

Our Policy Roadmap for 2026

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A stronger Illinois begins at home

Policy & Advocacy Team

Our speakers for today:



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Organizer**



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Housing Action Illinois

- Statewide coalition that has been aiming to **protect and expand good, safe, affordable housing** for nearly 40 years.
- We bring together 200 member organizations that believe in an Illinois where **everyone has a stable, affordable place to call home.**
- Our goals are to increase homeownership opportunities, expand affordable housing, and effectively end homelessness.

Our Mission

To increase and preserve the supply of quality, affordable, accessible homes in Illinois for low-and moderate-income families and individuals.

Our Values

Housing is a human right. We believe in a society that promotes basic human needs such as decent and safe housing for all of its members. Public policy and government spending should ensure that the basic housing needs of all people are met. Housing Action Illinois is committed to work that focuses on advancing equitable community development and affirmatively furthering racial justice.

Our Vision

To create an environment where all Illinois residents, particularly people with the lowest incomes, have a voice in housing policy and community development. We seek to bring together community stakeholders such as residents, businesses, and government to work together to increase the supply and availability of affordable housing across the state.

Public Policy Advocacy

We mobilize members & allies to **advocate for investments & policies** to:

- **Help end homelessness**
- **Create affordable rental housing**
- **Promote sustainable homeownership**

Capacity Building

By providing **training, consulting, & resources**, we help housing organizations better serve our communities

- **HUD Housing Counseling Intermediary**
- **AmeriCorps VISTA Network**

Education & Organizing

We **build awareness & activate change** by sharing information & stories with policymakers, nonprofits, & media

- **Annual conference**
- **Working groups & publications**

2026 Policy Agenda

Our year-round collaboration with other advocates, our members and allies, direct service providers, and people with lived experience of housing instability informs this annual policy agenda, which serves as a roadmap for our advocacy work.

Our 2026 Policy Agenda includes a variety of federal and state level initiatives focused on:

- **Protecting federal housing programs**
- **Ending homelessness**
- **Expanding affordable rental housing & protecting renters**
- **Promoting sustainable homeownership**

Protecting federal housing programs

The Latest: HUD Spending Bill for FY26 released on 1/20. House approved on 1/22. Schedule for Senate vote and and being signed into law unclear to due to debate on Homeland Security Bill.

\$7.3 billion increase over the previous fiscal year, for a **total of \$77.3 billion for HUD programs.**

- Funding for Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and other tenant-based assistance should be sufficient to ensure the renewals.
- Additional funding for Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs) allowing Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to use TPVs to help transition families who currently receive rental assistance through the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program to new assistance.
- Flat funding for Housing Counseling, HOME, Fair Housing and many other programs.
- Other programs have small increases; other programs received cuts.

Protecting federal housing programs

Homeless Assistance Grants

- Funded at \$4.4 billion, a \$336 million increase.
- The bill also includes language that requires HUD to renew Continuum of Care (CoC) grants expiring in the first quarter of 2026 (January-March) for 12 months, and creates a timeline for HUD to renew expiring grants throughout the year, if HUD has not issued awards under a new Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).
- Additionally, pursuant to preliminary court order, HUD announced the FY24-25 CoC NOFO is open to process all eligible renewals.

Protecting federal housing programs

Ongoing concerns (partial list):

- Intersection of housing and attacks on immigrants
- HUD staffing reductions
- Restrictions on use of fair housing funding
- Weakening of Community Reinvestment Act
- Adopted and proposed (e.g., eliminating disparate-impact fair housing regulation) Executive Orders, rules and guidance, including anticipated (e.g., on public charge and PHA time limits/work requirements) proposals, on numerous issues

Get more info:

- National Low Income Housing Coalition: <https://nlihc.org/>
- National Alliance to End Homelessness at: <https://endhomelessness.org/>

Protecting federal housing programs

How We are Doing this Work: Since the Trump administration returned to office, we have significantly ramped up the time and resources we are spending on federal level advocacy. For example:

- Additional meetings and regular communication with members of Congress
 - *Including Sen. Durbin, Rep. Quigley, Rep. LaHood, and others*
- Working with members and allies to understand, communicate and oppose the impact of spending and policy changes, both implemented and proposed
 - *E.g. with homeless service providers, Public Housing Authorities, housing counseling agencies, fair housing organizations and others*
- Responding to specific crises
 - *Such as the January 2025 “pause” of federal funding and the changes to the Continuum of Care Program for homeless services currently subject to litigation*
- Working more with national organizations, coordinating allies around the country, as well as fellow advocates and legislative allies at the State Capitol on state response plans
- Additional media outreach through reports
 - *Out of Reach, The Gap, Not Even a Place in Line*

Ending homelessness

Protect & Increase Funding in FY 27 State Budget

Increase of \$28.5 million for HOME Illinois

\$14 million increase for the Emergency and Transitional Housing (ETH) program

\$7.5 million increase across the three line items for Supportive Housing Services

\$5 million increase for the Homeless Prevention Program to serve 1,350 additional households

\$2 million increase to fund the Homeless Youth Program

As well as:

- Educating and advocating with state leaders about potential need for additional state funds, depending on the federal budget and awards for the CoC Program
- Support funding for additional programs that help people acquire and maintain a home
- Responding to Governor Pritzker's proposed budget (to be released on February 18)
- Advocating for progressive revenue solutions (more on later)

Partners:

- *Chicago Coalition to End Homelessness, Illinois Shelter Alliance, Supportive Housing Providers Association, and homeless service providers all around the state*

Stay tuned for info on how to support appropriations bills, HB 4568 (LaPointe) and SB 2969 (Johnson)

Ending homelessness

Stop Criminalizing People Experiencing Homelessness (HB 1429)

Chief Sponsor: Representative Kevin Olickal

- **Background:** 2024 U.S. Supreme Court made a decision in the *Johnson v. Grants Pass* case that it was not cruel or unusual punishment for people who are unsheltered to be arrested or fined.
- We are aware of at least 30 municipalities that have passed ordinances with so-called “camping bans” that can result in fines and arrests for people who are unsheltered.
- **Legislation:**
 - This bill protects people from being fined or criminalized because they are have no place to call home.
 - Clarifies that other illegal activities such as trespassing is not covered
 - Requires that before local government before moving someone who is unsheltered they provide a 72 hours notice unless removal is necessary for health and safety or main access to the property
 - Ask that local government make a good faith effort to connect to social services and other homeless resources services

Ending homelessness

How we do this work:

- Partnering with other advocates, service providers and people with lived experience.
- Building relationships and making the case with the governor's office, IDHS and the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness.
- Developing champions and supporters in the Illinois General Assembly to support budget and legislative issues.
- Frequent discussions with Illinois' 19 Continuum of Care Networks of homeless service providers to provide support and inform our policy priorities.
- Securing and being available to the media to talk the shortage of affordable housing and what's needed to prevent and end homelessness.
- Doing research and surveys on issues, such as what local governments have so-called "camping bans" and the impact of budget decisions.
- Endorsement opportunities, sign-on letters and action alerts.

Expanding affordable rental housing & protecting renters

Pass the Community Safety Through Stable Homes Act (SB2264)

Chief Sponsor: Senator Karina Villa

- **Background:**
 - This legislation builds on five years of organizing and advocacy to challenge local CFNOs across Illinois.
 - So-called “crime free housing and nuisance ordinances” puts civil rights at risk by allowing municipalities to force landlords to evict a tenant for mere perceived crime of the tenant or someone associated with them and for calls to emergency services. These evictions can be triggered without appropriate notice to the tenant or right to be heard.
 - CFNOs have a disparate impact on black and brown renters and puts survivors of domestic violence, people with mental health conditions, and people with disabilities at particular risk.

Expanding affordable rental housing & protecting renters

Pass the Community Safety Through Stable Homes Act (SB2264)

Chief Sponsor: Senator Karina Villa

- **The Legislation:**

- Protects renters from enforcement based on calls for emergency services.
- Protects renters from being evicted based on mere association with guests or other tenants.
- Establishes due process for renters by requiring notice by municipalities of enforcement and allows renters to be heard.

- **How we're doing this work:**

- Working in coalition with Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, Chicago Coalition to End Homelessness, Open Communities, as well as advocates for survivors of domestic violence and others
- Working with people directly harmed by these ordinances to testify at legislative hearings and speak to the media.
- Engaging in outreach to tenant organizers and legal aid attorneys to identify harm.
- March 2025 coalition report, *The Discriminatory Enforcement of Illinois' Crime-Free and Nuisance Property Ordinances*.

Expanding affordable rental housing & protecting renters

Pass the Rental Affordability and Fee Transparency Act

Chief Sponsors: Representative Nabeel Syed and Senator Mike Simmons (bills to be filed)

- **Background:**

- Throughout Illinois and the nation, renters are being faced with surprise costs beyond rent that make it harder to afford rent, compare list prices, and financially plan.
- Surprise fees can add hundreds to monthly rental costs, and The Federal Trade Commission reported that across the country, surprise fees can cost renters tens of billions of dollars annually

- **The Legislation:**

- Prohibits 11 junk fees.
- Requires that landlords clearly disclose any non-optional fees on the first page of the rental agreement and list pricing.
- Prohibits landlords from charging more than one of a security deposit, move in, or move out fee.

- **How we're doing this work:**

- Working in coalition with partners such as A Just Harvest, SHPA, Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing and others to pass a bill that protects renters from surprise costs and addresses unnecessary fees that increase rent.

Expanding affordable rental housing & protecting renters

Protect Public Housing Residents and Voucher Holders from Time Limits and Work Requirements (HB 4377 and SB to be filed)

Chief Sponsors: Representative Maurice West and Senator Ram Villivalam

- **Background:**

- Forthcoming proposed rules for Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) from the Trump Administration will threaten vulnerable Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher and project-based Section 8 tenants with time limits and work requirements.
- PHAs and owners could require up to a forty-hour work week with burdensome reporting requirements and no supportive services (e.g., transportation, child care, etc.).
- PHAs and owners could mandate termination of housing family benefits after as little as after two years with minimal hardship exceptions.

- **The Legislation:**

- Preempts such a federal rule and prohibits requirements unless required by federal law.
- Carves out Moving To Work (MTW) PHAs that already have work requirements.

- **How we're doing this work:**

- Working in coalition with Impact for Equity and National Housing Law Project to proactively protect tenants.

Promoting sustainable homeownership

Property Tax Delinquency Reform for Homeowners

Chief Sponsors: Stay tuned for chief sponsors and bill numbers: Key legislators are Senator Celina Villanueva, Representative Curtis Tarver and Representative Will Guzzardi

Background:

- In response to the U.S. Supreme Court's *Tyler v. Hennepin* decision, we are advocating for property tax sale reforms that protect homeowners' equity and prevent unnecessary displacement.
- Under Illinois' current tax sale system, people can lose their homes and all accumulated equity over relatively small tax debts.

The legislation we are pursuing also:

- Extends the period of time property owner has to "redeem" the property by paying the outstanding taxes to 3 years from current 2.5 years
- Improves notices requirements to provide greater clarity to property owners of the timeline, consequences for noncompliance, and potential resources to help homeowners.
- Reduces role of tax purchasers in tax sale in Cook County, which will significantly lower the cost of redemption.

Promoting sustainable homeownership

How we are doing this work:

- We have been working on this issue since 2021. Our 2021 research, covered by WBEZ and others, found that the vast majority of tax sale evictions by the Cook County Sheriff occur in majority-Black communities.
- Recent press coverage: Illinois is the last state still unlawfully stripping wealth from homeowners in tax foreclosures, Chicago Sun-Times, May 16, 2025:
<https://chicago.suntimes.com/the-watchdogs/2025/05/16/tax-foreclosures-illinois-home-ownership-velma-lewis-cook-county>
- Partners include: Chicago Community Trust, Cook County President's Office, Cook County Treasurer's Office and Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago

Even more priorities

Here are some additional priorities we are supporting:

- **Progressive State Revenue**

As a member of the **Illinois Revenue Alliance** and **Responsible Budget Coalition**, we advocate for progressive and equitable revenue streams for the State of Illinois to better fund programs that are essential to basic human needs and help individuals and families thrive.

- **Resources for Senior Home Repair**

We are members of **Fix Our Homes Illinois**, a broad-based coalition dedicated to ensuring that Illinois provides low-income older homeowners the resources they need to age safely, comfortably, and affordably at home.

- **Federal and IL CRA**

We co-lead the **IL CRA Coalition**, a group of organizations dedicated to protecting and strengthening the federal and the Illinois Community Reinvestment Acts as tools for building more equitable communities and addressing the racial wealth gap.

Get Involved & Take Action

2026 Policy Agenda

<https://bit.ly/2026haiagenda>



Brand New Action Center

housingactionil.org/takeaction



Sign up for Action Alerts here!

Looking ahead:

2026 Housing Matters Conference

September 29-30, 2026 | Champaign, IL

Questions & Discussion

Contact us!

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