

# SNAPSHOT OF PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN ILLINOIS

*This snapshot of permanent supportive housing in Illinois is based on survey results of Illinois supportive housing providers conducted in 2004 by the Mid-America Institute on Poverty for the Supportive Housing Providers Association of Illinois (SHPA). Surveys were sent to 130 supportive housing projects on lists provided by SHPA, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the Chicago Department of Human Services, and the Illinois Department of Human Services. Surveys were returned by 118 projects, resulting in a response rate of 91%. These findings are representative of providers around Illinois.*

**“Supportive housing has given me back my life and sense of usefulness, belonging, and worth.”**  
— Joseph, Chicago, IL

**A** national consensus has formed based on research and practical experience that supportive housing—affordable housing combined with supportive services—is a lasting and fiscally responsible solution to chronic homelessness.

This snapshot report paints the picture of supportive housing in this state, including how much there is, where it is located, whom it serves, how it helps chronically homeless and other at-risk populations become stably housed, and how close it comes to answering the need for supportive housing in Illinois.

Supportive housing assists individuals and families statewide with multiple barriers to being housed. While there are currently 5,466 units of permanent supportive housing in Illinois, it is estimated that nearly double this amount is needed. In this existing Illinois supportive housing, more than half of the residents were homeless at the time of entry into the program, with the rest being at risk of homelessness; many of these individuals were also dealing with issues such as mental illness, substance use, chronic physical illness, and prisoner reentry.

The combination of affordable housing linked with services allows people to live independently while receiving the support they need to remain housed. The support services most commonly offered to residents in supportive housing in Illinois are case management services, mental health services, and money management.



“Due to supportive housing, I have been able to provide my children a safe and stable home. Truthfully, what it comes down to is being able to be a family with my children.”

— Kelly, Marion, IL

“Supportive housing gives residents a home base from which to get settled and they can explore obtaining benefits, obtaining job skills, getting a job, and reconnecting with family. It helps stabilize mental illness and substance usage by reducing stress and harm that are inherent in homelessness.”

— Pathways Home, Chicago, IL

### What is permanent supportive housing?

Permanent supportive housing:

- **Is affordable to people with low incomes**—generally requiring them to pay no more than a third of their income for the housing;
- **Is safe, accessible, of good quality, and is integrated into the community;**
- **Takes many forms** including individual scattered apartment units, entire apartment buildings of varying sizes, and single family homes;
- **Is not time-limited**, although the subsidy keeping the housing affordable may, in some cases, not be permanent; and
- **Has comprehensive support services** closely connected to or integrated into the housing. Supportive housing providers provide case management, which includes life skills training and linkages to other needed services, such as physical and mental health services, substance abuse treatment and support, and employment services.

### How is permanent supportive housing effective?

Permanent supportive housing:

- **Enables** families and individuals to attain housing stability;
- **Is flexible**, allowing agencies to tailor services to an individual’s unique needs;
- **Is cost effective** as shown by research in other states<sup>1</sup>; and
- **Leverages large amounts of federal funding.** The bulk of supportive housing funding (most of it capital funding and operating support) comes from federal sources. A relatively small amount of state funding for services, capital, and operating support leverages the funding from federal sources.

<sup>1</sup> Proscio, T. (2000) *Supportive Housing and Its Impact on the Public Health Crisis of Homelessness*. San Francisco, CA: Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley; and Culhane, D. et al. (2002) *The New York/New York Agreement Cost Study: The Impact of Supportive Housing on Services Use for Homeless Mentally Ill Individuals*. Philadelphia, PA: Center for Mental Health Policy and Services Research, University of Pennsylvania.



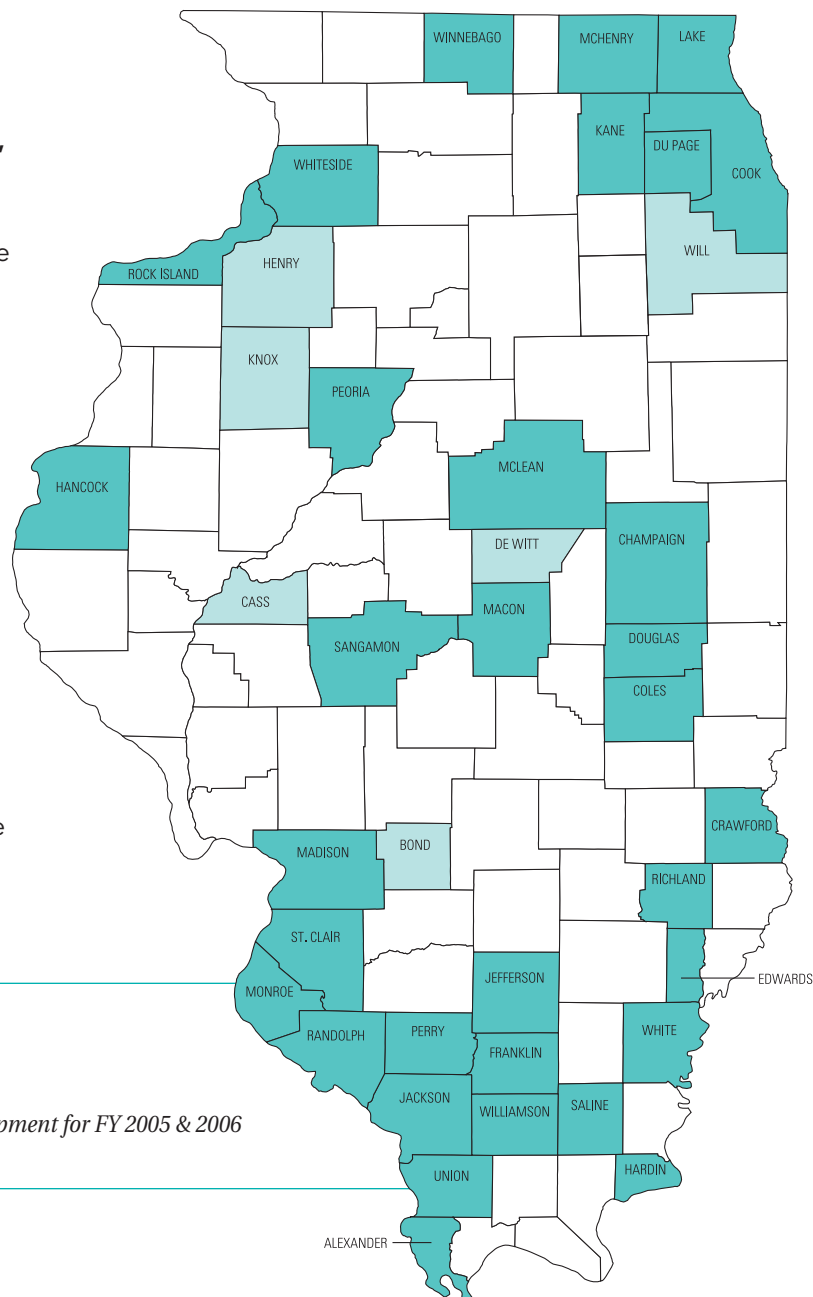
## Where in Illinois is permanent supportive housing located?

Permanent supportive housing is currently located in 33 counties throughout the state, and six additional counties have first-time projects under development. A majority of the supportive housing projects surveyed were located in Cook County. St. Clair, Madison, DuPage, and Kane counties have the next largest concentrations of supportive housing.

In Illinois there are currently:

- **5,466 units** of permanent supportive housing<sup>2</sup>,
- in **130 projects**
- run by **65 agencies**<sup>3</sup>

**Still, a huge gap between supply and demand exists in this state.** It is estimated that approximately 10,400 units of permanent supportive housing are needed, nearly double the amount of units currently available<sup>4</sup>.



 Counties with current projects

 Counties with first-time projects under development for FY 2005 & 2006

<sup>2</sup> This unit count only includes survey respondents.

<sup>3</sup> These numbers are estimates based on data provided by survey respondents and lists provided by SHPA, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the Chicago Department of Human Services, and the Illinois Department of Human Services. Permanent supportive housing projects that are not on any of these lists, and did not respond to the survey, are not included.

<sup>4</sup> Governor's Affordable Housing Task Force Working Group, Special Needs Housing with Services Working Group Draft Report, May 14, 2004.



“I was only in the mental health crisis unit once since I moved in December 2002, compared to about five times within a year prior to living in supportive housing.”

— Eric, Decatur, IL

## Who lives in permanent supportive housing?

Permanent supportive housing has been proven to help people who face the most complex challenges—individuals and families who are not only homeless, but who are also at risk of homelessness (have very low incomes and serious, persistent issues that may include substance use, mental illness, and HIV/AIDS) to live more stable, productive lives.

In Illinois, supportive housing residents face a multitude of challenges and come from various backgrounds. For example, an individual recently released from prison may suffer from mental illness, or a person who is homeless may also struggle with a chronic health condition.

**Based on the survey of Illinois providers, more than half of supportive housing residents were homeless and the rest were considered at risk of homelessness at the time of program entry.** Issues in addition to homelessness being faced by supportive housing residents are highlighted in Table 1.

*Table 1: Populations Served*<sup>5</sup>

<i>People with a mental illness</i>	34%
<i>People with drug related problems/issues</i>	21%
<i>People with alcohol related problems/issues</i>	18%
<i>Formerly incarcerated</i>	16%
<i>Physically disabled</i>	11%
<i>Developmentally disabled</i>	8%
<i>Veterans</i>	7%
<i>People with chronic physical health issues</i>	6%
<i>Victims of domestic violence</i>	3%

### There are many reasons why these populations need supportive housing.

- It provides people who are chronically homeless a needed mix of services and support to promote housing stability and break their cycle of homelessness.
- It allows individuals with special needs to live in an independent setting rather than in an institutionalized setting such as Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMDs), a psychiatric institution or nursing home.
- It provides people with a disability or those who have been released from prison with an affordable place to live and services to help them reenter society.
- It helps people recovering from substance abuse to remain clean and sober.

<sup>5</sup> Many residents fall into more than one category.



## What services are provided in permanent supportive housing in Illinois?

By definition, permanent supportive housing programs provide a variety of services to support their residents. **Almost all of the Illinois projects surveyed offered case management services.** Most supportive housing agencies offered case management services in-house. Additional services are often provided through partnerships with other agencies. Legal services, HIV/AIDS services, child care, and health services are most routinely offered by a partner agency.

Services offered by supportive housing programs or their partnering agencies are summarized in Table 2.

These supportive services are essential to helping individuals retain housing and improving their life outcomes. A study showed that as a result of employment services in supportive housing, residents realized increases of 50 percent in earned income and 40 percent in the rate of participation in employment<sup>6</sup>. Another study showed that homeless, mentally ill supportive housing residents reduced their use of state psychiatric centers by an average of 49 percent as a result of the services they received in supportive housing<sup>7</sup>.

Supportive housing—the combination of affordable housing and supportive services—can end the expensive cycle of shuffling the homeless and individuals with special needs in and out of institutions and emergency care. It is this combination of affordable housing and supportive services that enable individuals and families to remain housed.

<sup>6</sup> Long, D.A., et al., (1999). *The "Next Step: Jobs" Initiative Cost-Effectiveness Analysis: Final Report*. NY, NY: Corporation for Supportive Housing.

<sup>7</sup> Culhane, D. et al. (2002) *The New York/New York Agreement Cost Study: The Impact of Supportive Housing on Services Use for Homeless Mentally Ill Individuals*. Philadelphia, PA: Center for Mental Health Policy and Services Research, University of Pennsylvania.

**"As a result of the services provided where I live I got a part-time job. In addition, my health is a lot better."**

— Danny, Decatur, IL

*Table 2: Support Services Offered*

<i>Case management</i>	98%
<i>Mental health services</i>	89%
<i>Money management</i>	84%
<i>Medication monitoring</i>	71%
<i>Transportation services</i>	62%
<i>Employment assistance</i>	60%
<i>Alcohol and drug abuse services</i>	59%
<i>Clothing assistance</i>	42%
<i>Other health services</i>	38%
<i>HIV/AIDS services</i>	31%
<i>Education classes</i>	28%
<i>Legal services</i>	17%
<i>Child care</i>	16%



“Supportive services are absolutely essential for permanent supportive housing to be cost effective. Therefore, it is critical that funding is adequate to keep caseloads of social service providers at manageable levels. Failure to fund existing and new projects at proper levels will not give us that tax payer savings we would otherwise see”.

— *Zion Development Corporation, Rockford, IL*

“Some of the most basic services in supportive housing (such as training in basic living skills, encouraging and providing opportunities for appropriate socialization, having staff available in case of need by tenants, and to make certain the facility is a safe and secure environment) are the most critical to making supportive housing work. However, these are not Medicaid billable activities.”

— *Heritage Behavioral Health Center, Decatur, IL*

### How is permanent supportive housing funded?

Three types of funding are necessary to develop and operate supportive housing. Two of the funding types, financing for capital (property acquisition and construction) and operating support, are needed for all affordable housing. The third required funding element, unique to supportive housing, is funding for supportive services.

**Many populations benefit from permanent supportive housing, but the vast majority of funds for Illinois programs are received for people who are homeless and people with a mental illness.** Although other populations benefit as well, programs do not typically receive funding that targets them. These populations include people who were formerly incarcerated, victims of domestic violence, and veterans. In Illinois, these groups make up a significant proportion of supportive housing residents.

It takes many years to develop supportive housing because developers must assemble and integrate multiple sources of financing. Providers report that the process can take three years or longer. Once the building financing is complete, the program must raise additional funds for the support services, the key ingredient for supportive housing success. **Acquiring adequate and timely funding for supportive services continues to be a challenge for providers in Illinois.**



## Summary

This snapshot of supportive housing illustrates the status of supportive housing in Illinois, including its geographic diversity, populations served and services provided. It also highlights the gap between the need for supportive housing in this state and the amount of supportive housing now existing, and the challenge providers face in securing supportive services funding.

The current 5,466 units of supportive housing provide a cost-effective, lasting solution to homelessness for those lucky enough to reside in these units. However, an additional 10,000 persons are estimated to be in need of supportive housing in Illinois but do not have it. Without supportive housing, these 10,000 individuals and heads of families will continue to access expensive emergency services, will continue to reside with unnecessary restrictions in IMDs, or will return to state-operated mental health facilities or prisons.

This gap underlines the need for a commitment at the state and federal levels to provide sufficient funding for services, capital, and operating costs for supportive housing. Additional funding options and innovative ways to combine funding sources need to be explored. •

### Agencies surveyed

AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
AIDSCare  
Ambassadors for Christ  
Association for Individual Development  
Bethel New Life  
Cathedral Shelter  
Catholic Charities  
Chestnut Health Systems  
Chicago Christian Industrial League  
Chicago House and Social Service Agency  
Children's Place Association  
Christian Vision Center  
Coles County Mental Health Center  
Community Mental Health Council  
Community Counseling Center  
Community Supportive Living Systems  
Deborah's Place  
Dove Inc./Homeward Bound

DuPage County Health Department  
DuPage PADS  
Ecker Center  
Embarras River Basin Agency  
FEATHERFIST  
Heartland Health Outreach, Inc.  
Heartland Housing, Inc.  
Heartland Human Care Services, Inc.  
Heritage Behavioral Health Center  
Housing Opportunities for Women  
Housing Opportunity Development Corporation  
Human Service Center of Southern Metro East  
Human Support Services  
Inspiration Corporation  
Interdependent Living Solutions  
Interfaith Council for the Homeless  
Interfaith Housing Development Corporation

Lakefront Supportive Housing  
Lakeview Shelter  
Larkin Center  
Maine Center  
Mid Central Community Action, Inc.  
Northwestern Memorial Hospital  
PADS Crisis Services, Inc.  
Provena Behavioral Health  
Renaissance Social Services  
Single Room Housing Assistance Corporation  
South Side Office of Concern  
Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless  
Southern Illinois Regional Social Services  
St. Leonard's Ministries  
Stop Women Abuse Now  
The Renaissance Collaborative  
Thresholds  
WilPower, Inc.  
YMCA of Chicago  
ZION Development Corporation

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## Supportive Housing Providers Association



### Supportive Housing Providers Association

The Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA) is a statewide association of organizations who provide supportive housing. SHPA enables increased development of supportive housing and supports organizations that develop and operate permanent supportive housing. The Supportive Housing Providers Association

- Connects its members with best practices and state/national policymakers and funders;
- Educates stakeholders regarding the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of supportive housing; and
- Provides the opportunity to participate in planning a study of supportive housing in Illinois.

For more information, call (773) 588-0827  
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### Mid-America Institute on Poverty of Heartland Alliance

The Mid-America Institute on Poverty of Heartland Alliance (MAIP) was established in 1989 as a vehicle for achieving systemic policy changes to improve the quality of life for poor and low-income individuals and families. MAIP achieves this through a variety of methods including: conducting research to illuminate issues, evaluating the effectiveness of innovative program models, creating dialogue among players on issues of importance, developing findings-based policy recommendations, and advocating for change with policy makers, administrators, and program implementers.

Heartland Alliance is a service-based human rights organization focused on investments in and solutions to help the most poor and vulnerable in society succeed.

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