

The Art of the Two-Pager: Concisely Making Your Case to Solve Homelessness

2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
ENDING HOMELESSNESS
June 30–July 2, 2025 🌅 Washington, D.C. 🌅 #NAEH2025

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Decision-makers often have limited time and understanding of homelessness programs. Two-pagers represent a key "leave-behind" material for meetings with lawmakers so they can more easily discern the issues facing our field and the ways in which they can support our work. Come learn from seasoned advocates the best practices for creating succinct, focused, and professional documents that can be the difference between a funding increase or cut for your program.



SAVE THE DATE

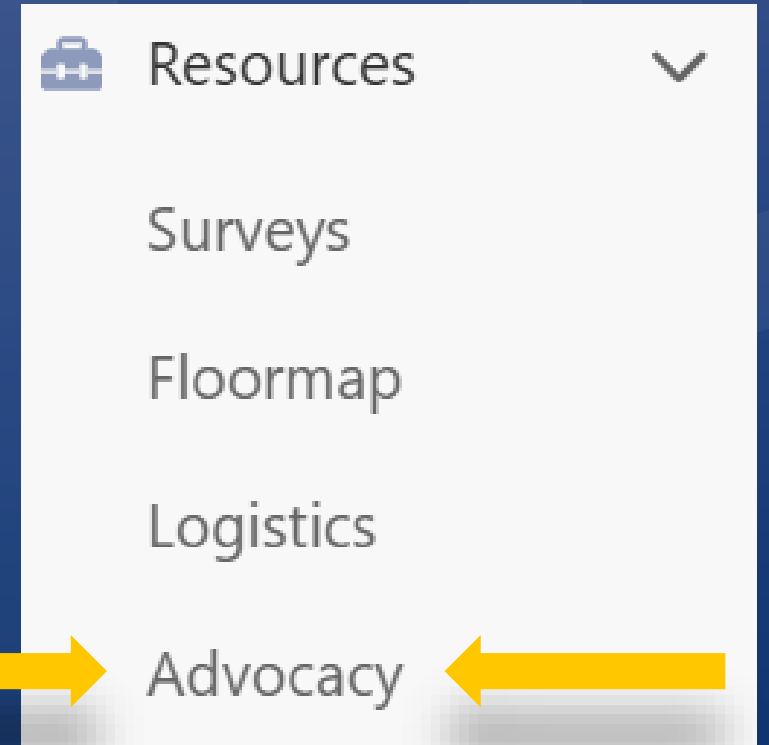
***Virtual* Capitol Hill Day:
September 17**



ENDHOMELESSNESS.ORG

WHOVA > RESOURCES > ADVOCACY

Engage with our advocacy resources on Whova.



TAKE ACTION TODAY

Prepare to take
action and sign
up for our
Advocacy Alerts.



ENDHOMELESSNESS.ORG

TAKE ACTION TODAY

1. Defend the two-year NOFO to keep funding flowing
2. Prevent dangerous budget cuts & advance real solutions





The Art of the Two-Pager: Concisely Making Your Case to Solve Homelessness

Housing Action Illinois

We bring everyone together to work toward an Illinois where everyone has a stable home.

- **Statewide coalition**
- **Leading the movement to expand and protect affordable housing and end homelessness in Illinois**
- **Doing this for nearly 40 years**





**We work across the entire housing
and homelessness ecosystem.**

**We unite, educate, & mobilize our members &
allies.**

Sample: Budget Specific Fact Sheet

This one pager was used in our state budget advocacy during 2022-2023 that resulted in a \$42 million increase for the Emergency and Transitional Housing Program, compared to previous year funding of \$10.4 million, as part of a new \$200.3 million new “HOME Illinois” line item in the FY24 state budget.

- Our narrative was that the emergency shelter system has been chronically underfunded in Illinois and that there was a “once in a generation opportunity” after the height for the COVID-19 pandemic to redesign and expand the system.
- Used data from the IL Interagency Taskforce on Homelessness, a group of state departments coordinating the new HOME Illinois plan, as well as our own analyses and other sources.
- The fact sheet supported other efforts, such as a statewide sign-on letter, advocating with elected officials and securing press coverage.

Sample: Budget Fact Sheet

- Housing Action Illinois highlighted data that found out that people who are Black in Illinois were 7 times more likely than people who were white to experience homelessness.
- We surveyed shelter providers and used those results as well as their stories of long waiting list and churches unable to continue the congregate shelter model in their communities.
- Based on a survey of emergency shelter providers, 76% of churches that previously offered donated basement and gym spaces are no longer willing to host shelter due to closures, declining membership and COVID-19 concerns.
- If you have time, spending a lot of time on the graphic design can add value to your one pager

Fund the Emergency and Transitional Housing Program at \$55 Million to Support People Without a Home
Current Funding is \$10.38 Million and Has Been Flat for Many Years

The Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness recently estimated **the unmet need is for 4,551 additional emergency shelter beds statewide.**

Every shelter bed that does not exist represents a person, often a child, in Illinois who has literally no place to call home.

The lack of emergency shelter often forces people to live outside, in a car and/or a place where their physical safety and life is at risk. For the most vulnerable, including people who are victims of domestic violence and people with mental illness, having access to emergency shelter makes the difference between life and death.

More Key Facts on the Need

- Based on recent data, across Illinois people who are Black are 7 times more likely than people who are white to experience homelessness.
- Children represented 21% of people who experienced homelessness in 2020.
- Based on a survey of emergency shelter providers, 76% of churches that previously offered donated basement and gym spaces are no longer willing to host shelter due to closures, declining membership and COVID-19 concerns.

Despite these enormous challenges, there is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a more humane and effective crisis housing system using federal pandemic recovery resources to develop non-congregate and fixed site shelters in former hotels and other sites.

However, increased ETH funding from the state is crucial to provide the operating and service funding necessary to make use of the federal funds and to help implement the state plan to reach functional zero homelessness in Illinois.

More Key Facts on Inadequate State Funding

- Taking inflation into account, state funding for the ETH Program, currently \$10.38 million, is only half what it was 20 years ago.
- Based on the overall need of about 11,320 beds, the State is contributing only about 6% of the funding needed to make sure all those in need have access to shelter.

Proposed Uses of \$51 Million Requested Increase

- \$20 million to save 1,600 beds, mostly rented hotel rooms, at risk of being lost due to federal pandemic relief funding being exhausted.
- \$29 million to increase the number of emergency shelter beds by 1,500; to lease approximately 333 apartments to rapidly rehouse families with transitional assistance; and to increase the number of currently available hotel vouchers by more than 500.
- \$2 million of the budget request would be used to help agencies with employee recruitment and retention, including hiring staff to work with people to find alternatives to going to a homeless shelter.

Over time, the reliance on renting hotel rooms should lessen and the increase in state funds can be dedicated to operating about 3,000 additional non-congregate and fixed site shelter beds.

For more information contact Doug Kenshol, Illinois Shelter Alliance and South Suburban PADS, at 708-332-7705 and dkenshol@sspads.org; or Bob Palmer, Housing Action Illinois, at 312-939-6075 and bob@housingactionil.org.

Federal Advocacy One Pager

- Created district specific fact sheets for Illinois House members.
- Our one pager combines and summarize priorities from National Low Income Housing Coalition and National Alliance to End Homelessness for FY24.
- Created a story bank to use to collect stories from our members and partners on advocacy priorities.
- Use stories with consent on one pager and other external facing documents.
- The stories we use come from providers and people with lived experience with support writing and/or editing stories.
- We share stories with House members and their staff from providers and advocates in their district.



A stronger Illinois begins at home

Housing Advocacy: Representative Lauren Underwood

Advocating for the Highest Level of Funding Possible for housing needs in FY 24:

- **Expanding rental assistance to 200,000 more households.** Rental assistance is a critical tool for helping the lowest-income people afford decent, stable, accessible housing, with a proven track record of reducing homelessness and housing poverty
- **Fully funding public housing.** Public housing is critical to ensuring people with the greatest needs have a safe, decent, affordable, and accessible place to call home, and the preservation of this community asset must be included to ensure housing is a human right
- **Fully funding homeless assistance grants.** The National Housing Trust Fund is the first new federal housing resource in a generation exclusively targeted to build and preserve rental homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes. It is the only federal housing production program targeted to address the market failure that is an underlying cause of the housing crisis
- **Providing \$3 billion in Emergency Rental Assistance.** Emergency rental assistance is needed to prevent eviction and addressing housing instability, this provisions were helpful to help people to housed during the pandemic
- **Investing \$100 million in legal services for eviction prevention.**
- **Opposing capping FY24 funding at FY22 levels:** consequences of curling housing budget and benefits include 1) Reduce HUD rental assistance and homelessness assistance by \$6.6 billion 2) Result in 1,700 fewer affordable housing units constructed and 1,300 households losing rental assistance 3) Increase children's risk of lead-based paint exposure in low-income housing 4) Reduce funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) by \$472 million

Support and Co-sponsor:

Eviction Crisis Act (S. 2182)/ Stable Families Act (H.R.8327) –Senator Bennet (D-CO), Portman (R-OH), Young (R-IN). . Bill establishes a permanent Emergency Rental Assistance program, (\$3 billion annually), to help families facing a financial shock avoid eviction. See [Opportunity Starts at Home campaign NLIHC's factsheet](#).

Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act (S. 1991) – Senators Van Hollen (D-MD) and Young (R-IN). Provides 500,000 new housing vouchers and counseling services to help families with children move to areas of opportunity. See [factsheet](#).



A stronger Illinois begins at home

Stories on Housing from Constituents and Housing Actions Illinois Members:

360 Youth Services

Valerie Tawrel

With increased federal funding to fight youth homelessness as a result of the COVID-19, 360 Youth Services was able to introduce a new, non-congregate shelter program to provide safe emergency housing for young people. "Building a whole new program, adding staff and forging additional relationships with the community... we had to figure out how to provide shelter when there was no shelter," recounts Valerie Tawrel, 360 Youth Services' Director of Housing. Located in Naperville, the organization pushes back against the assumption that teenagers in the area don't face housing insecurity. "People think, 'oh, there's nothing going on in Naperville. They don't need any help.' But it's absolutely the opposite," Tawrel shared. The federal Homeless Assistance Grant funding from HUD is crucial for 360 Youth Services to provide this programming.

Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

"When you have a newborn baby, nobody wants to take you in," Amanda says.

At 18, Amanda was working two jobs, trying to cover rent for her studio apartment, afford utility bills, and still meet her other expenses. But when she had her first child, the numbers stopped adding up.

Threatened with eviction, she gave up her apartment and started couch surfing, but it wasn't easy to stay with other people while taking care of a baby—and then she became pregnant again. Although she figured out how to make ends meet and was able to receive housing assistance, it hasn't been enough. Today, rent increases are pricing her out of the apartment where she lives with her two children. She is searching for an apartment in their old neighborhood, but with housing costs still on the rise, the pickings are slim, and she's not sure she'll be able to find a home that she can afford.

The Art of the Two-Pager

Debra Susie (NC Balance of State CoC) and Andrea Carey (HMIS Lead)



NC COALITION to end
HOMELESSNESS

Why a Data Graphic

- Spotlight from Cicero
- Getting to know our State Legislature
- Increasing asks from media, local stakeholders, our network

Selecting Your Data

- Use what you can
 - Get comfortable with the limits (and with footnotes!)
 - Make the best of jurisdictions
- Use CoC-Specific and Affordable Housing data
 - Your HMIS (System Performance Measures)
 - NLIHC's Out of Reach Report
 - Local news and cost studies

HOUSING FIRST WORKS ✓

Even after prioritizing the most chronic cases, the Housing First model implemented across the state documented returns-to-homelessness of just 13%.



Know Your Audience

- Personalize to the Audience
 - Simplify stats
 - Avoid alphabet soup
- Developing the Message – and sticking to it
 - Unaffordable Housing is the culprit, not individuals
 - Beware of repeating your opposition's message
- Consult on Design
 - Create intentional spacing

**2 out of every 3 North Carolinians
experiencing homelessness last year
were homeless for the first time.'**

How we use the tool

- In-Person Meetings:
 - Wait until the end of the meeting
 - Who hands it over is just as important as the tool
 - Comment on the takeaway and demand a response
- Virtual Letters and Requests
 - Use to follow-up electronically to unanswered calls/emails or as a 'new' education opportunity

Our final product

<https://ncceh.org/public-policy-advocacy/>

2 out of every 3 North Carolinians experiencing homelessness last year were homeless for the first time.¹

There is increasing public awareness of the economic drivers for homelessness – including housing costs, inflation, and low wages. Four of ten renters in Union County paid more than 30% of their income on housing and utilities.²

It takes an hourly wage of more than \$29 to afford a home at the fair market rent in Union County. Problem is, the average wage for renter households in Union is less than \$17 an hour. It would take a 78% raise to be able to afford a fair market 2 bedroom.³

HOUSING FIRST WORKS ✓

Even after prioritizing the most chronic cases, the Housing First model implemented across the state documented returns-to-homelessness of just 13%.

Community agencies secure housing and offer supportive services – like mental health counseling, substance use treatment, and employment assistance – to keep their clients in stable homes.



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