



## **SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION**

*Working Together, We Can Accomplish Anything*

**CALL TO**

**ACTION**

SHPA requests its members and supporters join us in advocacy to preserve and protect Supportive Housing line items in the state budget, so that there are no reductions in funding or delay in contract payments for supportive housing services in FY 2021.

It is very important that we lift up the amazing work SHPA's members have been doing in their communities, the impact of COVID-19 in their work and on those they serve, and the need for funding stability from the state during this pandemic- specifically in the remainder of FY2021. SHPA's members serve Illinoisans who are very vulnerable to COVID-19. SHPA's members work has literally saved lives and lessened the spread on COVID-19.

Particularly with the general election defeat of the graduated income tax proposal, Illinois lawmakers are facing enormous pressure to reconcile the state's FY 2021 budget deficit – estimated at \$5 billion or more – through deep spending cuts, revenue increases, borrowing, or some combination. So, while we will continue to advocate for the preservation of FY 2021 funding necessary for supportive housing services, it will serve us well to be mindful of the enormous pressures confronting lawmakers grappling with the state's crushing fiscal reality.

Illinois Lawmakers and their staff are trying to balance their ongoing official obligations with the considerable community needs associated with the COVID-19 crisis, while simultaneously attempting to keep themselves and their families healthy and safe. During this pandemic, many lawmakers and their staff have been conducting their work remotely. The act of connecting with a lawmaker or his/her staff has necessarily become far more challenging, but lawmakers and their staff are, in our experience, doing their best under the circumstances to continue to be responsive to constituent outreach.

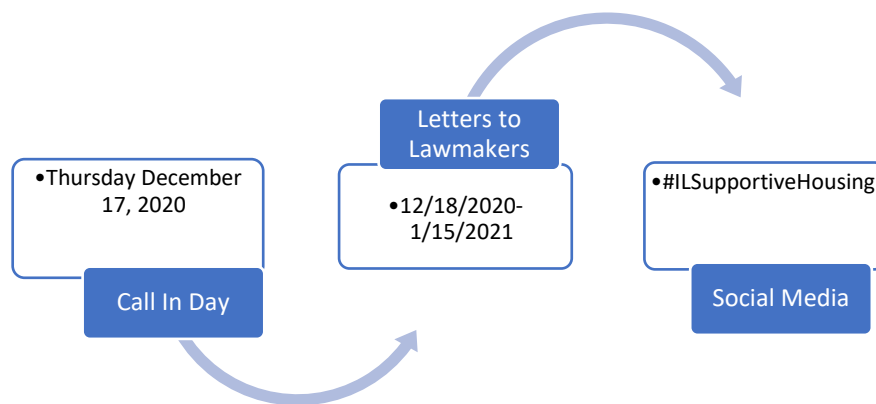
***Please join us in advocating by outreaching to the state lawmakers and raising awareness, beginning on December 17, 2020 with SHPA's Call In Day!***

***Working together, we can accomplish anything!***



## **SHPA's Action Toolkit**

This toolkit provides SHPA's members and supporters information on joining SHPA's work to preserve and protect Supportive Housing line items in the state budget, so that there are no reductions in funding or delay in contract payments for supportive housing services in FY 2021. This toolkit provides information on three action opportunities: SHPA's Call In day on Thursday December 17, 2020, Lawmaker Awareness and Advocacy Letter Campaign from December 18,2020 to January 15,2021, and Social Media Awareness using #ILSupportiveHousing.



## **SHPA's Message**

Supportive housing providers are working during this pandemic to protect the lives of vulnerable Illinoisans.

Supportive housing needs funding stability from the state especially during this pandemic. It is critical to preserve and protect supportive housing line items in the state budget, so that there is no reduction in funding or delay in contract payments for supportive housing services in FY 2021.

Any reduction to state funding for supportive housing services would devastate the lives of Illinoisans and severely burden local governments, both in the short term and the long term

In the state's battle against COVID-19, supportive housing providers have re-engineered operations, incurred new costs and lost revenue

**SHPA has prepared messaging materials available at [SHPA-IL.org](http://SHPA-IL.org). This resource is great to share with Lawmakers.**



## **December 17, 2020: SHPA's Call In Day**

*A Call In Day is a day of action. SHPA is asking its members and supporters to call Illinois Lawmakers and share the need to preserve and protect Supportive Housing during the state's financial uncertainty.*

***Please, call your Lawmakers on Thursday December 17, 2020!***

### **Direction:**

- Identify the state representative and senator who represent the location of your supportive housing agency. If you're not sure who they are, contact SHPA's Merridith Montgomery at (217) 321-2476 ext. 4 or [m.montgomery@shpa-il.org](mailto:m.montgomery@shpa-il.org).

Find your legislators' contact information by looking up your agency's address or your address at:

<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/DistrictLocator/AddressFinder.aspx>

- Call both your senator and representative's **district** offices.

It is likely you will speak to a legislative assistant or need to leave a recorded message:

- Tell them your name and that you are a constituent.
- Say you're requesting a call with the senator or representative to discuss the importance of funding for supportive housing.
- If you leave a message, be sure to include your phone number and respectfully request a return call.

### ***Navigating a Conversation with a Lawmaker***

- Lawmakers deal with dozens of major policy issues and hundreds of competing interests. Any lawmaker you speak with could be short on time and simultaneously focused on many different matters.
- A lawmaker may also direct his or her staff to return your call and collect your points on the lawmaker's behalf.
- Note the big picture: we're people working together, across the state, to preserve, protect and expand supportive housing.
- But remember: "All politics are local." Lawmakers are chiefly concerned with how state policy affects the people who live in their own districts. To the degree possible, emphasize the local implications of any reduction in state funding for supportive housing services.
- If the lawmaker or staff member wishes to direct the conversation, follow his/her lead. Legislators and staff have different styles; some might prefer to do the talking and ask questions, while others may prefer that you do most of the speaking while they listen.

### **At the Close of the Conversation, Thank the Lawmaker**

- Respectfully encourage the lawmaker to work with supportive housing providers to protect continued, necessary funding for supportive housing (and make note of his/her response).
- Thank the lawmaker for his/her time and tell him/her that you look forward to following up over the course of the fiscal year.



## Call In Day Script

*Once on the phone with a lawmaker or the lawmaker's staff, introduce yourself, share the name of your agency and where it is located.*

- Hello! My name is (Frist Name, Last Name) and I am a constituent/work in the district of (Legislator's Name).
  - Supportive Housing Provider: Provide a brief about your agency and its supportive housing programs: State the number of staff at your agency and the number of individuals served
  - Supportive Housing Resident: Share a few sentences about your experience, the services, and the impacts of supportive housing on your life.
- I am calling you because it is important that our state preserves, protects and expands supportive housing.
- Supportive housing providers have worked during this pandemic to protect the lives of vulnerable Illinoisans. Supportive housing can end homelessness, stop unnecessary institutionalization, build communities, and strengthen Illinois.
- I respectfully recognize the state's fiscal challenges are mounting. But I am concerned, because any reduction in funding or delay in contract payments for supportive housing services in Fiscal Year 2021 would severely impact the state and its response to COVID-19.
- Any reduction in appropriated funding or delay in contracted payments would necessarily lead to increased homelessness and a greater burden for local government. Community service agencies would be forced to part with staff, and could in some cases shut down entirely, and it would take years to rebuild this service infrastructure.
- During this pandemic, supportive housing providers have re-engineered operations, incurring new costs even as revenues from non-state sources have diminished.
  - Supportive Housing Provider: share information about impact on your work, those you have served, and any financial burdens associated with pandemic.
  - Supportive Housing Resident: share they impacts you have felt because of the changes necessary due to COVID-19. Please, be sure to highlight the team that has served you.
- Especially during this critical time, supportive housing – and residents it serves – depend on continued and stable funding from the state.
- **I respectfully ask that as, you continue to work to serve the people of Illinois and our community, please advocate for Supportive Housing which needs funding stability from the state especially during this pandemic. I ask for your advocacy to preserve and protect Supportive Housing line items in the state budget, so that there will be no reduction in funding or delay in contract payments for supportive housing services in FY 2021.**



## **Letters to Legislators: Lawmaker Awareness and Advocacy Letter Campaign**

Please, continue these conversations by sending letters to your legislators from December 18, 2020 through January 15, 2021.

### **Direction:**

- These tools can be used as a template for drafting your message to lawmakers.
- Please personalize all sections in yellow.
- Please send your communications to both your state representative and state senator.
- Use their District Office Address for this correspondence.

Find your legislators' contact information by looking up your agency's address or your address at:  
<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/DistrictLocator/AddressFinder.aspx>

<b>Supportive Housing Provider Template .....</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Supportive Housing Resident Template .....</b>	<b>Page 8</b>



## Supportive Housing Provider Template

[Please use your agency's letterhead/logo]

[Date]

Honorable [First] [Initial] [Last]

Address 1

Address 2

City, IL Zip

Dear [Choose one title as appropriate: Representative or Senator or Leader or Speaker or President] [Last Name]:

Illinois supportive housing providers are on the front line of fighting the spread of COVID-19 among this state's most vulnerable citizens. We serve men, women, and children who, but for our services, could be homeless and at much higher risk of contracting and spreading the virus.

Across Illinois, supportive housing providers offer case management, advocacy, alcohol and substance abuse counseling, mental health programs, and other critical services to help reduce homelessness and unnecessary institutionalization. To provide these critical services to 17,869 men, women and children residing in every region of Illinois, we rely substantially on state funds.

[Add information about your agency and its supportive housing programs: State the number of staff at your agency and the number of individuals served.]

We recognize the state's precarious fiscal condition but respectfully urge you to join us in advocating for full funding of supportive housing services to the levels appropriated by the FY 2021 budget. Any reduction in funding or delay in contract payments for supportive housing services in FY 2021 would severely undermine the state's effort to contain the spread of COVID-19. As Illinois continues to battle the coronavirus, reduced state funding for supportive housing services would elevate the risk of serious illness and death for men, women and children in this community and others across the state.

Any reduction in appropriated funding or delay in contracted payments would necessarily lead to increased homelessness and a greater burden for local government. Community service agencies would be forced to part with staff, and could in some cases shut down entirely, and it would take years to rebuild this service infrastructure.

During this pandemic, supportive housing providers have re-engineered our operations, incurring new costs even as our revenues from non-state sources have diminished. [Add information about impact on your work, those you have served, and any financial burdens associated with pandemic.] Especially during this critical time, supportive housing – and residents we serve – depend on continued and stable funding from the state.



Please join us in advocating for full and timely distribution of the FY 2021 funds appropriated for supportive housing services. Your support for funding stability will help ensure our agency and other providers have the means to continue providing what is, especially during this pandemic, a lifeline for vulnerable Illinoisans.

If you are interested in learning more about supportive housing programs in your district, please contact the Supportive Housing Providers Association of Illinois at (217) 321-2476. I also would be happy to act as a resource for you or your staff.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Please Include Your Signature**



## **Supportive Housing Resident Template**

[Date]

Honorable [First] [Initial] [Last]

Address 1

Address 2

City, IL Zip

Dear [Choose one title as appropriate: Representative or Senator or Leader or Speaker or President] [Last Name]:

Illinois supportive housing providers are on the front line of fighting the spread of COVID-19 among this state's most vulnerable citizens. They serve men, women, and children who, but for our services, could be homeless and at much higher risk of contracting and spreading the virus.

Across Illinois, supportive housing providers offer case management, advocacy, alcohol and substance abuse counseling, mental health programs, and other critical services to help reduce homelessness and unnecessary institutionalization. To provide these critical services to 17,869 men, women and children residing in every region of Illinois, agencies rely substantially on state funds.

As your constituent, I want to share my personal experiences with Supportive Housing with you. It has changed my life. [Please, share a few sentences about your experience, the services, and the impacts of supportive housing on your life, and specifically, anything related to COVID-19 and the response by the providers.]

I recognize the state's precarious fiscal condition but respectfully urge you to join us in advocating for full funding of supportive housing services to the levels appropriated by the FY 2021 budget. Any reduction in funding or delay in contract payments for supportive housing services in FY 2021 would severely undermine the state's effort to contain the spread of COVID-19. As Illinois continues to battle the coronavirus, reduced state funding for supportive housing services would elevate the risk of serious illness and death for men, women and children in this community and others across the state.

Any reduction in appropriated funding or delay in contracted payments would necessarily lead to increased homelessness and a greater burden for local government. Community service agencies would be forced to part with staff, and could in some cases shut down entirely, and it would take years to rebuild this service infrastructure.

Please join me in advocating for full and timely distribution of the FY 2021 funds appropriated for supportive housing services. Your support for funding stability will help ensure providers have the means to continue providing what is, especially during this pandemic, a lifeline for vulnerable Illinoisans.

If you are interested in learning more about supportive housing programs in your district, please contact the Supportive Housing Providers Association of Illinois at (217) 321-2476.

Thank you for your time and consideration.





Sincerely,

[Please Include Your Signature

Phone number

Email address]



## **Social Media**

Help SHPA bring awareness to all the amazing work being done in our field- especially during these unprecedented times. We are asking that you share your stories on social media, using the hashtag #ILSupportiveHousing.

Don't forget to like SHPA on Facebook and tag us too!



<http://www.facebook.com/shpail>

Examples of Posts include:

Supportive Housing Providers Are Working During this Pandemic to Protect the Lives of Vulnerable Illinoisans. #ILSupportiveHousing

We helped 150 households stay safely housed during the pandemic and helped them received service they need! #ILSupportiveHousing

Our staff have been working hard- making sure our 150 supportive housing residents safe this year! #ILSupportiveHousing

Supportive Housing changed my life! #ILSupportiveHousing

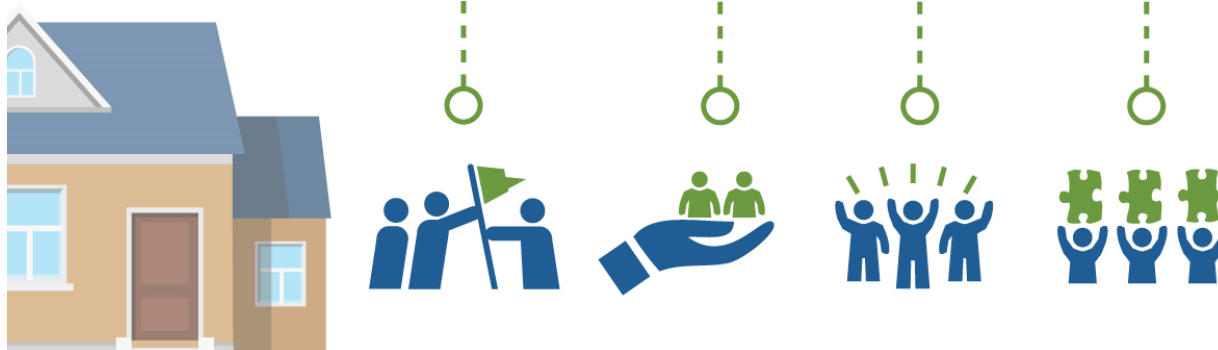
Social Media Images





# #ILSupportiveHousing

## Supportive Housing Providers Are Working During this Pandemic to Protect the Lives of Vulnerable Illinoisans.



### Advocacy Feedback

SHPA tracks outreach to lawmakers on an ongoing basis. We are constantly evaluating and adjusting our approach based on reports from residents and staff, so your comments are very important and help us to do a better job.

Please, let us know how your participated in our Call to Action:

Advocacy Activity	Survey Link
Call In Day	<a href="https://us18.list-manage.com/survey?u=9d985a7e25453fbb60cd5f50b&amp;id=26cb98ac7a">https://us18.list-manage.com/survey?u=9d985a7e25453fbb60cd5f50b&amp;id=26cb98ac7a</a>
Letters to Lawmakers	<a href="https://us18.list-manage.com/survey?u=9d985a7e25453fbb60cd5f50b&amp;id=bee78985b7">https://us18.list-manage.com/survey?u=9d985a7e25453fbb60cd5f50b&amp;id=bee78985b7</a>
Social Media Awareness	<a href="https://us18.list-manage.com/survey?u=9d985a7e25453fbb60cd5f50b&amp;id=61224b8913">https://us18.list-manage.com/survey?u=9d985a7e25453fbb60cd5f50b&amp;id=61224b8913</a>

Please report, by email or phone, the highlights of your outreach to Merridith Montgomery at 217-321-2476 ext. 4 or [m.montgomery@shpa-il.org](mailto:m.montgomery@shpa-il.org).