

Chicago Department of Family and Support Services  
**NEWS RELEASE**



City of Chicago  
Richard M. Daley, Mayor  
Mary Ellen Caron, PhD, Commissioner

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**CHICAGO PRESENTS INITIAL SURVEY FINDINGS IDENTIFYING  
MOST VULNERABLE HOMELESS**

**August 27, 2010** –Today, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and New York’s Common Ground presented the findings from Chicago’s first Registry Week, as part of the national 100,000 Homes Campaign.

For three consecutive mornings, 150 dedicated volunteers canvassed city streets and homeless shelters to survey and identify Chicago’s most vulnerable homeless individuals and families. Of the 738 surveyed, 629 were individuals and 109 were families. Forty-two (42) percent of the singles are considered medically vulnerable, and with families, 28 percent of the heads of households in families are considered medically vulnerable according to the data.

“The data we have gathered this week will further our efforts to eliminate chronic homelessness in Chicago,” said Commissioner Mary Ellen Caron, Chicago Department of Family and Support Services. “We are so grateful to the many organizations who have stepped up tremendously to commit valuable resources—from housing units, supportive services and much needed supplies.”

The survey, known as the Vulnerability Index is a tool for identifying and prioritizing the street homeless population for housing according to the fragility of their health. Among other key survey findings were:

- Fifteen (15) percent of respondents have been homeless for 10 or more years.
- The average years of homelessness for vulnerable respondents is seven years.
- The average respondent age was 48 years old; the youngest respondent was 18 years old and the oldest respondent was 77 years old.
- Eighty-nine (89) respondents were veterans, of which 43 met the criteria for vulnerable.
- Top reported health conditions of respondents include asthma (14 percent); heart disease (11 percent); heat stroke/heat exhaustion (9 percent); and diabetes (8 percent).

Chicago’s initial goal is to move 125 of the city’s most vulnerable homeless individuals and families into permanent housing by December 31, 2010. The by-name registry created from the survey enables the city’s most vulnerable homeless individuals and families to be quickly connected to the support they need as they transition into permanent housing.

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According to Kara Mergl, director of Research and Evaluation for Common Ground, “Thanks to the tremendous work of cities like Chicago and others across the nation that have joined the movement, we are able to share innovations and adopt best practices to provide support for the most vulnerable residents and reduce chronic homelessness. The campaign builds on the Ten-Year plans that many communities have already developed and provides us a with platform to work together toward a common goal.”

Chicago’s 100,000 Homes Campaign is a collaborative effort among local leading homeless service providers, faith-based groups as well as non-profit, governmental and private organizations. The 100,000 Homes Campaign in Chicago is lead by DFSS, the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness, the Corporation for Supportive Housing and the Emergency Fund. The effort also includes support from: Inspiration Corporation, the Chicago Police Crisis Intervention Team, Heartland Alliance, Polk Bros. Foundation, Michael Reese Health Trust, Chicago Community Trust and the Chicago Department of Public Health.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/fss/chgo100khomes> as well as on Facebook and Twitter: @chgo100khomes.

#### **About the 100,000 Homes Campaign**

The 100,000 Homes Campaign, launched by Common Ground, brings together change agents from across the country to find homes for 100,000 of the most vulnerable and long-term homeless individuals and families by July 2013. It is designed to fundamentally alter our response to chronic homelessness by giving communities concrete tools and connecting the change agents with one another so no one has to innovate alone. To date, approximately 50 US cities including New York, Detroit, and Fort Worth have pledged to support the campaign. More than 5,500 individuals have been permanently housed since late 2009.

#### **About the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services**

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) is dedicated to supporting a continuum of coordinated services to enhance the lives of Chicago residents, particularly those most in need, from birth through the senior years. The department works to promote the independence and well-being of individuals, support families and strengthen neighborhoods by providing direct assistance and administering resources to a network of community-based organizations, social service providers and institutions. For more information about the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, call 312-743-0300 or visit [www.cityofchicago.org/fss](http://www.cityofchicago.org/fss).

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