

Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Announces \$5 Million In Funding For Emergency Shelter Expansion

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CHICAGO - As the colder months approach, the demand for shelter is growing and many shelter providers are already approaching maximum capacity. The increased demand could create difficulties for shelters, putting some of the most vulnerable Illinois residents at risk. To address this concern, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) announced today an additional \$5 million is being invested to support the expansion of access to emergency shelters during the winter months.

“I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: shelter is not a privilege—it’s a right,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “With the winter season well underway and snowy days on our horizon, we are investing \$5 million to ensure that no Illinoisan goes without the shelter they need to stay warm, safe, and healthy. This additional funding will help emergency shelters expand their operations—keeping a roof over the head of every Illinoisan who needs it.”

“The shelter and comfortable housing many of us have is a dream for far too many others experiencing homelessness,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “This \$5 million in additional funding will help address the chronic need for housing by expanding access to emergency shelters during the harshest season of the year. Here in Illinois, we will continue to mobilize every resource and utilize every tool at our disposal to fight homelessness and support our most vulnerable residents—no matter the season, no matter the circumstance.”

In September 2021, Governor Pritzker signed an Executive Order (EO) to Fight Homelessness in Illinois. Consistent with the EO, the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (IOPEH) was established to provide administrative support and infrastructure for the Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness and the Community Advisory Council on Homelessness. The goal of these programs is to end chronic homelessness in Illinois. To this end, [The Home Illinois: Illinois’ Plan to Prevent & End Homelessness](#) was released in June 2022.

“It is imperative that we capably provide shelter for those in need, especially during the winter months. Addressing this crisis requires a combination of short-term and long-term initiatives, and today’s announcement is an immediate and necessary step to help those experiencing homelessness,” said Grace B. Hou, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services. “The goal of today’s increase in funding is to expand capacity to serve more households this winter and meet the anticipated demand. The funding will enhance existing Emergency and Transitional Housing Programs provider contracts.”

“A critical step in supporting people experiencing homelessness is providing safe and accessible shelter,” said Christine Haley, Illinois Homelessness Chief. We are allocating this funding to ensure communities across the state meet the essential need of protecting individuals and families with children from winter in Illinois.”

“On behalf of people experiencing homelessness all over the state, I want to thank Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Human Services for addressing the current crisis,” said Doug Kenshol, Executive Director for South Suburban PADS and Co-Founder of the Illinois Shelter Alliance, expressed gratitude.

“Emergency shelters are full and there are currently over 700 people on waiting lists in the areas of Suburban Cook, Lake, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, and Will Counties including families fleeing domestic violence, Veterans, and people with disabilities. This funding will save lives this winter. Going forward, we look forward to working collaboratively with the Governor and IDHS leadership to address the long-term shortage of over 4,000 emergency shelter beds across the State of Illinois.”

“The additional state funding that IDHS is providing will help emergency shelter providers serve additional people at a time when most all of the federal government resources that housed people during the COVID-19 pandemic have been exhausted, but the need for agencies serving people without a home has not lessened,” said Bob Palmer, Policy Director for Housing Action Illinois.

Anyone seeking more information about the services and supports that may be available can visit <http://dhs.illinois.gov/helpishere> and select "Shelter". Additionally, you can call 1-833-2-FIND-HELP or text the word "SHELTER" to 552020.