

CHICAGO'S PLAN 2.0

SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

FEBRUARY 2013





Under the scaffolding of what is about to become Chicago's newest permanent supportive housing facility and across the courtyard from where 40 young mothers and their children will finally find a place to call home, **Plan 2.0 was launched on August 23, 2012.** That morning at New Moms, Inc., Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced his proud endorsement of the broad-ranging, seven-year action plan and pledged an additional \$2.5 million to help achieve several of its key priorities. Grounded in data analysis and leading practices and driven by extensive community participation, Plan 2.0 marks a new era in Chicago's march toward our ultimate vision of a home for everyone.

This semi-annual progress report is the first of many reports to be released every February and August through 2019. It is part of our commitment to engage all of Chicago in the outcomes, successes, and challenges that lie ahead. This report outlines the top accomplishments of the first six months of Plan 2.0 implementation. Future reports will be used to update the projected housing need calculations and report on numeric progress made toward Plan 2.0's key objectives. To learn how you can participate in Plan 2.0 implementation, contact the Chicago Alliance at www.thechicagoalliance.org.





“We had no idea of the magnitude of the adventure upon which we were embarking. [You] invited me to be involved in something bigger than myself, adding meaning to my life.

I believe in Plan 2.0 because I believe in the people and process that created it. Plan 2.0 is a noble architecture, built by noble women and men demanding a noble life.”

CONNIE BACON

Homeless individual and leader in Chicago's homeless assistance system

THE CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

GOAL

Create an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing.

- ▶▶ In late 2012, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) invested \$438,000 in **physical infrastructure and facility operations improvements** for emergency shelter and interim housing programs. These additional resources have been used to maintain and strengthen the physical capacity of the housing programs at the front line of Chicago's crisis response system. For example, Chicago, like many other cities, continues to combat a bed bug epidemic in the shared living quarters of emergency shelters and interim housing programs. DFSS was able to deploy 48 new bed bug heater treatment systems to over 40 DFSS-funded shelters to provide state-of-the-art bed bug remediation. DFSS also coordinated trainings for providers on bed bug prevention and remediation practices to improve the system's response to this health hazard.
- ▶▶ The City of Chicago also committed a \$1.8 million lawsuit settlement to create a new interim housing program for victims of domestic violence and their children, the first increase in bed capacity for this population in years. This new 30-bed program will go a long way to **increase the housing safety net for victims of domestic violence in Chicago**. DFSS is in the process of identifying an agency with expertise in serving victims of domestic violence to create this new program, with a goal of opening in early 2014.

ACCESS TO STABLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

GOAL

Create and maintain stable and affordable housing for households who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

- ▶ Chicago's **Central Referral System (CRS) for permanent supportive housing launched** in November 2012. CRS is a web-based application that ranks single individuals and families by level of vulnerability and length of homelessness, ensuring streamlined access to available permanent supportive housing units. Currently, 300 units are using CRS with plans to expand to all permanent supportive housing units in Chicago. 2,093 households have already applied for housing through CRS through January 31, 2013. The development of CRS was led by the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and a task group of the Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness comprised of housing providers, consumers, and city and state housing agencies. The task group will continue to monitor and evaluate the implementation of CRS and plan for its expansion and transition to Options for Housing, a subsidiary of Catholic Charities selected to be the managing entity of CRS.
- ▶ As part of Chicago's efforts to **work with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) to effectively assist people experiencing homelessness**, CSH and CHA have partnered on an innovative new strategy to effectively target referrals to supportive housing units subsidized through CHA's Property Rental Assistance (PRA) program. They have developed data sharing policies and procedures to cross-match applicants on the Central Referral System who are also on a CHA waiting list, creating a pool of eligible referrals for PRA supportive housing units as they become available. Through this systems integration effort, 282 households have been identified on a CHA waiting list in the first three months of CRS implementation.

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

GOAL

Create a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate menu of services for youth who experience homelessness in order to prevent homeless youth from becoming the next generation of homeless adults.

- ▶ With the release of Plan 2.0, Mayor Emanuel announced an annual investment of \$2 million for **new and expanded housing and services for youth experiencing homelessness**. In 2013, DFSS awarded grants to four providers that will increase the total number of low-threshold, low-demand, year-round beds from 40 to 114. Services provided by The Night Ministry, A Safe Haven Foundation, La Casa Norte, and Unity Parenting & Counseling will provide critical emergency housing in each area of the city, including new shelters on the south and southwest sides. Additionally, DFSS awarded new contracts to Howard Brown Health Center – Broadway Youth Center, La Casa Norte, and Teen Living Programs to develop a citywide network of regional drop-in centers for homeless youth. These three drop-in centers located on the north, west, and south side will coordinate services with the shelters in their respective regions to ensure access to and continuity of services for the hundreds of youth to be served.
- ▶ The inclusion of youth homelessness as a strategic priority of Plan 2.0 has focused Chicago’s planning efforts and resource allocations on the needs of homeless youth. The City of Chicago Task Force on Homeless Youth, comprised of homeless youth providers, youth consumers, youth advocates, and city and state officials, has mobilized implementation efforts as the **key advisory body** for youth-related policies, interventions, and investments. The Task Force informed the development of the new drop-in center and low-threshold, low-demand shelter requests for proposal and will serve in an advisory capacity as the new services are implemented and evaluated. The Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness also approved the inclusion of 25 **permanent supportive housing units for chronically homeless youth** in the 2012 HUD Continuum of Care competition. If funded, these new units would come on line in 2014.

EMPLOYMENT

GOAL

Increase meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for people experiencing or most at risk of homelessness.

- ▶ As part of the launch of Plan 2.0, Mayor Emanuel pledged an additional \$500,000 to **strengthen the workforce development services available** to people experiencing homelessness. DFSS is using this investment to increase and better target services to those who are most in need. Current employment contracts within three DFSS community-based service centers will transition their services in 2013 to target households that are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. DFSS has also increased contracts of existing providers specializing in targeted employment services for people experiencing homelessness. These programs provide employment preparation training, job placement assistance, and supportive services to help participants secure and retain employment. These additional resources will help an additional 225 people exit homelessness with employment income.
- ▶ In a first-of-its-kind partnership, Cabrini Green Legal Aid and the Chicago Alliance are launching an exciting new project to **expand employment and housing opportunities for people with criminal records**. The Criminal Records Corps will consist of nearly 100 law students from six area law schools who will partner with 15 homeless service providers and the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in 2013. With guidance from Cabrini Green Legal Aid and their experts at the Expungement Help Desk, Corps members will provide assistance to hundreds of people experiencing homelessness who qualify to clear their criminal records. In addition, the Emergency Fund is providing \$15,000 in flexible financial funds to Cabrini Green Legal Aid to assist clients expunge or seal records. This innovative project will help remove one of the most persistent barriers to employment and housing facing people experiencing homelessness.

ADVOCACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

GOAL

Engage all of Chicago in a robust plan that creates a path to securing a home for everyone in our community.

- ▶▶ Since the launch of Plan 2.0, the Chicago Alliance and community partners have striven to **tell the story of the Plan** to diverse audiences throughout the City of Chicago. Thirteen presentations have been delivered on Plan 2.0, reaching over 600 people. For example, the Polk Bros. Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust convened a dynamic group of local philanthropic partners to learn about Plan 2.0 and to strategize ways to coordinate and increase investments in our strategic priorities. The Plan Advisory Committee of the Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness also released a Plan 2.0 Discussion Guide to encourage conversation and engagement throughout the community about Plan 2.0 and its implementation. Finally, Plan 2.0 and its efforts have been featured in a number of media outlets, including the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times, Streetwise, the Associated Press, and Chicago Public Radio.
- ▶▶ We are also working to **build support among elected officials for a fully-funded safety net** for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. DFSS Commissioner Evelyn Diaz and Chicago Alliance CEO Dr. Nonie Brennan sent each of the 50 Chicago Aldermen a letter explaining the significance of Plan 2.0 and encouraging their participation in its implementation. Through their first-ever Site Visit Campaign, the Chicago Alliance has been working with its 71 partner agencies to encourage policymakers to visit and learn more about homeless service agencies in their community. At the Chicago Alliance's annual Breakfast with the Mayor in December 2012, Mayor Emanuel reminded the audience of his deep commitment to the implementation of Plan 2.0: "It's not how much money you've spent, but how many lives you've touched."

CROSS-SYSTEMS INTEGRATION

GOAL

Work across public and private systems of care to ensure ending homelessness is a shared priority.

- ▶ In fall 2012, Chicago was chosen as one of ten critically important communities to launch a new joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). This initiative will be our community's first step in **fostering sustained, high-level coordination among government agencies**, a key objective of Plan 2.0. The "Dedicating Opportunities to End Homelessness" initiative is designed to help communities identify opportunities to more strategically target mainstream resources to achieve their goals of ending homelessness. We are working closely with our partners at HUD and USICH to make substantial local progress, secure commitments from key stakeholder agencies, and participate fully in this national effort.
- ▶ The state of Illinois recently selected a key partner in the homeless assistance system, Heartland Health Outreach (HHO), to **coordinate a critical expansion of Medicaid in Chicago**. Full implementation of health care reform will greatly expand the number of low-income individuals eligible for Medicaid, potentially up to 330,000 adults in Cook County. Starting in 2013, Together4Health, the consortium of 34 Chicago-area service providers, hospitals, and healthcare organizations led by HHO, will be enrolling individuals in Medicaid and working to coordinate their comprehensive physical and behavioral health care. This innovative project, led by a homeless service provider, is a key step toward ensuring the assessment and connection to health care for all households experiencing homelessness.

CAPACITY BUILDING

GOAL

Ensure a strong homeless assistance system capable of implementing Plan 2.0 goals and HEARTH Act performance standards.

- ▶ In 2012, HUD released new regulations guiding the implementation of the HEARTH Act, requiring changes in policies and procedures for individual organizations and promoting system-wide planning on performance. DFSS and the Chicago Alliance, with support from the Corporation for Supportive Housing, **convened trainings for homeless service providers to provide technical assistance** on the implementation of these changes system-wide. CSH conducted seven trainings to 190 staff members of homeless service agencies, providing guidance on new eligibility and documentation requirements for homeless assistance programs. Agencies also received training and technical assistance on the development of systematic quality assurance procedures to help review their compliance with the new regulations.
- ▶ Reflecting Chicago's commitment to **data-informed decision making and planning**, Chicago has made important strides in strengthening our Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). As of September 17, 2012, Chicago's HMIS was upgraded to ServicePoint 5, bringing service providers a host of new features to make data management easier and more streamlined. To fund an HMIS expansion project in 2013, DFSS invested \$112,000 in the system and the Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness approved the reallocation of \$206,000 in HUD Continuum of Care funds. These resources will add capacity to the Chicago Alliance, the HMIS lead agency, to increase training and technical assistance resources, build on data quality improvements, and increase reporting capacity for the system.