Supportive Housing in Illinois: A Wise Investment

Affordable housing that provides on-site services for people who are homeless or have a mental illness or for other vulnerable populations could dramatically reduce the use and cost of expensive public services such as state prisons and mental health facilities, according to a new report by the Heartland Alliance Mid-America Institute on Poverty (MAIP), the Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA), and the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH).

Supportive Housing in Illinois: A Wise Investment measured the impact of the supportive housing intervention on the use of public services from a sample of 177 residents over a four-year time period, comparing the two years before residents entered supportive housing with the two years after. Data were collected on these residents from Medicaid, mental health hospitals, substance use treatment, prisons, and various county jails and hospitals.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how permanent supportive housing impacts residents’ reliance on primarily publicly-funded services. The key research questions were:

- Does living in supportive housing change the volume of publicly-funded services residents use?
- Does living in supportive housing change the type of publicly-funded services residents use?
- Does living in supportive housing decrease the cumulative cost of services residents use?

The study found that Illinois saw an overall 39 percent cost reduction in the use of public services, such as inpatient mental health care, nursing homes, and criminal justice, over a two-year period.

Congress Reauthorizes McKinney-Vento Program!

On May 19, both the House and Senate overwhelmingly passed S. 896, the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act. The legislation will reauthorize McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance programs for the first time in nearly 20 years. The legislation will provide communities with new resources and better tools to prevent and end homelessness. President Obama signed the legislation on May 20.

S. 896 incorporates as an amendment the compromise, bipartisan Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act.

To read an analysis of the HEARTH Act, go to [www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2098](http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2098)

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Free Rental Housing Listing and Locator Service

ILHousingSearch.org is a housing locator service sponsored by the Illinois Housing Development Authority, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Illinois Department of Human Services, and Illinois Department on Aging. The site is currently accepting listings from property providers, and the housing search feature will be available June 1st. ILHousingSearch.org provides detailed information about rental properties and helps people find housing to best fit their needs. The service can be accessed at no cost online 24 hours a day or through a toll-free, bilingual call center at 1-(877) 428-8844, available Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Central Time.

The fast, easy-to-use free search lets people look for rental housing using a wide variety of criteria and special mapping features. Housing listings display detailed information about each unit. The service also provides links to housing resources and helpful tools for renters such as an affordability calculator, rental checklist, and information about renter rights and responsibilities.

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Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provides $2 billion for NSP2, the second iteration of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program that incorporated several key changes to the original NSP program. NSP2 is a competitive program that will provide cities, states, and nonprofits with funds to buy foreclosed or abandoned homes to rehab, resell, or demolish in order to stabilize neighborhoods. At least 25% of the funds must be used for housing for those with incomes below 50% AMI. NSP2 has tenant protections and Section 8 antidiscrimination provisions. The NOFA provides NSP2’s award competition criteria and program requirements. The NOFA gives the public only 10 days to submit comments regarding an applicant’s proposed uses and locations of NSP2 money. Public hearings are not required.

Applications are due by July 17, 2009.

ARRA allows HUD to use up to $200 million for technical assistance (TA); HUD chose to use only $50 million. A second NOFA describes the competitive basis for awarding TA grants to states, local governments, nonprofits, for-profits, and consortiums of organizations. Of the $50 million available, $11.5 million is for local TA activities and $38.5 million is for national and regional TA activities. Applications are due June 8, 2009.

The two NOFAs, as well as other NSP2 implementation guidance, are at http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/neighborhoodspg/index.cfm.
President Barack Obama rolled out his detailed FY10 funding request for federal programs on May 7, revealing an almost 11% increase for HUD’s programs over the current year. The President had provided Congress with a broad overview of his FY10 requests in February.

National Housing Trust Fund

As expected, the budget includes inaugural funding for the National Housing Trust Fund. “For the first time, the Budget provides $1 billion to capitalize a Housing Trust Fund that will help make significant advances in providing affordable housing options for targeted low income families, thus addressing one of the most serious social and economic problems facing our society,” HUD’s budget request predicts that its FY10 budget will, by the end of 2010, provide vouchers for 2.1 million families, “the largest number of families ever assisted by this program.”

Housing Choice Vouchers

HUD asserts that the FY10 request seeks enough funding to renew all existing Housing Choice Vouchers, including the new vouchers funded in FY08 and FY09. Further, no rescissions of agencies’ reserves as was done in FY09 are proposed. And the Administration also proposed lifting of the unit cap on the number of vouchers each agency can use. The HUD request predicts that its FY10 budget will, by the end of 2010, provide vouchers for 2.1 million families, “the largest number of families ever assisted by this program.”

Making the Connection

Kinship Care

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.

Our current economic crisis is hard on all, but for our grandparents (and other relatives) caring for related children they face a double whammy: the economics and emotional challenges of having to parent again, and trying to navigate through complex public benefit programs critical to being able to keep the child in their home. The Illinois Department of Aging reports that over 200,000 children under the age of 18 are living in a grandparent-headed home, so this is not an insignificant number of households.

Often the family lacks appropriate information about the issues of kinship care, the special needs (both physical and psychological) of children who may be born to a substance-abusing mother or are at risk of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Questions arise for the caregiver about how to obtain guardianship, birth certificates, and medical records. Families wonder if it is better to adopt or just be the child’s guardian. They need to find ways to be able to financially and emotionally support another household member and they try to figure out what resources are available to pay for books, school trips, and all the other expenses of a growing child. While dealing with these issues, the family also needs to try and navigate the existing child welfare system, and try to understand what the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) can do to help. Too often the family’s source of information is from well meaning friends, who do not understand the reality of the system, so misinformation is shared.

On May 14, 2009 Illinois made a big step forward in addressing the big issue kinship care by passing HB 2365 (as of this writing the bill is waiting to be signed by the governor). This bill creates a program called Kinship Navigators. Kinship navigators will be able to help link relative caregivers both inside and outside of the formal child welfare system to a broad range of

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after the sample of 177 individuals moved into supportive housing. This cost reduction in public services yielded a total overall savings of more than $850,000 – an average savings per resident of $2,400 per year.

“Illinois could see significant savings from the most expensive users of public services, such as those with mental illness or substance use, if more supportive housing units are made available,” said Katrina Van Valkenburgh, Corporation for Supportive Housing. “This study, like others we’ve done across the country, demonstrates that supportive housing works and is a wise investment of public dollars.”

“Now more than ever, our most vulnerable populations need to count on a support system inclusive of housing to survive challenging times. Illinois’ public services are already strained and facing fiscal woes. But an investment in supportive housing now could save the state a significant amount of dollars long term,” says Janet Hasz, Executive Director of the Supportive Housing Providers Association. “Supportive housing provides residents the tools to lead stable, healthy, and independent lives. Once they leave us, they no longer need to rely on the state systems as much—or at all.”

The study notes a dramatic shift in the use of state services pre- to post-housing. Among the key findings:

- The number of people using state mental health hospitals dropped 90 percent from pre- to post-supportive housing. The number of overnight stays in mental health hospitals went down by almost 100 percent. The sample of 177 residents used more than $400,000 worth of state mental health hospital services before entry into supportive housing—down to $873 after.

- Overnight stays in state prison dropped to zero during the post-housing time period with a 100 percent cost savings of over $215,000. County jails saw an 86 percent decrease in overnight stays post-supportive housing.

- Medicaid services saw a major shift from a high-reliance on expensive inpatient/acute services before supportive housing to less expensive outpatient/preventative services after.

- Nursing home stays decreased by 97 percent, saving over $230,000

“The true cost saving from supportive housing is much higher than reported in this study. We weren’t able to collect the costs of homeless shelters, soup kitchens, free clinics and other supportive services used by this population,” says Amy Rynell, lead researcher at MAIP. “And while we also don’t measure the social costs of supportive housing, we know from residents that post-housing they experience better health, an end to homelessness, financial confidence, and independence – qualities that lead to an improved society as a whole – and which don’t always have a dollar amount.”

According to Van Valkenburgh, other studies on the effects of supportive housing have included much of this additional data and found even greater per person savings than the $2,400 identified in Illinois. (See endnotes.)

This is the first statewide study that looks at the effects of permanent supportive housing on residents in Illinois and adds to the current research about the cost-effectiveness of supportive housing as a key component for eliminating homelessness. Supportive housing in Illinois not only reduced the homelessness and housing instability previously experienced by residents but also produced a large cost savings in a

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services and supports that will help them meet the needs of the children in their care.

The Illinois Department of Aging in partnership with Area Agencies on Aging have in place numerous services including Caregiver Resource Centers, Support groups, help with obtaining guardianship, legal services, and other information and assistance including advocacy with school enrollment. If more information is needed call the Senior Help Line at 1-800-252-8966

Guardianship is always an issue. It is important to know that in order to apply and receive benefits such as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), All Kids and to apply for a Social Security card you do not have to obtain guardianship. In addition, school districts cannot require legal guardianship. Some districts request, but cannot require, written confirmation from the caregiver that the child is in the actual custody and control of a non-parent or non-guardian. So you should be able to enroll a school age child in school immediately.

Guardianship, however, is needed to obtain the child’s birth certificate, Proof of Citizenship, Social Security Card, Medical Records / Proof of Immunization and School Records. Financial and medical help available through the TANF program (as long as the caregiver is blood related to the child, can prove the relationship, and has not adopted the child). This program provides financial assistance in the form of a monthly check to help families care for children who need help. The check is issued for the child only, so this means the caregiver’s income and assets are not counted. If the child has an income (child support, Social Security benefit, etc.) the child’s income will be counted. The caregiver will also be expected to cooperate with state efforts to obtain child support form the child’s parents.

The caregiver often needs help to pay for child care. If the caregiver receives TANF, the caregiver’s income is not used to decided eligibility for child care reimbursement and there are no co-pays that need to be made. If the caregiver does not receive TANF, the caregiver’s income will have to be provided and will be used to determine eligibility for child care assistance and a co-pay will have to be made. Often when I talk with caregivers they say they don’t want to bother to apply for TANF since the benefit is so low ($108-$117 a month). I will counter that even though the TANF check is low; the value of the child care re-imbursement is huge.

For Food Stamps and WIC (Women, Infant and Children age 5 and under) eligibility for these 2 programs is based upon the entire household’s income. So the caregiver’s income will need to be provided. Food Stamps also require the household’s assets be counted. For more information on WIC services and the nearest agency, contact the Illinois Department of Public Health at 1-800-323-4769. For information about Food Stamps call the Illinois Department of Human Services at 1-800-252-8635.

Proving relationship to a child is often a challenge, especially for the paternal relatives when paternity has not been established. There are a number of alternatives to consider. The state has a medical program called 94R (PM 03-05-06) which is available to children living in homes with adults where relationship is unable to be proven. Application is made at the local IDHS/FCRC (Family Community Resource Center). If TANF assistance is needed, paternal relatives can provide a written statement signed by the alleged father (PM 03-05-01-c) or the child’s mother saying he is the child’s father; or items such as a baptismal certificate, medical record, bible entry, etc. that shows the father’s name and relationship; or other evidence that shows the relationship (letters, cards, etc.) At application with IDHS, the relative should ask for help to obtain birth certificates or other documents to prove relationship if this help is needed. The state is able to approve cash benefits for 3 months while waiting for the family to provide non-financial proofs (PM 17-02-01).

College tuition help is available through existing programs such as Pell Grants and student loans. In 2006 Illinois created the “Higher Education Student Assistance Act” for young people who have been in the legal custody of grandparents, received public aid assistance (TANF) for at least 12 consecutive months, graduate from high school with a 2.7 grade point average, has been recommended for assistance by the principal or other appropriate school official and who are enrolled in or plan on being enrolled full-time in an institution of higher learner. If funding is available, eligible applicants will receive a renewable grant of $1,000 to be applied to tuition and mandatory fees. This grant can be renewed for up to four years provided that the student can provide the Commission with a recommendation from an academic counselor, advisor or instructor and that the student has a 2.7 grade point average.

Some great websites for information are: www.gu.org, and Grands Place at www.grandsplace.org and Grandparent Again at www.grandparentagain.com.

In addition to Illinois efforts, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Children’s Bureau, has announced the availability of competitive grant funds authorized by the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351). The grants are to help children who are in or are at-risk of entering into foster care reconnect with family members by developing and implementing grant programs in the areas of kinship navigator programs; programs utilizing intensive family-finding efforts to locate biological family and reestablish relationships; programs utilizing family group decision-making meetings; or residential family treatment programs.

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number of public systems. Based on resident interviews, many people also experienced enhanced quality of life, not solely as result of being stably housed, but also due to their increased use of preventive and maintenance services, particularly in health, mental health, and substance use service systems.

SPHA estimates at least $11 million could come back to the state if $3 million in state funds are invested into 494 units serving 606 men, women, and children in the next fiscal year. Advocates say that if the $3 million for supportive housing is obtained, the funds would leverage more than $27 million in federal assistance. Illinois currently has 6,000 units of permanent supportive housing serving over 8,000 individuals in 28 counties.

Providers have an opportunity to tailor their services based on some key implications from this study. Supportive housing has a tremendous cost savings impact for people who might be considered the hardest to house: those with a mental illness, those who were formerly incarcerated, those with a disability or health issue, and those with histories of drug use. As projects seek to target populations in need, tailoring outreach and services for those with the aforementioned characteristics will result in cost savings as well as appropriate housing in the least restrictive setting.

Another implication is the increased services needed by people when they are initially housed. In the first 6 months of permanent supportive housing, residents need support in order to stabilize their health. Some services, such as inpatient medical care, saw a spike in use in the first 6 months of supportive housing which quickly decreased thereafter. In line with findings from other supportive housing studies, use of health services increased after people were housed, likely due to increased contact with case managers who made referrals to health professionals. While homeless, many people did not have access to such systems and deferred needed care. Health and mental health needs are an important initial assessment and referral piece for case managers to consider. Case managers have an opportunity to educate about and refer residents to Outpatient/Preventive services, which not only saves money, but can help residents maintain stability in their health and lives.


For further information, contact Janet Hasz of the Supportive Housing Providers Association at (773) 935-4663, or supportivehsg@aol.com.

Endnotes


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develop a formula to allocate voucher administrative fees based on the cost of an efficiently managed voucher program; and eliminate the unit cap imposed by past appropriations bills on the number of families that each public housing agency may serve.

Project-based Section 8

For project-based Section 8 contracts, Secretary Donovan says the FY10 request will provide for 12 months of funding for every contract as it is renewed. It also requests the authority for the HUD Secretary to spend up to $10 million for tenant resources, information and outreach grants. “These grants will provide financial assistance to tenant groups, nonprofit organizations, and public entities for building the capacity of tenant organizations for furthering the purpose of the Mark-to-Market program,” according to HUD budget documents. HUD’s mark-to-market program allowed for the restructuring of project-based Section 8 contracts and had, until the mid-2000s, provided resources so that tenants could effectively engage in the future of their homes. This initiative would restart that outreach and organizing program.

Community Development Block Grants

The President’s FY10 budget would increase funding for Community Development Block Grants while also creating new set-asides within CDBG: a Sustainable Communities Initiative, a Rural Innovation Fund, and a University Community Fund. For CDBG, the President will also seek reforms to modernize the CDBG formula “to better target funds to communities with the greatest economic need.” “It has been very hard to demonstrate the results that CDBG produces,” Secretary Donovan said during his agency’s
McKinney-Vento
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The legislation:

- Increases prevention resources and changes the current Emergency Shelter Grants Program to the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program;
- Requires HUD to provide family rapid re-housing incentive;
- Continues the chronic homelessness initiative and adds families with children to the initiative;
- Designates 30 percent of total funds for permanent housing solutions for families and individuals with disabilities;
- Modestly expands the definition of homelessness;
- Consolidates HUD’s competitive grant programs;
- Improves homeless assistance in rural communities and gives them greater flexibility;
- Increases emphasis on performance;
- Simplifies the match requirement; and
- Authorizes a funding level of $2.2 billion.

These changes will not go into effect until 18 months after passage, giving HUD and communities time to prepare.

S. 896 also includes language that will require that tenants living in foreclosed properties be given 90 days notice prior to eviction.

For further information, go to www.endhomelessness.org/section/policy/legislature/mckinney_vento, or contact the National Alliance To End Homelessness at the address in Headlines Directory.

Kinship Care
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Eligible applicants include state, local or tribal child welfare agencies, and private nonprofit organizations that have experience in working with foster children or children in kinship care arrangements. The program announcement is posted at: www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2009-ACF-ACYF-CF-0078.html

The DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization focused on advocacy and planning in DuPage County, Illinois and designer and trainer of Making the Connection: A Guide to Accessing Public Benefits. The DuPage Federation is affiliated with Northern Illinois University, Regional Development Institute. Questions can be directed to Kathryn Nelson at knelson@dupagefederation.org.

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budget briefing. “I understand very personally [as Housing Commissioner for New York City] what an important resource it is, but we must be able to demonstrate results very concretely,” he said. “Everyone agrees the CDBG formula is outdated.”

Homeless Assistance

The President’s request for HUD’s homeless assistance programs would increase to $1.8 billion. Secretary Donovan said HUD will continue to emphasize homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing in its homeless assistance programs.


Link to NLIHC’s budget chart for selected HUD programs at http://www.nlihc.org/doc/FY10-presidents-request33.pdf

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

Housing Search
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Property owners and managers, including Housing Authorities and private landlords, can use this service to manage their property listings free of charge. Listings can include pictures, maps, and information about nearby amenities. Property owners and housing authorities can register and manage their listing online at www.ILHousingSearch.org or via phone by contacting the call center at (877) 428-8848. The call center will work with property providers to ensure that vacancy information is regularly updated.

Agencies can take advantage of many free services to help house clients with special needs. A comprehensive housing locator that is regularly updated with vacancy information and eligibility criteria will save valuable staff time. We hope you will join us in spreading the word about this site, first to property providers and then to the general public.
# Headlines Directory

**Center for Community Change**  
1536 U Street NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
Phone: (202) 339-9300  
http://www.communitychange.org

**Center on Budget and Policy Priorities**  
1325 S. Wabash, Suite 205  
Chicago, IL 60605  
Phone: (202) 435-0198  
Fax: (202) 435-4548  
http://www.cbpp.org

**Coalition of Citizens With Disabilities**  
820 First Street, NE, Suite 530  
Washington, DC 20002  
Fax: (217) 522-7016  
Telephone: (217) 522 7016  
http://www.ccdionline.org

**Chicago Coalition for the Homeless**  
300 E. Monroe, Suite 205  
Chicago, IL 60603  
Fax: (312) 435-0198  
Telephone: (312) 435-4548  
http://www.cbpp.org

**Coalition of Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies**  
801 N. Market  
Champaign, IL 61821  
Fax: (217) 403-6231  
Telephone: (217) 403-6222  
http://www.icoa.org

**Coalition to End Homelessness**  
1518 K Street, NW, Suite 410  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Telephone: (202) 638-1526  
Fax: (202) 638-4644  
E-mail: nchv@nchv.org  
http://www.endhomelessness.org/

**Community Action and Human Services**  
601 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 850  
Washington, D.C. 20004  
Telephone: (202) 393-5229  
Fax: (202) 393-3834  
http://www.rnweb.org

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

**Housing Action Illinois**  
11 E. Adams, Suite 1601  
Chicago, IL 60603  
Telephone: (312) 939-6074  
Fax: (312) 939-6822  
http://housingactionil.org

**Housing Authority of the City of Chicago**  
77 W. Jackson 24th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3507  
Fax: (312) 353-5417  
Telephone: (312) 353-1696  

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

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620 E. Adams, CIPS-3  
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