



SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

Working Together, We Can Accomplish Anything

Homelessness is an ongoing crisis in Illinois, exacerbated by COVID-19. The response to homelessness in Illinois is very complex, under resourced, and fragmented. Now, is a pivotal time. Prioritizing homelessness and housing strategies can end homelessness and ensure housing stability for all Illinoisans.

People experience homelessness in many ways. Homeless households sleep in emergency shelters, transitional housing, doubled up with other households, in and out of institutions, and on the streets. Housing instability makes healthcare, employment, education, and even basic hygiene a struggle for households across Illinois. During this global pandemic, the gaps of Illinois' Homeless Response have been highlighted. It is time to end homelessness.

An end to homelessness requires collaboration around a shared vision. Housing is the solution to homelessness. Services are critical to housing stability. Leadership is needed to establish this vision. **An Interagency Council on Ending Homelessness is needed to finally end homelessness in Illinois.**

The Big Picture

The Illinois Interagency Council on Ending Homelessness would tackle big picture issues on homelessness and housing. It would incorporate diverse strategies, align local, state, and federal resources, and build capacity across many sectors.

The council would be tasked with:

- Creating a state plan to prevent and end homelessness, including unnecessary institutionalization, that assesses overall needs, coordinates resources, and promotes national best practices
- Recommending policy, regulatory, and resource changes needed to accomplish the objectives outlined in the state plan
- Sustaining a non-partisan approach to addressing homelessness and unnecessary institutionalization

Homelessness

Homelessness has many definitions, mainly derived from funding sources. The fact is there is no single face of homelessness. Many Illinoisans are one check or health crisis away from homelessness, which is true during this pandemic too. Many Illinoisans have been housing instable for long time. Homelessness often intersects with other institutions, including health, criminal justice, and child welfare. People of color and people with disabilities are disproportionately experiencing a state of housing crisis that moves them between the institutions and homelessness- exacerbating vulnerabilities to death.

Current efforts to address homelessness are fragmented. Many state agencies and communities dedicate resources to addressing homelessness and these efforts are currently not coordinated. Establishing an Illinois Interagency Council on Ending Homelessness would provide a vehicle for cross-agency coordination and planning. Meaningfully addressing the complex, cross-sector issue that is homelessness and institutionalization would support the Administration in tackling many priorities. With housing as a platform, Illinoisans can accomplish anything.

An Illinois Interagency Council on Ending Homelessness would align Illinois' response to homelessness, encompassing all homeless and housing instability experiences, with one goal- ensuring that every Illinoisan has a home that meets their needs in the communities they choose.

Critical Components to the Council

Members:

- Leadership from the Governor's Office
- Executive Leadership from State Agencies
- Community Leaders to serve as a Community Advisory Council
- Persons with Lived Experience
- Staff to support the operations of the council and mobilize implementation of its strategies

Initial Objectives:

- Create a plan to prevent and end homelessness and oversee implementation
- Ensure that comprehensive, state-wide data is available for analysis
- Ensure data-driven decisions create and oversee the plan
- Coordinate various housing and community services related plans
- System alignment and integration
- System improvement/enhancements

Working Together, We Can Accomplish Anything

Across the state, the foundations have been built to connect Illinoisans who are experiencing homelessness to housing that meets their needs. Resources are limited. Vulnerable populations compete over these resources because of scarcity.

Housing is a need of every Illinoisan. Housing is central to a person's health, opportunity, and success. Approaching homelessness as a crisis and housing instability as a problem- empowers solutions.

The possibility of preventing and ending homelessness in Illinois is within our State's reach. These investments will increase the capacity to best serve Illinois. It will allow more opportunities. It can end homelessness.