Illinois DCFS
Youth Housing Assistance Program

In 1999, Congress enacted the Foster Care Independence Act (FCIA), authorizing $140 million for the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program to improve service delivery for foster youth transitioning out of care. FCIA includes a provision allowing states to use 30 percent of federal independent living dollars on room and board.

With the implementation of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, Illinois embarked on developing a Youth Housing Assistance Program, which provides housing advocacy and cash assistance to youth aging out of foster care. The program was modeled on Illinois’ Norman housing advocacy program, which provides housing services to families at risk of involvement in child protective services due to the lack of safe and stable housing.

The program was built on research that demonstrates that housing is essential to stabilizing clients and providing services to meet their needs. The Department of Children and Family Services involved advocates, current and former foster youth, providers, and state agency officials in the development of the program. DCFS chose several housing advocacy

(Continued on page 4)

Illinois Housing Costs Outpace Renter Incomes in 2003

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) has released Up Against A Wall: Housing Affordability for Renters, an analysis of the U.S. Bureau of the Census American Community Survey (ACS) supplementary surveys in 2002 and 2003 that reports on median gross rents, housing cost burdens, and the ability of the average renter to afford the median rent at the national, state and local level.

Along with renter affordability data for all fifty states and the District of Columbia, a twenty-page data appendix to the report provides data on renter households in counties in the U. S. with a population of more than 250,000 and most cities within these counties with a minimum population of 65,000. In addition to data for the State of Illinois, the report lists data for Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, Madison, McHenry, St. Clair, Will, and Winnebago Counties, as well as the cities of Chicago and Waukegan.

(Continued on page 5)
Homeless Headlines

HUD Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced the availability of a new guide to assist communities in collecting data on the number and characteristics of people who are homeless but living outside the housing continuum.

The guide lays out the steps involved in three possible approaches and provides examples of their use by different communities. It includes relevant HUD definitions and standards, sample surveys and forms and other reference information.

HUD has indicated that information on unsheltered homeless people will be requested in both future Continuum of Care applications and the homeless needs section of the Consolidated Plan. The guide can be accessed at www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/countinghomeless/countingguide.pdf.

CSH Toolkit For Ending Long-Term Homelessness

This Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) interactive, online resource highlights some of the most promising practices for ending long-term homelessness today. In addition to key lessons learned by supportive housing projects and programs across the country, the Toolkit includes profiles of systems-wide strategies for working with this population, photo tours of supportive housing projects from around the country, sample documents from supportive housing service teams and property managers, and a listing of key additional tools. This Toolkit was created by the CSH Resource Center and was made possible by the generous support of the MetLife Foundation.

To view the Toolkit, visit csh.c.topica.com/maacTP8abbYWPchr7RqeafpNE0/

For further information, contact the Corporation for Supportive Housing at the address in Headlines Directory.

Financial Guide for Small Nonprofits

The Housing Assistance Council has developed a basic guide to managing the accounting and financial aspects of small nonprofit organizations. Designed to improve the effectiveness of rural housing nonprofits, the guide includes suggestions on budgeting, basic accounting systems, and the need for auditing. It also covers the penalties imposed on nonprofits that do not manage their money responsibly.

The guide, “Accounting & Financial Operations for Nonprofits in Rural Housing,” is available at www.ruralhome.org or for $5 (including shipping and handling), by contacting Luz Rosas at (202) 842-8600 or luz@ruralhome.org.

Reading

Mainstream Resources/Funding


Housing Programs Cut in Omnibus Bill

An omnibus spending bill for FY2005 passed the House and Senate on November 20. The bill cuts funding for most HUD housing programs. All FY2005 Omnibus figures will endure an additional 0.8% across-the-board cut.

Rental Assistance Vouchers

Of the amount provided for tenant-based assistance, $13.36 million is for voucher renewals (after taking into account the 0.8% across-the-board cut). That amount would be sufficient except for the proposed distribution of these funds to housing authorities. A budget-based system is implemented in the appropriations bill that requires HUD to provide all public housing agencies with a fixed annual budget based on the average number of vouchers in use in May, June and July 2004 and multiplied by the 2005 annual adjustment factor. HUD expects to notify agencies within forty-five days of the enactment of the legislation as to their annual budgets.

This system appears to be at least as restrictive, if not more, than the system established by HUD in its April 22, 2004 notice. According to the bill’s report, “PHAs are expected to manage utility costs, decreased tenant contributions and protect the most at-risk families within these budgets. HUD has not provided a central fund or any other funds to address increased leasing or costs in 2005.”

The report continues, “HUD shall also provide agencies with flexibility to adjust payment standards and portability as necessary to manage within their 2005 budgets,” leaving the door open for HUD to decrease the value of vouchers and restrict portability options for voucher-holders. HUD is given the authority to make any necessary adjustments for costs associated with first-time renewals of tenant protection and HOPE VI vouchers in 2005.

PHA reserves are reduced to one week and funding for administrative fees are the same as FY2004. The measure prohibits HUD from using recaptured funds from any source including any project based carryover from being used for 2005 Section 8 funding. HUD will also not be providing any replenishment of program reserves and is not providing for a central fund.

The bill separates the Section 8 tenant-based activities from the project-based Section 8. The intent is to provide better transparency in the program.

Public Housing Capital Fund

The bill includes $2.6 billion for the capital fund - a decrease. The Resident Opportunity Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) program is funded at $53 million and Neighborhood Networks is funded at $15 million.

Public Housing Operating Fund

The legislation synchronizes the funding cycles of all public housing authorities to a calendar year but does not include the $30 million from the (Continued on page 7)

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FY 2005 Housing Appropriations

(Continued on page 7)
agencies that they had existing relationships with and placed sixteen Housing Advocates throughout the state to help youth locate affordable housing and access social services for stabilization.

Housing Advocacy

Housing advocacy services assist clients in obtaining and/or maintaining stable housing. Services include:

- Assistance in securing affordable housing;
- Consumer education;
- Budget counseling;
- Linkages to community based resources (i.e. assistance with utilities, clothing and food); and
- Follow-up services for a minimum of three months after the client secures appropriate housing.

Note: Housing Advocacy does not include any money.

Youth receiving housing advocacy services must meet all three criteria:

- Be at least 17 ½ and less than 21 years of age;
- Be a DCFS ward within six months of emancipation, or be a former ward who was emancipated (Note: Youth that entered adoption or subsidized guardianship after their 14th birthday are also eligible.); and
- Have an income that is sufficient to meet rent and utility costs; or be working on obtaining that income (While housing advocacy can begin before income is in place, it is extremely unlikely that youth will be able to secure housing without sufficient income. Housing advocates can often help with employment.)

Cash Assistance

Assistance will vary depending on a client’s situation. Cash assistance may be authorized for the following reasons:

- Housing security deposit;
- Rent (limited circumstances);
- Beds for the client and the client’s children;
- Current utility bills or utility deposits;
- Appliances;
- Partial housing subsidy for a period of one year following emancipation (housing costs must exceed 30% of income & assistance cannot continue past the client’s 21st birthday);
- Other items required by the client to avoid or manage a crisis.

Youth receiving Cash Assistance must meet all four criteria:

- Be at least 18 and less than 21 years of age;
- Be a DCFS ward ready for emancipation or be a former DCFS ward who was emancipated (Note: Youth that moved to adoption or subsidized guardianship are not eligible for cash assistance);
- Have completed a budget statement (CF5 370-5C) that demonstrates that with any subsidy and all other income they will be able to cover all remaining living expenses (e.g. housing, utilities, clothing, food); and
- Need cash assistance in order to attain or maintain stable housing.

Referral Process

Caseworkers refer youth to the Youth Housing Assistance Program six months before emancipation if they are in need of housing services. Youth must submit a request for Housing Advocacy and/or Cash Assistance to the Youth Housing Assistance Coordinator. Youth are assigned to a Housing Advocate located in their region for services.

For more information, contact:

Ted Ernst Youth Housing Assistance Coordinator Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Phone: (312) 814-5571 Email: TErnst@idcfs.state.il.us

John Cheney Egan Housing Specialist Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Phone: (312) 814-1878 Email: Jegan@idcfs.state.il.us

A program brochure is available at www.state.il.us/DCFS/docs/Youth%20Housing%20Broch.pdf.

The Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Multi-Year Plan for 2001 through 2004 may be found at www.state.il.us/DCFS/docs/chafee.pdf.

The ACS

The recent publication of the 2003 American Community Survey (ACS) supplementary survey allows a first analysis of rental affordability in 2003 at not only the national level, but in all the states and many of the largest counties and cities across the country. The ACS is a new survey that the U.S. Census Bureau is currently ramping up to provide basic social, demographic, economic and housing data annually, as opposed to every ten years with the Census. It will also provide data at more local geographies than other more specialized surveys such as the biennial American Housing Survey or the Current Population Survey.

Though the Census plans to first roll out the survey to the entire sample in 2005, the 2002 and 2003 surveys have sufficiently large samples to draw meaningful conclusions about housing conditions nationally, as well as in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 241 counties, and 88 cities. Counties surveyed in the ACS cover 66 percent of the renter households in the country, while cities surveyed include 28 percent of all renter households.

Funding to implement the full ACS sample in FY 2005 is uncertain as of this writing, with the Senate bill providing only $65 million of a total $140 million needed to implement the survey.

State Rankings

Based on the Up Against the Wall report, NLIHC also released a ranking of the most unaffordable states in 2003. Scores used in computing the overall state rankings combined weighted state rankings on median gross incomes for each state, the percent of each state’s renter households paying rents in excess of 50 percent of income, and on the “rental unaffordability index.” The index results from dividing the area’s median gross rent (rent plus all utilities) by 30 percent of the median household income. Since it is based on state rankings, potential scores range from 1 through 50.

The index ranks California as the most unaffordable state for renters in 2003 with a rating of 47.4. Rounding out the top five most unaffordable states are Florida, Oregon, New York, and Louisiana. Illinois was the 19th most unaffordable of the fifty states with a rating of 31.4. The least unaffordable state was Wyoming with a 1.8 rating.

Findings

In 2003, nearly half of America’s renter households lived in unaffordable housing.

- In Illinois, 45 percent of all renters paid unaffordable housing costs, and 23 percent paid more than 50 percent of their income for rent and utilities. This was up from 44 percent and 22 percent respectively in 2002.
- In 2003, 47 percent of renters in both Waukegan and Chicago paid unaffordable housing costs, with 24 percent and 25 percent respectively bearing severe cost burdens.
- In no state were fewer than one-third of renter households living in unaffordable housing.

Between 2002 and 2003, the median gross rent increased in 79 percent of the 214 largest counties and in 71 percent of the cities with available data in the survey.

- The median gross rent for Illinois increased 5 percent from 2002 to 2003, with increases for all but one of the counties for which data was included.
- Increases in Waukegan and Chicago were 5 percent and 6 percent respectively.
- More than half of renter households in 44 percent of the cities surveyed live in unaffordable housing.
- A household with the median renter income cannot afford the median gross rent in nearly two-thirds of the cities surveyed.
- 2003 renter incomes are not keeping up with housing costs throughout much of the country, as measured by changes in the affordability index, forcing an ever greater share of renter households into unaffordable housing.
- This was true for Illinois as a whole and all Illinois counties listed, except McHenry.
- Waukegan saw a slight improvement, and Chicago was unchanged from 2002 to 2003.
- Two-thirds of the largest counties in the country had a higher share of renter households living in unaffordable housing in 2003 than in 2002.
- For Illinois, there was a 2 percent increase.
- There was an increase for all the reported counties, except for Cook and McHenry.
- Waukegan and Chicago both saw increases.

Up Against the Wall is available at www.nlihc.org/pubs/uaw04/UpAgainstaWall.pdf. The unaffordability index is available at www.nlihc.org/pubs/uaw04/ACSranking.pdf.

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

116 W. Illinois St., No. 2E  
Chicago, IL 60610  
Telephone: 312-321-9402  
Email: info@irvinstern.org  
URL: www.irvinstern.org

**Contact:** Jeffrey Epstein, Treasurer

**Areas of Interest:** Human services, social service programs, physical and mental health outreach, literacy and vocational training; civic affairs, grass roots and neighborhood organizations; education; community development; education; food services; homeless human services; mental health/crisis services; public affairs.

**Types of Support:** Building/renovation; emergency funds; equipment; general/operating support; program development; seed money. Jewish federated giving programs.

**Limitations:** Giving for the enhancement of the Jewish community. Giving primarily in Chicago, Illinois and New York, New York. No grants to individuals, or for endowment funds, deficit financing, building funds, capital campaigns, construction projects, medical research, or advertising or program books.

**Application Information:** Letter of inquiry form available on foundation website. Application form required. A brief letter or an email is preferred as a first contact with the foundation. Only 1 copy of the proposal is requested; board meets in April and October. Deadlines: submit proposal preferably in March or August; deadlines are April 1 and September 1.

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**The TJX Foundation, Inc.**

(formerly Zayre Foundation, Inc.)  
c/o The TJX Cos., Inc.  
770 Cochituate Rd., Rte. 1E  
Framingham, MA 01701  
Telephone: 508-390-3199  
Fax: 508-390-2091  
URL: www.tjx.com/corprespons/commsupp.html

**Contact:** Christine A. Strickland, Foundation Manager

**Areas of Interest:** Providing shelter; enhancing education; community development, disadvantaged families and children. Arts, children/youth services; community development, crime/violence prevention; domestic violence; disabled; economically disadvantaged; education; health care; higher education; homeless; homeless human services; human services; minorities/minorities/immigrants centers/services; women; women centers/services.

**Types of Support:** Continuing support; general/operating support; scholarship funds

**Limitations:** Giving on a national basis. No support for political groups or fraternal organizations. No grants to individuals.

**Application Information:** Proposals should be no longer than three to five pages in length. An application form is not required, but the following should be submitted:

- How project results will be evaluated or measured.
- Copy of most recent annual report/audited financial statement/990.
- Listing of board of directors, trustees, officers and other key people and their affiliations.
- Copy of current year’s organizational budget and/or project budget.
- Copy of IRS Determination Letter.
- Listing of additional sources and amount of support.
- Results expected from proposed grant.
- Population served.
- Statement of problem project will address.
- Detailed description of project and amount of funding requested.
- Brief history of organization and description of its mission.

As an initial contact, send one copy of the proposal. The board meets bimonthly and the deadline stated is 4 weeks before a board meeting. Final notification will be a letter from the foundation.

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**Topfer Family Foundation**

(formerly the Morton & Angela Topfer Family Foundation)  
5000 Plz. on the Lake, Ste. 170  
Austin, TX 78746  
Fax: 512-329-6462  
Email: info@topferfoundation.org  
URL: www.topferfamilyfoundation.org

**Contact:** Sophie Folly, Grants Administrator

**Areas of Interest:** Self sufficiency. Affordable housing for the elderly programs, including home modification, home repair and affordable housing alternatives. Children/youth services; crime/violence prevention; child abuse; economically disadvantaged; education-drop-out prevention; employment-job counseling; employment services; employment training; family services-adolescent parents; family services-parent education; health care infants; housing/shelter aging; pediatrics; youth development.

**Types of Support:** Building/renovation; capital campaigns; continuing support; endowments; equipment; general/operating support; in-kind gifts; land
acquisition; matching/challenge support; program development. **Limitations:** Giving primarily in the greater metropolitan areas of Chicago and Austin, Texas. No support for political campaigns or purposes; academic or scientific research. No grants to individuals; advertising; dinner; gala; or raffle tickets; school fundraisers or events; no loans.

**Application Information:** Applications available on the foundation’s website. An application form is required. Only one copy of the proposal; the board meets in March, June, September, and December.

**U.S. Bancorp Foundation, Inc.**
(formerly First Bank System Foundation)
BC-MN-H23K
800 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55402
Telephone: 612-303-4000
Fax: 612-303-0787
URL: www.usbank.com/about/community_relations/charit_giving.html

**Contact:** Teresa Bonner, Director

**Areas of Interest:** Education and economic opportunities of low- and moderate-income persons. **Affordable housing,** including the preservation, rehabilitation, and construction of quality affordable housing that assists low- and moderate-income populations; and programs that provide home buyer counseling and related economic education to individuals and families with low and moderate incomes. Community development; economic development; employment; housing/shelter; rural development; urban/community development; youth development. **Types of Support:** Capital campaigns; employee matching gifts; general/operating support; program development. **Limitations:** Giving in the twenty-four states where U.S. Bancorp has banks – Illinois is included. No support for fraternal organizations, merchant associations; chamber membership or programs, or 501(c)(4) or (6) organizations; fundraising events or sponsorships; pass through organizations or private foundations; programs operated by religious organizations for religious purposes; political organizations or organizations designed primarily to lobby; or organizations receiving primary funding from United Way. No grants to individuals, or for travel and related expenses, endowment campaigns, or deficit reduction.

**Application Information:** Guidelines, grant application, and contact information are available on the foundation’s website or by calling. The U.S. Bancorp charitable contributions contact in your local area can provide information on local grantmaking timelines, deadlines, and other information. This charitable contributions program includes the giving programs of U.S. Bancorp and its subsidiaries. An application form is required. Applicants should submit:

- Copy of IRS Determination Letter.
- Listing of board of directors, trustees, officers and other key people and their affiliations.
- Copy of current year’s organizational budget and/or project budget.
- Copy of most recent annual report/audited financial statement/990.
- Additional materials/documentation.
- Detailed description of project and amount of funding requested.

Only one copy of the proposal is requested. The board meets bimonthly.

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**Omnibus Bill**
(Continued from page 3)

Senate bill to assist PHA with transition costs associated with the shift to a calendar year system. The calendar year change was done to simplify and improve administration and oversight of the program and provided a one-time savings to this account of $1 billion.

Included in the public housing operating fund is language that provides $10 million in bonus funds to public housing agencies that assist program participants in moving away from dependency on housing assistant programs. HUD is directed to release these funds through a notice of funds availability. And, $8 million of public housing operating funds is given to the Department of Justice to assist in the investigation, prosecution and prevent of violent crimes and drug offenses in public and federally assisted low income housing.

**No Prohibition on Voter Registration in Public Housing**

The final bill does not include a provision from the Senate that would have prevented public housing agencies from participating in voter registration and education efforts. The bill’s conference report states that no HUD funds can be used for partisan political activities.

**Other Provisions**

The final bill does not include the Senate provision to allow up to 50 percent of vouchers to be project-based.

The final bill does not include the Senate provision authorizing the HUD Secretary to transfer project-based assistance, debt and income restrictions to other properties.

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