

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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This statement can be attributed to Doug Kenshol, co-founder of the Illinois Shelter Alliance and Executive Director of South Suburban PADS.

On behalf of the Illinois Shelter Alliance, I want to thank Governor Pritzker for his transformative and lifesaving leadership.

We applaud Governor Pritzker for including preventing and ending homelessness as one of the key budget priorities in his fiscal year 2024 budget proposal, as evidenced by the \$350 million in state and federal funding dedicated to the HOME Illinois plan.

Members of our coalition especially appreciate that the summary of the HOME Illinois plan states that it includes, "\$155 million to support unhoused populations seeking shelter and services, inclusive of \$55 million to the Emergency and Transitional Housing Program."

In addition, the Governor has proposed increased general revenue spending and other funding increases for priorities that prevent people from ever needing shelter, as well as being able to more easily access permanent housing, so that individuals and families are in shelter for as brief a time as possible.

These investments include funding for homelessness prevention, shelter diversion, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, street outreach, medical respite and other critical needs.

Governor Pritzker's leadership will save lives.

This proposed funding will not end homelessness in Illinois, but it will generate a great deal of momentum towards that end.

At present, every day 3,000 to 4,000 people cannot access safe shelter in Illinois. This includes women fleeing domestic violence, families with young children, veterans, and people who are medically vulnerable. Their lives and health are at risk and many will eventually be hospitalized due to frostbite, flu and other preventable illnesses.

Many served by the Emergency and Transitional Housing Program are children. The most recent state data shows that 1 out of every 4 people served by funded agencies was a child under the age of 18. About half of those children were 5 years old or younger.

[The State of Illinois' own December 2022 analysis](#) shows that we need 4,551 additional shelter beds across the state, a 67% increase. To make matters worse, during the remainder of 2023, we are at serious risk of losing up to 1,600 beds as federal pandemic relief funding comes to an end.

We will continue to advocate with the General Assembly to support the Governor's proposed increases and the additional resources needed to make sure everyone in Illinois has a home.

Our request for \$61 million in Emergency and Transitional Housing Program funding was originally outlined in a [letter](#) sent to Governor Pritzker in December. The funding request has been endorsed by over 255 organizations, including: the Illinois Association of Medicaid Health Plans, Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Catholic Conference of Illinois, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Cook County Health, Housing Action Illinois, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Illinois Shelter Alliance, and many other health, religious and housing advocates. Today's proposal represents significant progress towards meeting immediate crisis needs.

Governor Pritzker has stated that "[shelter is not a privilege—it's a right.](#)" Now, we need the General Assembly's assistance to approve the funding the Governor has requested.

We look forward to working with the Governor Pritzker's administration, members of the General Assembly and others to fully develop the details of the HOME Illinois plan to ensure that resources effectively reach those who need shelter and housing.

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[The Illinois Shelter Alliance](#), formed in 2022, is a coalition of more than 50 emergency shelter and transitional housing agencies, as well as their allies, who are advocating for a more dignified, supportive and effective crisis housing system for people experiencing homelessness in Illinois.