

2024

# Department of Family and Support Services

American Rescue Plan Act Mid-Year Impact Book



MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON  
ROAD TO RECOVERY PLAN  
CITY OF CHICAGO



### ■ Table of Contents

---



---

<b>1. Letter from Commissioner Brandie Knazze</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. DFSS Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Gender-Based Violence Division Overview</b> .....	<b>7</b>
a. Spotlight: Emergency Fund for GBV Survivors .....	<b>10</b>
b. Spotlight: GBV Legal Services .....	<b>12</b>
<b>4. Homeless Division Overview</b> .....	<b>15</b>
a. Spotlight: Rapid Rehousing .....	<b>17</b>
b. Spotlight: Shelter Capital Improvement Efforts .....	<b>19</b>
<b>5. Human Services Division Overview</b> .....	<b>21</b>
a. Spotlight: 2-1-1 Metro Chicago.....	<b>24</b>
b. Spotlight: Chicago Empowerment Fund (formerly known as Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot) .....	<b>26</b>
<b>6. Workforce Division Overview</b> .....	<b>29</b>
a. Spotlight: SPRING Forward: Re-entry Employment and Housing Navigation .....	<b>32</b>
<b>7. Youth Division Overview</b> .....	<b>34</b>
a. Spotlight: Year-round Employment Program and Chicago Youth Service Corps.....	<b>37</b>
b. Spotlight: Service Coordination and Navigation (SCaN) .....	<b>40</b>
<b>8. Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>43</b>



### November 2024

Dear Valued Community Partner,

I am so proud to share the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) 2024 Mid-Year Impact Book. This report is a celebration of the impact we have had across our program divisions and a spotlight of critical ARPA-funded programs that were launched and expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic intensified the needs of our residents, prompting the City of Chicago to respond quickly. We witnessed the struggle faced by families during the pandemic which led DFSS to receive initial ARPA allocation for critical services and programs. This report highlights the dedication and resilience of our DFSS staff, community partners, and the Chicago residents we serve each day. Some of the key efforts include:

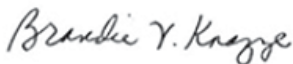
- **Youth Employment:** Employing 27,793 youth through the 2024 One Summer Chicago summer jobs program with the addition of ARPA funding, a 35% increase from 2022 to 2024. We prioritized hiring homeless/unstably housed youth, those in foster care, justice-involved, living with a disability and young people out of school and/or out of work. Additionally, over 4,500 youth participated in our year-round jobs program.
- **Rapid Rehousing:** Housing 1,718 households experiencing homelessness, 35% of which were unsheltered prior to housing. Over 600 of those who exited the program moved to permanent housing.
- **SPRING Forward:** Launching an employment and housing support program for returning residents that has provided 199 participants with rental assistance subsidies for 12 months and housing navigation services. 140 residents out of 199 have been stably housed for at least 30 days. Moreover, 229 participants are working a transitional job, and 101 participants have been placed in permanent employment.
- **Emergency Fund for GBV Survivors:** Providing over 5,000 survivors escaping violent situations with \$1,000 in one-time financial assistance payments.
- **Guaranteed Income Program:** Launching the first iteration of the city's guaranteed income program in 2022, providing \$500 a month to 5,000 individuals for one year. This program demonstrated that a large-scale cash assistance program can be carried out responsibly and efficiently.

Looking ahead, I'm proud to continue this excellent work through 2025. Our commitment to leveraging data to drive impact, reporting, and process improvement remains at the forefront. We engage deeply with our delegate agencies, collaborating to celebrate success, and pinpoint areas for growth. We are grateful for Mayor Brandon Johnson's support and investment in critical programs that uplift Chicagoans.

At DFSS, our goal is to ensure that when Chicagoans are in need, they find a welcoming, responsive, and efficient system of support – one where there is no wrong door to accessing services in our recovery from the pandemic. It is an honor and a privilege for me to do this work with the amazing team at DFSS.

Thank you for your continued partnership and dedication to our shared mission.

Sincerely,



Brandie V. Knazze  
Commissioner  
Department of Family and Support Services



### Department of Family & Support Services Introduction

As the City of Chicago’s primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. DFSS’s priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans’ lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS’ resources responsibly and effectively

**DFSS Mission Statement**

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families with resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

The Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) played a pivotal role in supporting Chicagoans during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the need across the city, DFSS leveraged American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds through the Mayor’s Road to Recovery Plan to address challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, launching and expanding existing programs and services. This report details DFSS’ pandemic response across DFSS’ program divisions, the impact of critical ARPA-funded programs, and their implications for the City’s future.



### Pandemic Response

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it an urgent need for programs and services to increase economic mobility, housing stability, and community safety for Chicago Residents. DFSS used ARPA funding to support the diverse needs of vulnerable populations across multiple policy pillars. Working with a wide range of community-based organizations to strategically allocate funding across divisions to serve these populations, DFSS administered 20 out of the City’s 50 ARPA-funded community initiatives across the following City of Chicago Road to Recovery policy pillars: Community Safety, Housing and Homelessness Supports, Human Rights and Arts & Culture, Youth & Economy, and Mental Health and Wellness. The following is the ARPA funding allocation across the City’s policy pillars as of June 2024:

### Current DFSS ARPA allocations as of June 2024

Policy Pillar	ARPA Funding Allocation
<p><b>Community Safety</b></p> <p>Focuses on programs that address the root causes of violence and create lasting, positive relationships in the community</p>	\$41,601,870.90
<p><b>Housing and Homeless Supports</b></p> <p>Focuses on investments in housing and neighborhoods which will contribute to a more equitable city</p>	\$41,863,226.00
<p><b>Youth and Economy</b></p> <p>Focuses on programs that lead to increased opportunities for social and economic mobility</p>	\$168,961,846.44
<p><b>Human Rights and Culture</b></p> <p>Focuses on arts and culture investments which are fundamental components of healthy communities, providing social, educational, and economic benefits that shape people’s lives and neighborhoods</p>	\$13,137,000.00
<p><b>Mental Health and Wellness</b></p> <p>Focuses on investments in health and human services and in trauma-informed public health systems which will contribute to a more equitable city</p>	\$7,249,636.89
<p><b>Total DFSS ARPA Funding Allocation</b></p>	<b>\$272,813,580.23</b>



### Prioritizing Recovery

DFSS strategically directed ARPA-funded resources and services to populations and areas most affected by the pandemic, ensuring that aid reached those with the greatest need. DFSS utilized various methods or processes to assess need and prioritize funds during the pandemic. These included:

- **Community Vulnerability Index Scores:** The City of Chicago identified community areas that were disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and were vulnerable to barriers to COVID-19 vaccine uptake. Vulnerabilities were defined as a combination of sociodemographic factors, epidemiological factors, occupational factors, and cumulative COVID-19 burden. Each Chicago zip code and community area received a single weighted score. The higher the score, the more vulnerable the geographic area and thus the population in that area (<https://data.cityofchicago.org/Health-Human-Services/Chicago-COVID-19-Community-Vulnerability-Index-CCV/xhc6-88s9/data>).
- **Historically Marginalized Chicago Communities:** These areas were primarily on the South and West sides that experienced greater economic and financial instability. These community areas typically include Black and Brown populations and had higher CCVI scores.
- **Priority Populations:** These populations already are served by DFSS program divisions. These priority populations included returning residents who were recently incarcerated, youth ages 14-24, especially unemployed or justice-involved youth, survivors of gender-based or domestic violence, and individuals at-risk or currently experiencing homelessness.

The availability of ARPA funds made it possible for DFSS to address the immediate needs of Chicagoans during the pandemic to ensure safety and health for all. DFSS launched innovative programs and expanded existing services citywide, especially for vulnerable Chicagoans highly susceptible to health, job, and economic insecurity.





## Gender-Based Violence Division Overview

The primary goal of the Division on Gender-Based Violence (DGBV) is to enhance the safety and increase the well-being of survivors of gender-based violence through delegate agencies that provide direct services. DFSS is focused on raising awareness about and preventing gender-based violence (GBV), coordinating access to information, and providing impactful services.

Current DGBV funding sustains community-based agencies to operate the 24/7 Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline, and to provide advocacy, counseling and case management, legal services, services to youth survivors, hotel and rapid rehousing, cash assistance, monitored child visitation services, and other support services. DGBV works with city and community partners to raise awareness about and offers education on GBV for better screening, response, and coordination of services.

### DGBV Pandemic Response

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, GBV survivors suffered privately in the face of stay-at-home orders, social distancing, and isolation (<https://wgntv.com/news/cover-story/shadow-pandemic-of-gender-based-violence-spurs-action-in-chicago/>). The number of murders and shootings stemming from domestic violence in Chicago increased nearly 66% from 2020 to 2021, according to Chicago Police Department's Crime Statistics. During that time, DFSS responded through strategic action to mitigate this situation for survivors. Chicago was the first in the nation to create a comprehensive approach to GBV, expanding and launching critical programs provide support for survivors (<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/sites/public-safety-and-violenc-reduction/pdfs/GBV%20strategic%20plan%20FINAL.pdf>).

Since 2021, the DFSS Division on Gender-Based Violence used ARPA funding to launch or expand the following programs, which span multiple City of Chicago Road to Recovery policy pillars including Community Safety, Housing and Homelessness Supports, and Youth and Economy:

**Gender-based Violence (GBV)** refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. GBV is an umbrella term for a range of interpersonal violence including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

**Domestic Violence (DV)** is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion, that adults or adolescents use to gain power and control over their intimate partners.



### Current ARPA allocations as of June 2024

Program	ARPA Funding Allocation	Impact (as of 6/30/2024) <sup>1</sup>
<p><b>Rapid Rehousing Program for Gender-Based Violence Survivors (RRH)</b></p> <p>This initiative quickly moves survivors into housing for at least 12 months and supports their stability once they are there through trauma-informed, comprehensive services to enhance and maintain their safety.</p>	<p>\$4,638,000.00</p>	<p>148 GBV Survivors placed in RRH unit</p>
<p><b>Legal Services for Gender-Based Violence Survivors</b></p> <p>This project aims to enhance safety and stability for survivors through seeking legal remedies in court (criminal and/or civil), immigration, housing and other systems, along with trauma-informed and culturally specific legal support.</p>	<p>\$4,137,000.00</p>	<p>751 survivors received legal services</p>
<p><b>Prevention, Education, and Training for Gender-Based Violence Survivors</b></p> <p>This GBV education program is for both youth and caregivers with the goal of enhancing the current and future safety and stability of youth through awareness education and resources for further assistance.</p>	<p>\$1,225,000.00</p>	<p>1,751 training attendees served</p>

<sup>1</sup> Current GBV data is reported through Q2 2024. Data through Q1 2024 was reported to the U.S. Treasury Annual Report and additional data was received after report was submitted.





<p><b>Gender-Based Violence Victim Services for Young People</b></p> <p>This program provides age-appropriate, trauma-informed and culturally appropriate services, such as ongoing comprehensive case management, clinical services, and counseling, to youth impacted by gender-based violence and/or human trafficking.</p>	<p>\$5,000,000.00</p>	<p>1,003 youth survivors served through drop-in centers and counseling<sup>2</sup></p>
<p><b>Emergency Fund for GBV Survivors</b></p> <p>This program provides one-time unrestricted financial assistance to survivors of gender-based violence to support economic security, safety, and well-being.</p>	<p>\$10,000,000.00</p>	<p>5,480 survivors received \$1,000 payment</p>
<p><b>Total ARPA Funding</b></p>	<p><b>\$25,000,000.00</b></p>	



<sup>2</sup> 810 reported in the U.S. Treasury Report; 245 survivors served through case management support and 758 survivors supported through low-barrier drop-in centers.



### SPOTLIGHT: Addressing Gender-Based Violence with the Emergency Fund

The COVID-19 pandemic's impact heightened the urgency for already vulnerable GBV survivors, prompting Chicago's inaugural emergency financial assistance for survivors of GBV program. When survivors are in a violent situation, flexible funding can secure stability and safety. Women of color face higher rates of gender-based violence, along with lower access to financial resources due to intersecting gender and racial wealth disparities. Without financial resources, a survivor is at risk of not being able to flee or break the cycle of violence ([www.cbpp.org/research/income-security/tanf-and-domestic-violence-cash-assistance-matters-to-survivors](http://www.cbpp.org/research/income-security/tanf-and-domestic-violence-cash-assistance-matters-to-survivors)). During the COVID-19 pandemic, survivors experienced disproportionate financial instability and higher rates of violence due to social restrictions, increased contact with abusers, and loss of resources. Requests for assistance to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline surged by an enormous 475% from 2020 to 2022, highlighting the pandemic's exacerbation of violent incidents.

In response, the City of Chicago launched the Emergency Fund in 2023 in partnership with the non-profit organization The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence (The Network), with an initial investment of \$5 million in ARPA funding to support survivors confronting escalating incidents of violence, social isolation, and limited choices. The Emergency Fund provides one-time unrestricted grants of \$1,000 directly to survivors in need. Given the success of the program and level of need, this program secured an additional \$5 million in 2024 to provide relief for survivors through December 2025—with a total ARPA investment of \$10 million as part of the Mayor's Road to Recovery Plan. The Network supports survivors through the initial application phases, communicates with survivors once they've been approved for a grant, and provides payment directly to recipients.

#### Impact on Survivors

Since launching in May 2023, the GBV Emergency Fund has had great success reaching survivors, particularly women of color and those living in Chicago's underserved neighborhoods. In 2023, the Network processed 6,594 applications and provided one-time \$1,000 payments to 5,480 recipients.

The Emergency Fund initially aimed to reach survivors from communities with low to medium COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index (CCVI) scores. And the program did just that—79% of recipients lived on the South and West Sides of Chicago. Across all recipients, 57% identified as Black or African American, and 28% identified as Latinx. Additionally, majority (86%) of recipients were female survivors.

The funds gave survivors freedom to address their crisis as needed – 65% of survivors reported spending money on rent, 60% on food, and 51% towards utilities. Additionally, 70% of recipients reported a boost in their emotional and mental well-being, and 69% felt their safety increased because of the funding. These unrestricted grants provided tools to escape a violent situation and gave survivors peace of mind. Lastly, the Network effectively reached a new group of survivors and provided trauma-informed case support. In a survey administered by the Network, 37% of recipients reported never having accessed GBV services before and 49% of respondents now have a clearer understanding of available resources. The Emergency Fund not only offered immediate financial support but paved the way for greater resource awareness for survivors.

#### GBV Emergency Fund by the Numbers

- 70% of survivors reported improved emotional/mental health
- 69% of survivors spent money reported improved safety because of the funds
- 79% of recipients reside on the South and West Sides of Chicago
- 57% identify as Black
- 28% identify as Latinx
- 86% of recipients identify as female
- 65% of survivors spent money on rent
- 60% of survivors spent money on food
- 51% of survivors spent money on utilities



*"The Network is grateful for the leadership and commitment Mayor Johnson has shown in ensuring Chicago has the strongest safety net for survivors in the country. By allocating \$5 million in ARPA funds to the Survivor Fund, he improved safety and wellbeing for the most vulnerable residents in the city. We appreciate the partnership from the Department of Family and Support Services in co-designing an innovative program that meets the needs of survivors in every community."*

- Amanda Pyron, Executive Director, The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence

### Insights for the Future: Reaching Survivors Where They Are At

GBV survivors often face barriers in accessing support services. To address this issue, the Emergency Fund reached survivors from traditionally underserved neighborhoods through strategic community outreach and trauma-informed engagement practices. The following lessons from the initial roll-out of the Emergency Fund can be utilized in future cash assistance programs:

- **Strategic community outreach is critical in reaching survivors:** Delegate agencies intentionally provided awareness and access to survivors to encourage them to apply, especially for survivors who have never previously sought out resources or received GBV services. This program partnered with over 100 non-GBV organizations on the south and west sides of Chicago and shared the application at church and local neighborhood events. Information sharing through the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline provided guidance on how to apply. Agencies led the distribution of flyers in eight languages in public spaces, such as libraries and laundromats in medium and high community vulnerability index areas (CCVI), as well as publishing articles in Block Club Chicago and the Chicago Sun-Times.
- **Trauma-informed engagement practices are needed:** Once survivors expressed interest, application specialists and case workers worked closely with prospective applicants to guide them through the application process without requiring survivors to document or re-live trauma. In 2023, the Emergency Fund application was established as a one-time application window with a single deadline, aiming to serve many survivors at once. In 2024, DFSS shifted to a rolling monthly application phase to accommodate survivors. Monthly application phases offer more chances for survivors to access the application and an opportunity to work with an application specialist as their situation changes. The Network prioritized accessibility by making applications user-friendly, available in multiple languages, and accessible via phone and computer. Specialists assist survivors in determining eligibility and ensure all necessary documentation is collected before submission and ensure that payments are quick.

*"As a mother and a DV survivor, it is very difficult to make ends meet. The funding I received was like a breath of fresh air, it took some weight off my back. I am extremely appreciative for the assistance."*

- Emergency Fund Recipient



### SPOTLIGHT: Need for Legal Services for GBV Survivors

During the pandemic, the Cook County Domestic Violence Courthouse shifted to entirely virtual proceedings, severely restricting access to legal services for gender-based violence survivors. The disruption to in-person courthouse proceedings left many survivors unable to access legal intervention to address issues such as sexual assault, domestic abuse, stalking, or human trafficking. Because of this, survivors continued to experience violence in their homes – with no hope.

With the ARPA investment, the City of Chicago expanded legal services to support survivors confronting escalating incidents of violence, social isolation, and limited choices during the pandemic. Prior to the ARPA investment, legal aid providers that specialize in GBV cases were overwhelmed with referrals and had long wait lists. With the ARPA investment, DFSS expanded legal services in partnership with Metropolitan Family Services Legal Aid Society (LAS), Ascend Justice, LifeSpan, and Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE). Services provided by these organizations aimed to reinforce the safety and stability of survivors by providing comprehensive and tailored support in pursuing legal remedies in various systems, including criminal court, civil court, immigration, housing, and others, in a trauma-informed and culturally specific manner.

#### Impact: Ensuring Safety for Survivors<sup>3</sup>

From May 2022 through June 2024, this program provided services to **751 GBV survivors** addressing critical legal needs caused by challenges and vulnerabilities exploited by abusers. This program hosted 53 outreach events to increase engagement in services and provide training for staff in communities across the city.

Many survivors faced significant challenges related to their immigration status, a situation which requires unique legal assistance. Agencies supported 223 individuals with immigration proceedings and petitions, helping to protect their access to local community support. Family court issues, such as custody disputes, divorce, and alimony were addressed with 190 survivors, guiding them through complex and stressful legal processes.

Beyond immigration and family court proceedings, this program facilitated 230 survivors in filing for protective orders; 139 received emergency protection orders, and 104 obtained plenary orders.

Providing survivors with these types of legal services saves lives. The Metropolitan Family Service's Legal Aid Society (LAS) provided immigration and family legal services which resulted in a positive impact as shown through the powerful story of "Cynthia,":

#### Legal Services for GBV Survivors by the Numbers

**223** Survivors received legal assistance regarding their immigrant status, which is one of the most common vulnerabilities a person that causes harm can use to threaten a survivor  
**190** engaged in family court and dealt with cases of custody issues, divorce, alimony or child support

**230** survivors filed a protective order with assistance from this program

**139** survivors received an emergency protective order

**104** survivors received a plenary protective order with assistance from this program

<sup>3</sup> Current GBV data is reported through Q2 2024. Data through Q1 2024 was reported to the U.S. Treasury Annual Report and additional data was received after report was submitted.





After a horrific incident of physical abuse by her husband in May of 2023, Cynthia escaped and fled to the nearest fire department; unfortunately, she had to leave her children at home to do so. When the police arrived at the residence, her husband and the children were gone. She was admitted to the hospital and a few days later recovered enough to begin the legal process. After a criminal case was initiated by the States' Attorney's Office, Cynthia was referred to LAS's Safe Families Program (SFP). SFP obtained an order of protection requiring Cynthia's husband to turn over the children, but the police and private investigators hired by LAS were unable to locate them. Cynthia eventually received word that her husband had kidnapped the children and taken them to Mexico.

SFP began to assist Cynthia with a Hague case (the process for international abduction). After gathering all required documents, getting them translated, and submitting them to the Dept. of State, Cynthia had to wait for the process to unfold—eventually getting a court date for the case in Mexico. At the court date, Cynthia's husband handed over the children to her mother, who immediately took them out of town to a safe location so that SFP could determine how to get them back to the US. Cynthia's immigration status meant that she could not travel to retrieve them, and her family and friends were unable to travel to the US with them. LAS staff worked with Cynthia non-stop to identify a solution, calling the consulates, the Department of State, and the FBI. Eventually a plan was identified, and the children were able to fly back and be reunited with Cynthia at the end of August. After retrieving the children from the airport, LAS staff assisted Cynthia with moving into a new apartment and obtaining necessities. LAS also assisted Cynthia with enrolling herself and her children in supportive services through other community providers and is assisting Cynthia with her immigration and divorce matters.

Reported to DFSS by Metropolitan Family Services Legal Aid Society (LAS).

## Insights for the Future: Providing Needed Hope for Survivors



Cynthia's experience of violence contains intersecting issues of immigration status, housing instability, abuse and kidnapping – all issues that can only be addressed with accessible legal interventions. Without support provided through this program, Cynthia might not be with her children today. The expansion of GBV legal services has demonstrated the fundamental need for accessible, trauma-informed legal representation and interventions for survivors, and elevated important lessons about these types of supports.

- **GBV survivors' legal needs are time sensitive and require immediate action:** ARPA funding allowed for the reopening of intake processes that were closed during the pandemic, enabling 751 survivors to access necessary legal representation. When survivors are placed on waitlists for services unavailable, this can do real and tangible harm to their safety. As seen in the above story of survival, survivors are left with no choice if they cannot access legal services. Without investment in legal services, many survivors who often face financial and personal hardship would be unable to secure the legal support they need for themselves and their families. The availability of these services ensures that survivors are not left without options and that their legal rights can be pursued.
- **GBV survivors need tailored legal services:** The issues faced by survivors are highly specific and complex, requiring specific knowledge of intersecting systems and legal remedies. Survivors, especially those from marginalized communities, require legal services that are both trauma-informed and tailored to their unique needs. This program supports specialized legal assistance that considers the issues of violence, housing instability, financial instability, and other challenges faced by survivors. Ensuring legal professionals are trained to handle these issues sensitively is crucial for providing effective support and safeguarding the well-being of survivors and their families.

## Homeless Division Overview

The DFSS Homeless Services Division is committed to creating an effective crisis response system to prevent and address homelessness in Chicago. The Homeless Services Division’s mission is to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring by managing citywide efforts in homeless outreach, prevention, shelter, and supportive housing services. Central to this mission is investment in a three-pronged approach: **Prevention, Crisis Response, and Housing and Supports**. The division funds 50 delegate agencies providing services including homeless prevention, shelter, outreach and engagement, housing supports, and system planning and coordination, and partners with a network of stakeholders to advance these efforts.



### DFSS Approach to Address Homelessness



### Pandemic Impact & Response

The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected Chicago’s homeless population, heightening their vulnerability due to pre-existing health challenges and the congregate nature of many shelters. People experiencing homelessness faced increased risks, as maintaining social distancing and hygiene measures in shelters was challenging. Homelessness in Chicago impacts individuals and families across the entire city, especially in neighborhoods including Near West Side, Uptown, and parts of the South Side (<https://chicagohomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/CCH-CY23-Year-in-Review.pdf>). Following the pandemic, Chicago has seen an increase in homelessness, with the city’s 2020 Point-in-Time Count (PIT) reporting 5,390 people experiencing homelessness while the 2024 PIT count reported 18,836 people—a significant rise attributed to both the influx of New Arrivals from the southwest U.S. border and the end of pandemic-era supports for households at risk of homelessness.

In response, DFSS leveraged federal funding, including ARPA funding, to expand Rapid Rehousing, which supports households in quickly transitioning to permanent housing. Additionally, DFSS received different funding under HOME-ARPA to launch several shelter capital improvement initiatives to increase non-congregate shelter units, expand accessibility, and restore and expand bed capacity to beyond pre-COVID levels. DFSS is working closely with the Chicago Department of Housing (DOH) to support their shelter acquisition project. These initiatives are rooted in the “Housing First” approach to ensure that individuals move from homelessness to stable housing as quickly as possible.



### Current ARPA allocations as of June 2024

Program	Funding Allocation	Impact (as of 6/30/2024)
<p><b>Rapid Rehousing Program (RRH)</b></p> <p>This initiative quickly moves individuals experiencing homelessness into rental units for up to 24 months and provides case-management support to help them ultimately secure permanent stable housing.</p>	<p>\$32,327,226.00 (ARPA Funding)</p>	<p>1,718 new households housed<sup>4</sup></p>
<p><b>Shelter Infrastructure Initiative</b></p> <p>This initiative focuses on capital improvements to increase non-congregate sleeping units, increase shelter bed capacity, and create safer and more accessible facilities. HOME-ARP funds will be used for strict non-congregate conversions where each individual or family has their own sleeping room with an in-unit full bathroom.</p>	<p>\$40,000,000.00 (\$20M in HOME-ARP and \$20M in BOND); this initiative did not receive ARPA funding.</p>	<p>DFSS released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for projects under this initiative, and is in the process of supporting RFQ applicants to refine their capital improvement proposals.</p>
<p><b>Non-Congregate Shelter Acquisition Program</b></p> <p>This DOH initiative is in partnership with DFSS to fund the transition of approximately 300 existing congregate shelter beds throughout the city into non-congregate settings in multiple facilities, prioritizing those shelters in the greatest need of improved conditions.</p>	<p>\$30,000,000.00 (BOND); this initiative did not receive ARPA funding.</p>	<p>The five grantee finalists are at various stages: one actively renovating its newly acquired property plans to open in December 2024, and the remaining four are on track to close on their property in 2025. All together, these five acquisitions will transition approximately 300 existing congregate bed shelter beds throughout the city into non-congregate shelter beds.</p>
<p><b>Total ARPA Funding</b></p>	<p>•\$32,327,226.00 – ARPA •\$20,000,000.00 – HOME-ARP •\$50,00,000.00 – BOND</p>	

<sup>4</sup> 1,632 households were reported in 2024 U.S. Treasury Report. 1,718 households were reported on 6/30/24.





### SPOTLIGHT: Addressing Homelessness through Rapid Rehousing

Homelessness in Chicago is a complex and pervasive issue that disproportionately affects certain groups, particularly Black and Latinx communities. Beyond protecting households from increased risk of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, ending a household's experience of homelessness reduces the adverse effects that homelessness can have on mental health, substance use, and physical ailments. Recent research in Illinois found that the average age at time of death is nearly 20 years younger for people experiencing homelessness than for the population at large and that people experiencing homelessness face a greater risk of being a victim of violent assault or homicide (<https://dph.illinois.gov/resource-center/news/2024/july/new-report-outlines-the-health-toll-of-homelessness.html>)

The City of Chicago initially expanded its investment in Rapid Rehousing (RRH) as part of the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic, supported with federal CARES Act funding. The program helped rapidly move vulnerable residents at risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19 out of homeless shelters and encampments and into their own rental unit with supportive services. Due to the success of the program, the city allocated \$32 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to connect more people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing as part of continued pandemic response and recovery.

The RRH program helps individuals and families exit homelessness by providing housing relocation and stabilization services of short-to-medium-term rental assistance and case management for up to 24 months. Households experiencing homelessness are connected to RRH through Accelerated Moving Events (AMEs), one- or two-day events held at homeless shelters or nearby encampments where multiple households – typically 20 to 30 households at each event – can complete multiple steps of the housing process at once to support rapid movement into their own rental unit. The eligibility requirements for the Rapid Rehousing program are flexible, requiring no preconditions such as employment, income, or sobriety.



#### ARPA-Funded Rapid Rehousing by the Numbers

58 AMEs held

1,718 New Households housed

Over 925 Households exited from program

Over 600 households exited to  
permanent housing

65% of households in program exited to  
permanent housing

#### Impact of the RRH Program

Since the RRH Program expanded in Chicago with pandemic-era federal funding beginning in October 2020, 3,000 households have been housed. Of those 3,000 households, ARPA funding has supported 1,718 households<sup>5</sup>. The city's RRH program serves a diverse population of residents. Accelerated Moving Events rotate who is served across several factors: geography, location type (e.g., sheltered or unsheltered), and subpopulation experiencing homelessness (e.g., youth aged 18-24, families with children, single adults, and survivors of domestic violence). From October 2022 through June 2024, ARPA investments have funded 58 AMEs.

<sup>5</sup> 1,632 households were reported in 2024 U.S. Treasury Report. 1,718 households were reported on 6/30/24.



Overall, 925 households have exited the RRH Rehousing program from October 2022 through June 2024. 65% (603) of the households who exited the program moved into permanent housing. Ultimately, the RRH program's achievements highlight the importance of ongoing investment in flexible, adaptive housing solutions to ensure long-term stability for Chicago's most vulnerable residents.

### Insights and Future Implications

Chicago's RRH program has shown success in quickly stabilizing individuals and improving long-term outcomes, yet the city faces new challenges like rising homelessness. In the 2024 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count, there were over three times as many people estimated to be experiencing homelessness in Chicago as in the 2023 PIT Count. This increase is mostly due to the large number of New Arrivals who have come to Chicago seeking shelter since August 2022. However, there have also been increases in homelessness amongst the Non-New Arrival population as the housing market has become more expensive and pandemic-era resources (e.g., Child Tax Credit) have expired. Sustainable solutions, including program extensions, quality case management, and more affordable housing are needed to address these issues effectively. Rapid Rehousing will continue to be a resource providing housing and stability for residents facing homelessness, especially post-pandemic.

- Rapid Rehousing Program requires effective coordination across agencies:** When expansion of the RRH Program began in 2020, the Chicago Continuum of Care launched a leadership team to oversee the effort which included representation from the City of Chicago, All Chicago, service providers, and people with lived experience of homelessness. This structure supported discussion and troubleshooting of program implementation as well as frequent and transparent reporting on who RRH was serving across equity measures (race, geography, subpopulation) and early performance metrics. The lessons learned continue to inform implementation of the ARPA-supported RRH Program today.
- Flexibility and tailored support for individuals experiencing homelessness are critical:** An important lesson from Rapid Rehousing is the value of flexibility in program design and implementation. The ability to adapt housing assistance to the individual circumstances of participants, whether sheltered or unsheltered, was critical factor to RRH's success. Providing options such as rental assistance without restrictive preconditions and using AMEs to speed up the process of placing individuals in homes has proven to be effective. These approaches have reduced the barriers to accessing housing for many who would otherwise face significant challenges.

## SPOTLIGHT: Shelter Capital Improvement Efforts

### The Need for Non-Congregate Shelter Options

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the urgent need for safer, non-congregate shelter options in Chicago, as existing congregate shelters posed significant health risks to those experiencing homelessness. Research shows that homeless individuals are at heightened risk of contracting communicable diseases, including tuberculosis, hepatitis C, and HIV/AIDS (<https://www.cdcfoundation.org/blog/homelessness-and-health-new-strategies-hand>). Before the pandemic, one-third of all shelter beds in Chicago were in shared rooms with over 20 people and shared bathrooms, creating environments where the spread of diseases could easily occur. In response, during the pandemic many shelters reduced their bed capacity to allow for social distancing, which led to a significant loss in the number of available beds, especially for single adults.

Homelessness in Chicago has also increased in the years since the pandemic. The 2024 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count revealed a threefold increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness compared to the 2023 PIT Count. ([https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/fss/supp\\_info/Homeless/2024-Homeless-Point-In-Time-Count-Report/2024\\_PIT\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/fss/supp_info/Homeless/2024-Homeless-Point-In-Time-Count-Report/2024_PIT_Report_Final.pdf)) A large share of this increase is due to the influx of over 47,000 New Arrivals (primarily from Latin American countries like Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador) who have come to Chicago since August 2022. However, there have also been increases in the number of Non-New Arrivals experiencing homelessness in the past two years, as the local supply of affordable housing has become more limited and federal and state pandemic supports (e.g., Child Tax Credit) have expired. These factors have left people in more economically vulnerable situations, contributing to the rising number of people experiencing homelessness. This reality underscores the need for continued investment in non-congregate shelter options and shelter infrastructure improvements.

### Shelter Capital Improvement Projects

To address these challenges, the City of Chicago, through initiatives like the Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS) Acquisition Program and the Shelter Infrastructure Initiative, is investing in the acquisition and renovation of buildings to transition over 500 congregate shelter beds into non-congregate settings. These initiatives aim to create safer, more dignified, and accessible housing options for individuals experiencing homelessness. Rolled out alongside the City's comprehensive ARPA investment, these projects are funded through bond funding and HOME-ARP.

#### Shelter Acquisition Project

DFSS is partnering with Department of Housing (DOH) to implement their Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS) Acquisition Program which funds the acquisition and renovation of buildings to be used as NCS for people experiencing homelessness. Since the fall of 2022, DOH has been working with five RFP grantee finalists that operate homeless shelters in Chicago and are in immediate and critical need for new space due to aging infrastructure, including safety and health concerns, visible structural damage, outdated facilities and resources, and inadequate HVAC systems. The five grantee finalists are at various stages: one actively renovating its newly acquired property plans to open in December 2024, and the remaining four are on track to finalize their property purchases in 2025. All together, these five acquisitions will transition approximately 300 existing congregate bed shelter beds throughout the city into non-congregate shelter beds.

#### Capital Improvement Project

DFSS's Shelter Infrastructure Initiative (SII) has overlapping goals with DOH's NCS Acquisition Program but aims to improve existing shelter facilities rather than acquire new buildings and relocate shelter programs. Through this program, DFSS intends to provide capital funding for improvements such as non-congregate conversions, ADA accessibility improvements, as well as modernizing aging infrastructure. The initiative focuses on restoring bed capacity to pre-pandemic levels, adding up to 100 beds to the system and converting 300 existing beds to non-congregate beds.



In February 2023, DFSS qualified 10 shelter providers through a Request For Qualifications process. The initially qualified shelters were deemed to have proposed feasible capital improvements in line with SII program goals. In February 2024, all qualified providers chose to proceed through Phase II: Pre-Development and RFP Submission in partnership with a program administrator. Phase II activities include supporting more detailed project proposals and cost estimates, working with the city to complete required environmental site assessments and submitting final plans for potential funding through an RFP process. Renovations are projected to begin in February 2025, increasing bed capacity by over 300 beds and implementing significant improvements to shelter facilities across the city.

### Insights for the Future

Building on current learnings and in line with national best practices, DFSS and the Department of Housing (DOH) are making major investments to improve the infrastructure of Chicago's homeless shelter system.

- **Shelters address immediate needs for those literally and at-risk of homelessness:** Looking ahead, while permanent housing remains the ultimate solution to homelessness, shelters will continue to be crucial in meeting the immediate needs of individuals and families. The SII's focus on capital improvements and ADA accessibility enhancements at existing shelters aims to restore and exceed pre-pandemic bed capacity while modernizing infrastructure. The projected increase of over 300 beds and significant facility upgrades by early 2025 will be vital in meeting the rising demand for shelter and ensuring that facilities are both safe and accessible. Ongoing investments in shelter infrastructure, including building acquisition, modernization, and compliance with safety standards—are essential.
- **Shelter sustainability requires long-term commitments:** Ensuring the long-term sustainability of shelters and transitional housing programs is crucial for maintaining stability in the fight against homelessness. This sustainability is secured through strategic, long-term commitments that safeguard the ongoing use of these properties. For example, within the SII, grantee requirements include a 15-year shelter operation term ensures that facilities remain dedicated to serving individuals and families in need and a 30-year land use restriction that mandates properties be utilized as shelters, transitional housing, or affordable housing, preventing them from being repurposed for other uses that would reduce the availability of vital housing resources. These measures are further supported by increased operational funding, which covers necessary maintenance, staff, and services to meet evolving community needs. Together, these long-term requirements guarantee that shelters remain a permanent and reliable part of the solution to homelessness.



## ■ Human Services Division Overview

---

---

The DFSS Human Services Division (HSD) plays a critical role in addressing the immediate and long-term needs of Chicago residents. Working with community partners, HSD provides comprehensive and holistic human services and resources to residents and families that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive economically. HSD offers walk-in resources at our Community Service Centers and safety net programs such as the Chicago Empowerment Fund, the 2-1-1 Metro Chicago hotline, and legal services for residents through the Legal Protection Fund and the Criminal Justice Legal Service Initiative (formally known as Community Justice Initiative).

### **Comprehensive Human Centered Service Delivery:**

Community Service Centers, funded through community services block grant (CSBG) help individuals and families in need access resources such as shelter, food, gender-based violence assistance, job training, and employment placement referrals. Clients can also get help completing applications for rental and utility assistance and other public benefits. The Community Service Centers meet residents where they are, assess their needs, and provide the necessary resources and support. After completing an initial assessment, clients with multiple or complex issues are assigned a case manager and/or a social worker to identify and address their longer-term needs and goals. Each center partners with additional delegate and sister agencies that provide specialized support programs and services that contribute to the overall stability and well-being of residents in all stages of life.

### **Pandemic Response: Launch of Innovative Programming:**

In response to the economic harm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Human Services Division implemented several innovative programs and expanded existing services to address the increased needs of residents. The pandemic intensified pre-existing health, social, and economic disparities in Chicago, requiring a robust and adaptive response from the Human Services Division, prioritizing resources to the city's most vulnerable residents. The Division received ARPA funds across the following Road to Recovery policy pillars: Human Rights/Arts & Culture, Mental Health and Wellness, and Youth and Economy.



### Current ARPA allocations as of June 2024

Program	ARPA Funding Allocation	Impact (as of 6/30/2024)
<p><b>Guaranteed Income: Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot and Chicago Empowerment Fund</b></p> <p>The first round of guaranteed income supported residents from 2022 to 2023 through the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot (CRCP), providing residents with monthly \$500 unrestricted cash payments. The second round will soon launch, supporting additional residents through the Chicago Empowerment Fund (CEF).</p>	<p>\$63,994,940.73</p>	<p>5,006 recipients in Round 1; 5,000 projected recipients in Round 2</p>
<p><b>Resiliency Fund 2.0</b></p> <p>This program provided one-time \$500 relief payments to low-income residents who may have missed out on access to federal pandemic stimulus funding. The program concluded in December 2023.</p>	<p>\$9,235,253.44</p>	<p>14,330 Recipients</p>
<p><b>Criminal Justice Legal Services Initiative</b></p> <p>This program delivers impactful legal support and educational workshops covering crucial topics such as the school-to-prison pipeline, understanding rights when interacting with law enforcement, employment, school, and housing rights.</p>	<p>\$4,500,000.00</p>	<p>41,786 residents attended educational workshops; 8,338 residents received legal consultation or representation</p>



<p><b>Legal Protection Fund</b></p> <p>This program provides free advocacy and legal services to immigrants and refugees, including unaccompanied children. Legal service organizations support individuals in applying for immigration status, accessing protections and due process, and courtroom navigators to conduct outreach to immigrant populations.</p>	<p>\$4,500,000.00</p>	<p>Over 50,000 received legal services</p>
<p><b>2-1-1 Metro Chicago</b></p> <p>211 Metro Chicago is a free, 24/7/365 service that connects residents to essential, non-emergency health and social service supports and information.</p>	<p>\$7,249,636.89</p>	<p>49,245 City of Chicago requests answered</p>
<p><b>Total ARPA Funding</b></p>	<p><b>\$89,479,831.06</b></p>	



### SPOTLIGHT: Bridging the Gap in Social Services with 2-1-1 Metro Chicago

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly deepened existing disparities in Chicago, particularly among communities of color already facing socio-economic and health inequities. As the crisis unfolded, many residents faced heightened financial instability, unemployment, and difficulty accessing essential services. The city's 311 system, a 24/7 resource line traditionally responsible for handling non-emergency inquiries about city services such as waste disposal, became overwhelmed by the surge in calls related to health and human services. Chicago was one of the few cities in the country without a dedicated 211 service focused on health and human services resources, connecting residents to trained staff who understand and can support the complexity and trauma of everyday crises.

#### 2-1-1 Metro Chicago: The City's First Health and Human Services Hotline

The City of Chicago, Cook County, and United Way of Metro Chicago partnered to launch the 211 System in 2023. 2-1-1 Metro Chicago is a free, confidential helpline available 24/7 for callers to access vital resources such as food, housing, utility assistance, and health services. United Way of Metro Chicago, as the program operator, works closely with service providers to ensure resources are relevant and up to date. Staff, known as Resource Navigators, assist individuals to find appropriate resources by engaging in detailed conversations to understand their needs.

2-1-1 Metro Chicago operates under a "No Wrong Door" model which redirects client to appropriate resources no matter where you enter. When services are not available, the 211 System collects information and shares it with the city and other stakeholders to identify service gaps and inform funding strategies, creating a more efficient service coordination system. 211 System does not replace other helplines such as 911, 311, 988. This system includes protocols for handling all types of requests (including emergencies) and referral protocols to other helplines and emergency services when necessary.

#### 2-1-1 Metro Chicago's Impact

As of June 30, 2024, 2-1-1 Metro Chicago has managed 49,245 contacts<sup>6</sup> from Chicago residents through phone calls, text messages, website searches, and chat services. The neighborhoods with the highest volume of requests were Auburn Gresham, Chatham, and South Shore, reflecting areas of significant need in the city. The most frequently reported needs were for housing and shelter (40%), utility assistance (15%), and access to food (9%), underscoring the lingering pandemic-related housing instability and financial strain that many residents face. These statistics highlight the critical role 2-1-1 plays in connecting vulnerable communities with essential services and support systems.

#### 2-1-1 Metro Chicago by the Numbers (as of 6/30/24)

**49,245** City of Chicago requests  
(phone/web/chat)

**29,704** website hits

**145,495** referrals provided

**25,151** total contacts from residents annually

<sup>6</sup> 48,133 contacts were reported in 2024 U.S. Treasury Report





Through these contacts, 2-1-1 Metro Chicago provided over 145,000 referrals to Chicago residents, illustrating its broad reach and impact. Of these referrals, the highest volume was for rental payment assistance, a reflection of the pressing housing crisis in the city. The data also reveals that a vast majority of the contacts (96%) were in English, with 4% in Spanish. Women made up 64% of the contacts, with the largest age group seeking assistance being between 25-34 years old (22%), followed closely by those aged 35-44 (19%). These demographic insights show that 2-1-1 is a lifeline for a diverse range of individuals, especially young adults and families, navigating financial and housing challenges in Chicago.

### Insights for the Future

The 2-1-1 Metro Chicago program exemplifies the impact we can achieve when government, philanthropy, and social service organizations collaborate to address real community issues. In addition to linking individuals with essential services like housing and financial assistance, 2-1-1 also provides valuable data that sheds light on the region's most urgent needs, enabling more effective solutions. In the first years of operation:

- **2-1-1 Metro Chicago fills a critical gap in accessible services:** The launch of 2-1-1 Metro Chicago has effectively addressed a critical gap in access to essential services. Prior to 2-1-1's implementation, information about available human service resources was scattered and de-centralized or required coming in-person to an office during working hours – an option not available to many Chicagoans working hard to provide for their families. 2-1-1 Metro Chicago does the critical work of gathering and maintaining comprehensive information about the wide variety of human services across the city and region, which requires regular follow-up with thousands of organizations to ensure information is up to date.
- **Personalized follow-up with callers strengthens service coordination:** One of the key successes of 2-1-1 Metro Chicago has been the commitment of United Way to follow up with residents to ensure they have received the services they were referred to. By checking in with individuals after the initial referral, 2-1-1 can confirm that residents are accessing the resources they need and provide additional support if challenges arise. This continued engagement not only improves the effectiveness of the program but also fosters trust between residents and service providers, reinforcing 2-1-1's role as a reliable connector in the community.

*One caller was referred to 2-1-1 Metro Chicago to seek referrals for medical devices by Medicare. Upon contact, a Resource Navigator carefully reviewed the agencies in the database and found three that could meet her needs. This caller opted to receive the information via text message, and, on a follow-up call, she gladly reported that her mother had been to an appointment to be assessed for a hearing device and that the agency she was working with could accept her supplemental Medicaid plan. This 2-1-1 caller was appreciative of the experience and stated that the 2-1-1 staff members were "very friendly, patient, and helpful."*



### SPOTLIGHT: Responding to Economic Hardship through Guaranteed Income

Exclusionary practices and decades of inequitable institutional policies have created significant economic challenges for vulnerable communities across Chicago. According to a 2021 report by the Chicago Urban League, Black and Latino communities in Chicago have faced persistent disparities in educational attainment and homeownership rates, which are crucial drivers of economic stability. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges, as unemployment rates surged and health disparities became more pronounced, particularly affecting Black and Latino residents.

A study from the University of Illinois at Chicago highlighted that during the pandemic these groups experienced higher rates of job loss and were more likely to live in areas with limited access to healthcare (<https://socialwork.uic.edu/news-stories/covid-19-disproportionate-impact-marginalized-populations/>).

The Human Services Division (HSD) launched the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot (CRCP) in 2022 and will soon launch the second round of cash assistance payments called the Chicago Empowerment Fund (CEF) to provide direct financial assistance to low-income households, aiming to mitigate income volatility and improve financial stability in response to these growing disparities. Building on the success of the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot, the City of Chicago is continuing their partnership with program administrators GiveDirectly, lead outreach and recruitment coordinators YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, and community-based organizations Pui Tak, United African Organization, Center for Changing Lives, Phalanx Family Services, and Spanish Coalition for Housing, who all conduct outreach for eligible residents city-wide. Additionally, the city is partnering with the Inclusive Economy Lab (IEL) to conduct research evaluating the effectiveness of both CRCP and CEF.

Launched in 2022, CRCP leveraged a \$32 million ARPA investment to provide \$500 monthly relief payments to about 5,000 Chicago residents. These payments, delivered through direct deposit or debit card, offered a lifeline to those most affected by the pandemic, particularly in communities with preexisting economic hardships. At the time of implementation, CRCP was one of the largest guaranteed income programs in the nation. Building on the first round of funding provided through CRCP, DFSS and Mayor Brandon Johnson are launching another iteration of the guaranteed income program, CEF, with an additional ARPA investment of \$32 million. With a total of \$64 million allocated, the program aims to support an additional 5,000 residents through 2025-2026.

#### Impact of Guaranteed Income

Guaranteed income programs, like CRCP and CEF, represent a significant effort to improve financial stability and overall wellbeing for those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on results from previous guaranteed income programs and subsequent research findings, CRCP and CEF are poised to have significant impacts on participants' mental and physical health outcomes.

**Guaranteed income** programs provide an unrestricted cash transfer payment to targeted population groups experiencing economic hardship and instability

#### Guaranteed Income by the Numbers

Provided total cash allocation of **\$29,990,500** to residents

**5,006** residents received monthly payments

**68%** of respondents stated ability to pay bills was their top priority

**33%** of respondents stated that paying off debts and saving money was their second and third highest priority





Based on the First Look and Big Shoulders reports published by IEL at the University of Chicago, the program saw more than 176,000 applications and conducted a lottery to select 5,000 participants with a significant focus on communities of color, caregivers, and housing insecure and homeless residents. Ability to pay bills was, by far, the highest priority for study participants with 68% selecting it as one of their top three priorities

(<https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/attachments/5c577639c291dbf0e037e3ebc5627cd73985b2d9/store/ecddd230d6b35dba45fd6c61ff1d0edb15e4491326aa9afefe6894cc955/CRCP+First+Look+Report+Winter+2023.pdf>).

Paying off debts and saving money were tied as the second and third most important priorities, with 33% of study participants ranking each as a top three priority. Spending data from GiveDirectly shows that almost 50% of participants made a cash withdrawal each month of the program, which suggests that the direct cash transfers were not only essential for meeting immediate needs but also likely played a role in helping participants manage ongoing expenses. Future analyses will examine if and how these programs impact employment, financial health, health, intrahousehold outcomes and more

(<https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/attachments/5c577639c291dbf0e037e3ebc5627cd73985b2d9/store/ecddd230d6b35dba45fd6c61ff1d0edb15e4491326aa9afefe6894cc955/CRCP+First+Look+Report+Winter+2023.pdf>).

### Insights for the Future

As the largest national initiative of their kind, CRCP and CEF position Chicago as a leader in the growing conversation around guaranteed income. Guaranteed income programs are set up as modern social safety nets for families experiencing economic and financial hardship. While the city is awaiting the results of a formal impact evaluation to better understand how unrestricted cash benefits individuals, there is much to learn already about program implementation

(<https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/attachments/5c577639c291dbf0e037e3ebc5627cd73985b2d9/store/ecddd230d6b35dba45fd6c61ff1d0edb15e4491326aa9afefe6894cc955/CRCP+First+Look+Report+Winter+2023.pdf>).

Given Chicago's experience, the following are key implementation implications for future cash assistance programs:

- Successful guaranteed income programs prioritize recipient autonomy:** Guaranteed income programs such as CRCP and CEF are built on a foundation of trust with recipients—trust that recipients are the ones who best know how to spend money to address their needs. Rather than government dictating exactly how or where financial support can be spent, these programs enable recipients to use the unrestricted cash transfers to address a wide range of personal needs, which vary from family to family and individual to individual. That trust and choice should carry through to other elements of program design – such as minimizing the administrative burden for recipients. To minimize burden during the application period, DFSS enabled a specific portion of applicants to self-attest their eligibility, confirming their qualifications with minimal documentation ([https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/attachments/ce29574b87f0c5ea4bf999c6049458e89e587e32/store/42011003b3f4386de3c22d8b54a74989abd6f468224df5eec5e1ec3107c8/UC\\_ResilientCommunitiesPilot+ProcessEvaluation+%281%29.pdf](https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/attachments/ce29574b87f0c5ea4bf999c6049458e89e587e32/store/42011003b3f4386de3c22d8b54a74989abd6f468224df5eec5e1ec3107c8/UC_ResilientCommunitiesPilot+ProcessEvaluation+%281%29.pdf)). This streamlined process ensures that families can access support without unnecessary delays or administrative hurdles. Lastly, participants were able to independently choose the format to receive funds, including direct deposit, debit card, or electronic debit.

- **Strategic outreach and engagement are critical:** CRCP and CEF address critical gaps in existing challenges by providing direct financial support to families in economic hardship. When eligibility is broad, programs risk not successfully prioritizing those most in need. To ensure equitable access, CRCP implemented a lottery system for over 176,000 applicants, prioritizing those in poverty and economically distressed areas. A comprehensive outreach strategy, led by YWCA and its local community organizations was employed to connect with potential eligible applicants in priority community areas largely on the west and south sides ([https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/attachments/ce29574b87f0c5ea4bf999c6049458e89e587e32/store/42011003b3f4386de3c22d8b54a74989abd6f468224df5eec5e1ec3107c8/UC\\_ResilientCommunitiesPilot\\_ProcessEvaluation+%281%29.pdf](https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/attachments/ce29574b87f0c5ea4bf999c6049458e89e587e32/store/42011003b3f4386de3c22d8b54a74989abd6f468224df5eec5e1ec3107c8/UC_ResilientCommunitiesPilot_ProcessEvaluation+%281%29.pdf)). In-person application events were held, allowing direct assistance and guidance. Phone support was also available, offering a personal touch for those unable to attend events. Additionally, outreach efforts included canvassing in targeted neighborhoods and leveraging local community organizations to spread awareness. Recognizing the need for additional assistance, CRCP also provided 1:1 support for individuals facing technological or language barriers, including seniors and those with disabilities. This multi-faceted outreach strategy, combined with a flexible and accessible application process, was crucial in ensuring that financial aid reached those most in need and promoting fairness across the program.

*"I am so happy about this program. I don't have to worry about my financial issues anymore and I can focus on something that's gonna push me ahead in the future. Something that's gonna benefit, like, it's not gonna benefit me right now, but it's gonna benefit me in the long run, which would be going back to school."*

- CRCP Recipient, Age 23

*"To have extra income for an entire year is a blessing. I don't have to worry about being behind on rent or being behind on my car or light bill or whatever the case may be because I will always have that extra money to fall back on to feed me."*

- CRCP Recipient, Age 33



## ■ Workforce Services Division Overview

The Workforce Services Division (WSD), working with community partners, administers employment preparation and job placement programs designed to assist residents in overcoming their unique barriers to quality job opportunities. The division prioritizes low- and moderate-income residents, particularly those facing significant challenges such as homelessness, limited English proficiency, or past incarceration, regardless of race, ethnicity, or criminal record. The division selects partners through a robust request for proposal (RFP) process to identify community-based organizations and nonprofit service providers experienced in serving the city's most vulnerable populations. Together, WSD and community partners work to help individuals develop the skills and resources necessary to achieve economic stability and improve their quality of life.

The WSD employs an equitable, trauma-informed approach to service delivery, focusing on neighborhood-level interventions that promote healthy and supportive communities. Through its core portfolio, the division supports three workforce training models: Employment Preparation and Placement, Industry-Specific Training, and Transitional Jobs. WSD has a particular focus on supporting returning residents (those who have served time in a county or state correctional facility) and system-impacted individuals (residents with arrest and conviction records) through its five Community Re-entry Support Centers (CRSCs). In 2023, more than 1,100 of the approximately 3,000 individuals served were returning residents, underscoring the division's commitment to this vulnerable population.

### WSD Pandemic Response

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbated existing inequalities within Chicago, particularly for returning residents who face underlying challenges in re-entering the workforce. These challenges, including limited access to re-entry housing, educational barriers, and the stigma associated with criminal records, were intensified by the pandemic. Moreover, the economic downturn caused by COVID-19 led to widespread unemployment, creating a heightened competition for jobs that disproportionately affected returning residents—who faced discrimination and decreased access to essential documentation.

With the infusion of ARPA funding, the WSD took proactive steps to expand its services to returning residents, system-impacted individuals, and un/underemployed residents and address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Using Chicago's Roadmap to a 2nd Chance City as a guide, the division designed programming aligned with Mayor Johnson's Youth and Economy and Community Safety policy pillars. With ARPA funding, the WSD expanded the existing four CRSCs to provide Re-entry Navigation support to more returning residents and launched a fifth CRSC on the west side of Chicago to address unmet need in that part of the city. In addition, the WSD launched the Re-Entry Workforce Development Program (SPRING Forward Re-entry) & Re-Entry Housing Navigation Pilot and partnered with the City Colleges of Chicago to launch the Career Grow Chicago Workforce Development Program.



### Current ARPA allocations as of June 2024

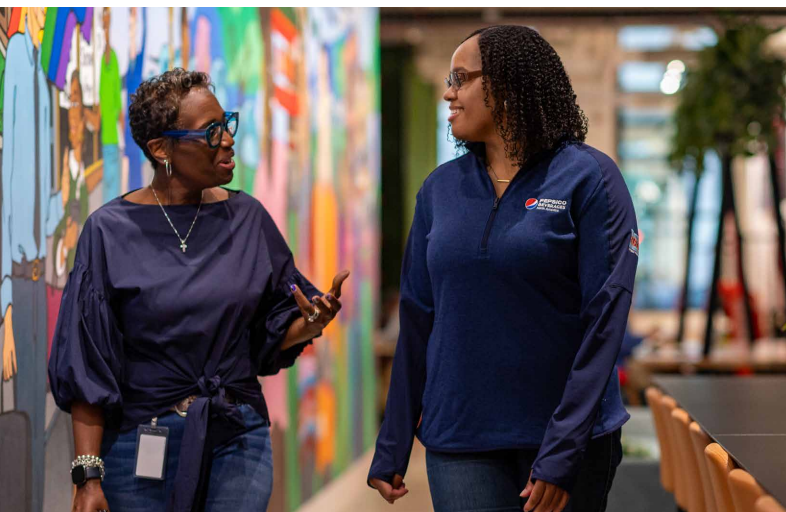
Program	ARPA Funding Allocation	Impact (as of 6/30/2024)
<p><b>Re-entry Housing Navigation: SPRING Forward</b></p> <p>The SPRING Forward pilot program provides re-entry, employment, and housing navigation services to returning residents. The Housing Navigation component of the program facilitates access to affordable permanent housing and wrap-around supportive services to stabilize returning residents and mitigate the risk of recidivism.</p>	<p>\$4,898,000.00</p>	<p>199 households received rental assistance subsidies and housing wrap-around services</p>
<p><b>Re-entry Workforce Development: SPRING Forward and CRSCs</b></p> <p>SPRING Forward provides re-entry, employment, and housing navigation services to returning residents. The Workforce component of the program facilitates access to wrap-around supportive services and connections to job training and employment placement programs to stabilize returning residents and mitigate the risk of recidivism.</p> <p>CRSCs are designed to stabilize residents who are in transition from an Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and/or a Cook County Jail correctional facility setting back into the community, providing them with a central location where they can receive re-entry navigation services as needed and access, through referrals, supportive services that will enhance their well-being and empower them to successfully complete their probation, parole and/or electronic monitoring requirements.</p>	<p>\$8,247,899.00</p>	<p>101 participants placed in a permanent job<sup>7</sup> through SPRING Forward.</p> <p>(as of September 23, 2024)</p> <p>Over 1,500 returning residents have received re-entry navigation services through CRSCs<sup>8</sup></p>

<sup>7</sup> 67 placed in permanent job as reported in 2024 U.S. Treasury Report, 101 reported on Sept. 23, 2024

<sup>8</sup> 1,230 enrolled in workforce programs reported in U.S. Treasury Report



<p><b>Workforce Development Program: Career Grow Chicago</b></p> <p>This workforce development program, established by DFSS and City Colleges of Chicago (CCC), assists non-traditional adult learners to advance in their careers by providing a variety of short-term certificate programs with hands-on learning components as well as pathways to work-based learning opportunities and apprenticeships. This program offers opportunities in early childhood education, nursing, construction, HVAC, information technology, transportation, distribution, and logistics.</p> <p>This investment also includes RiseKit, a web-based platform that connects employers and community-based workforce organizations to job seekers who need access to job readiness training, employment opportunities, or both.</p>	<p>\$5,908,604.00</p>	<p>1,992 participants enrolled</p>
<p><b>Total ARPA Funding</b></p>	<p><b>\$19,054,503.00</b></p>	



### SPOTLIGHT: SPRING Forward Program

#### Addressing Barriers to Re-entry, Employment, & Housing for Returning Residents

Returning residents in Chicago face significant systemic barriers to accessing stable housing and employment opportunities, which often perpetuates a cycle of housing instability and re-incarceration and the continued need for housing and employment services. These challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased unemployment rates and intensified competition for jobs. According to the Prison Policy Initiative, despite some employers' stated willingness to hire individuals with criminal records, data shows that having a record reduces callback rates by 50%. Moreover, returning residents struggle to access most housing programs due to stringent requirements, such as a federal 90-day homelessness prerequisite, and low supply of affordable rental units in Chicago. The pandemic disrupted re-entry support services, leading to increased financial anxiety and social isolation among formerly incarcerated individuals, making their reintegration even more difficult.

#### SPRING Forward by the Numbers

229 completed transitional work

101 residents placed in permanent, full-time employment

199 households receiving rental assistance subsidies

In collaboration with The Cara Collective (TCC) and Lawndale Christian Legal Center (LCLC), the Workforce Services Division (WSD) launched the Selected Pre-Release for Intensive Navigation Support Going Forward (SPRING Forward) Program, a pilot initiative, with a \$9.2 million ARPA investment. This initiative is comprised of two separate ARPA-funded programs, with the Re-Entry Workforce Development Program partnering with TCC and providing workforce services and the Re-Entry Housing Navigation Pilot working with LCLC and providing housing services. Moreover, the program provides comprehensive wrap-around support, including job skills training, transitional employment, and a 12-month rental subsidy. SPRING Forward is specifically for residents recently released from the Cook County Department of Corrections (CCDOC) and the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) within the past 18 months. The pilot offers both workforce and housing support simultaneously, with a goal of improving employment outcomes and lowering recidivism rates for returning residents through the dual service coordination of TCC and LCLC.

#### SPRING Forward Re-entry & Housing Navigation Impact

Since its launch in July 2023, the SPRING Forward Program has made substantial progress in enhancing housing and employment stability for returning residents by effectively addressing their re-entry needs. The program has conducted and completed needs assessments for over 400 returning residents, ensuring those selected receive personalized support tailored to their unique circumstances. 229<sup>9</sup> participants have concluded transitional work and are ready to begin the search for permanent employment. While many of these individuals are still in the process of completing workforce training programs, 18 have earned industry-recognized credentials and 101 have secured permanent, full-time employment (i.e., subsidized employment)<sup>10</sup>. 199 of the program's participants have received rental assistance subsidies and housing navigation services, over 140 of whom have remained stably housed for at least 30 days without being reincarcerated. These achievements are complemented by numerous success stories that highlight the program's effectiveness and reinforce the program's vital role in providing comprehensive support that meets immediate needs and fosters long-term stability and success for returning residents.

<sup>9</sup> 178 completed transitional work as reported in 2024 U.S. Treasury Report, 229 was reported on Sept. 23, 2024

<sup>10</sup> 67 placed in permanent employed as reported in 2024 U.S. Treasury Report, 101 was reported on Sept. 23, 2024





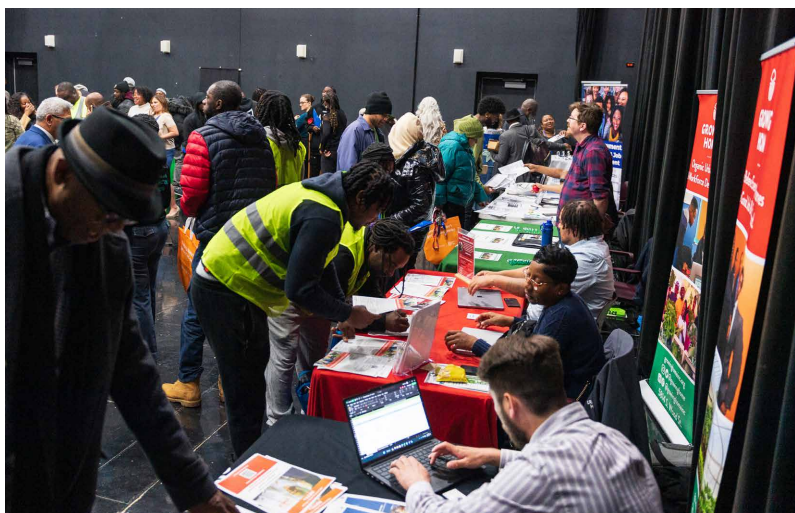
*"Thank You. I am in a position now where I can make things happen for myself because of LCLC. You guys are really doing a lot for people and it's making a difference. Thank you and stay blessed."*

- SPRING Forward Participant

### Insights for the Future

Drawing from the SPRING Forward Program's outcomes, several key insights underscore the importance of supporting returning residents:

- Linking housing and employment service providers is critical for comprehensive support:** Currently, the re-entry support landscape lacks comprehensive housing and employment services for returning residents. Without this support, clients are left vulnerable to economic and housing instability, which can quickly lead to a dangerous cycle of recidivism, increased homelessness, and legal consequences such as eviction. The SPRING Forward program creates a vital safety net for returning residents by providing them with sustainable wages and stable housing, essential for their successful reintegration into society. On a client-level, TCC and LCLC worked closely with residents to secure steady employment and safe, affordable housing, which prevented the potential spiral into poverty and crime and empowered clients to build a more secure and productive future. DFSS, along with TCC and LCLC, meet regularly to review client progress and make sure clients are on track to secure permanent, high-quality employment and a housing unit.
- Early evidence is promising in reducing recidivism:** Between July 2023 and June 2024, only 20 out of 266 participants recidivated, demonstrating that the SPRING Forward program's focus on pairing re-entry with housing services is showing early success in reducing recidivism and addressing the complex challenges faced by returning residents. Traditional re-entry initiatives frequently overlook the complex challenges faced by individuals leaving incarceration, such as securing stable housing, finding sustainable employment, and overcoming the stigma of a criminal record. SPRING Forward fills this gap by identifying housing as a priority need for returning residents and providing tailored services that directly respond to these needs. This early success underscores the critical role of stable housing in facilitating a smooth transition back into society, highlighting SPRING Forward as a promising model for re-entry programs.



*"[The program] is great at giving people opportunities to get their lives back on track and opportunities to change."*

- SPRING Forward Participant



## ■ Youth Services Division Overview

The Youth Services Division (YSD) of DFSS is committed to empowering Chicago youth through intentional programming that enhances their well-being and future success. The needs of Chicago's youth – identified through community and youth feedback and national and local best practices – are the key drivers in informing the development and expansion of the division's programming and continuously shape the Department's priorities and goals for Chicago's youth. To achieve these goals, YSD's efforts and resources are focused on making the greatest impact through three portfolios:

- The **Enrichment Portfolio** provides structured, safe, and enriching activities for young people ages 6 to 21 outside of the classroom, during weekends, and while youth are on school breaks. Examples include academic support; career and vocational development; science, technology, engineering, arts, math (STEAM); arts and cultural activities; and sports. My CHI. My Future. (MCMF) builds on community strategy work launched in 2019 and aims to connect all youth with an out-of-school time program. In 2023, community programming expanded with ARPA funding to serve more youth.
- The **Youth Employment Portfolio** brings together government institutions, community-based organizations, and employers to offer subsidized and unsubsidized employment and internship opportunities annually to over 17,000 youth and young adults, ages 14 to 24, through five program models funded by ARPA and other sources: Chicagobility, Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), Chicago Youth Service Corps (CYSC), Year-Round Employment Program (YREP), and the Corporate Partnership Program.
- The **Prevention and Intervention Portfolio** serves youth of highest promise who may need more support because they are not connected to school or employment, may have been involved with the juvenile or criminal justice system, may have unstable housing, high exposure to violence, or need mental health support.

### YSD Pandemic Response

The COVID-19 pandemic intensified the challenges faced by Chicago's youth, highlighting the urgent and ongoing need to address youth unemployment and community safety. Unemployment for youth ages 16-24 spiked during the pandemic and persists, with social, emotional, and economic consequences for youth and their families. As a result, community violence, including homicides and shootings, also increased and remain above pre-pandemic levels. For youth from further marginalized communities such as youth of color, youth experiencing housing insecurity, or youth with a disability, etc., issues of unemployment and exposure to violence are even more exacerbated and continue to persist (<https://www.chapinhall.org/research/youth-of-color-disproportionately-impacted-by-housing-instability/>).

In response to the pandemic, YSD received ARPA funding to expand existing programming and launch new initiatives across the following Road to Recovery policy pillars: Community Safety, and Youth and Economy. The following programs were either launched or expanded to provide comprehensive support.



### Current ARPA allocations as of June 2024

Program	ARPA Funding Allocation	Impact (as of 6/30/2024)
<p><b>Youth Intervention Programs</b></p> <p>These services are for youth who are involved or exposed to violence through two models: mentoring (youth 12-24) and year-round employment programs.</p>	\$14,427,226.27	Over 95% of youth report a positive relationship with their mentor
<p><b>Service Coordination and Navigation (SCaN)</b></p> <p>This youth-driven program provides services to youth ages 14-24 at the highest risk of violence involvement.</p>	\$5,100,000.00	65% of participating youth report an increase in personal agency/self-efficacy
<p><b>Youth Opportunity Programs</b></p> <p>These employment programs include expanded funding for four youth employment program models, three of which fall under the umbrella of One Summer Chicago (OSC)—including Summer Youth Employment Program, Chicagobility, and Chicago Youth Service Corps, and one of which is the Year-Round Youth Employment Program.</p>	\$66,103,168.00	Over 27,793 youth employed (across multiple program models) <sup>11</sup>
<p><b>Youth Justice Diversion</b></p> <p>This program delivers evidence-based community violence intervention programs by engaging youth 10 - 17 years old that have had contact with law enforcement. Youth are referred to the program by the Chicago Police Department (CPD), assessed for risk, needs, and strengths, and then connected with services.</p>	\$7,074,644.63	84% of enrolled youth successfully completed their service plan within 90 days

<sup>11</sup> 27,793 number and includes both ARPA and other city funding and is reported as of August 2024 when One Summer Chicago ended. Over 20,000 was reported in the 2024 U.S. Treasury.



<p><b>My CHI. My Future.</b></p> <p>MCMF brings together delegate agencies to bolster the youth opportunity ecosystem, connecting young people to safe, meaningful, and engaging out-of-school time opportunities. The initiative includes three program models: Year-Round Safe Spaces, Anchor Orgs, and the Micro-Grant Program.</p>	<p>\$14,246,981.27</p>	<p>26,470 youth attended MCMF-run events since expansion in 2023</p>
<p><b>Total ARPA Funding</b></p>	<p><b>\$106,952,020.17</b></p>	



### ■ SPOTLIGHT: Addressing Unemployment through Year-round Employment Opportunities

Evidence is clear that youth employment is vital to long-term well-being and economic prosperity – research has shown that youth who are employed during the academic year tend to have higher earning potential in adulthood (<https://www.utsa.edu/today/2021/05/story/youth-unemployment-uei-sa-works.html>). The COVID-19 pandemic led to a sharp increase in youth unemployment which continues to persist, reaching 9.7% in March 2024 (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/217448/seasonally-adjusted-monthly-youth-unemployment-rate-in-the-us/>). Without intervention and investment, the effects of the pandemic threatened to undermine Chicago youth's opportunities for early work experience and career exposure throughout the academic year.

In response, the Youth Services Division (YSD) launched the Year-Round Employment Program and expanded the Chicago Youth Service Corps in partnership with 50+ delegate agencies and 11 sister agencies. YSD targeted these investments in programs which offer both consistent career exposure and an opportunity for youth to earn an hourly wage of \$15.80. YSD also incentivized non-profit partners delivering these programs to engage youth from priority populations such as youth with a disability, youth who are English as a Second Language Learners, youth who are enrolled in Chicago Public Schools, youth who are experiencing homelessness, youth in the foster care system and/or transitioning out of care, youth who are justice involved, and Opportunity Youth (ages 14 - 24).

- **Chicago Youth Service Corps (CYSC):** Employs youth ages 16 - 24 year-round through employment programming focused on leadership development and local civic engagement. Youth collaborate with their peers to identify issues within their communities and work to create solutions that are presented during an end-of-year capstone showcase. CYSC is part of the ARPA Youth Opportunity Programs.
- **Year-Round Employment Program (YREP):** Employs youth ages 16 - 24 throughout the academic year, providing employment and career development across the City of Chicago. This youth-driven program aims to provide access and support for youth across priority populations. Youth create transition goals resulting in youth pursuing higher education, enlisting in military, or securing permanent jobs. YREP cohorts are funded by both the ARPA Youth Opportunity Programs and the ARPA Youth Intervention Programs.

#### Year-round Youth Employment by the numbers

**YREP** employed over 1,300 youth (as of 6/30/2024)

**61%** of 2022 and 2023 participants identify with one or more priority population groups

**74%** of 2023 participants demonstrated work readiness skills for continued employment

**CYSC** employed over 3,200 youth (as of 6/30/2024)

**90%** of CYSC 2023 participants reported a growth in personal and leadership development

**86%** of CYSC 2023 participants reported a growth in civic minded attitudes and behaviors

### Year-Round Employment Opportunity Impact

The combined efforts of CYSC and YREP have employed over 4,500 youth as of June 30, 2024, thanks to the expansion of both programs under ARPA funding.

YREP alone has provided employment opportunities to over 1,300 youth. 61% of 2022 and 2023 participants belong to one or more priority population groups, reflecting the commitment to reaching those in greatest need. 74% of the 2023 participants exhibited strong work readiness skills at the end of the year, setting them up for continued success in the job market.



Meanwhile, with the ARPA investment and other city funding, CYSC program has employed over 3,200 youth (as of 6/30/2024)<sup>12</sup>. As of December 2023, the end-of-year survey results highlight the program's effectiveness in fostering personal growth and civic engagement. 90% of CYSC participants reported development in personal and leadership skills, while 86% noted a positive shift in civic minded attitudes and behaviors. Together, both year-round opportunities cultivate life skills and set youth up for their future.

*One CYSC participant from Boys and Girls Club of Chicago focused on bringing sustainable urban gardening to encourage people to grow their own produce. CYSC enabled this participant to travel to Wyoming to attend leadership workshops, honing this skill to bring it back to Chicago communities.*

### Investing in the City's Future

Investing in year-round employment opportunities provided through the Chicago Youth Service Corps and Year-Round Employment Program, allows youth to explore various career pathways while developing skills that will prepare them for the workforce, giving Chicago businesses access to a future talent pipeline.

- **Ongoing engagement for youth is needed for success:** While summer employment keeps youth engaged for six weeks, year-round opportunities maintain youth involvement and build on their summer experience throughout the academic year offering a deeper exposure to and understanding of different career pathways. This long-term exposure allows youth to gain critical experiences and skills to apply to future opportunities.
- **Community safety and financial benefits support both families and the city:** Consistent employment supports youth financially, aids in professional development, and contributes to meeting family needs—especially for youth-led households. By investing in year-round opportunities, we increase community safety and economic security and build a reliable future workforce, particularly for priority populations.
- **Year-round employment increases youth autonomy:** Year-round employment fosters a sense of ownership and autonomy for youth by giving them a chance to explore their interests and pursue different pathways. By providing consistency, these programs allow youth to improve future earning potential and open diverse career pathways which set them up for greater professional opportunities of interest.

*"The program impacted my life because it showed me that I can change my current lifestyle and be better."*

- YREP participant

<sup>12</sup> CYSC total impact includes both ARPA and other city funding sources.



2024

# Department of Family and Support Services

## ARPA Mid-Year Impact Book



### SPOTLIGHT: Addressing Community Safety through SCaN

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant increase in community violence across Chicago. Chicago experienced a 55% increase in shootings and a 56% increase in homicides from 2019 to 2020. Violence continued to rise in 2021, with a 67% increase in shootings and 61% increase in homicides compared to 2019. While rates of shootings and homicides have decreased since 2021, they remain above pre-pandemic levels, and 2023 data indicates that shootings were still 12% higher— and homicides were still 24% higher— than in 2019 (<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/vrd/home.html>). In 2023, just over half of carjacking arrests were youth under 18 years of age, and data indicates that the most common age of homicide offenders in 2023 was 20 years of age <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-Annual-Report.pdf>. As crime persists in Chicago, youth are most affected and require both support and resources.

To help address these impacts, the Youth Services Division utilized ARPA funding to expand the Youth Intervention Programs - Service Coordination and Navigation (SCaN) program—which aims to reduce youth involvement in violence and improve wellbeing by providing youth who are at the highest risk of violence involvement with services, stability, and a network of community to guide them towards a successful transition to adulthood. SCaN is a voluntary youth-driven program in partnership with the Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Police Department, Cook County Juvenile Probation Officers, and four delegate agencies that leverages a supportive relationship between a youth and a Navigator. The Navigator serves as an advocate and provides intensive individualized service coordination. Service coordination allows youth to have access to ancillary support from programming, including food assistance, housing assistance, and mental health support.

#### SCaN and ARPA Impact

Since its expansion under ARPA in January 2022, the SCaN program has been dedicated to supporting youth who have faced the challenges of crime, either through direct involvement or exposure to violent crime such as carjacking or armed robberies. With the ARPA investment, SCaN has served nearly 200 youth (as of 6/30/2024).

Among the participants, 65% reported an increase in personal agency and self-efficacy, gaining a stronger sense of control over their lives. Additionally, 45% of the youth have been linked to further supportive services, extending their network of help. Approximately 34% of participants have successfully reached at least one of their service plan goals, and on average, each youth has made three connections with various services.

A key component of SCaN's approach is the long-term, trusting relationship between youth and Navigators. Navigators are the primary contact for youth beginning at outreach. They provide coordinated care intervention for youth utilizing a strong community-based network of services. Navigators connect and coach youth to services and provide feedback around youth's short and long-term goals through a trauma-informed and equity lens. This personalized approach is designed to support youth in achieving their goals and building a stable future.

#### SCaN by the Numbers:

**65%** of youth experienced increase in personal agency/self-efficacy

**45%** of youth connected to additional supportive services

**34%** of youth completed at least one of their service plan goals

Youth made on average **three** service connections





*“One SCaN participant was a high-risk youth on probation at the time he was referred to me. While I was working with him, he caught another high-profile criminal case. The case was a serious felony which would have resulted in a 6-to-30-year conviction if found guilty. I was able to help him find a reasonable attorney who did not charge high fees for the case. We were able to lower the case from a felony to a misdemeanor and the judge was impressed with the support letters we provided.”*

- SCaN Navigator

### Insights for the Future: A Need for a Youth-Driven Model

Investing in a youth-driven program like SCaN is essential for enhancing community safety and supporting youth with high promise. The need for such programs is critical. SCaN has demonstrated several key lessons for successfully delivering this type of programming:

- **Non-punitive engagement is needed for youth with the highest risk of violence:** The SCaN model is not connected to the court system or CPD. Youth are not required to participate in SCaN, unlike other programs that use a punitive model to penalize youth. SCaN empowers youth to set their own goals for success and safety. This approach fosters personal responsibility and positive change without the pressure of punishment and allows youth to grow at their pace.
- **Intensive support from a consistent navigator is critical for success:** SCaN differentiates itself by offering intensive, personalized support through its navigator model. SCaN Navigators model "relentless engagement," meaning they consistently and repeatedly "show up" for youth to support them on their goals. One day that might look like taking them to lunch or dropping off groceries, and the next day they may accompany a youth to a stressful court date or help them through a crisis. Navigators fill a gap by not just offering a referral for support but walking hand in hand with youth and improving their resource utilization. This dynamic, hands-on approach addresses the complex needs of youth impacted by violence through a consistent and skilled relationship.
- **Expanded focus to gender-based violence is a response to the growing need:** In response to the rise of gender-based violence such as intimate partner violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and stalking, SCaN broadened its scope. With the new ARPA investment, the program now addresses these critical issues, offering comprehensive care to youth affected by gender-based violence. This expansion reflects a commitment to meeting the needs of youth in a post-pandemic world by providing a strong, inclusive support system for youth facing serious challenges.

*“One SCaN participant’s home was shot up and (he) could not take public transportation. As a result, he would only attend school if we helped him with transportation. He was out of school, and I assisted him with enrollment at [An Alternative Highschool]. He only had 8 months to graduate, and we were able to get him to graduate. He went off to work at O’Hare Airport.”*

- SCaN Provider



2024

Department of Family and Support Services  
ARPA Mid-Year Impact Book



■ The successful impact of our pandemic-related work and the achievements under ARPA would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment and dedication of the following DFSS agencies and partners:

After School Matters, Inc.  
All Chicago Making Homelessness History  
Alternative Schools Network  
Alternatives Inc  
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago  
Ascend Justice  
Asian Human Services, Inc  
ASPIRA, Inc. of Illinois  
Association House of Chicago  
B.U.I.L.D. Incorporated  
Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council  
Beyond The Ball  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago  
Breakthrough Urban Ministries, inc.  
Bright Point  
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council  
BUILD, Inc.  
Cabrini Green Legal Aid  
Cara Collective  
Catholic Charities of The Archdiocese of Chicago  
Center for Changing Lives  
Center for Companies that Care  
Center for New Horizons  
Central States Service Jobs for Progress, Inc.  
Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation  
Chicago Children's Advocacy Center  
Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership  
Chicago Parks Foundation  
Chicago Urban League

Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois  
Chinese Mutual Aid Association, Inc.  
Circesteem Inc  
City Colleges of Chicago  
Community Assistance Programs  
Erie Neighborhood House  
Fire Defense Legal and Civil Rights Program Trust  
Free Spirit Media  
Gary Comer Youth Center, Inc.  
GiveDirectly, Inc.  
Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation  
Heartland Human Care Services, Inc.  
Howard Area Community Center  
Howard Brown  
Ignite Org.  
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority  
Inner-City Muslim Action Network  
K.L.E.O. Community Family Life Center  
Kuumba Lynx  
Lawndale Christian Legal Center  
Lawrence Hall  
Le Penseur Youth & Family Services, Inc.  
Legal Aid Chicago  
Legal Aid Society of Metropolitan Family Services  
Life-Span  
Lost Boyz Inc.  
Mapscorp  
Metropolitan Family Services  
Mikva Challenge



Mikva Challenge Grant Foundation, Inc.  
 National Immigrant Justice Center  
 Northwest Side Housing Center  
 Northwestern University  
 Northwestern University Settlement Association  
 Phalanx Family Services  
 Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation  
 Project Exploration  
 Project: Vision Inc.  
 Pui Tak Center  
 Resilience  
 Rincon Family Services  
 Safer Foundation  
 SGA Youth & Family Services  
 Sinai Community Institute  
 Spanish Coalition for Housing  
 Teamwork Englewood  
 The Alliance 98  
 The Catholic Bishop of Chicago –  
 Holy Cross Immaculate Heart of Mary  
 The Catholic Bishop of Chicago – St. Sabina Church  
 The Network: Advocating against Domestic Violence  
 The Puerto Rican Cultural Center  
 The Resurrection Project  
 The Salvation Army  
 The Salvation Army STOP-IT Program  
 Think Outside Da Block  
 Trellus  
 UCAN  
 Union League Boys and Girls Clubs  
 United African Organization  
 United Way of Metropolitan Chicago  
 Universal Family Connection  
 Westside Health Authority  
 YMCA Metropolitan Chicago  
 Young Men's Christian Association of Chicago

Youth Advocate Program Inc.  
 Youth Guidance  
 Youth Outreach Services

### Partners

Board of Trustees of Community College District #508  
 Chicago Department of Housing  
 Chicago Department of Public Health  
 Chicago Mayor's Office  
 Chicago Office of Budget & Management  
 Chicago Police Department  
 Cook County  
 Cook County Department of Corrections  
 Cook County Jail  
 Cook County Juvenile Probation  
 GBV Task Force  
 Illinois Department of Corrections  
 Inclusive Economy Lab  
 Juvenile Diversion Advisory Council  
 Praxis  
 State of Illinois

### Thank you to all DFSS staff across the following divisions who are making Recovery happen!

Contracts, Programmatic Monitoring, and IT Division  
 Finance Division  
 Gender-based Violence Services Division  
 Homeless Services Division  
 Human Services Division  
 Strategy, Policy, Equity Division  
 Workforce Services Division  
 Youth Services Division





**MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON**  
**ROAD TO RECOVERY PLAN**  
CITY OF CHICAGO