



2023 Annual Homelessness Report

Progress on Implementing Seven Principles for
Addressing Encampments

A joint report from the Chicago Department of Family and Support
Services and the Chicago Department of Housing



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Introduction

The following report was written in response to the recently passed ordinance O2023-1011, sponsored by former Alderman James Cappleman, which was intended to educate and inform members of the Chicago City Council and the public on the City's housing and homeless systems, and to provide the most recent available data and outcomes to show the progress those systems are making.

The report below outlines the current state of homelessness in Chicago. It also details the activities that the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), the Department of Housing (DOH) and other sister Departments conduct to engage with residents of encampments with the goal of moving those residents in to permanent housing. In addition to these current activities, thanks to the Federal ALL INside initiative, Chicago has welcomed a dedicated federal official to accelerate and support locally driven strategies to reduce unsheltered homelessness. While it is not the focus of this report, the impact of the immigrants and refugees from the Southwest border must be considered along with the information included, as it does and will continue to impact the number of people experiencing homelessness in Chicago and the resources needed to alleviate this challenge.

Ultimately, the solution to homelessness is affordable housing. Reducing the number of Chicagoans experiencing homelessness requires expanding and preserving housing stock for extremely low-income Chicagoans (< 30% Average Median Income). DFSS, DOH, and other sister Departments will continue to support and offer resources to those experiencing homelessness through the activities described in this report.

State of Homelessness

The City of Chicago, Chicago Continuum of Care¹, and its partners use multiple data sources to understand the state of homelessness in Chicago. Highlights and key takeaways from these sources are outlined below and additional detail can be found in the linked reports.

Estimates of Homelessness

One metric of how many people are experiencing homelessness in Chicago is the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, an annual one-night count mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to occur in jurisdictions across the country in the last 10 days of January. Based on the 2023 PIT Count, which took place on January 26, 2023, there were a total of 6,139 people estimated to be experiencing homelessness, with 5,149 individuals in sheltered locations and 990 individuals in unsheltered locations. There were 2,196 asylum seekers residing in emergency shelters included in this year's Count, reflecting the influx of new arrivals from the southwest border of the United States that began in August 2022. Additionally, around 16% of those experiencing homelessness in the 2023 PIT Count were children under the age of 18, mainly in households with an adult(s). Of these, 67% were non-asylum seekers. In addition, 12.4% of those counted were youth ages 18-24, of which about half were non-asylum seekers. Chicago continues to see massive racial disparities in who experiences homelessness: among the non-asylum-seeking population, just under 70% of people experiencing homelessness are Black/African American, compared to roughly 30% of Chicago's overall population. Additional detail from the PIT Count can be found at:

https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/provdrs/emerg/svcs/PI_Tcount.html.

The Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) also produces a quarterly CoC System Goals Report which reports on progress against the homeless services system's shared goals to prevent and end homelessness, using data from Chicago's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Compared to the PIT Count, HMIS data helps us understand how many people and households have recently accessed homeless services in Chicago, such as drop-in centers, shelters, and homeless-dedicated housing. Based on HMIS data, 8,727 people were on the Active List (i.e. experiencing homelessness) on an average day in 2022. The 2022 CoC System Goals Report, and quarterly updates, can be found here: <https://allchicago.org/hmis/data-reports>. The CoC also completes a Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) report annually for HUD to report on the number of households who experienced homelessness for at least one day of the year, based on engagement with homeless services. According to the latest LSA, 11,297 households had at least one day of homelessness in the period of October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022.

Additional data sources help us understand the scale of homelessness, inclusive of households in Chicago experiencing “doubled-up homelessness,” or living with others temporarily out of economic necessity. These households are not intended to be captured by the PIT count or the CoC System Goals report, both of which use HUD's definition of literal homelessness that excludes the “doubled-up” population. The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless 2022 report estimates that 65,611 households in Chicago experience literal homelessness or stay with others temporarily over the course of a year, based on 2020 American Community Survey and HMIS data. Additional detail can be found here: <https://www.chicagohomeless.org/estimate-of-homeless-people-in-chicago/>

Key Numbers

Latest Estimates of Homelessness in Chicago

- 6,139 people estimated to be experiencing literal homelessness on a given night (2023 Point-in-Time Count)
- 8,727 people on the Active List (experiencing homelessness based on recent engagement with homeless services programs) on an average day in 2022 (CoC System Goals Report, 2022)
- 11,297 households experiencing homelessness served by Chicago Continuum of Care homeless services in a year (Longitudinal Systems Analysis, 2022)
- 65,611 people experienced literal or doubled-up homelessness in year (Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, 2022 report based on 2020 data)

Chicago Public Schools estimates that 17,773 students experienced homelessness during the 2021-2022 school year, based on enrollment in the Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) program which provides services such as transportation, school uniforms, school supplies, fee waivers, and referrals to community resources for students experiencing housing instability. This estimate includes students experiencing both literal and doubled-up homelessness since students are eligible if they are living in shelters, unsheltered locations, motels or hotels, or are doubled-up with others.

Housing for People Experiencing Homelessness

Key Trends in Chicago Homelessness

- Arrival of migrants from southwest border: Chicago has welcomed over 11,500 migrants from the southwest border, many bussed from the State of Texas, since August 31, 2022. Many new arrivals are in need of shelter. 2,176 new arrivals were counted as part of the 2023 Point-in-Time Count in January 2023 and the number of new arrivals experiencing homelessness in Chicago has surpassed 5,400 as of July 2023.
- Return of crisis response system capacity coming out of the pandemic: The number of people residing in Chicago’s homeless shelter system has increased following a dip during the COVID- 19 pandemic, partially due to gradual return of bed capacity in congregate shelters that reduced beds in line with public health guidance.
- Scale back of federal pandemic-era homeless prevention funds: Rental assistance programs for Chicagoans at risk of losing their housing expanded significantly with federal pandemic relief funds. As these funds expire, programs have begun to scale back to previous capacity which may increase the number of new households entering homelessness.
- Loss of lower-cost rental units in the Chicago housing market: There is a 119,435-unit gap between the supply of affordable rental housing and the demand, a 10 year high.

Recent research by the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University, in their “State of Rental Housing in the City of Chicago” report, has found that the “affordable housing gap” in 2021 was the largest in at least a decade, reaching over 119,000 units. Similarly, the proportion of Chicago renter households who are rent-cost burdened—meaning they are spending more than 30% of their income on rent—increased to 51%, the highest since 2015.

The Chicago Department of Housing reports quarterly on the state of its affordable housing programs. The primary way that DOH supports extremely low-income Chicagoans (under 30% Area Median Income) is through the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund (CLIHTF), which contracts with nonprofit and for-profit property managers to establish non-time-limited, unit-based subsidies that hold the rent paid by an extremely low-income household to 30% of their income. As of Q4 2022, 2,870 households were supported by CLIHTF, of which 1,569 were between 15% and 30% AMI and 1,301 were under 15% AMI. In addition to units supported by CLIHTF, DOH's multifamily finance programs created or preserved 1,949 affordable housing rental units in 2022, of which 110 were for units at 30% AMI or below.

The Housing Inventory Count is a count of housing programs within the CoC that provide beds and units dedicated to serving people experiencing homelessness, conducted in conjunction with the annual PIT Count and also required by HUD. The most common homeless-dedicated housing programs:

- Permanent supportive housing: non-time limited affordable housing with supportive services, often dedicated to households experiencing chronic homelessness, in either project-based or scattered site units
- Rapid rehousing: short to medium term (fewer than 24 months) of rental assistance and supportive services to help households stabilize in housing

In January 2023, Chicago had 8,360 beds of permanent supportive housing, 2,099 beds of rapid rehousing, and 310 beds of other permanent housing.

The CoC System Goals Report also includes how many households have been housed with homeless-dedicated housing resources through the Continuum of Care, which includes programs funded by HUD, the Chicago Housing Authority, and the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund. These resources include permanent supportive housing units and rapid rehousing units. In 2022, 1,874 households were housed with CoC resources, a 29% reduction from the previous year, in part a reflection of scaling back rapid rehousing funded with COVID-relief federal funds. On average a household moving into housing through the CoC has experienced homelessness for 805 days—a timeline largely driven by limited housing resources.

Based on CoC projections, Chicago needs an additional 2,637 permanent supportive housing slots and 3,851 rapid rehousing slots to meet current need and anticipate in-flow. These projections are based on the definition of homelessness that excludes doubled-up households, so is a minimum level needed to address housing instability in Chicago.

In addition to providing services and resources to people experiencing homelessness, the City prioritizes programming that aims to prevent homelessness in order to keep Chicagoans safely and stably housed. In 2022, DOH gave one-time housing grants to 5,467 households at risk of homelessness through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Much of this was through the Court-based Emergency Rental Assistance Program, which assists tenants facing eviction filings. Additionally, over 600 individuals were served by DOH's Right to Counsel Pilot Program, which provides free legal assistance to low-income tenants facing eviction.

The Rental Assistance Program (RAP) at DFSS is also an important part of the homeless prevention strategy. As a result of increased federal relief funding, the Department was able to expand the program to serve 2,709 households with \$14.6M of rental assistance since August 2020. Alongside increasing the availability of the RAP, the Department set equity goals, enlisted organizations to conduct targeted outreach to communities most impacted by COVID-19 and monitored application data in real-time to course-correct to reach those most in need. While the demand for this program is still high, CARES funding will end in September 2023 and funding levels will return to their pre-COVID capacity, serving roughly 200 households annually.

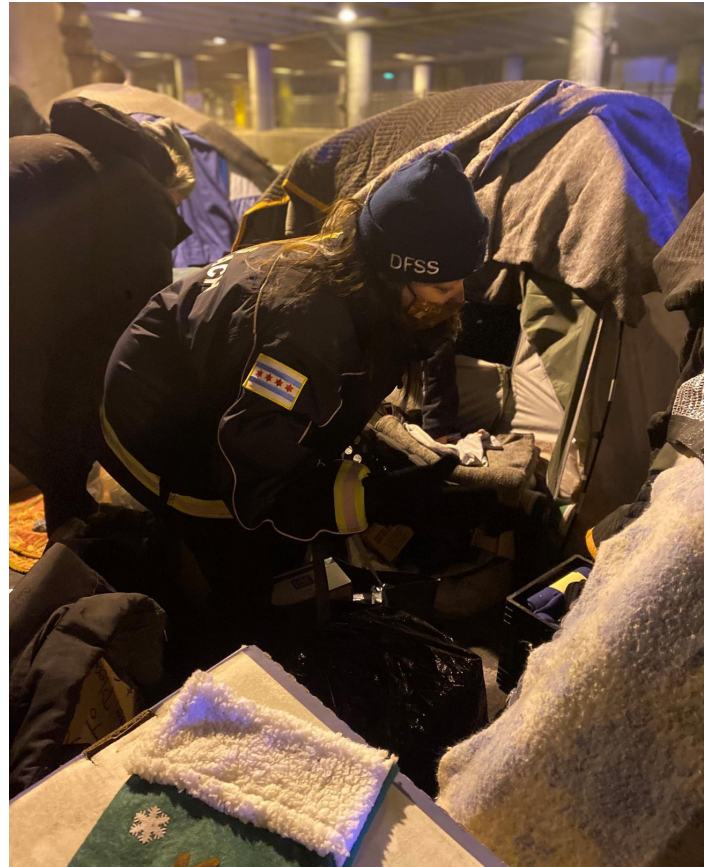
Key Numbers

Homeless-Dedicated and Affordable Housing Resources in Chicago

- 8,360 beds of permanent supportive housing, 2,099 beds of rapid rehousing, and 310 beds of other permanent housing in the Chicago Continuum of Care (Housing Inventory Count, 2023)
- 1,874 households housed with Chicago Continuum of Care resources in 2022 (CoC System Goals Report)
- 2,870 households supported with Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund subsidies as of Q4 2022 (DOH)
- 1,949 new or preserved affordable housing rental units in 2022 (DOH)

Implementing the Seven Principles for Addressing Encampments

One priority of Chicago's homelessness response is addressing unsheltered homelessness and encampments. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) created a set of principles to help communities as they develop and implement their response to encampments. Below are highlights of Chicago's current work under each of these principles. Note that this report does not include a comprehensive overview of all relevant work, but instead features key initiatives, successes, and challenges.



Summary of Progress

Homeless-Dedicated and Affordable Housing Resources in Chicago

Principle	Highlights
Establish a Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City's Interagency Task Force to Reduce Homelessness ensures city agencies are organized around a unified goal and set of strategies • The Encampment Strategy targets resources to encampment residents to support them in transitioning to sheltered living situations
Engage Encampment Residents to Develop Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chicago CoC includes two lived experience groups who participate in CoC lines of work • Feedback from encampment residents was collected and integrated into the CoC's 2022 application for new federal funding for unsheltered homelessness
Conduct Comprehensive and Coordinated Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City-wide street outreach coordination ensures that encampments are engaged and addressed in a timely and targeted manner • Inter-departmental partnerships have created innovative solutions such as the Mobile Health Van to address encampment residents' medical needs
Address Basic Needs and Provide Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFSS provides porta-potties and coordinates cleanings with the Department of Streets and Sanitation at large encampments • DFSS coordinates with Streets and Sanitation to conduct monthly cleanings at select encampments • DFSS funds 11 daytime drop-in centers that offer residents experiencing homelessness basic need services
Ensure Access to Shelter or Housing Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFSS funds a low barrier shelter, the Pilsen Navigation Center, targeted for encampment residents • DFSS and DOH are investing Chicago Recovery Plan funds to improve shelter infrastructure to better attract and serve unsheltered residents
Develop Pathways to Permanent Housing and Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 330 households from encampments have moved into housing with federal COVID-relief funding through Accelerated Moving Events
Create a Plan for What Will Happen to Encampment Sites After Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFSS coordinates with the Chicago Police Department, Streets and Sanitation, and Department of Transportation to develop transition plans for encampment residents and monitor recently closed encampments for new residents

Principle 1: Establish a Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response

The City's Interagency Task Force to Reduce Homelessness launched in 2016 to focus on coordination of homeless services across all agencies to improve delivery and reduce homelessness of individuals and families. In 2023, the Interagency Task Force goals are to reestablish regular communications on homelessness between departments and agencies, build a shared understanding of the current state of homelessness in Chicago, and to identify a unified goal and set of strategies to collaborate on as a group.

Through the work of the Task Force, Chicago's Encampment Strategy was developed and operationalized. The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) leads and coordinates this multi-agency response that focuses on encampments throughout the city, with the following goals:

- Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness living in large encampments
- Provide multiple social service programs to meet needs of clients experiencing homelessness
- Protect the legal rights of persons experiencing homelessness, while protecting their health and safety and that of the community at large
- Continuously engage repeatedly and consistently and have a pool of flexible referral sources to incentivize shelter and housing

The strategy has three levels of response based on the encampment size: Level 1 responses are for encampments with 10 or more people; Level 2 is for encampments with 5-9 people; and Level 3 is for those with fewer than 5 people. A Level 1 response provides 5-10 days of onsite and sustained engagement services by City-funded street outreach teams. Level 2 and 3 responses provide onsite, sustained engagement services for less time. In 2022, DFSS conducted six Level 1 responses and two Level 2 responses.

Before and during an encampment response, DFSS coordinates with other city departments including: Streets and Sanitation to conduct deep cleaning, removing trash and debris, and providing hazmat teams if necessary; Chicago Police Department to dispatch their crisis intervention and/or homeless outreach teams to the response; Chicago Park District and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, who are notified if the encampment involves areas under their jurisdiction; and the Fire/EMS Department who can assist medically vulnerable residents and transport them for medical care. In 2022, DFSS expanded partnerships to bring legal services, workforce services, and MAR-NOW (Medication-Assisted Recovery) treatment as part of encampment response.

Principle 2: Engage Encampment Residents to Develop Solutions

Input from people with lived experience of homelessness, including current and former encampment residents, is incorporated into the community decision making process through the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), a membership-based organization whose mission is to prevent and end homelessness in our city, with a structure and composition that is mandated by HUD. The City actively participates in the CoC, including with representation from DFSS, DOH, Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Housing Authority, and Mayor's Office on the CoC Board.

The CoC prioritizes the involvement of people with lived experience of homelessness in leadership roles and decision-making. The CoC has two lived experience groups:

- Lived Experience Commission (LEC): a coalition of individuals who are receiving or have received services from Chicago's homeless system, people who were formerly homeless, or people at risk of becoming homeless.
- Youth Action Board (YAB): youth leaders from Chicago who have previously experienced homelessness. YAB members use what they learned from their life experiences and come up with solutions to end youth homelessness in Chicago. They inform agencies, policy makers, and legislators on ways to work with youth experiencing homelessness and provide them with guidance on how to do it better.

Between the two groups, at least 11 people reported they lived in unsheltered situations during their experience of homelessness. In 2022, HUD released a new funding opportunity focused on unsheltered homelessness. The CoC held numerous listening sessions with people who had experienced homelessness to inform the CoC's application for new funding, including current and former encampment residents recruited by the DFSS Homeless Outreach and Prevention team. Key themes that emerged from these conversations were the need for more robust outreach teams that trained medical staff such as nurses to support the physical and behavioral health needs of people living on the streets; the need for inclusion of people with lived experience as peer outreach workers to connect with and engage with people living on the streets; and the need for greater system-level coordination across all outreach teams. In response, the CoC applied for new funding for street outreach teams with clinical supports.

One of the priorities of the All INside initiative is to support the City and CoC in creating pathways for decision-making for people with lived experience beyond the input phase to implementation, including for the resolution of encampments.

Principle 3: Conduct Comprehensive and Coordinated Outreach

DFSS funds thirteen street outreach programs operated by delegate agencies and operates its own City-staffed Homeless Outreach and Prevention (HOP) team to engage and serve individuals experiencing homelessness and living near railroad tracks, bridges, the Chicago River, viaducts and alleys, Chicago Parks and CTA train stations. DFSS began funding an overnight outreach team in 2018 to create 24-hour outreach coverage. These teams build rapport with homeless individuals to engage them in services. DFSS's delegate agencies, along with city-staffed outreach teams, are the primary entities conducting street outreach in the community. Some state-funded entities and the Jesse Brown Veteran Affairs Medical Center Outreach Teams also conduct street outreach and work closely with DFSS to ensure city-wide coverage.

The DFSS team convenes outreach partners to address system-level outreach plans for coverage as well as to conduct city-wide outreach surge events to assess and engage hotspots and identify new hotspots. The city is divided into regions with outreach teams responsible for scanning the region for new people experiencing homelessness as well as going to known locations. Monthly coordination meetings are led by DFSS and the HOP team staff to ensure consistency and prevent unnecessary overlap in service provision. Meetings can focus on specific strategies for addressing hot spot encampments or new community resources available.

The DFSS HOP Team also coordinates with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) to strategically deploy the Mobile Health Unit which provides immediate medical attention for vulnerable Chicagoans experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The team can also conduct medical screenings, write prescriptions, administer Hep A vaccinations, and connect encampment residents to primary care.

Additionally, beginning in 2023, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) invested \$2 million to expand homeless outreach efforts on both 24/7 CTA train lines, the Red and the Blue Lines, to engage and support more unsheltered individuals spending time on the trains. Funding supports delegate outreach teams with qualified, trained workers who build trust with potential clients and offer supports such as food, referrals to services (mental health, detox supports), and provide transportation to shelter and coordinated entry assessments so that people receiving services can get connected to housing. DFSS and the CTA meet with these outreach delegate agencies monthly to discuss progress and implement solutions on the ground.

Principle 4: Address Basic Needs and Provide Storage

Chicago's Encampment Strategy addresses basic needs by supplying Level 1 Encampments (10 or more people) with porta-potties to limit the spread of disease and ensure a sanitary environment. Level 1 encampments also look to provide additional medical services and access to showering facilities.

DFSS also coordinates with the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) on a monthly schedule for encampment cleanings, currently covering 25 encampment locations. Cleanings focus on addressing unsanitary conditions for encampment residents and the general public that can result from accumulation of discarded items or waste. The City follows policies and procedures for off-street cleanings that seek to balance the rights of encampment residents while maintaining the public way. This policy was originally created for Lower Wacker Drive area and now applies across encampment sites, and can be found at https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/city-policy-and-procedures-governing-off-street--cleaning-pursua0.html. In 2022, DFSS and DSS collaborated on 384 cleanings. To date in 2023, there have been 185 cleanings. DSS posts notice of upcoming cleanings 7 days in advance. During regular outreach, DFSS outreach staff remind encampment residents of upcoming cleanings and mark collapsed or abandoned tents with stickers, providing notice that they may be discarded if they are not claimed or removed from the public way.

DFSS also funds 11 daytime drop-in centers (five youth-dedicated and six adult) operated by delegate agencies that offer residents experiencing homelessness basic need services such as meals, showers, laundry, and quiet safe spaces. These centers are staffed to engage residents living in public spaces and help them identify more stable indoor housing.

Principle 5: Ensure Access to Shelter or Housing Options

In 2022, 971 Chicagoans experiencing unsheltered homelessness that were engaged by City funded outreach projects were connected to a sheltered destination (this could include Emergency Shelter, Transitional or Permanent Housing). Additional detail and quarterly data on this metric can be found in the CoC System Goals Reports here:

<https://allchicago.org/hmis/data-reports>. DFSS's continued outreach coordination will focus on the north star goal of increasing unsheltered individuals exits to permanent housing destinations.

Overall, City funding supports approximately 3,000 shelter beds, which operate near capacity on any given night. The City of Chicago opened its low-barrier shelter, the Pilsen Navigation Center, in 2018, which provides 40 beds for encampment residents. Low-barrier shelter practices include: allowing couples to stay in shelter together, pets to remain with their owners, and residents to keep their belongings. The Pilsen Navigation Center served 150 residents in 2022. DFSS will release a request for proposal in summer 2023 for another low-barrier shelter to connect more unsheltered residents with shelter and services.

The City of Chicago is also investing in improving the infrastructure of Chicago's homeless shelter system, based on learnings from the pandemic and in line with national best practice. Specifically, the City funded non-congregate shelter beds in hotels during the pandemic with federal COVID-relief funding. According to research conducted by the University of Chicago Medicine and Lawndale Christian Health Center at these hotels during the pandemic, the housing significantly reduced COVID-19 incidence and improved self-reported mental health symptoms

and certain health measures such as blood pressure. More than half of program participants moved on to longer-term housing after the intervention.

Building on these learnings, DFSS is investing \$40 million to fund shelter programs to repair and renovate existing shelter facilities to transition to more accessible and non-congregate settings, sustain current bed capacity, and replenish bed capacity to pre-COVID levels or beyond. Improvements are intended to encourage more unsheltered residents to accept shelter by providing individuals with their own space and addressing other limitations of current shelter options, including storage space and accessibility. To date, DFSS has qualified 10 shelter programs to apply for capital funding.

In partnership, DOH is investing \$30 million in Chicago Recovery Plan funding to acquire new non-congregate facilities for shelter programs. In 2022, DOH put forth an RFP for the Non-Congregate Shelter Acquisition program and selected five grantee finalists providing shelter across the City to receive funding to acquire new non-congregate buildings:

Grantee Finalist	Population Served	Region of Existing Shelter Location	Applicant's preferred Region for Potential New Shelter	Expected shelter beds after rehab
North Side Housing and Supportive Services	Single Adults	North	North (7464 N Clark)	50 – 72
Cornerstone Community Outreach	Single Adults	North	North	28 – 65
Franciscan Outreach	Single Adults	West	West	50 – 100
La Casa Norte	Youth (18 – 24)	Northwest, Southwest	Northwest, West, Southwest	30 – 75
Unity Parenting and Counseling, Inc.	Youth (18 – 24)	Southeast	Southeast, Southwest, Far South	24 – 30

Principle 6: Develop Pathways to Permanent Housing and Supports

Outreach staff work with encampment residents to get them connected to homeless-dedicated housing through Chicago's Coordinated Entry System, a key component of the Chicago CoC. Households complete a standardized assessment in-person or through the Coordinated Entry Call Center and are matched with appropriate housing and service opportunities. Additional information can be found here:

<https://allchicago.org/coordinated-entry-system/>

With federal COVID-relief funding, Chicago expanded investments in rapid rehousing, a program which provides short to medium term rental assistance and supportive services to help households stabilize in housing, and piloted several practices to more rapidly connect people experiencing homelessness to housing. One of these new practices is the Accelerated Moving Event (AME), one or two-day events where participants select an available rental unit, meet with their case manager, and arrange for furniture selection. Outreach teams coordinate with housing providers to host monthly Accelerated Moving Events specifically for unsheltered residents to rapidly connect individuals to housing. Overall, expanded investment in rapid rehousing housed 1,888 households between October 2020 and December 2022, 73% of whom exited to another permanent housing destination. Of these households, just over 330 households were housed from unsheltered locations through AMEs².

Chicago Recovery Plan funding for rapid rehousing continues to support roughly one AME each month dedicated to unsheltered residents, organized by the DFSS Homeless Outreach and Prevention (HOP) team. Additionally, DFSS has projected that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and supplemental funding dedicated to Rapid Rehousing interventions will house 1,200 new households, including approximately 900 households by the end of 2023. While not all of these households will have experienced unsheltered street homelessness, it will be a significant pathway for those affected residents.

Principle 7: Create a Plan for What Will Happen to Encampment Sites After Closure

As a matter of practice, the City does not close encampments unless there is a safety issue, a policy change or project by another City, State or private partner that requires relocation and closure. In the last year, DFSS has worked with Chicago Park District and the Illinois Department of Transportation on encampment closures that were required due to policy change and/or construction. In both cases, DFSS recommended advance notice and outreach to residents, connections to housing through an

Accelerated Moving Event and bridge housing for those who did not move before the closure occurred. Through work with the All INside Initiative and the Interagency Task Force to address Homelessness, DFSS recommends creating a transparent process that includes providing adequate notification, outreach and connections to housing for residents impacted. Finally, Chicago's Encampment Strategy has a process for engaging and moving residents from an encampment into shelter or housing prior to any cleaning or removing of abandoned property. DFSS coordinates with Chicago Police Department, Streets and Sanitation, and Department of Transportation to ensure the area is properly cleaned and sanitized. After the encampment has been cleared and the area cleaned, an identified delegate outreach agency will continue to monitor the area to ensure that there is not a rebuilding of the encampment.

What's Next

Chicago has several upcoming opportunities to strengthen and expand our approach to reducing unsheltered homelessness, building on the City's current Encampment Strategy.

- In February 2023, HUD awarded the Chicago Continuum of Care a new grant of \$60 million, to be awarded over 3 years, as part of awards to communities across the country to address unsheltered homelessness. Funding will be awarded to agencies for programs submitted as part of Chicago's comprehensive application to HUD to expand and enhance services to support people moving from unsheltered locations to shelter and housing. The City will partner closely with the CoC to ensure implementation of new programs coordinates and builds on existing strategies and resources.
- Chicago was also selected as one of six jurisdictions to be part of a new national initiative called All INside managed by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the White House in Spring 2023. The national initiative has a goal of reducing homelessness by 25% by 2025. Chicago has welcomed a dedicated federal HUD official, Michele Smith, to accelerate and support locally driven strategies to reduce unsheltered homelessness and drive this initiative. She began her work with the City of Chicago in early July 2023 and will be working with Chicago over the next two years on the Initiative. There were five key priorities identified by the City of Chicago, All Chicago, and Continuum of Care partners outlined in the All INside Initiative MOU:
 - A dedicated focus and priority placed on pathways to housing for residents returning from jails and prisons and residents with arrest or conviction records, including a systematic review of eligibility and exclusions.
 - Addressing the needs of unsheltered people on public transit, safety concerns near highways and under viaducts and bridges, and diverting unsheltered persons from systems of transportation to safer places for shelter.

- Dedicated support to help participants in the HMIS system make community choices to create a data system that will support collaborative change in Chicago. Support to address technical issues that relate to allowing the system to provide added transparency for HMIS partners working across same populations.
- Efficient processes for preparing and obtaining documentation/IDs to support access to housing and benefits.
- Improving the involvement of persons with lived experience in actual decision-making processes that go beyond the “input” stage extending into the “implementation” stage.
- DOH is working with the Non-Congregate Shelter Acquisition program grantee finalists to go through the acquisition process throughout 2023, with some closings expected in 2023.
- In June 2023, DOH published the 2023 Qualified Allocation Plan, which established a dedicated Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) tract and requires all new developments to set aside 5% of units created for permanent supportive housing. The creation of new PSH units for extremely low-income Chicagoans (< 30% Average Median Income) is essential to the success of housing pathways. Through the Chicago Recovery Plan and additional funding sources, DOH committed over \$65M to the development of PSH. Additionally, closings for PSH units funded through the 2021 QAP will begin in 2023.
- DFSS is working to release a new Request for Proposal to open and operate a new low-barrier shelter facility on the Northside of the City (north of W Chicago Avenue within City of Chicago boundaries). The objective is for the facility to open in fall of 2023. The selected delegate would play a critical role in addressing Chicago’s unsheltered homelessness response by providing access to low-barrier shelter on the Northside of the City.

Footnotes

1. The Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) is a membership organization comprised of more than 100 organizations and individuals who work to prevent and end homelessness in Chicago. Mandated by the U.S. Department of Urban Development (HUD), the CoC strategizes and plans a coordinated, comprehensive approach to providing housing and services for people experiencing homelessness.
2. <https://allchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Chicago-Continuum-of-Care-System-Goals-2022-Annual-Report-Final.pdf>