Safe Homes Act Effective January 2, 2007

The Safe Homes Act protects the health and safety of survivors of domestic and sexual violence who live in rental housing. Now, tenants and members of their household who are survivors of violence can:

- Change the locks on an emergency basis to keep the person who attacked them out of the home (written leases only)
- Leave their housing and end their lease early to protect their physical safety and emotional well being (for tenants with written or oral leases)

A survivor of domestic or sexual violence must tell the landlord or their agent (for example, the property manager) in writing that there is a real threat (called a “credible imminent threat”) of future domestic violence or sexual violence happening in the apartment. The notice must be given to the landlord or agent 3 days before or after leaving the apartment. No additional documentation is necessary.

If the person gives proper notice to the landlord, they cannot be held responsible for rent due after they have left the apartment.

A survivor of sexual assault can leave their apartment early without showing a credible imminent threat of future harm if the sexual assault occurred on the premises. The survivor must notify the landlord or property manager in writing three days before or after leaving the apartment.

FY 2007 HUD Funding at Risk

The list of people at risk of losing or never getting housing assistance if Congress decides to keep FY07 HUD spending at FY06 levels became longer and more clear the week of January 8. House and Senate Democrats have agreed to finish the uncompleted appropriations business of the 109th Congress by enacting a single “joint funding resolution” through FY07, which ends September 30, 2007. HUD programs will be included in this measure and most will be harmed if kept at FY06 funding levels.

The House and Senate had hoped to enact the joint funding resolution by February 15, when the current short-term continuing resolution runs out. There has been speculation by Senate Minority Whip Trent Lott (R-MS) that Congress will have a hard time meeting the February 15 deadline and an additional, short continuing resolution will be necessary. A continuing resolution until February 15 is currently keeping federal programs funded. Now, however, the goal is to have an FY07

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Free Income Tax (and EITC) Help

Beginning January 27, free tax return preparation will be available to low-income taxpayers in 36 Illinois communities through the non-profit Center for Economic Progress. The Center will help families and individuals claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and receive all of the federal and state tax benefits, credits, and deductions to which they are entitled.

Working families with household incomes of less than $40,000 and individuals with incomes less than $15,000 are eligible for the Center’s free services. For over a decade, the Center has assisted more than 150,000 working families through its Tax Counseling Project, helping to generate more than $196 million in income tax refunds and saving families more than $10 million in tax preparation fees.

“Families struggling to make ends meet should not have to pay for tax help they can access for free; we can them keep and save more of their hard-earned money,” said David Marzahl, Executive Director of the Center for Economic Progress. “Thanks to our trained and certified volunteer work force, we plan on assisting 30,000 families this year.”

The Center is also prepared to provide families with the assistance they need to take advantage of recent changes in tax laws, such as the one-time phone tax refund, Illinois’ new provisions for injured and innocent spouse relief, and the new split refund option.

For the first time, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will allow taxpayers to split their refunds and directly deposit the money they are owed into as many as three bank accounts.

With the tax season around the corner, the Center is encouraging families to plan on saving at least some of their refund and investing in their future. The Center recommends that families and individuals interested in this refund-splitting opportunity bring their savings and checking account numbers and bank routing information. At select sites, the Center’s banking partners will have representatives available to open new accounts.

Through its programs and services, the Center provides low-wage workers access to mainstream financial services and pulls them out of the costly cycle of relying on check cashers and payday lenders.

Tax sites will be located in 16 Chicago neighborhoods and throughout the suburbs and downstate. In Chicagoland and northern Illinois, communities with tax sites include Auburn Gresham, Back of the Yards, Bronzeville, Chinatown, Humboldt Park, Lawndale, Loop, Pilsen, Rogers Park, South Chicago, Uptown, West Garfield Park, West Haven, Woodlawn, Aurora, Joliet, Elgin, Rockford, Harvey, and Waukegan. In downstate Illinois, communities with tax sites include: Alton, Bloomington, Champaign, Decatur, East St. Louis, Marion, Moline, Normal, Peoria, and Springfield.

For more information, please call (312) 630-0273 or TTY (312) 701-1326, or visit www.centerforprogress.org. All tax sites are ADA accessible.

Funding

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spending bill to the President for signature before he submits his FY08 budget to Congress on February 5.

Unless “cataclysmic” harm can be shown, FY07 funding levels will remain at FY06 levels. Many people in HUD-assisted housing programs will suffer such harm if programs are funded at FY06 levels. In addition to funding levels, the National Low Income Housing coalition (NLIHC) is seeking policy changes to fix major policy failings and to extend necessary programs. NLIHC is pushing for the joint funding resolution to include critical fixes to the voucher funding distribution system and to extend HUD’s Mark-to-Market program. Congressional staff members have said that there will be few, if any, policy changes in the joint funding resolution.

The following list provides a snapshot of what is at risk:

Without a $487 million increase above the FY06 level and language linking Public Housing Authorities’
LIHC and its many partners in the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) Campaign are working with new House Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank (D-MA) to introduce legislation to establish a National Housing Trust Fund. This will be stand-alone legislation that closely reflects the legislative proposal of the National Housing Trust Fund Campaign (www.nilhc.org/detail/article.cfm?article_id=3690&id=40). The goal of the NHTF Campaign is to create a dedicated source of federal funding to support the production and preservation of 1,500,000 rental homes over ten years, at least 75 percent of which will be affordable to extremely low income families. Chairman Frank and the Campaign are working to assure bipartisan co-sponsorship of the bill.

Mr. Frank also plans to reintroduce GSE regulatory reform legislation that will include the separate Affordable Housing Fund (AHF), supported by the NHTF Campaign in the 109th Congress. The AHF will use funds from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, estimated to be around $500,000,000 a year, to achieve several housing objectives including production of rental housing affordable for very low and extremely low income families, with a preference for those who are extremely low income. The AHF was included in H. R 1461, the GSE regulatory reform bill in the last Congress, which was passed by the U. S House of Representatives. The Senate adjourned last year without taking up comparable legislation. Mr. Frank’s bill will not include the provisions added under pressure from conservative Republicans in the last Congress that would prohibited any of the funds from the AHF going to non-profit housing developers that engage in lawful, non-partisan voter activities.

For further information, contact the National Low Income Housing Coalition at the address in Headlines Directory.

Making the Connection

General Assistance, Part I

Contributor: DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform

The authors of this column welcome your comments and questions. See contact information at the end of the article.

Connecting individuals to public benefits often is difficult. Sometimes the “system” doesn’t work right and other times our clients don’t work right with the “system”. There are other times we just don’t understand the system well enough to know if it is working.

General Assistance seems to operate as one of those systems that we don’t understand. General Assistance can be referred to as Transitional Assistance, or Township Assistance.

Eligibility: In Illinois, individuals who are not eligible for any other cash benefit through the traditional “categorical” programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or for SSI, may be able to receive financial assistance through locally funded and operated General Assistance programs. General Assistance is the public benefit program of last resort and as a result is often one of the few programs that single able bodied adults qualify to receive.

Where to apply: Where you apply for General Assistance is based on where you live. In Chicago the state Illinois Department of Human Services operates General Assistance under the name Transitional Assistance. If you live in suburban Cook County or in 84 other counties application is made at the township office where you live. If you live in one of the 17 counties without townships, then the application is made to the county office.

Background: Following is some basic information about General Assistance regardless of where you live:

State statute establishes the General Assistance program (305 ILCS 5/6-1 et seq.) so it is not an optional program for local townships/counties. Funding has to be provided for this program. If allocated funds are exhausted, then other township funds can be transferred or assets liquidated (60 ILCS 1/) to help cover the costs.

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Mayors Show City Housing Needs


Once again, there was little indication that the rise in homelessness and housing problems is letting up for the nation’s cities. Mayors reported increases in requests for housing by low-income families and individuals in 86 percent of the cities surveyed. A lack of mental health programs and affordable housing were cited most often as the main reasons for homelessness.

The demand for emergency food increased in the cities surveyed. Seventy-four percent of the cities showed an increase in emergency food requests. An estimated 23 percent of the requests went unmet despite a reported 13 percent increase in resources available to these programs. Nearly half of those requesting aid were in families and 37 percent were employed.

Eleven cities - Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Denver, Des Moines, Los Angeles, Louisville Metro, Nashville, Portland, Santa Monica and Seattle - identified high housing costs as the primary cause of hunger.

The Council of Mayors has been publishing these surveys for more than 20 years. This year the survey covered 23 cities. The study is available at www.usmayors.org/uscm/hungersurvey/2006/report06.pdf.

HUD SuperNOFA: General Section Published

HUD has published the General Section of this year’s SuperNOFA early this year. This notice provides prospective applicants for HUD competitive funding with the opportunity to become familiar with the General Section of HUD’s FY2007 SuperNOFA, in advance of publication of the FY2007 SuperNOFA. HUD plans to publish its annual SuperNOFA early in 2007. Early publication of the General Section is one of several steps instituted to improve the funding process for the grantee community. Early publication of the General Section gives prospective applicants additional time to become familiar with and address provisions in the General Section, which constitute part of almost every individual program application. HUD will publish with the SuperNOFA any changes to this General Section made after this publication. To download the General Section, go to: www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofa07/gensec.pdf.

Safe Homes

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The lock change provisions only apply if a tenant has a written lease and all parties to the lease request the lock change due to a credible imminent threat of domestic or sexual violence. The tenant must also supply one of the following pieces of information: a police report, medical records, court records, or a statement from a victim service organization. Once the landlord receives proper notice, the landlord has 48 hours to change the locks or allow the tenant to change the locks. The landlord may charge a reasonable fee for the lock change. If a landlord does not change the locks within 48 hours after the tenants give him proper notice, the tenants may change the locks or sue the landlord in court to have the locks changed. A tenant should provide the landlord with a copy of the new key within 48 hours.

Public housing residents are not included in this law because there is another law that protects them. The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 (VAWA), provides protections, money and programs for victims of violence living in public housing. VAWA more specifically deals with the unique issues victims face when they live in public housing.

For further information contact Tammie Grossman of Housing Action Illinois at (312) 939-6074, tammie@housingactionil.org, or the address in Headlines Directory.
General Assistance  
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shortfall. In some instances financial help can be requested from the state to operate the local governments General Assistance program (when this happens the township is called a “receiving” township and has to comply with state General Assistance policy).

Local Governments have the option to provide Emergency Assistance. Each government unit establishes guidelines, income levels; income disregards, payment levels, and determines what emergency assistance it will provide. This program is optional, so funding is usually limited and at times is exhausted, resulting in the Local Government saying they have run out of money. Emergency assistance cannot replace General Assistance.

All Local Governments are required to have written policy for operation of the General Assistance program. Policy is fairly uniform in Illinois, with Townships using either a manual that is available through the Township Officials of Illinois organization or the Illinois Department of Human Services General Assistance Policy Manual. If you want to view your Local Government’s General Assistance policy, you can ask to view the manual at the local Township or County office. General Assistance policy is based on what is contained in the Public Aid Code (305 ILCS 5).

Anyone can apply for General Assistance. Local Governments are required to provide applications when they are requested. Usually an applicant needs to be a township resident who is at least age 18 and a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident. An adult is eligible for GA if s/he is age 21 or over; is married and living with a spouse, regardless of age (even though living with a parent); or age 18, 19, or 20 and not living with a parent.

A decision on an application must be made within 30 days, the decision is to be provided in writing and individuals have the right to file an appeal decisions.

Usually there is an interview and the following information is usually requested:

- Identification
- Proof of residency
- Birth certificates for children
- Social Security cards
- Proof of any income and/or assets
- Proof of registration for employment services

To find out further information about General Assistance you can go to the Township Officials of Illinois website at http://www.toi.org/information/GAFAQ.asp.

Homeless Headlines

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Homeless Headlines

Working Hand-in-Hand
Rural Homeless Education
A Working Symposium
Holiday Inn, Collinsville, Illinois
Tuesday March 20, 2007, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Sponsored by the Illinois State Board of Education Homeless Education Program for Illinois

The full-day working symposium will bring together local ISBE homeless education liaisons, shelter directors, and other service providers for discussions on a range of topics related to the education of homeless rural children, ages birth to eighteen. Such topics may include: poverty, transportation, sheltering, micro-enterprise development, rural families and their future, affordable housing, education, nutrition, and health.

A working document of resources and recommendations will be developed from the work that day that will do several things:

- Bring together folks that work in similar professional fields,
- Discuss formation of cooperative working networks,
- Propose potential goals for the next two - three years, and
- Discuss possible funding to support realization of those goals

The intent is to initiate conversations between advocates of rural homeless issues that all impact on the education of homeless children. Participants will determine how we might work more closely together to begin to meet the needs of families of poverty and transition in the rural areas of this state. Other states have had success in bringing people together to share, delineate problems/issues, and then look at the realistic alternatives that might be forged into the future for specific populations, including rural homeless families with children.

The registration fee is $10 and includes a buffet style deli lunch. Each registrant will also receive a copy of Rollinson and Pardeck’s book, Homelessness in Rural America. Registration will be accepted for the first sixty-five submissions on a first-come, first-served basis using the symposium registration form at http://homelessed.net/Calendar/calendar.htm. Scroll down to “Hand-in Hand”

For further information, contact Peggy Dunn at madunn@isbe.net.

Funding
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agencies in Louisiana and Mississippi. To extend fungibility, NLIHC thinks certain conditions must be met. For example, funds must be used to repair units that are minimally damaged for immediate occupancy, and housing agencies must be required to seek public input on fungibility plans.

Finally, for disaster-related housing, Congress should mandate that FEMA extend for 12 months its housing assistance programs for households displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Given the extremely slow pace of recovery on the Gulf Coast, temporary housing needs remain.

House leadership brought the measure to the House floor the third week of January. The measure will then be considered by the Senate.

For further information, contact the National Low Income Housing Coalition at the address in Headlines Directory.

Tuning Up Your Skills:
Current Tools & Techniques of the Frontline Mental Health Practitioner Conference
John A. Logan College
Carterville, IL
March 15 & 16, 2007

Sponsored by: Center for Rural Health & Social Service Development, Office of Economic & Regional Development, of the Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Agenda
Thursday, March 15, 2007
9:00 - 10:00 Registration
10:00 - 10:15 Welcome
10:15 - 12:00 Plenary Session Part 1: Crisis Intervention
12:00 - 1:00 Lunch (on your own)
1:00 - 2:30 Plenary Session Part 2: Crisis Intervention
2:30 - 2:45 Break
2:45 - 4:00 Breakout Sessions: Â· Integrated Dual Diagnosis Treatment (IDDT) Â· Update on Medications for Mental Illness

Friday, March 16, 2007
9:00 - 9:05 Welcome Back
9:05 - 11:00 Plenary Session: Staff Burnout & Engagement of the Mental Health Consumer
11:00 - 11:15 Break
11:15 - 12:15 Plenary Session: Update on Mental Health & Evidence Based Practices
12:15 - 12:30 Closing Remarks & Door Prizes

There is a $49 registration fee. Registration deadline is February 22, 2007. If you have questions or if you would like additional information please contact: Heather Hartung at hhartung@siu.edu, or Tracey Williams at Tracey.D.Williams@illinois.gov.
Mental health/crisis services; Minorities; Native Americans/ American Indians; Nursing care; Residential/custodial care, hospices; Substance abuse, services; Volunteerism promotion.

**Geographic focus:** National

**Type of support:** Employee matching gifts; Matching/challenge support; Program development; Program evaluation; Program-related investments/loans; Research; Seed money; Technical assistance.

**Limitations:** Giving limited to the U.S. No support for political organizations, international activities, programs or institutions concerned solely with a specific disease or basic biomedical research. No grants to individuals, or for ongoing general operating expenses, endowment funds, capital costs, including construction, renovation, or equipment, or research on unapproved drug therapies or devices.

**Application Information:** Contact foundation directly.

### The UPS Foundation

55 Glenlake Pkwy., N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30328
Telephone: (404) 828-6374
FAX: (404) 828-7435
URL: www.community.ups.com/ philanthropy/main.html

**Type of grantmaker:** Company-sponsored foundation.

**Total Giving:** Approximately $40,000,000

**Purpose and activities:** The foundation supports organizations involved with education, obesity, hunger, nutrition, human services, community development, volunteerism, youth, senior citizens, disabled people, mentally disabled people, economically disadvantaged people, and homeless people. Special emphasis is directed toward programs designed to address hunger, literacy, and volunteerism.

**Fields of interest:** Aging; Children, services; Community development; Disabilities, people with; Economically disadvantaged; Education; Education, reading; Family services; Food services; Homeless; Human services; Mental health; Mentally disabled; Nutrition; Volunteerism promotion; Youth.

**Geographic focus:** National; international

**Types of support:** Employee matching gifts; Management development/capacity building; Research; Technical assistance.

**Limitations:** Giving on a national basis and in Canada and Mexico; giving also to statewide, regional, national, and international organizations. No support for religious organizations not of direct benefit to the entire community. No grants to individuals; generally, no grants for capital campaigns, endowments, or general operating support.

**Application Information:** Proposals should be no longer than 2 pages. Application form not required.

Applicants should submit the following: 1) statement of problem project will address, 2) copy of IRS Determination Letter, 3) brief history of organization and description of its mission, 4) copy of most recent annual report/audited financial statement/990, 5) how project’s results will be evaluated or measured, 6) detailed description of project and amount of funding requested, 7) copy of current year’s organizational budget and/or project budget, 8) listing of additional sources and amount of support. Initial approach: Proposal. Copies of proposal: 1. Deadline: September 1. See Web site for further information & publications.
Center for Community Change
1536 U Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
Telephone: (202) 339-9300
http://www.communitychange.org

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
820 First Street, NE, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 408-1080
Fax: (202) 408-1056
http://www.cbpp.org

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
1325 S. Wabash, Suite 205
Chicago, IL 60605
Telephone: (312) 435-4548
Fax: (312) 435-0198
http://www.enteract.com/~cch/index.htm

Coalition of Citizens With Disabilities in Illinois
300 E. Monroe, Suite 100
Springfield, IL 62701
Telephone: (217) 522-7024
TDD: (217) 522-7016
http://www.csdi.org

Corporation for Supportive Housing
203 N. Wabash, Suite 410
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: (312) 332-6690
Fax: (312) 332-7400
Email: il@csdh.org
www.csh.org

Food Research and Action Center
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, # 540
Washington, D.C. 20009
Telephone: (202) 986-2200
Fax: (202) 986-2525
foodresearch@frac.org

Housing Action Illinois
11 E. Adams, Suite 1501
Chicago, IL 60603
Telephone: (312) 939-0974
Fax: (312) 939-8822
http://www.housingactionil.org

Housing Assistance Council
1025 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 606
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 842-8600
Fax: (202) 347-3441
http://www.ruralhome.org

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
801 S. 11th
Springfield, IL 62703
Telephone: (217) 788-2830
Fax: (217) 788-1839
http://www.ilcdav.org

Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness
Matthew Hanafee, Executive Director
P.O. Box 3956
Oak Park, IL 60303-3956
Telephone: (708) 263-3590
Email: ILHomeless@aol.com

Illinois Community Action Association
3435 Liberty Drive
Springfield, IL 62704
Telephone: (217) 789-0125
Fax: (217) 789-0139
http://www.icaanet.org

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
620 S. Adams, Suite 3B
Springfield, IL 62701
Telephone: (217) 785-6142
Fax: (217-782-1206
http://www.state.il.us/edc/

Illinois Department of Human Services
Homeless Services and Supportive Housing
40 W. Lawrence, 2C
Springfield, IL 62762
Telephone: (217) 782-1317
Fax: (217) 524-6029
http://www.state.il.us/agency/dhs/

Illinois Food Bank Association
P.O. Box 8293
Springfield, IL 62703
Telephone: (217) 722-4022
http://www.csh.org

Illinois Housing Development Authority
401 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 900
Chicago, IL 60611
Telephone: (312) 836-5200
Fax: (312) 836-5286
TDD: (312) 836-5222
http://www.idha.org/

National Alliance to End Homelessness
1518 K Street, NW, Suite 206
Washington, D.C. 20009
Telephone: (202) 638-1526
Fax: (202) 638-4664
E-mail: naeh@naeh.org
http://www.endhomelessness.org/

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
333 ½ Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20003-1148
Telephone: (202) 546-1969
Fax: (202) 546-2063
E-mail: nchv@nchv.org
http://www.nchv.org/home.html

National Coalition for the Homeless
1012 14th Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 2005-3406
Telephone: (202) 393-5229
Fax: (202) 393-3054
http://www.nchv.org/

National Community Reinvestment Coalition
727 15th St., NW, #900
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 267-1294
Fax: (202) 267-1293
http://www.nrhcweb.org

National Low-Income Housing Coalition & National Low Income Housing Information Service
727 15th St NW, 6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 662-1530
Fax: (202) 393-1973
E-mail: info@nlihc.org
http://www.nlihc.org

National Rural Housing Coalition
601 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 850
Washington, D.C. 20004
Telephone: (202) 393-5229
Fax: (202) 393-3054
http://www.nrhcweb.org

Rural Development
2118 W. Park Ct, Suite A
Champaign, IL 61821
Telephone: (217) 403-6222
Fax: (217) 403-6231

Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless
P.O. Box 955
801 N. Market
Marion, IL 62959
Telephone: (618) 993-0094
Fax: (618) 993-4013

Supportive Housing Providers Association
3417 North Monticello
Chicago, IL 60640
Telephone: (773) 588-0827
Fax: (773-267-1294
supportivehousing@aol.com

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Community Planning and Development
77 W. Jackson 24th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3507
Telephone: (312) 353-1969
Fax: (312) 353-5417