Dear Members & Supporters

Where we live affects everything in our lives: our health, our access to education, our job opportunities, our ability to save money, how we raise our children, and what kind of future we build for ourselves and our families. At Housing Action Illinois, we want a future in which every Illinoisan, no matter their income, has a good, stable place to call home.

We are publishing this report in September 2020, amidst the COVID-19 public health crisis, economic downturn, and widespread social unrest in response to systemic racism. We are facing challenges both new and old. However, as we work to meet these challenges and build a better future, we must also reflect on the past and honor the work that has moved us forward. In 2019, we made significant strides toward our vision of an Illinois where everyone has a good place to call home. We are proud of our accomplishments, and we know they would not have been possible without collective action and strong partners from around the state.

Thank you for your support — you are helping us create a tomorrow in which our communities are not just surviving but thriving.

Sharon Legenza, Executive Director

Mary Lu Seidel, Co-Chair
Sheila Dodd, Co-Chair
POLICY ADVOCACY

Each year, we mobilize our members and allies to advocate for policies that help end homelessness and housing discrimination, create affordable rental housing, and promote sustainable home ownership. We aim to increase federal, state, and local investments in proven housing programs, as well as to develop new policy solutions. Working alongside strong allies, we had a number of key wins.

We successfully advocated for $200 million for affordable housing in the Illinois capital budget. Through direct funding and by leveraging other resources, these dollars will help people rent or buy homes as well as support innovative initiatives such as reentry housing programs and health + housing partnerships.

The Homeless Prevention Program helps people avoid experiencing homelessness by providing them with rental and utility assistance. We secured a $4 million—more than 80%—increase for the program, bringing its total funding to $9 million. We estimate this will support 6,500 households.
As co-chair of the Just Housing Initiative, we successfully advocated for protections from housing discrimination for people with arrest and conviction records in Cook County. The campaign brought together more than 100 organizations and leaders with lived experience, who shared their personal stories and helped plan campaign strategies. The protections went into effect at the end of 2019.

In 2018, we advocated for a law requiring Illinois to update its definition of an elevated blood lead level. In 2019, we secured $6 million in new funding to implement the rules, bringing total funding to approximately $10 million. As a result, an additional 6,000 children are newly eligible for resources including nurse care management and inspections to identify lead hazards in their

Click here to learn about other key wins and advocacy work in our 2019 General Assembly Session Wrap-Up
CAPACITY BUILDING

Through our Capacity Building program, we help nonprofit housing organizations build staff expertise and become more effective at their work, ensuring that agencies keep up with changing trends, new technology, and best practices. We offer workshops and one-on-one support to provide housing practitioners with the resources, knowledge, and skills they need to serve more families and help our communities thrive.

TRAINING & CONSULTING

Our team of expert Capacity Building Specialists design trainings that serve the unique needs of housing organizations. In 2019, more than 2,000 participants attended our in-person and virtual workshops.

We launched our Online Study Group in 2018 to help housing counselors prepare to take and pass the HUD Individual Certification Exam. This year, we took it national, drawing more than 420 participants from 39 states. Having certified housing counselors will help ensure more effective and standardized counseling services and more knowledgeable counselors.

Feedback from attendees has been very positive, with counselors reporting that they feel better prepared to take the exam after participating in the Online Study Group.

“Took the test the Tuesday after the study group ended and passed on the first try. The study group was indispensable in so many ways!”

- Karen Crump, Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California
As a HUD-Approved Housing Counseling Intermediary, we secure funding from HUD and pass it on to our affiliated housing counseling agencies. We provide assistance with administrative functions and help each agency ensure it meets program standards and client needs. With our support and resources, our affiliates are able to help more families find and keep good homes.

In 2019, we received $1.2 million from HUD—the 7th largest award in the nation—and distributed it to 33 housing counseling agencies in the

**Intermediary Affiliates**

Access Living, Chicago | Advantage Housing, Kokomo, IN | Brightpoint, Fort Wayne, IN | CDBG Operations Corporation, East St. Louis | CEFS Economic Opportunity Corporation, Effingham | Center for Changing Lives, Chicago | Central Detroit Christian Community Development, Detroit, MI | Community & Economic Development Association of Cook County, Chicago | Community Investment Corporation of Decatur, Decatur | Community Service Council of Northern Will County, Bolingbrook | Cornerstone Community Development Corporation, Ford Heights
AmeriCorps VISTA

We manage a network of AmeriCorps VISTA Members, who are placed at our member organizations across the state. VISTA Members work on a range of projects to fight poverty and end homelessness while building the capacity of their host organizations. Our 27 full-year VISTA Members and 25 VISTA Summer Associates recruited and managed 964 volunteers and raised more than $560,000 in cash and in-kind donations for their host sites.

“Now that I am a year out of VISTA, I see a great deal of how this experience catapulted my career. It gave me the experience needed to become a good job candidate, and I am able to utilize skills learned at CCH (Chicago Coalition for the Homeless) in my current role.”

- Veronica Cullinan, AmeriCorps VISTA, 2017-2019

Community Revitalization Challenge

The Community Revitalization Challenge (CRC) is a multi-year initiative to connect community-based organizations to financial institutions to design and launch projects that increase access to affordable housing in Illinois. We launched the first round of the CRC in 2018. During the second year, participants reached the final stages of developing their proposals and began seeking funding for their projects. Seven have received a total of $200,000 in
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Housing Justice + Racial Justice

Racial justice is foundational to our work at Housing Action Illinois. Expanding access to quality, affordable homes for everyone—in any community, regardless of race or ethnicity—is long overdue and an inextricable part of addressing systemic racism. As we explain our core issues, Housing Action Illinois aims to build awareness of the deep connections between racial justice, affordable housing, and ending homelessness. We are committed to advocating for policies and programs that advance equity.

Click here to explore our issue breakdowns

Storytelling for Change

To help residents of permanent supportive housing explore how they can tell their stories to make a difference, we facilitated a series of workshops in Mt. Vernon, Peoria, Rockford, Hillside, and Chicago in partnership with the Supportive Housing Providers Association. We also created a guide for supportive housing practitioners who are interested in helping facilitate storytelling workshops with their residents.

The stories of people who live in supportive housing can shed light on important issues, such as what it is like to experience homelessness or live with mental illness or a disability. Stories are an effective tool for change, helping people connect, understand different perspectives—and take action.

The Storytelling for Change workshops culminated in the publication of A Place to Call Home, which shares the experiences of Illinoisans who have been homeless in their own words.
Eviction in Illinois Policy Brief

Eviction is prevalent throughout Illinois. Our 2019 policy brief reviews statewide data from 2016 and finds that more than half (54 percent) of cases did not result in a negative determination, but the tenants still ended up with an eviction filing on the public record. This record is often a serious obstacle to finding a future home. Our brief suggests ways to address and prevent eviction throughout Illinois.

Racial Disparity in Homelessness Policy Brief

Black Illinoisans are eight times more likely to experience homelessness than White Illinoisans. Even among those in poverty, Black Illinoisans are more likely to experience homelessness than White Illinoisans. Our 2019 policy brief examines racial disparities in homelessness throughout Illinois and provides policy recommendations for addressing them.
Each year, housing professionals from around Illinois come together for our annual Housing Matters! conference. This year, 246 participants from 145 different organizations gathered to join us for workshops on policy advocacy, ending homelessness, housing counseling, and housing development, as well as a Community Revitalization Challenge breakfast and office hours. Governor J.B. Pritzker welcomed our guests with a personal video message, and we closed out the conference with an inspiring keynote address from Illinois Deputy Governor Sol Flores.
MEMBERS

Access Living, Chicago | Affordable Housing Corporation of Lake County, Libertyville

Housing Action Illinois has more than 160 members, including nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and corporations, all committed to protecting and expanding the availability of quality, affordable housing.
Thank You to Our 2019 Funders & Conference Sponsors


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FINANCIALS

Revenue: $2,660,594
  Government Grants: $1,973,296
  Foundation Grants: $200,526
  Corporate Contributions: $156,200
  Other: $289,807
  Membership Dues: $40,765

Expenses: $2,641,418
  Programs: $2,532,936
    Subgrants/Stipends: $1,498,271
  Fundraising: $29,926
  Management and General: $78,556

Total Assets: $1,303,042
  Current Liabilities: $629,086
  Total Net Assets: $673,956

59% of our program funds were given to other organizations as subgrants.

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