

housingactionillinois

For Immediate Release	For more information contact:
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USE OF HOMELESS SHELTERS IN ILLINOIS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED DURING SECOND HALF OF 2008

Proposed Federal Recovery Funding For Homelessness Welcome But Stable Housing Still Needed

Chicago—Homeless service providers in Illinois saw a marked increase in the need for their services during the last six months of 2008. This is a trend that is likely to continue as long as the economy continues to worsen.

During December 2008, 71% of state-funded providers of overnight and transitional shelter reported serving an increased number of people experiencing homelessness compared to six months previous. According to the report released by Housing Action Illinois, more than one-third, 35%, of agencies reported an increase of more than 10%.

These trends make the case for 200,000 new Housing Choice Vouchers and a \$2 billion increase for homelessness prevention assistance through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program to be included as part of any economic recovery package proposed by President-elect Barack Obama and members of Congress.

On January 15, leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives released a draft of their proposed economic recovery legislation. The proposal includes \$1.5 billion for the Emergency Shelter Grant Program but no funding for Housing Choice Vouchers. The Senate will introduce a proposal in the coming days and Congress will try to complete legislation by mid-February.

"The short term rental assistance, housing relocation, and stabilization services provided by the Emergency Shelter Grant Program will really benefit families suffering due the economic crisis," said Bob Palmer, Policy Director for Housing Action Illinois. "However, new Housing Choice Vouchers are really need to create more stable housing options for vulnerable households."

If both programs were funded at the suggested amount, Illinois would receive approximately 8,622 new vouchers and \$95.4 million to enable approximately 18,644 households to avert eviction or obtain new housing with short-term assistance.

These measures would not only help prevent an increase in homelessness but inject funds quickly into local economies and help bolster local housing markets. All or nearly all of the funds would be spent before the end of 2010, the time frame when additional spending is badly needed to help turn the economy around.

At the state level, Illinois needs to find a way to pass a fiscal year 2010 budget that provides an adequate safety net for people at-risk of or experiencing homelessness. The EFS Program is an essential part of the state's response to homelessness along with homelessness prevention, permanent supportive housing and other programs and deserves adequate funding to meet the needs of people experiencing a housing crisis.

The following service providers are available to discuss recent trends in their programs serving people who are homeless:

Name	Organization	City	Phone Number
Deb Darzinskis	Catholic Charities	Joliet	815-723-3405
Carol Simler	DuPage PADS	Wheaton	630-682-3846 ext. 231
Ryan Dowd	Hesed House	Aurora	630-229-7280
Darlene Marcusson	Lazarus House	St. Charles	630-587-2144
Barb Hicks	Madonna House	Quincy	217-224-7771
Israel Vargas	San Jose Obrero Mission	Chicago	312-243-4347 ext. 3
Mike Wasserberg	South Suburban PADS	Homewood	708-927-4135
Peggy Russell	Williamson County Family Crisis Center	Herrin	618-988-8020

Complete results from the survey are available at www.housingactionil.org. Housing Action Illinois' mission is to increase and preserve the supply of decent, affordable and accessible housing in Illinois, particularly for households with the lowest incomes. They have more than 150 organizational members statewide, including homeless service providers, nonprofit housing developers and housing counseling agencies.