

CCH 2024 Legislative Agenda

This spring the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) is advocating for several statewide measures in Springfield that would help remove barriers for people experiencing and at risk of homelessness. CCH policy and organizing staff, along with our grassroots leaders, are currently leading efforts to pass seven bills that will impact students experiencing homelessness, families attempting to retain their housing, extremely low-income families and children, and provide additional funding to homeless and housing service providers.

Strengthening Supports for Homeless Students

HB 5407 (Rep. Mussman)

Illinois has not funded homeless education in over fifteen years. Though the number of students identified as homeless has grown since that time. In recent years, the number of students experiencing homelessness in Illinois increased by 30.86% between the 2020-21 school year and the 2021-22 school year. The federal government has stepped in due to COVID-19 providing homeless education funding, but that support will end in September 2024. In reinstating funds for homeless education, CCH is asking the General Assembly to expand uses for homeless education funds alongside looking at novel ways in which to identify students experiencing homelessness as there are possibly up to [55,000 students experiencing homelessness](#) who were not identified by school districts in Illinois.

Homelessness Prevention Program Improvements

HB 5564 (Rep. Jimenez)

The Homelessness Prevention Program is a 20-year-old program that has successfully ensured people maintain their housing. 88% of the people who utilize the program remain housed after receiving assistance. It saves the state thousands of dollars per individual in emergency services and shelter funding. Though funding for HPP services has grown, with additional funding additional assistance is needed to support the families and individuals contacting for assistance. With this legislation, providers will be permitted to use up to 30% of their funding for case management to ensure those who are assisted by the program remain housed after receiving assistance.

Community Safety Through Stable Homes Act

SB 3680 (Sen. Villa) and HB 5314 (Rep. Ford)

Municipalities throughout Illinois have enacted so-called “crime-free housing and nuisance property” ordinances (CFNOs) under the guise of fighting crime and keeping communities safer. However, in practice, CFNOs establish a system that forces housing providers to unfairly penalize and sometimes evict tenants based on any alleged criminal or nuisance activity, pushing families into instability and even homelessness, which undermines public safety.

CFNOs frequently exclude people of color from housing and endanger our community's most vulnerable members. This includes survivors of domestic violence and people with disabilities, whose calls for emergency services or the police can lead to eviction rather than the assistance needed. These ordinances often violate fair housing and other civil rights laws.

Making the Safe Communities and Stable Homes Act law will help make sure people aren't afraid to contact the police, protect people from unfair discrimination, keep families in their homes, and refocus public policy on more effective responses to crime.

Ending Housing Retaliatory Behavior

SB 3100 (Sen. Villa) and HB 4768 (Rep. Guzzardi)

Tenants living in a building without access to heat or water sometimes have the added burden of being afraid to contact government entities to resolve the issues and might face retaliation from their landlords in a difficult position to be in. Illinois current statute provides that a landlord cannot retaliate against their tenant if they seek governmental intervention if in need of services but does not provide for any type of recourse for tenants. In amending the current statute we are seeking to expand it to specify actions that are defined as retaliation as well as the remedies available to tenants, both monetarily as well as specific performance.

Illinoisians Dedicated to Offering Transitional Solutions

HB 4769 (Rep. Guzzardi)

In Illinois, as with much of the country, people experiencing homelessness do not always have access to temporary shelter. For those individuals, finding refuge under viaducts and expressways may be the only way that they can find shelter from the elements. Understanding that these spaces also need repair or other construction projects, making sure that people who are using the space for shelter

are notified and assisted with finding other options is important as well. This legislation would require departments of transportation to conduct assessments of whether people experiencing are in the pathway of construction and if so partner with state or local human service departments to identify shelter or other housing opportunities.

Support the Community Partner Fair Contracting Act

HB 5064 (Rep. Avelar) SB 3457 (Sen. Halpin)

The Community Partner Fair Contracting Act (CPFCA) will rectify structural inequities in the state's contracting, payment, and court of claims systems to ensure that health and human service providers can better meet the needs of their communities.

- **Ensure Timely Contracts and Payments:** Amends the Prompt Payment Act (PPA) to require agencies to issue contracts within 30 days of the start of the grant term and approve bills or invoices within 30 days. It also shortens the time frame between when the bill is approved and when interest begins accruing from 90 to 45 days.
- **Expand and Clarify Advanced Payment Eligibility:** Amends the PPA to expand the list of critical services in statute and requires state contracts to identify a date of payment and whether a contract is eligible for PPA and advanced payment.
- **Promote Flexible Contracts that cover the full cost of services:** Amends the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) to remove arbitrary caps on fringe benefits and prevents state agencies from limiting indirect costs in contracts or grant agreements to less than 20%.
- **Expedite and Simplify Court of Claims Process:** Amends the Court of Claims Act (CCA) to divert undisputed lapsed appropriation claims of less than \$2500 and allow state agencies to pay claims from any appropriated funding source.

Commit to Funding and Ending Homelessness in Illinois

The recently completed state plan required by Governor Pritzker's executive order, *Home Illinois*, creates a framework for achieving functional zero homelessness. The shortage of affordable housing compounded by losing employment, chronic physical and/or mental health problems, domestic violence, or a family turning away a child are just some of the circumstances that result in homelessness.

State-funded programs to prevent and end homelessness receive deeply inadequate funding to achieve the goals of the plan. Providers have continuously stepped up to

serve more people in crisis during the pandemic. Providers continue to struggle with:

- Increasing rents in the private market, making it harder to help people maintain or find a home.
- Agencies unable to pay competitive wages to retain and recruit qualified staff.
- Shelters losing donated spaces and volunteers due to COVID-19 concerns.

This legislation will increase the housing and homeless service line items. These funds will help support the development of new housing opportunities, keep people on the brink of homelessness to maintain their housing, provide supportive services, and make sure that staff in these programs are provided with a living wage.

Supportive Housing Services

- Total Increased Funding Need: \$11 million

The Homeless Youth Program

- Total Increased Funding Need: \$8 million

The Homelessness Prevention Program

- Increased Funding Need: \$10 million

The Emergency and Transitional Housing Program

- Increased Funding Need: \$20 million