Everyone needs an affordable, stable place to call home.

That’s why we unite 160+ organizations across Illinois in protecting and expanding access to affordable housing.
Housing Action Illinois

A stronger Illinois begins at home

Public Education & Organizing
- AmeriCorps VISTA Network

Capacity Building
- HUD Intermediary

Policy Advocacy
Faces of Homelessness
Speak Up!

[Image of a man smiling, presumably associated with Speak Up! campaign by CSH (The Source for Housing Solutions)]
Community Writing Project

STARTING A WRITING GROUP: THE BASICS

Writing groups can take place in any welcoming community setting that can provide a quiet room with table and chairs. Usually when a writing group is initiated, participants and the hosting organization arrange for the group to meet weekly for around eight to twelve weeks in order for participants to engage in a process of...

READ MORE

BECOMING A WORKSHOP FACILITATOR

Writing workshops can be taught by anyone who has had experience participating in a writing workshop and is committed to popular education. The key to being an effective writing workshop teacher is a deep respect for the dignity and experience of those participating in the workshop, the desire to learn from the writers as much...

READ MORE

DEVELOPING WRITING PROMPTS

At each session the group members have conversations about topics that are important to their lives, and in the course of discussion ideas for writing topics emerge. When it comes time to write, the teacher suggests one or two writing prompts based on particularly compelling issues the group has discussed, and also solicits writing prompts...

READ MORE
TELLING STORIES AS AN ORGANIZATION
How are you already telling stories?

In conversation

Online

In print

Grants & program proposals

Events

Fundraising
Who is telling your stories?

- Staff
- Clients
- Volunteers
- Board
- Funders
- Media
- Community members
Where do your stories come from?

You  Coworkers
Board  Clients
Community  Funders
Who are you telling stories to?

- Clients
- Community
- Funders
- Landlords
- Legislators
- Peer organizations
Why?
GATHERING STORIES
For sale, baby shoes, never worn.

- Ernest Hemingway
"I've never been evicted. I've never even been served an eviction notice. But my application was denied."

- John, Tenant

*Prejudged: The Stigma of Eviction Records*
Kaya, 4, Tokyo, Japan

James Mollison, Where Children Sleep
Ryan, 13, Pennsylvania, USA
What Is Affordable Housing?
NYC EDITION

The Center for Urban Pedagogy
The Center for Urban Pedagogy
#ILBudgetNow to End Homelessness

**WHY WE NEED**

**IF SENATE BILL 6 BECOMES LAW**

Basic human needs will be met with FY 18 appropriations.

- Operating Grants for Shelters & Transitional Housing: $15,387,700
- Grants for Homeless Prevention: $4,977,500
- Operating Grants for Shelters & Emergency Services for Homeless Youth: $5,550,000
- Services for People in Supportive Housing: $32,727,700
- Rental Subsidies for Extremely Low Income Households: $42,000,000
- Grants/Loans to Create & Preserve Affordable Housing Units: $55,000,000

**Total:** $149,638,900 (already $0 provided)

**IF THERE IS NO BUDGET**

Illinois fails some of our most vulnerable residents.

- Thousands of more families, individuals & youth experiencing homelessness & struggling to afford & maintain housing.
- More lost jobs & program closures at nonprofit agencies throughout the state.

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1. Who needs to know?
2. What do you need to know?
3. What do you need to bring?
Time to talk
• What was your childhood like?
• Where did you grow up?
• What is your earliest memory of home?
• What is a home to you?
• Who is someone who has been really important in your life?
• What did your (daughter, mother) say when they heard about ____?
• How are you different now than before?
• What has helped you most as you face challenges?
• What does your future hold?
• How would you like to be remembered?
Photographer Etiquette

1. Establish a dialogue
2. Read the room
3. Participate in the environment
Consent

• Explicit vs. implicit
• Release forms & informed consent
Documentation

Transcription

Story bank

Active use
STORIES IN ACTION
Northwest Springfield Haven

- Supportive housing provider
- Springfield, IL; opened in 2017
- Manages “The Haven”—an apartment complex with 30 units of permanent housing and supportive services for people experiencing homelessness and dealing with mental illness.
- Residents access wrap-around supports that are specialized to their individual recovery plan and build the skills needed to reach their goals, such as maintaining a job or living independently.
Mary

• 37 years old; 7 months at The Haven
• 3 years ago, Mary’s struggle with chronic depression and opioid dependency led to her three children being removed from her care and placed with her mother
• Since then, she has been in and out of homeless shelters and unable to maintain a steady job
• Mary came to The Haven with 3 goals: Stay housed, keep a job, and rebuild a relationship with her children
• She recently celebrated 6 months of sobriety, regularly meets with a counselor, works part-time at a nearby coffee shop, and plans to take a class at a community college in the fall
• Mary sees her children more often and hosts family game nights at her apartment
In Mary’s Words

“I’m really proud of my place [at The Haven] and want to show it off. I haven’t had that in a long time. It makes me feel good to have somewhere I can invite my children or have a friend over.”
“I never used to be able to keep a job. Every time I’d get hired somewhere, it would only be a matter of time before I’d say something wrong or show up late—suddenly my three strikes were up and I’d be out another paycheck. But [knocks on wood] I’ve had my job now for months and I plan on keeping it! I can stay focused when I don’t have to worry about where I’m going home to at the end of the day.”
In Mary’s Words

“"I am so grateful for The Haven. Having this apartment has helped me be independent and build a better future—where I can really be there for my children. Here, my life is back on track."

Once upon a time…
**Value**
Start with shared values, whether explicit or implicit

- Families are a cornerstone of society, and every child should grow up with opportunities to succeed.
- Friday—Mary’s favorite night of the week—is game night. She loves playing board games with her children after helping them with their homework.

**Problem**
Frame problems as a threat to our vision and values & be careful with facts

When you’re struggling to afford rent, it’s difficult to manage other obstacles, such as mental illness, addiction, finding a job, or caring for a family. High rents and a lack of housing assistance put low-income households one unexpected expense away from homelessness.

**Solution**
Pivot quickly to positive solutions that solve the problem

If Mary’s rent was more affordable or she could access emergency rental assistance, a temporary loss of income may not have placed her family in such a precarious position. Supportive housing gave Mary’s family a second chance by providing a stable place for Mary to focus on staying healthy and keeping a job.

**Action**
Give your audience a concrete action

Call your representative and tell them to help stabilize low-income families by making funds for rental assistance and supportive housing a campaign priority.
Mary’s Story: Annual Report

Mary came to The Haven with three goals: stay housed, keep a job, and rebuild a relationship with her children. After seven months in supportive housing, Mary is on track to meet all of her ambitions.

Before coming to The Haven, Mary worked overtime every week to afford a 2-bedroom home for her family. When she suddenly lost her job, Mary’s depression returned. She started abusing opioids and tried everything she could to make ends meet. At the beginning of the next month, Mary was served an eviction notice and her children were placed in their grandmother’s care. Mary spent the next two years trying to find stability, but she struggled to maintain a job and stay healthy without a place to stay every night.

Mary now works part-time at a nearby coffee shop and plans to take a class at a community college in the fall. “I’ve had my job now for months and I plan on keeping it,” says Mary. “I can stay focused when I don’t have to worry about where I’m going home to at the end of the day.”

Mary recently celebrated six months of sobriety and has started hosting her children at her Haven apartment. Every Friday, they come over for a family game night, where they play board games and talk about what they’re learning in school. As Mary explained, “I’m really proud of my place and want to show it off. It makes me feel good to have somewhere I can invite my children or have a friend over.”

“Having my apartment at The Haven has helped me be independent and build a better future—one where I can really be there for my children. Here, my life is back on track.”
Before coming to The Haven, Mary worked overtime every week to afford a 2-bedroom home for herself and her three children. When she suddenly lost her job, Mary’s depression returned. Struggling to find a new job, stay healthy, and keep a home for her family, Mary was evicted and lost custody of her children. After two difficult years in and out of homeless shelters, Mary came to live at The Haven. Seven months later, Mary meets with a counselor regularly, has a part-time job, and hosts family game nights at her apartment every week. Supportive housing gave Mary the opportunity to be independent and build a future where she can be there for her children.

Make a gift to help more people like Mary reach their goals
Mary’s Story: Social Media

**Facebook Post:**
Supportive housing gave Mary the opportunity to focus on managing her mental illness, finding and keeping a job, and rebuilding relationships with her children. With a stable place to live, residents at The Haven access services and work on building the skills they need to reach their goals. Learn more about Mary’s story and supportive housing...

"Having my apartment has helped me be independent and build a better future for my family. Here, my life is back on track."
- Mary, current resident at The Haven

**Tweet:**
#SupportiveHousing helped Mary focus on her health, employment, & family. Learn how The Haven helps people reach their goals......
Mary’s Story: Media Spotlight

We Can End Homelessness. Supportive Housing is a Key Step.

After two years of cycling in and out of homeless shelters, Mary came to live at The Haven. Finally, she had a stable place to rebuild her life. Mary’s main priorities were to stay off the streets, keep a job, and restore a relationship with her children. After just seven months in supportive housing, Mary is taking care of her mental health, has a steady part-time job, and even started hosting family game nights every week. But, according to the Executive Director at Northwest Springfield Haven, Mary’s success story isn’t an anomaly.

Supportive housing combines a stable place to live with access to supportive services, so residents like Mary can work on building the skills needed to reach their goals. (...
Breakout Groups
Questions?