

# 2024 | ANNUAL REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS

## PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR ADDRESSING ENCAMPMENTS





# 2024 | ANNUAL REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS

## Progress on Implementing Seven Principles for Addressing Encampments

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### INTRODUCTION

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The following report was written in compliance with ordinance O2023-1011, sponsored by former Alderman James Cappleman, which was intended to educate and inform members of the Chicago City Council and the public on the City's housing and homeless systems, and to provide the most recent available data and outcomes to show the progress those systems are making, using the Seven Principles for Addressing Encampments as a framework.

The report below outlines the current state of homelessness in Chicago based on year-end data from 2023 and the January 2024 Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count. It also details the activities that the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), the Department of Housing (DOH) and other sister Agencies conduct to engage with residents of encampments with the goal of moving those residents to permanent housing.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The City of Chicago, largely through the Department of Family and Support Services and the Department of Housing, has continued in 2023 to lead the implementation of a spectrum of services and supports for people experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Throughout 2023, the City has maximized its use of time-limited ARPA funding alongside City funds to continue investing in evidence-based models of crisis intervention, housing supports, and critical infrastructure improvements to meet the growing need of those experiencing housing instability.

Homelessness in Chicago is increasing. The City's annual Point-in-Time Count of people experiencing homelessness estimated 18,836 people experiencing homelessness in shelters or unsheltered locations on January 25, 2024, a three-fold increase from the 2023 estimate of 6,139 people experiencing homelessness. The vast majority of this increase is due to the large number of New Arrivals from the southwest border of the U.S. arriving in Chicago since August 2022 in need of shelter and basic needs. However, as pandemic-era supports for households have ended and Chicago continues to lose affordable housing, homelessness among non-New Arrivals is returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Homelessness in Chicago is an issue of equity. The overwhelming majority of people experiencing homelessness in Chicago are extremely low-income households, earning less than 30% of area median income (AMI). Additionally, homelessness in Chicago holds significant racial disparities. Based on the 2024 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count for the non-New Arrivals population, Black/ African American individuals and families have higher rates of homelessness in comparison to other non-New Arrivals racial/ethnic groups. The PIT identified that 72% of the total non-New Arrivals population in Chicago experiencing homelessness during the 2024 PIT Count identified as Black or African American, but less than 30% of residents in Chicago identify as Black or African American.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, July 1, 2023. [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Chicago city, Illinois.](#)

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Mayor Brandon Johnson has made homelessness the cornerstone of his administration's goal to realize a better, safer, stronger future for the City of Chicago. On October 3rd, 2023, Mayor Johnson signed Executive Order 2023-20 establishing the City of Chicago's first Chief Homelessness Officer position establishing a role responsible for addressing the complexities of homelessness and housing insecurity in Chicago, fostering greater policy and operational coordination across City departments and sister agencies, and providing strong leadership to prevent and end homelessness.

**The ultimate goals of the City are to reduce and prevent homelessness over time through investment in affordable housing, and to ensure that our response to homelessness is equitable, rapid, and appropriate to the needs of residents experiencing a housing crisis.**

The City of Chicago addresses homelessness utilizing a three-pronged approach, **preventing homelessness** from occurring, responding to immediate needs with a **crisis response** system, and supporting people experiencing homelessness to move into **long-term housing** options. Each element of this continuum is necessary and plays a critical role in the overall strategy of solving homelessness.

In 2023, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) and the Department of Housing (DOH) continued to implement and expand critical initiatives to support people experiencing homelessness and housing instability, including:

- Through increased investments in the DFSS Rapid Re-Housing program, over 640 new households moved from homeless shelters or unsheltered locations into housing in 2023.
- Through DOH programs to create and preserve affordable multifamily housing, 1,797 affordable housing units were established, developed, or preserved in Chicago in 2023. DOH also brought on 35 new Permanent Supportive Housing units in 2023 and anticipates bringing on a total of more than 250 new Permanent Supportive Housing units over the next 1-3 years, which will serve those who are considered extremely low-income, or earning less than 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) as well as provide essential supportive services to residents.
- DFSS and DOH are partnering to improve the infrastructure of Chicago's homeless shelters to sustain bed capacity from pre-pandemic levels and to better meet client needs, in line with national best practice and learnings from the pandemic. In 2023, DFSS qualified 10 shelter locations for renovation funding through a Request for Qualifications. DOH worked with 5 selected grantee finalists to advance toward acquisition and rehab of new buildings for non-congregate shelter. We expect investments across the two initiatives to improve roughly 700-1,000 shelter beds, or between one-quarter to one-third of beds in the current DFSS-supported shelter system, in the next 2-3 years.
- The Chicago Continuum of Care, in partnership with the City, launched the Unsheltered Homelessness Initiative in 2023, funded by a 3-year \$60 million grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). New projects, including 14 new housing projects and 6 street outreach teams, began to serve unsheltered residents in 2023.

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However, we also face new and continuing challenges:

- Continued migration of asylum seekers assisted by southern states. Since August 2022, Chicago has welcomed over 41,000 New Arrivals from the southwest border of the U.S. and currently is providing emergency shelter for approximately 7,500 New Arrivals. At the time of last year's report (July 2023), Chicago had received 11,500 New Arrivals.
- Current shelter data reveals an increase in households accessing homeless shelters following a reduction during the pandemic, reflecting a return to pre-pandemic shelter capacity but also increased need as federal and state pandemic supports have ended.
- Chicago is seeing a loss of affordable rental units in the housing market, which may lead to more new households experiencing housing instability and homelessness. Recent data shows Chicago experiencing the largest gap in affordable housing in a decade, reaching over 119,000 units in 2021. Gaps in affordability and increasing rental costs – up by 6% in 2023 – also limit pathways for households to exit homelessness<sup>2</sup>.
- The resources and process required to develop new affordable housing units takes time. Affordable multi-family housing development can take between 18 and 36 months from project selection for funding to lease-up readiness. In addition, the development of units for extremely low-income households under 30% AMI or those requiring supportive services necessitates additional rental subsidy and service provision funding.
- Success of homeless services initiatives rely on the strength of our service provider partners. In recent years, non-profit leaders for homeless shelters, street outreach teams, and housing providers have raised concerns about staffing and ability to afford living wages for the critical staff working directly with households experiencing homelessness.
- Lastly, successes across the City's homelessness work in recent years have been primarily funded through time-limited federal resources, specifically Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding and American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding.
- **To achieve significant progress, we must persist in making investments. This means committing resources to support individuals facing homelessness from all walks of life, as well as people living in unstable housing situations, such as doubled-up households. Further, these investments must be equitable, aiming to rectify the injustices caused by structural racism.**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.housingstudies.org/releases/2023-state-rental-housing-city-chicago/>

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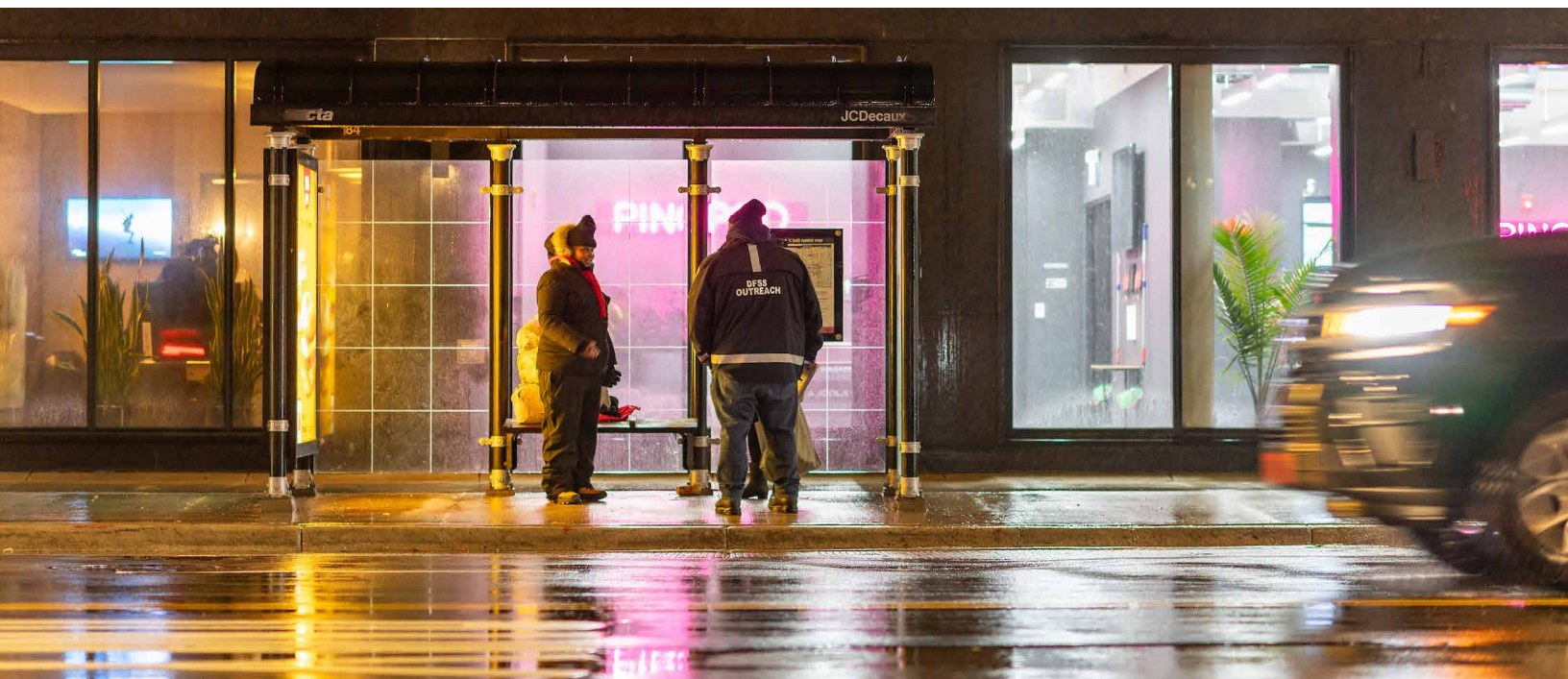
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### Looking ahead to 2024

Looking ahead, the City of Chicago hired its first-ever Chief Homelessness Officer, Sedy Soto, in March 2024. The Chief Homelessness Officer will work in alignment with the county, state, and federal government, particularly the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, and the White House ALL INside initiative. In partnership with City departments and sister agencies, Soto is working to expand the inventory of housing options for people experiencing homelessness including rental assistance, rapid rehousing, non-congregate shelter, stabilization housing, permanent supportive housing, and opportunities for residents to transition out of supportive housing.

The City and State are also partnering on the One System Initiative to integrate the systems for people experiencing homelessness and supporting New Arrivals in Chicago. The goal of this work is to move to a unified system approach to unhoused Chicagoans regardless of their immigration status or how long they have been here. Workgroups of representatives from the current homeless services system and migrant shelter system, with support of technical assistance consultants, are meeting weekly to develop recommendations by the end of Summer 2024, with implementation no earlier than January 2025.

One critical tool the City will use to address needs related to homelessness over the next five years is the \$1.25B housing and economic development bond. A total of \$625 million is dedicated to housing needs, with \$360-\$390 million included to build and preserve affordable rental housing. \$230-\$250 million will be used to build and preserve affordable rental homes, \$115-\$135 million will be used for a social housing revolving fund, and multifamily retrofit will receive \$10-\$15 million. For homelessness-specific activities, \$20-\$30 million is dedicated for single-room occupancy (SRO) preservation.





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### STATE OF HOMELESSNESS

The City of Chicago, Chicago Continuum of Care, and its partners use multiple data sources to understand the state of homelessness in Chicago. We have several ways to understand the scale of homelessness in Chicago because there are several definitions of homelessness and homelessness is not static – households enter and exit from homelessness every day. Highlights and key takeaways from these sources are outlined below and additional detail can be found in the linked reports.

#### KEY TRENDS

**Arrival of migrants from southwest border:** Chicago has welcomed over 41,000 migrants and New Arrivals from the southwest border, many bussed from the State of Texas, since August 31, 2022. Many New Arrivals are in need of shelter. 13,891 New Arrivals were counted as part of the 2024 Point-in-Time Count on January 25, 2024. Over 22,680 New Arrivals have been resettled or reunited with sponsors since August 2022 and there are currently about 8,695 New Arrivals staying in Chicago shelters as of April 2024.

**Increased need outpacing increased bed capacity:** New shelter programs and beds became available in 2023 through state winter bed funding and new programs starting operation. Even with additional bed capacity in shelters, bed utilization has increased across the system, especially for the number of people in family households staying in shelter.

**Changing economic and housing conditions post-pandemic:** Additional federal and state pandemic supports such as the Illinois Emergency SNAP benefits expired in 2023, leaving more households in need with less resources. Chicago has also experienced a 6% increase in the average cost for rental units in 2023.<sup>3</sup> High housing and rental costs, paired with the declining supply of affordable rental units (a 119,435-unit gap between the supply of affordable rental housing and the demand in 2022), likely led to increases in those experiencing homelessness this past year.

**Continuing racial and economic inequities for people experiencing homelessness:** Homelessness affects some of Chicago's most marginalized residents – households at the lowest levels of income struggle to make ends meet, those who've experienced historic racial inequities, survivors of violence, and many others. The ongoing impact of economic and racial inequities require the City to continue centering an equity-based approach to homelessness prevention, crisis response, and housing.

<sup>2</sup> [Malon, Claire](https://www.chicagotribune.com/2023/11/04/chicago-rent-prices-are-on-the-rise-heres-a-look-at-the-median-costs-throughout-the-city/). Chicago Tribune. "Chicago rent prices are on the rise. Here's a look at the median costs throughout the city." <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2023/11/04/chicago-rent-prices-are-on-the-rise-heres-a-look-at-the-median-costs-throughout-the-city/>, November 4, 2023.

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### Estimates of Homelessness in Chicago

The City and other partners in Chicago employ several methods for estimating the number of people, or households, who are experiencing homelessness. Chicago uses several metrics to understand homelessness since there are multiple definitions of homelessness and homelessness is not static – there are households entering and exiting homelessness on a daily basis. The table below provides a summary of the various methods and results of different estimates of homelessness, including a brief description and the reporting period associated with each estimate. You can find a detailed description of each method following the table.

**Table 1 Different Estimates of Homelessness in Chicago**

Name	Description	Number	Reporting Year
Annual Point in Time Count	One night estimate of all sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness; mandated by HUD and captures those who are experiencing literal homelessness based on HUD's definition.	18,836*	January 2024
LSA Annual Count	Number of households who experienced homelessness at least one day in a sheltered project who were served in the homeless response system from fall of 2022 to fall of 2023.	12,053	2023
Annual Chicago Coalition for the Homeless Count	An estimate of all households experiencing any kind of homelessness over the course of 2021. Includes those who are sheltered, unsheltered, and those temporarily staying with others.	68,440	2023
CPS Students in Temporary Living Situations Count	Count of students enrolled in the Students in Temporary Living Situations program. Includes students experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, as well as those who are living doubled-up.	17,700	2023
HMIS Daily Active List Average	Estimates how many people are on the "Active List" meaning they have an enrollment record in HMIS as experiencing homelessness in the past 90 days. This number is the daily average for all of 2023.	11,767	2023

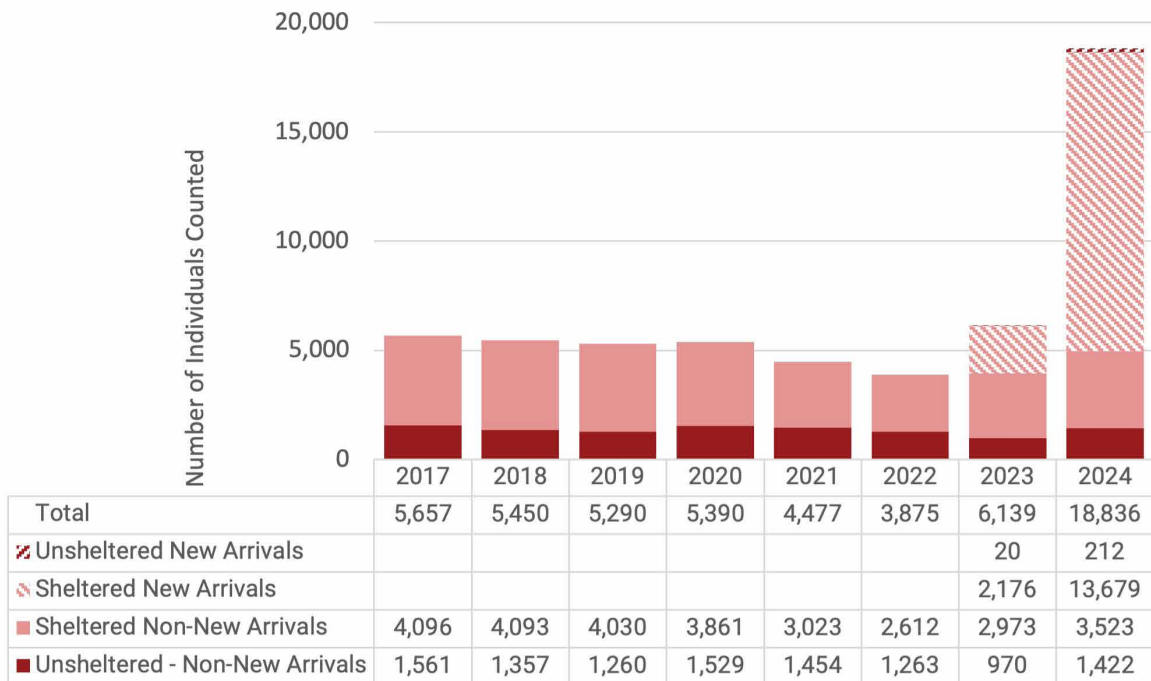
\* Includes 13,679 people in new arrivals shelters, who are not captured in other estimates.

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One metric of how many people experience homelessness in Chicago is the **Point-in-Time (PIT) Count**, an annual one-night count mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to occur in jurisdictions across the country in the last 10 days of January. Based on the 2024 PIT Count, which took place on January 25, 2024, there were a total of 18,836 people estimated to be experiencing homelessness, with 17,202 people in sheltered locations and 1,634 individuals in unsheltered locations. There were 13,679 New Arrivals residing in emergency shelters included in this year’s Count, reflecting the continued migration of New Arrivals across the southwest border of the United States that began in August 2022. This year, around 30% (5,599) of those experiencing homelessness in the 2024 PIT Count were children under the age of 18, mainly in households with an adult(s). Of these, 14% (780) were non-Asylum Seekers (New Arrivals). In addition, 14% (2,545) of those counted during the PIT were youth ages 18-24, of which about 19% (487) were non-asylum seekers. Chicago continues to see massive racial disparities in who experiences homelessness: among the non-Asylum-Seeking population, 72% (3,536) of people experiencing homelessness are Black/African American, compared to roughly 30% of Chicago’s overall population. Additional detail from the PIT Count can be found at: [City of Chicago :: Point in Time \(PIT\) Count](#).

**Figure 1: Total Estimate of People Counted – Point in Time Count**



As seen in the historical PIT chart, annual estimates of literal homelessness were gradually decreasing prior to 2020. During the peak pandemic years (2021-2022), an infusion of financial resources from the federal government focused on prevention and housing helped decrease rates in homelessness. However, the decrease in estimates of homelessness were also driven by a reduction in shelter capacity due to shelter decompression efforts in line with public health guidance during the pandemic. Post-pandemic (2023-2024), estimates have significantly risen due to continued arrival of New Arrivals in Chicago as well as an increase in the need for homeless services as federal and state pandemic supports for households ended and the housing market and economy have significantly changed.

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The Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) also produces a quarterly **CoC System Goals Report** which reports on progress against the homeless services system's shared goals to prevent and end homelessness, using data from Chicago's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Compared to the PIT Count, HMIS data helps us understand how many people and households have recently accessed homeless services in Chicago, such as drop-in centers, shelters, and homeless-dedicated housing. Based on HMIS data, 11,767 people were on the Active List (i.e. experiencing homelessness) on an average day in 2023. Note that HMIS data does not currently capture people served in New Arrivals shelters. The 2023 CoC System Goals Report, and quarterly updates, can be found here: <https://allchicago.org/hmis/data-reports>. The CoC also completes a Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) report annually for HUD to report on the number of households who experienced homelessness for at least one day of the year, based on engagement with homeless services. This report also provides an overview of the total number of households and people served in the homeless system annually, which was 15,843 households or 21,482 individuals from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023. According to the latest LSA, 12,053 households experienced homelessness for at least one day during that same period of time.

Chicago continues to see massive racial disparities in who experiences homelessness

**72% of people\* experiencing homelessness are Black/African American**

\*Non-New Arrivals, source 2024 PIT Count

Compared to the general population of Chicago where 29.8% of residents are Black/African American



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Additional data sources help us understand the scale of homelessness, including households in Chicago experiencing “doubled-up homelessness,” or living with others temporarily out of economic necessity. These households are not intended to be captured by the PIT count or the CoC System Goals report, both of which use HUD’s definition of literal homelessness that excludes the doubled-up population.

**The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless 2023 report** estimates that 68,440 households in Chicago experience literal homelessness or stay with others temporarily over the course of 2021, based on 2021 American Community Survey and HMIS data. Additional detail can be found here: <https://www.chicagohomeless.org/estimate-of-homeless-people-in-chicago/>

**Chicago Public Schools** estimates that 17,700 students experienced homelessness during the 2022-2023 school year, based on current and past CPS enrollment in the Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) program which provides services such as transportation, school uniforms, school supplies, fee waivers, and referrals to community resources for students experiencing housing instability. This estimate includes students experiencing both literal and doubled-up homelessness since students are eligible if they are living in shelters, unsheltered locations, motels or hotels, or are doubled-up with others.

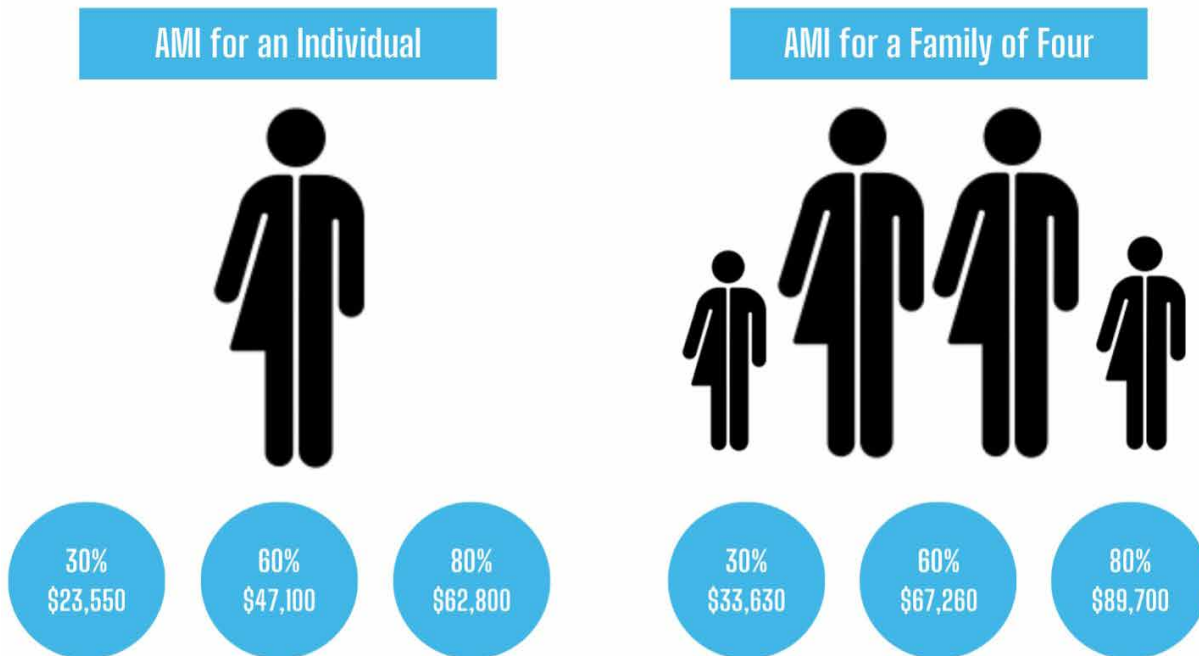
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### STATE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Chicago is committed to working toward ending homelessness by focusing on the solution to homelessness – the creation of affordable housing. What is considered “affordable” varies by household, so the City operates under the HUD definition of affordability – that no one should have to pay more than 30% of their income to live in safe, healthy housing. Area Median Income (AMI) is the universal standard used by local governments to calculate maximum affordable housing costs for households of different sizes. You can see examples of AMI based on household size, in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Examples Area Median Incomes by Family Size as of April 2024

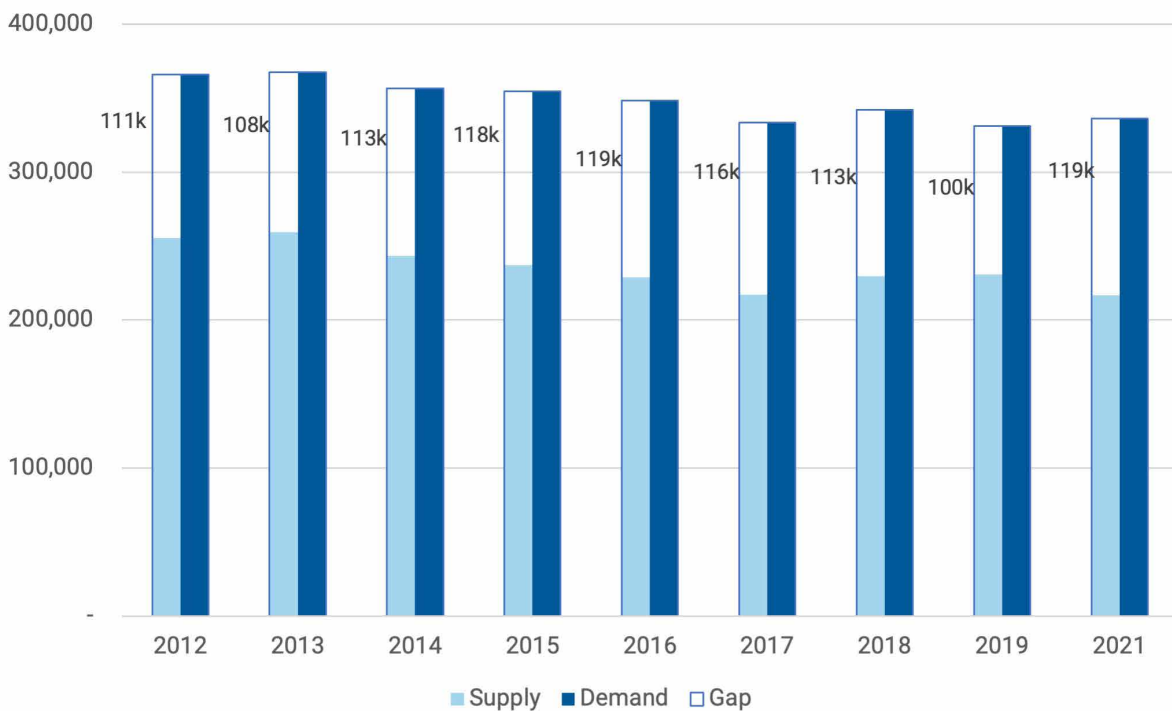


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Recent research by the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University, in their “State of Rental Housing in the City of Chicago” report published in 2023<sup>4</sup>, found that the affordable housing gap, the difference between the demand for affordable housing and the supply available, in 2021 was the largest in at least a decade, reaching over 119,000 units. You can see this illustrated in Figure 3, below.

**Figure 3: Gap between Supply and Demand of Affordable Rental Housing Units**



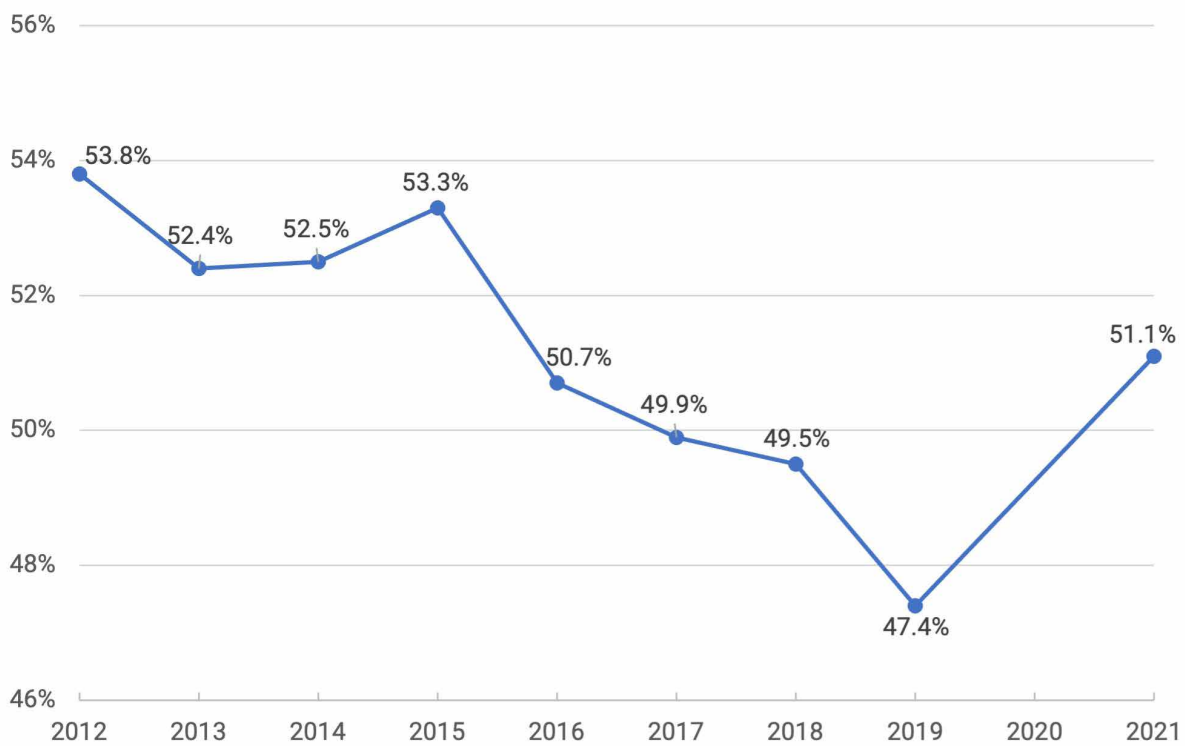
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.housingstudies.org/releases/2023-state-rental-housing-city-chicago/>

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Similarly, the proportion of Chicago renter households who are cost-burdened—meaning they are spending more than 30% of their income on rent—increased to 51% in 2021, the highest since 2015. Figure 4 illustrates the shift in the share of households that were rent cost-burdened. This shift took place over the early pandemic, and it's unclear if this trend is anticipated to slow or reverse until more current data is available.

**Figure 4: Share of Households that were Cost-burdened**



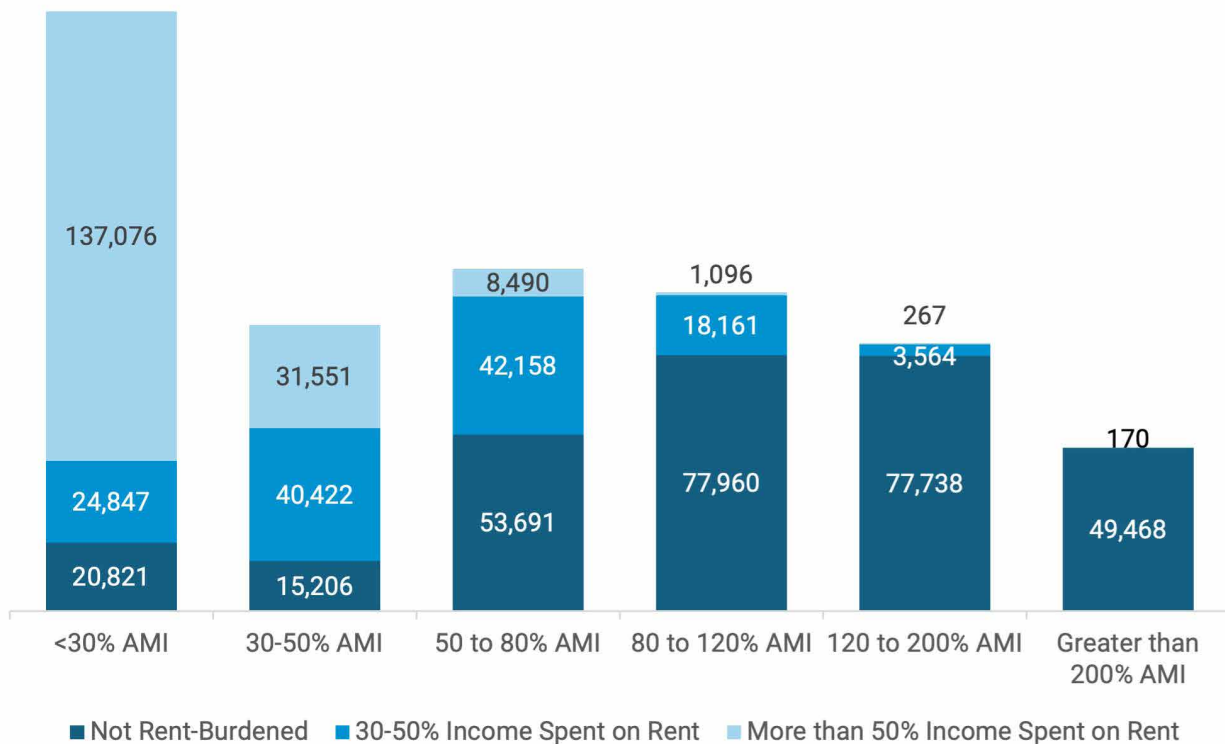


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Extremely low-income (ELI) households at or below 30% AMI bear an even higher rent-cost burden: 75% of ELI households were severely rent cost-burdened, meaning they are spending more than 50% of their income on rent. Chicago is home to more than 180,000 extremely low-income renter households, representing over 20% of all Chicago renters. These households, and the disproportionate number experiencing severe rental cost-burden, point to a clear need for the creation of more deeply affordable housing options. You can see the breakdown of rent-burdened status by income level, in the year 2021, in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5: Rent-Burden Status by Income Level in 2021**



The current gaps in available affordable housing, increases to ongoing rental costs, and shift for low-income renters toward paying substantial portions of income toward rent all point to a substantial portion of Chicago residents currently at risk of homelessness. This data, along with what we know from various data sources counting residents at risk of or experiencing homelessness, point to the need for further investment in a broad and equitable array of homelessness prevention, crisis response, and housing resources.

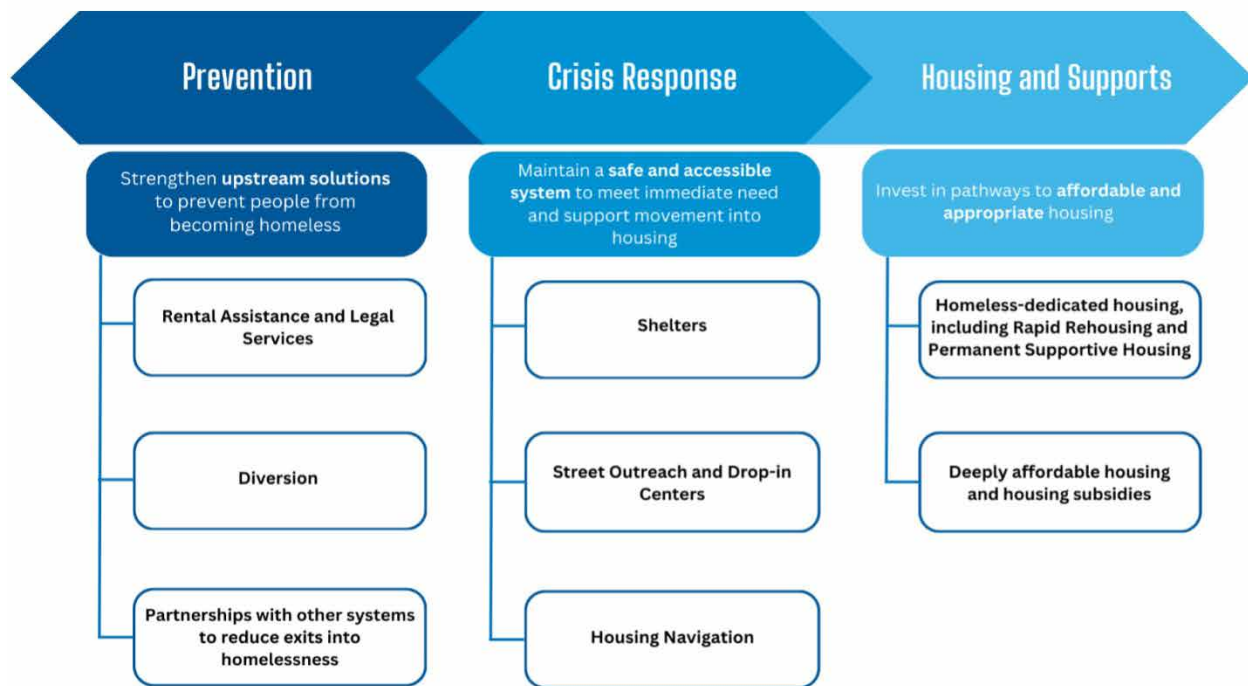
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### RESOURCES FOR ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

The City of Chicago, in partnership with the Chicago Continuum of Care, seeks to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring, a benchmark set by U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness<sup>5</sup>. People experience homelessness due to a variety of causes, and that requires a range of options to respond to those causes. While the ultimate solution to homelessness is affordable and abundant housing, each piece of this continuum is necessary and plays a critical role in the overall strategy of solving homelessness. The City of Chicago, through DFSS and DOH, responds to homelessness with a three-pronged approach:

1. Prevent people from experiencing homelessness.
2. Maintain a safe and accessible crisis response system.
3. Support households in quickly moving back into housing.



The current state of resources dedicated to each of these approaches is below, including resources both in the existing homeless services system and the new resources for New Arrivals from the southern border of the U.S. The City and State of Illinois are working together on the **One System Initiative**, which kicked off in March 2024 and seeks to establish a long-term integration of the system for People Experiencing Homelessness and the parallel system supporting New Arrivals in Chicago.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.usich.gov/guidance-reports-data/federal-guidance-resources/criteria-and-benchmarks-achieving-goal-ending-0>

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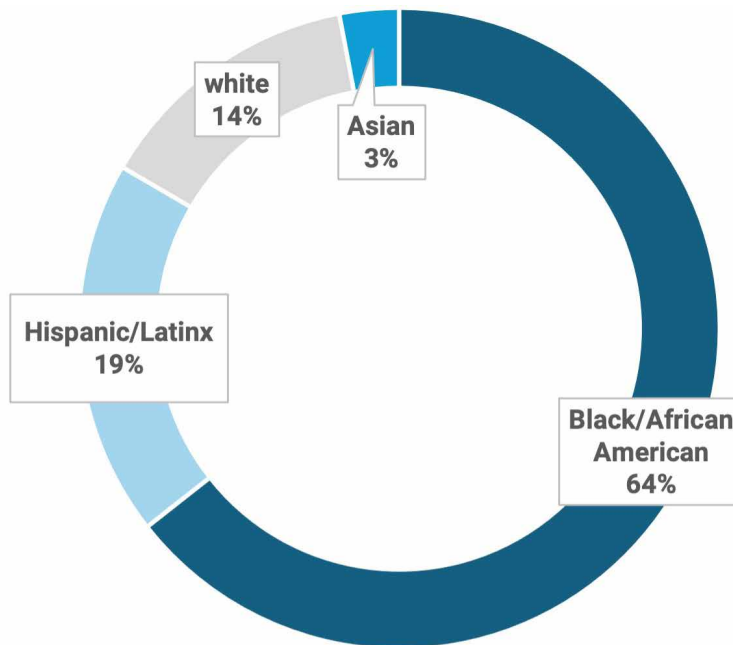
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### Prevention

The first element to ending homelessness in Chicago is preventing residents from entering homelessness. To that end, the City, through both DFSS and DOH, funds programs in order to keep Chicagoans safely and stably housed.

During COVID-19, the city received funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (2020). In response, the City's Department of Housing **Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)** was created. The program aimed to prevent homelessness by assisting Chicago tenants and landlords economically impacted by the pandemic. ERAP provided up to 18 months of rental assistance to 24,580 households with \$166.7M in funding from program inception in June 2021 through December 2023. Over 70,000 people applied for ERAP, highlighting the substantial need for rental assistance during this period. Much of this was through the Court-based Emergency Rental Assistance Program, which assists tenants facing eviction filings. The recipients of ERAP represent a diverse array of Chicago's population, with representation across various racial and ethnic groups: 64.4% Black/African American, 19% Hispanic/Latinx, 13.6% white, and 3% Asian.

Figure 6 Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) Recipients by Race/Ethnicity



Additionally, The Right-to-Counsel program is a City-wide pilot providing free legal assistance to low-income tenants facing eviction. The program is administered by DOH through partnerships with the Law Center for Better Housing (court-based assistance) and Beyond Legal Aid (community-based support). Beginning in August 2022, the program has served 1,200 households facing eviction cases as of December 2023. So far under this program, 90% of cases have come from rent cost-burdened households, and for cases with a completed/known outcome, eviction was avoided in 85% of cases.

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Through one-time-funding of the ERAP and the Right to Counsel Pilot Programs, the City has demonstrated how rental assistance helps Chicagoans maintain housing stability. Funding through ERAP has ceased, and funding for the Right to Counsel Pilot is only available through July 2025 – continued funding is essential to tackling homelessness as tenants continue to face economic challenges. Unless a sustainable funding source is identified, these programs will continue to wind down and renters in the future will continue to face increased hardships.

The **Rental Assistance Program (RAP)** at DFSS is also an important part of the homelessness prevention strategy. As a result of increased federal relief funding, the City was able to expand the program to serve 2,709 households with \$14.6M of rental assistance since August 2020. Alongside increasing the availability of the RAP, the DFSS set equity goals, enlisted organizations to conduct targeted outreach to communities most impacted by COVID-19 and monitored application data in real-time to course-correct to reach those most in need. While the demand for this program is still high, CARES funding ended in September 2023 and funding levels returned to their pre-COVID capacity, serving roughly 200 households annually.

For New Arrivals from the southern border of the U.S., Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago (CCAC) supports the **reunification of new arrivals in Chicago with family and friends in other cities and states**. This outmigration support coordinates transportation options and funds transportation costs. As of December 31, 2023, a total of 3,652 individuals have out-migrated from Chicago under this initiative. Of those, 1,163 individuals received this support at the Landing Zone, the city's point of entry to the new arrivals shelter system.



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### Crisis Response

Despite prevention efforts, many Chicagoans will experience homelessness, but the goal is that these instances are rare, brief, and non-reoccurring. For this reason, it is critical that Chicago provide a crisis response system that is able to support people experiencing homelessness. This section describes the resources dedicated to conducting outreach to people experiencing homelessness and both emergency shelter and other crisis supports, as well as resources to assist New Arrivals with critical steps on the road to housing stability.

The City funds thirteen **street outreach programs** operated by DFSS delegate agencies and an internal **DFSS Homeless Outreach and Prevention (HOP)** team to engage and serve individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The DFSS HOP team will be expanding in 2024 to include two new positions to outreach to new arrivals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The City is also partnering with 6 new outreach teams funded through the Chicago Continuum of Care’s Unsheltered Homelessness Initiative. In addition, DFSS funds a single **delegate agency to transport, refer and place residents experiencing homelessness in available shelter beds** across the city. By calling Chicago’s 311 City Services, residents experiencing a housing crisis or domestic violence are connected to an available shelter bed with a trauma-informed response. Families in need of shelter are connected to the shelter system and resources through the Emergency Homeless Assessment and Response Center (EHARC).

Overall, there are 3,777 emergency shelter beds in Chicago, based on the annual Housing Inventory Count (HIC) that occurred on the same night as the Point in Time Count, January 25, 2024. DFSS is the primary funder of shelter beds in Chicago and coordinates citywide **shelter** referral and placements. DFSS funds and oversees a network of shelter programs totaling approximately 3,000 beds at over 40 facilities operated by 28 different delegates. Additionally, the City operated over 15,000 beds for New Arrivals at the time of the 2024 HIC. Compared to the 2023 HIC, there has been an increase in the bed capacity for both emergency shelters serving the New Arrival population and those serving the non-New Arrival population. Across all emergency shelters, there has been a 260% increase in available emergency shelter beds since the last HIC. Additionally, even with those bed capacity increases, the overall utilization of those beds has increased- 86% of the emergency shelter beds were used the night of 2024 HIC/ PIT Count compared to 79% being used for a smaller number of shelter beds during the 2023 HIC/ PIT Count. This finding further points to the growing need of people experiencing homelessness to access shelter across our system.

**Table 2 Number of temporary housing beds in Chicago, January 2024**

TEMPORARY HOUSING TYPE	NUMBER OF BEDS
Emergency Shelter	3,777
Emergency Shelter – Dedicated for New Arrivals	15,128
Transitional Housing	1,228

Source: Chicago Housing Inventory Count (HIC), 2024

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The City funds 11 daytime **drop-in centers** (five youth-dedicated and six adult) operated by DFSS delegate agencies that offer residents experiencing homelessness basic need services such as meals, showers, laundry and quiet safe spaces. These centers are staffed to engage residents living in public spaces and help them identify more stable indoor housing.

The City of Chicago is also investing in **improving the infrastructure of Chicago's homeless shelter system**, based on learnings from the pandemic and in line with national best practice. Specifically, the City funded non-congregate shelter beds in hotels during the pandemic with federal COVID-relief funding. According to research conducted by the University of Chicago Medicine and Lawndale Christian Health Center<sup>6</sup> at these hotels during the pandemic, the housing significantly reduced COVID-19 incidence and improved self-reported mental health symptoms and certain health measures such as blood pressure. More than half of program participants moved on to longer-term housing after the intervention.

Building on these learnings, DFSS and DOH are making major investments in the City's shelter system to provide more accessible and non-congregate settings, sustain current bed capacity, and replenish bed capacity to pre-COVID levels or beyond. Improvements are intended to encourage more unsheltered residents to accept shelter by providing individuals with their own space and addressing other limitations of current shelter options, including storage space and accessibility.

Through the Shelter Infrastructure initiative, DFSS is investing \$40 million to help shelter programs repair and renovate existing shelter facilities, including de-congregating some facilities. To date, DFSS has qualified 10 shelter programs to apply for capital funding. Simultaneously, DOH is investing \$25 million in Chicago Recovery Plan funding to assist shelter programs to acquire and renovate new non-congregate shelter facilities. In 2022, DOH put forth an RFP for the Non-Congregate Shelter Acquisition program and selected five grantee finalists providing shelter across the City to receive capital funding to acquire new non-congregate buildings. On the following page, you can see a map with the designated locations for the DFSS and DOH shelter sites.

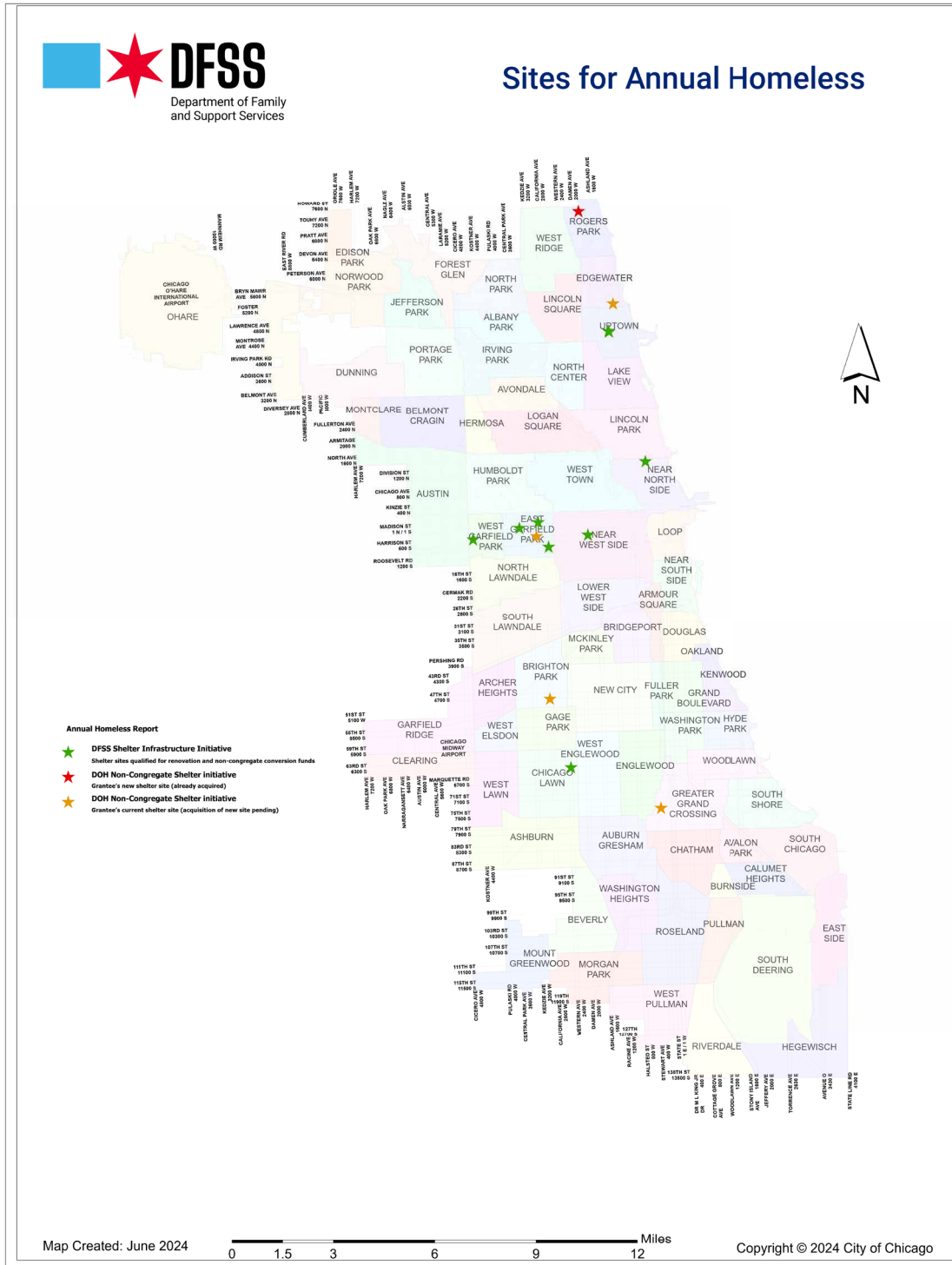
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<sup>6</sup> Huggett TD, Tung EL, Cunningham M, et al. Assessment of a Hotel-Based Protective Housing Program for Incidence of SARS-CoV-2 Infection and Management of Chronic Illness Among Persons Experiencing Homelessness. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2021;4(12):e2138464. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.38464

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Figure 7 DFSS Shelter Infrastructure and DOH Shelter Acquisition Sites



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In 2023, all projects advanced, identifying sites for acquisition and starting the site due diligence processes. To date, one shelter acquisition has closed with construction in process, with the other four advancing through the site selection, zoning, and building permitting processes.

One additional new model in development, through the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) in partnership with DOH, is **The Haven on Lincoln**, a stabilization housing program aimed at providing transitional housing and intensive, on-site behavioral and physical health care services and case management to Chicago residents who have shown a history of cycling through the City's homelessness services system, emergency room system, and other institutional settings. The program will establish new 40 beds to help meet the needs of individuals cycling through systems. The program has been in design and development throughout 2023, with implementation expected in the upcoming year.

### Housing and Supports

One of the strongest evidence-based solutions to homelessness is using a housing-first approach where housing is accessible, sustainable, permanent, and affordable. Chicago needs a range of affordable and safe housing options to meet the varied needs of the population experiencing homelessness. This section outlines current housing resources that are dedicated to households experiencing homelessness and New Arrivals as well as housing resources for any extremely low-income Chicagoans. Both homeless-dedicated housing and general affordable housing are necessary to address homelessness in Chicago.

#### Homeless-Dedicated Housing

The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is a count of housing programs within the CoC that provide beds and units dedicated to serving people experiencing homelessness, conducted in conjunction with the annual PIT Count and also required by HUD. The most common homeless-dedicated housing programs include:

- **Permanent supportive housing (PSH):** non-time limited affordable housing with supportive services, often dedicated to households experiencing chronic homelessness, in either project-based or scattered site units.
- **Rapid rehousing (RRH):** short to medium term (fewer than 24 months) of rental assistance and supportive services to help households stabilize in housing.

In January 2024, Chicago had 9,165 beds for permanent supportive housing (a 10% increase since the 2023 HIC), 2,979 beds for rapid rehousing (42% increase), and 304 beds for other permanent housing (a 2% decrease). With the increased housing program bed capacity from the 2023 to the 2024 HIC, the utilization rates of these beds and housing resources have remained similar in the past two years for PSH (about 86% utilization) and RRH (100% utilization) according to the HIC.



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Figure 8: Homeless-dedicated housing resources through the Continuum of Care

HOUSING TYPE	DESCRIPTION	
Permanent Supportive Housing	Non-time limited affordable housing with supportive services.	9,165
Rapid Rehousing	Short-term rental assistance for up to 24 months with case management, supportive services and without preconditions.	2,979
Other permanent housing	Any other permanent housing project that does not fall under the definition of PSH or RRH.	304

Source: Chicago Housing Inventory Count (HIC), 2024

Households are connected to these homeless-dedicated housing resources through the Chicago Coordinated Entry System, Households complete a standardized assessment and are matched with appropriate housing and service opportunities based on prioritization criteria determined by the CoC. Additional information can be found here: <https://allchicago.org/coordinated-entry-system/>

The **CoC System Goals Report** helps us understand how many people have been housed with these homeless-dedicated housing resources through the Continuum of Care listed above. In 2023, 1,536 new people were housed with CoC resources, an 18% reduction from the previous year and a 42% reduction from 2021. The other CoC metric that captures housing placements is the number of people who exit to permanent housing destinations, which can be CoC housing or any other stable housing, such as moving in with family. In 2023, 3,467 exits from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) were to permanent housing destinations- an 18% reduction since 2022 but a 10% increase since 2021. Note that the majority of exits from homeless services are to unknown destinations: 85% in 2023, since a household may not return to services or data may not be collected by the service provider. Additionally, on average, an unhoused person moving into housing through the CoC has experienced homelessness for 843 days, an increase of 38 days from 2022. These metrics provide other insights about housing trends and constraints in our system which are likely due to staffing shortages that limit new participants inflow into such housing programs and suboptimal PSH utilization in the past few years - 84% in 2022 and 81% in 2023.<sup>7</sup> With sustained access and funding for housing resources and the growing need of unhoused clients post-pandemic, the CoC is actively working to address these challenges such as the PSH utilization in the CoC to house more people more quickly.

<sup>7</sup> All Chicago, Chicago Continuum of Care System Goals 2023 Report. [2023-System-Goals-Annual-Report.pdf \(allchicago.org\)](https://allchicago.org/2023-System-Goals-Annual-Report.pdf).

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### Supporting New Arrivals through Rental Assistance

The State's Asylum Seeker Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ASERAP) has so far helped over 5,000 households resettle throughout this humanitarian response. To qualify for rental assistance, a new arrival must come from the southern border and have been living in a City of Chicago shelter on or before Nov. 17, 2023. For those that have met these eligibility requirements, many continue to go through and complete the ASERAP resettlement process.

Shelter residents can either find units on their own or receive State assistance with housing locations via Catholic Charities. If they receive assistance locating housing, shelter residents have an intake process where they can express their individual needs and accommodations so that case managers are able to help identify suitable units. Each ASERAP application must have a signed tenant acknowledgement form to proceed. The acknowledgement form says that the tenant has spoken to the landlord, has seen the unit, and agrees that the unit meets their needs.

The ASERAP application process typically takes approximately 21 business days from submission to move-out. Once a check is cashed by the landlord, the move-out process begins. The landlord will give keys to the tenant, who will then return to the shelter and inform their case manager of receiving the keys. From that point, the utility process begins, and set-up is initiated along with scheduling the furniture delivery date. Once those tasks are completed, the tenant will move out to their unit and begin their new journey. Once a household moves out, the State connects them to a community-based organization in their area to address any future needs they may have. If a household requires assistance beyond three months, they may apply for the Illinois Court-Based Rental Assistance program, which is also administered by the Illinois Housing Department Authority (IHDA).

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### Affordable Housing

The primary way that City supports extremely low-income Chicagoans (under 30% AMI) is through developing and preserving deeply affordable housing units with operating or rental subsidies. While the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) manages the City's public housing stock and voucher program, DOH is the City of Chicago's lead agency for affordable housing programs. One of DOH's primary roles is the creation and preservation of affordable multifamily housing. DOH tracks and reports on this data in two distinct ways: developments receiving City Council approval are tracked in DOH's public quarterly reports, and developments reaching closing to receive funding and begin construction are tracked in DOH's pipeline. The table below shows the progress toward multifamily development, and the specific creation of multifamily affordable housing units since the prior Homelessness Report.

#### NUMBER OF MULTIFAMILY UNITS IN DEVELOPMENT

	UNITS IN DEVELOPMENTS APPROVED BY COUNCIL	UNITS IN DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAVE COMPLETED UNDERWRITING AND BEGAN CONSTRUCTION
Total units in subsidized multifamily developments, 2022	1,949	1,293
Total units in subsidized multifamily developments, 2023	834	1,726
Affordable units in subsidized multifamily developments, 2022	1,753	1,176
Affordable units in subsidized multifamily developments, 2023	724	1,366

As a result of the Racial Equity Impact Assessment conducted by DOH on the Qualified Allocation Plan, the City has sought to prioritize developments that establish affordability in high-cost opportunity neighborhoods, maintain affordability in transitioning neighborhoods, and prioritize mixed-use housing and revitalizing strategies to redeveloping neighborhoods. This varied strategy moves affordable housing toward DOH's vision, which is the equitable distribution of resources across all 77 communities so that every Chicagoan can choose and remain in quality housing that is affordable, safe, and healthy.

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In addition to affordable multifamily housing development, the City's Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO) helps to establish affordable units in newly developed market rate housing. In 2023, another 119 affordable units were established through required set-asides in market rate developments.

The City also prioritizes the preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing. The primary form takes place through **DOH's SRO Preservation program**, which preserves existing SROs through reducing debt and operating costs for owners and maintaining low-cost, affordable housing options for the City's at-risk residents. The program was established in 2022 through Chicago Recovery Plan funding. Since its creation through the end of 2023, the program has preserved **over 300 SRO units**. The program serves as a key preservation tool for naturally occurring affordable housing, which serves as an important housing resource for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, including residents returning from jail or prison.

Over the past five years...

4,500+ Affordable Housing Units Established

1,300+ Affordable Housing Units developed through the ARO

380+ SRO Units Preserved



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The City supports extremely low-income Chicagoans (under 30% AMI) through developing deeply affordable housing units with operating or rental subsidies. For DOH affordable housing developments, there are several key partnerships that support this work:

1. The **Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund (CLIHTF)** contracts with nonprofit and for-profit property managers to establish non-time-limited, unit-based subsidies that hold the rent paid by an extremely low-income household to 30% of their income. As of Q4 2022, 2,870 households were supported by CLIHTF. 1,569 subsidies were supporting households between 15% and 30% AMI and 1,301 subsidies were supporting households earning less than 15% AMI. CLIHTF provides housing opportunities through its Special Initiative programs, which focus on meeting the needs of various demographic groups. In addition to the Homeless Dedicated Initiative that exists to provide people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing, CLIHTF has special initiatives<sup>8</sup> for people living with HIV/AIDS, Chicago Veterans, formerly homeless families, and people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. CLIHTF Special Initiatives subsidies are accounted for in the homelessness housing inventory count (HIC), and the remainder of units provide subsidy in DOH developments and other housing opportunities.
2. Starting in 2023, DOH requires affordable housing developments to set aside 5% of units created for PSH or deeply affordable units. Those units will be filled and, in some cases, subsidized in **partnership with the CoC** for people experiencing homelessness or those ready to move on from PSH into non-supportive deeply affordable units.
3. DOH also partners with other rental subsidy and services partners. **One key partner is the Chicago Housing Authority.** DOH has partnered with CHA to help finance the creation of 3,084 CHA units in 54 developments under their Plan for Transformation. The CHA currently supports 52,414 households through its Public Housing and Tenant-based Voucher programs. Together, these efforts represent only about 1/3 of the housing needed for this very low-income demographic.

The establishment of new Permanent Support Housing units has been a growing priority for the City. In 2023, 35 of the new affordable housing units developed were PSH units. Additionally, DOH released a new round of funding in 2023 through its Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP)<sup>9</sup>, the mechanism by which the department allocates Low Income Housing Tax Credits and funding for affordable multifamily housing developments. In the 2023 QAP, DOH created a new tract to focus specifically on funding PSH developments and required - for the first time - that 5% of units in all other DOH developments to be set aside for PSH.

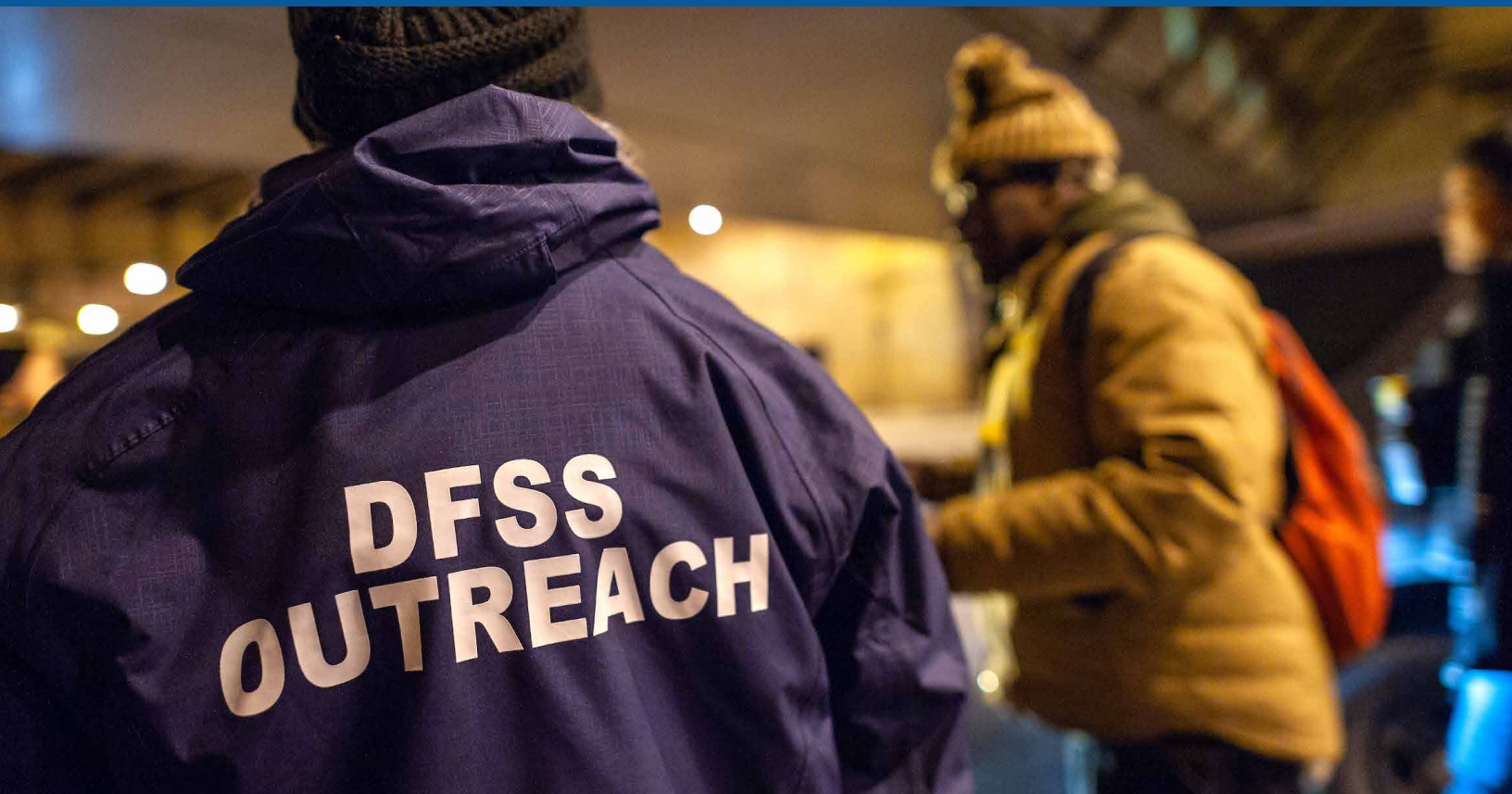
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<sup>8</sup> <https://clihtf.org/programs-initiatives/rsp-rental-subsidy-program/special-initiatives/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/doh/supp\\_info/2023-qualified-allocation-plan.html](https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/doh/supp_info/2023-qualified-allocation-plan.html)

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Through these two mechanisms and one-time PSH development funds from the Chicago Recovery Plan and HOME-ARP allocation, DOH anticipates establishing **more than 250 new PSH units over the upcoming 1 – 3 years.**

DOH is also seeking to increase equitable access to PSH by including expanded priority populations for PSH units to include people experiencing doubled up homelessness, residents returning from jail or prison, and survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking. The PSH-specific funding and prioritization will allow for further investment in the creation of deeply affordable, subsidized, and supportive housing for residents at risk of, experiencing, or exiting homelessness.

At its core, affordable housing, including public housing, is as much a tool to preventing homelessness as it is a solution to addressing homelessness. Further City investments in creating and preserving deeply affordable and supportive housing options that meet the varied needs of Chicagoans is a key strategy in connecting the full circle of resources needed to end homelessness. The City's commitment to preserving naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) is demonstrated in a variety of ways, including through the anti-deconversion ordinance passed in 2021, as well as the anti-demolition surcharge in Pilsen and areas surrounding The 606 (Bloomingdale Trail), which has contributed to as much as an 81% decrease in the number of demolitions of residential buildings.

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### PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR ADDRESSING ENCAMPMENTS

One priority of Chicago’s homelessness response is addressing unsheltered homelessness and encampments. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) created a set of principles to help communities as they develop and implement their response to encampments. Below are highlights of Chicago’s current work under each of these principles. Note that this report does not include a comprehensive overview of all relevant work, but instead features key initiatives, successes, and challenges related to the seven principles.

It should be noted that the USICH released a new, updated version of the principles for addressing encampments in April of 2024<sup>10</sup>, which now includes 19 strategies.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS	
PRINCIPLE	HIGHLIGHTS
<b>Establish a Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City’s Interagency Task Force to Reduce Homelessness ensures city agencies are organized around a unified goal and set of strategies.</li> <li>• The Encampment Strategy targets multi-sector resources to encampment residents to support them in transitioning to sheltered living situations.</li> </ul>
<b>Engage Encampment Residents to Develop Solutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chicago CoC includes two lived experience groups who participate in CoC lines of work.</li> <li>• Chicago’s dedicated federal official through the All INside Initiative is supporting the Lived Experience Commission to strengthen their membership’s capacity to engage in CoC decision making.</li> </ul>
<b>Conduct Comprehensive and Coordinated Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly coordination meetings held with street outreach teams by region to ensure encampments are engaged and addressed in a timely and targeted manner.</li> <li>• Inter-departmental partnerships have created innovative solutions such as the Mobile Health Van to address encampment residents’ medical needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Address Basic Needs and Provide Storage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City provides porta-potties and coordinates cleanings at large encampments.</li> <li>• The City funds 11 daytime drop-in centers that offer residents experiencing homelessness basic need services.</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure Access to Shelter or Housing Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City funds a low barrier shelter, the Pilsen Navigation Center, targeted for encampment residents.</li> </ul>

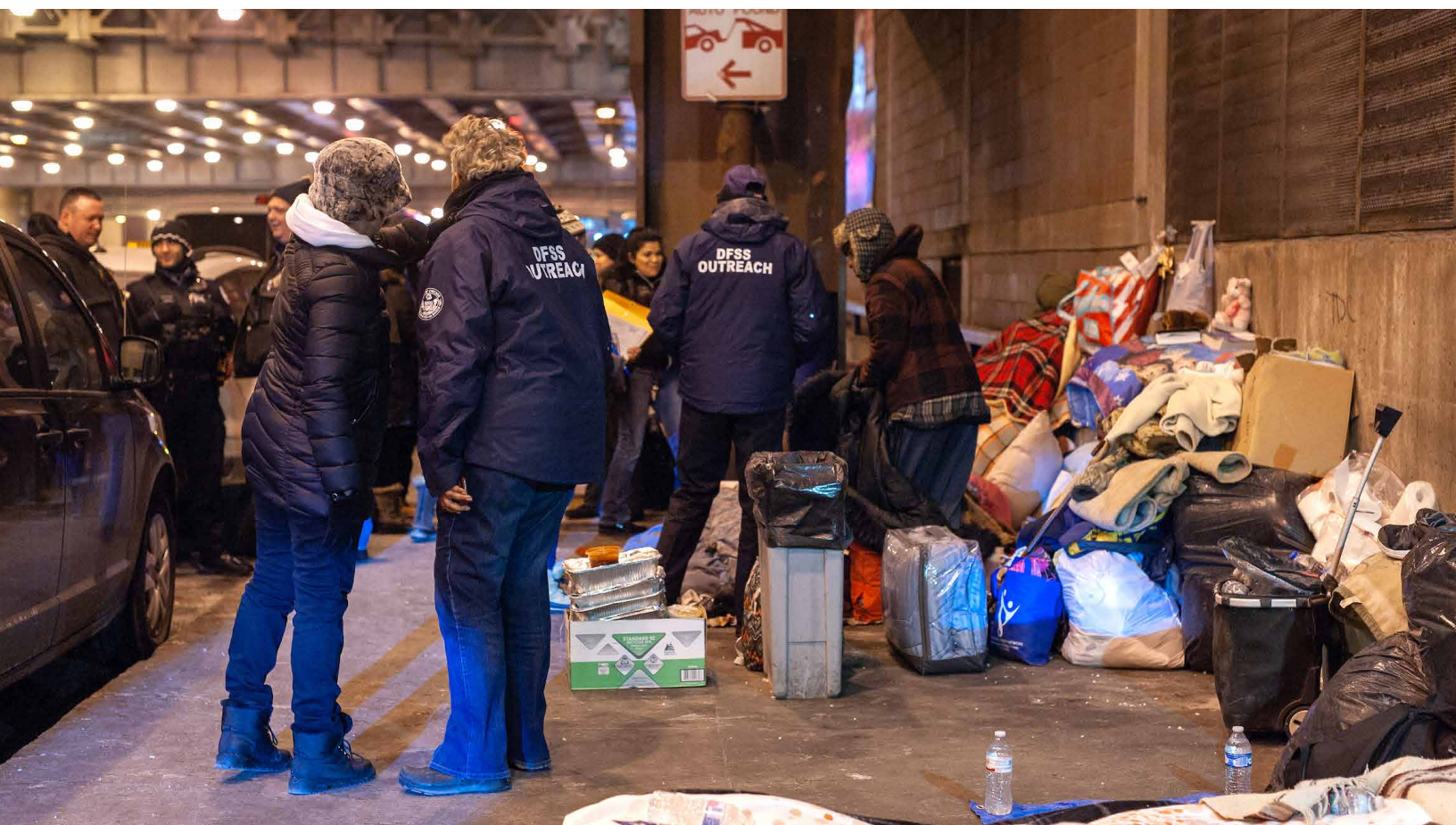
<sup>10</sup> <https://www.usich.gov/guidance-reports-data/federal-guidance-resources/19-strategies-communities-address-encampments>

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## Progress on Implementing Seven Principles for Addressing Encampments

(Continued)

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS	
PRINCIPLE	HIGHLIGHTS
<p><b>Develop Pathways to Permanent Housing and Supports</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City funding supports roughly one Accelerated Moving Event dedicated to unsheltered residents each month.</li> <li>• In 2023, DOH established a PSH tract in the Qualified Allocation Plan to create new purpose-built PSH developments and require 5% of units in all other developments to serve as PSH. 35 PSH units reached closing and are amid construction, with more in the pipeline to come in 2024</li> </ul>
<p><b>Create a Plan for What Will Happen to Encampment Sites After Closure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFSS coordinates with the Chicago Police Department, Streets and Sanitation, and Department of Transportation to develop transition plans for encampment residents and monitor recently closed encampments for new residents.</li> </ul>





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### Principle 1: Establish a Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response

The **City's Interagency Task Force to Reduce Homelessness** launched in 2016 to focus on coordination of homeless services across all agencies to improve delivery and reduce homelessness of individuals and families. In 2024, Mayor Brandon Johnson appointed the City's first **Chief Homelessness Officer** to coordinate across City departments and sister agencies and develop a five-year plan to address the homelessness crisis in Chicago.

Chicago's **Encampment Strategy** was developed and operationalized through the work of the City's Interagency Task Force to Reduce Homelessness. The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) leads and coordinates this multi-agency response that focuses on encampments throughout the city, with the following goals:

- Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness living in large encampments.
- Provide multiple social service programs to meet needs of clients experiencing homelessness.
- Protect the legal rights of persons experiencing homelessness, while protecting their health and safety and that of the community at large.
- Continuously engage repeatedly and consistently and have a pool of flexible referral sources to incentivize shelter and housing.

The strategy has three levels of response based on the encampment size, which are outlined in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 Encampment Strategy Levels of Response**

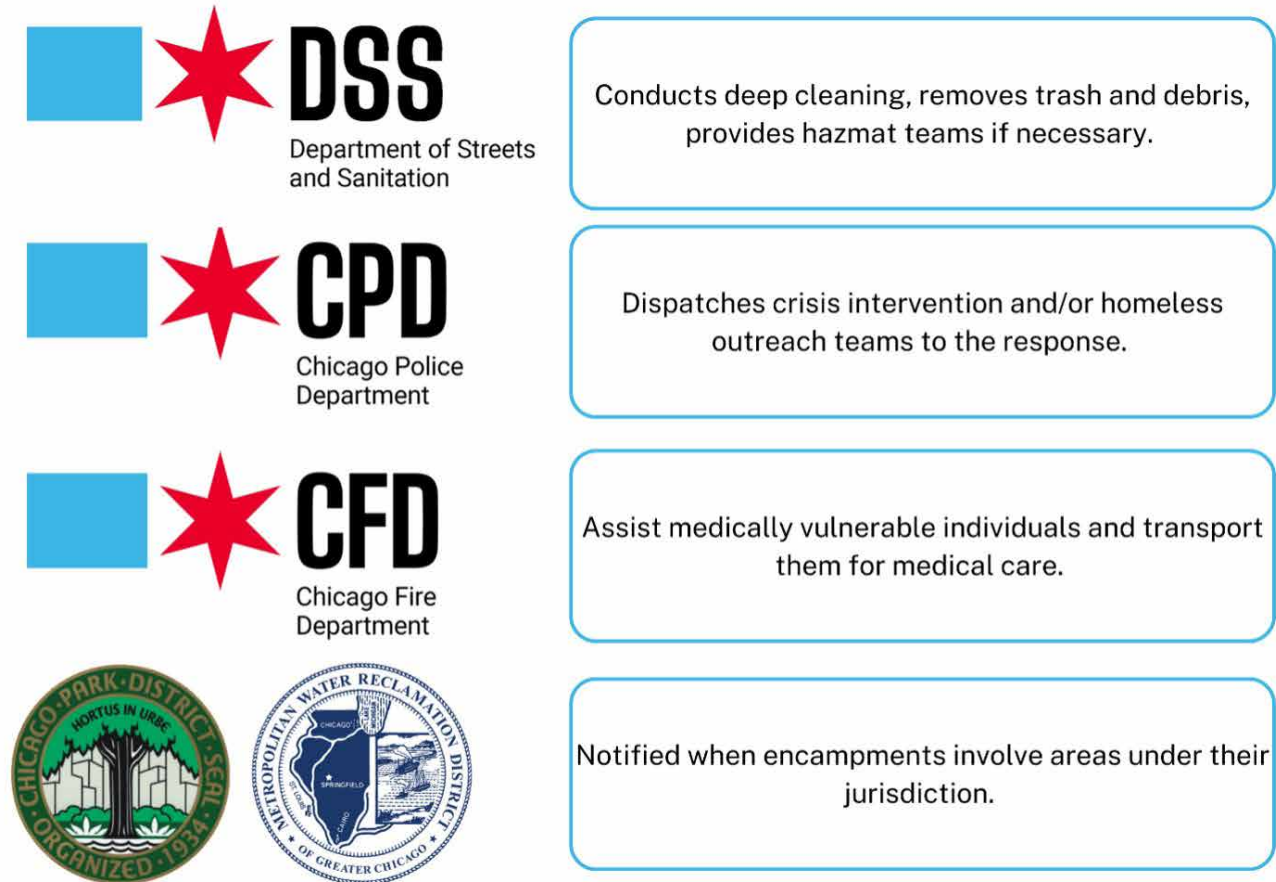
LEVEL	NUMBER OF ENCAMPMENT RESIDENTS	ENGAGEMENT PROVIDED
Level 1	10 or more	5 to 10 days of onsite and sustained engagement services
Level 2	5 to 9	Onsite, sustained engagement for less than 5 days
Level 3	Fewer than 5	

In 2023, DFSS conducted 3 Level 1 encampment initiatives. Before and during an encampment response, DFSS coordinates with other city departments, which you can see below in figure 9. In 2022, DFSS expanded partnerships to bring legal services, workforce services, and MAR-NOW (Medication-Assisted Recovery) treatment as part of encampment response.

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Figure 9 Additional City Departments included in encampment response



The Chicago CoC was awarded new resources under the HUD CoC Supplemental to Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness (Special NOFO). These resources serve as a basis for the Unsheltered Homelessness Initiative (UHI) and include new outreach and housing supports. Through an MOU with these Outreach providers, DFSS now coordinates, in conjunction with All Chicago, an additional six outreach teams within the department's Coordinated Outreach strategy.

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### Principle 2: Engage Encampment Residents to Develop Solutions

Input from people with lived experience of homelessness, including current and former encampment residents, is incorporated into the community decision making process through the Chicago **Continuum of Care (CoC)**, a membership-based organization whose mission is to prevent and end homelessness in our city, with a structure and composition that is mandated by HUD. The City actively participates in the CoC, including with representation from DFSS, DOH, Chicago Housing Authority, and Mayor's Office on the CoC Board.

The CoC prioritizes the involvement of people with lived experience of homelessness in leadership roles and decision-making. The CoC has **two lived experience groups**:

- Lived Experience Commission (LEC): a coalition of individuals who are receiving or have received services from Chicago's homeless system, people who were formerly homeless, or people at risk of becoming homeless.
- Youth Action Board (YAB): youth leaders from Chicago who have previously experienced homelessness. YAB members use what they learned from their life experiences and come up with solutions to end youth homelessness in Chicago. They inform agencies, policy makers, and legislators on ways to work with youth experiencing homelessness and provide them with guidance on how to do it better. Currently 4 of 5 Youth Action Board members have experience of unsheltered homelessness.

One of the priorities of the All INside initiative is to support the City and CoC in creating pathways for decision-making for people with lived experience beyond the input phase to implementation, including for the resolution of encampments. Michele Smith, the All INside federal official dedicated to Chicago, supported the LEC in updating their charter, including adding a plan for six requested trainings for LEC members each year to support their ability to impact CoC decision making. Michele also supported the LEC in reviewing compensation policies across communities nationally and at their recommendation, the Chicago CoC raised compensation for LEC members from \$30 per meeting to \$50 per meeting.

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### Principle 3: Conduct Comprehensive and Coordinated Outreach

DFSS funds **thirteen street outreach programs operated by delegate agencies** and operates its own **City-staffed Homeless Outreach and Prevention (HOP) team** to engage and serve individuals experiencing homelessness and living near railroad tracks, bridges, the Chicago River, viaducts and alleys, Chicago Parks and CTA train stations. DFSS began funding an overnight outreach team in 2018 to create 24-hour outreach coverage. These teams build rapport with homeless individuals to engage them in services. DFSS's delegate agencies, along with city-staffed outreach teams, are the primary entities conducting street outreach in the community. Additional CoC-funded outreach teams, some state-funded entities and the Jesse Brown Veteran Affairs Medical Center Outreach Teams also conduct street outreach and work closely with DFSS to ensure city-wide coverage.

The DFSS team convenes outreach partners to address system-level outreach plans for coverage as well as to conduct city-wide outreach surge events to assess and engage hotspots and identify new hotspots. The city is divided into regions with outreach teams responsible for scanning the region for new people experiencing homelessness as well as going to known locations. With additional Unsheltered Homelessness Initiative Outreach resources, each Geographic Region now receives additional support to ensure all encampment residents can be connected to the homeless response system. **Monthly coordination meetings** of outreach leadership across the city, regardless of funding, are led by DFSS and the HOP team staff to provide system wide updates and discuss sector best practices and ensure consistency. Additionally, DFSS holds four monthly Geographic Coordination meetings that bring together all outreach providers serving a specific region of the city (North Side, West Side, South Side and Central Business District). These meetings are attended by front line staff and focus on addressing hot spot encampments, case conferencing unsheltered residents that are deemed as needing higher levels of care and coordinating upcoming available housing resources.

The DFSS HOP Team also coordinates with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) to strategically deploy the **Mobile Health Unit** which provides immediate medical attention for vulnerable Chicagoans experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The team can also conduct medical screenings, write prescriptions, administer Hep A vaccinations, and connect encampment residents to primary care.

Additionally, beginning in 2023, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) invested \$2 million to **expand homeless outreach efforts on both 24/7 CTA train lines**, the Red and the Blue Lines, to engage and support more unsheltered individuals spending time on the trains. Funding supports delegate outreach teams with qualified, trained workers who build trust with potential clients and offer supports such as food, referrals to services (mental health, detox supports), and provide transportation to shelter and coordinated entry assessments so that people receiving services can get connected to housing. DFSS and the CTA meet with these outreach delegate agencies monthly to discuss progress and implement solutions on the ground.

Based on the first year of the expansion contract, across both the Blue and the Red Lines, outreach workers had a total of 7,800 interactions with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. From January through December 2023, there were 122 shelter placements on the two lines and 47 clients have been housed- 20 through a CTA-specific Accelerated Moving Event (AME) and an additional 27 clients who were supported by the CTA outreach teams who exited from homelessness to other stable or permanent housing destinations outside of the AME process.

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### Principle 4: Address Basic Needs and Provide Storage

Chicago's Encampment Strategy addresses basic needs by supplying Level 1 Encampments (10 or more people) with **porta-potties** to limit the spread of disease and ensure a sanitary environment. Level 1 encampment initiatives also look to provide additional medical services and access to showering facilities.

DFSS also coordinates with the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) on a **monthly schedule for encampment cleanings**, currently covering 25 encampment locations. Cleanings focus on addressing unsanitary conditions for encampment residents and the general public that can result from accumulation of discarded items or waste. The City follows policies and procedures for off-street cleanings that seek to balance the rights of encampment residents while maintaining the public way. This policy was originally created for Lower Wacker Drive area and now applies across encampment sites, and can be found at [https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp\\_info/city-policy-and-procedures-governing-off-street-cleaning-pursua0.html](https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/city-policy-and-procedures-governing-off-street-cleaning-pursua0.html). In 2023, DFSS and DSS collaborated on 336 cleanings. DSS posts notice of upcoming cleanings 7 days in advance. During regular outreach, DFSS outreach staff remind encampment residents of upcoming cleanings and mark collapsed or abandoned tents with stickers, providing notice that they may be discarded if they are not claimed or removed from the public way.

DFSS also funds 11 **daytime drop-in centers** (five youth-dedicated and six adult) operated by delegate agencies that offer residents experiencing homelessness basic need services such as meals, showers, laundry, and quiet safe spaces. These centers are staffed to engage residents living in public spaces and help them identify more stable indoor housing.

Storage is also a key need for encampment residents. Uncertainty or lack of storage space in shelter for resident belongings is a common reason that unsheltered residents decline shelter. The City is working to address this need through investments in the Shelter Infrastructure Initiative and acquisition of new non-congregate facilities. Transitioning shelter facilities to more non-congregate setups will allow for clients to securely keep belongings in their own rooms.

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### Principle 5: Ensure Access to Shelter or Housing Options

In 2023, 1,154 Chicagoans experiencing unsheltered homelessness that were engaged by City funded outreach projects were connected to a sheltered destination (this could include Emergency Shelter, Transitional or Permanent Housing). Additional detail and quarterly data on this metric can be found in the CoC System Goals Reports here: <https://allchicago.org/hmis/data-reports>. The City's continued outreach coordination will focus on the north star goal of increasing unsheltered individuals exits to permanent housing destinations.

Overall, City funding supports approximately 3,000 shelter beds, which operate near capacity on any given night. The City of Chicago opened its **low-barrier shelter**, the Pilsen Navigation Center, in 2018, which provides 40 beds for encampment residents. Low-barrier shelter practices include:

- allowing couples to stay in shelter together,
- pets to remain with their owners, and
- residents to keep their belongings.

The Pilsen Navigation Center served 139 unique residents in 2023.



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### Principle 6: Develop Pathways to Permanent Housing and Supports

Outreach staff work with encampment residents to get them connected to homeless-dedicated housing through Chicago's **Coordinated Entry System**, a key component of the Chicago CoC. Households complete a standardized assessment in-person or through the Coordinated Entry Call Center and are matched with appropriate housing and service opportunities. Additional information can be found here: <https://allchicago.org/coordinated-entry-system/>

With Federal COVID-relief funding, Chicago expanded investments in Rapid Re-Housing, a program which provides short to medium term rental assistance and supportive services to help households stabilize in housing and piloted several practices to connect people experiencing homelessness more rapidly to housing. One of these practices is the **Accelerated Moving Event (AME)**, one or two-day events where participants select an available rental unit, meet with their case manager, and arrange furniture selection. Outreach teams coordinate with housing providers to host monthly Accelerated Moving Events specifically for unsheltered residents to rapidly connect individuals to housing. Expanded investment in Rapid Re-Housing housed 640 new households in 2023. The Chicago Office of the Inspector General conducted an audit of this program model and found that it, "provides stable housing for many encampment residents," and "can serve as a potential model for other jurisdictions working with their own encampment populations." You can read the full audit report at <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Audit-of-DFSS-Outreach-to-Encampments-of-People-Experiencing-Homelessness.pdf>.

Chicago Recovery Plan funding for rapid rehousing continues to support roughly one AME each month dedicated to unsheltered residents, organized by the DFSS Homeless Outreach and Prevention (HOP) team.

As part of the CoC's Unsheltered Homelessness Initiative (UHI), the CoC funded 14 projects from 10 agencies and expects to add an additional 800 units of Permanent Housing to the Coordinated Entry System. These units began to come online in 2023, will continue to come online throughout 2024. These units would be targeted at Chicagoans who are specifically experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Anticipating the higher level of service need for this population, there will be additional supports to help residents stabilize in housing after transitioning inside.

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In 2023 the CoC partnered with the Harvard Kennedy School's Government Performance Lab (GPL) to address Permanent Supportive Housing unit utilization challenges with a pilot designed to increase client and unit match success rates and improve matching timeliness. Starting in July 2023, the project team conducted research with providers, housing assessors, and navigators to understand the issue and inform strategy for a proactive engagement pilot. This pilot implemented client pre-screening for housing navigators, giving clients an opportunity to express needs and preferences for housing. The pilot also relies on anticipated unit vacancies to decrease the amount of time units are empty, and helps navigators better understand challenges around hard-to-fill units. The GPL team initiated the proactive engagement pilot in December 2023 and continues to collect data into 2024. GPL staff and the CoC anticipate a second year of Chicago's participation in the project to start in July 2024.

Finally, the City remains committed to preserving and developing housing units that are affordable, subsidized, permanent, and supportive. Without more of such units, the pathways out of homelessness are too narrow, insufficient to serve the City's need. Through the ongoing work at the Department of Housing, as described elsewhere in this report, the City is actively focusing on PSH and RRH development, preservation, and subsidy, including the new PSH set-aside requirement and new PSH tract in the 2023 Qualified Allocation Plan.



### Principle 7:

#### Create a Plan for What Will Happen to Encampment Sites After Closure

As a matter of practice, the City does not close encampments unless there is a safety issue, a policy change or project by another City, State or private partner that requires relocation and closure. DFSS has worked with Chicago Park District and the Illinois Department of Transportation on encampment closures that were required due to policy change and/or construction. In both cases, DFSS recommended advance notice and outreach to residents, connections to housing through an Accelerated Moving Event and bridge housing for those who did not move before the closure occurred. Through work with the All INside Initiative and the Interagency Task Force to address Homelessness, DFSS recommends formalizing a City-wide process that includes providing adequate notification, outreach and connections to housing for residents impacted.

Finally, Chicago's **Encampment Strategy** has a process for engaging and moving residents from an encampment into shelter or housing prior to any cleaning or removing of abandoned property. DFSS coordinates with the Chicago Police Department, Streets and Sanitation, and Department of Transportation to ensure the area is properly cleaned and sanitized. After the encampment has been cleared and the area cleaned, an identified delegate outreach agency will continue to monitor the area to ensure that there is no rebuilding of the encampment.

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## RESOURCES FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

If you are someone experiencing housing insecurity or know someone who needs help, please call 2-1-1. The hotline is an information and referral resource that can help connect you to resources for food, housing, utility payment assistance, health care, transportation, childcare, employment, mental health, disaster information and more. Please note that 2-1-1 is not intended to assist with emergency services.

If you are at risk of experiencing homelessness, you can call 3-1-1 to be connected with homelessness prevention resources. The hotline will direct you to appropriate City services, as available.



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### APPENDIX

#### Glossary of Terms

**Affordable housing rental costs:** are less than 30% of the occupant’s gross monthly income, including utilities, as defined by HUD.

**Area Median Income (AMI)** is the annual household income earned by the median household in a region, adjusted by household size.

PERCENTAGE OF AREA MEDIAN INCOME, AS OF APRIL 2024							
Household Size	15%	30%	40%	50%	60%	80%	100%
1	\$11,775	\$23,550	\$31,400	\$39,250	\$47,100	\$62,800	\$78,500
2	\$13,455	\$26,910	\$35,880	\$44,850	\$53,820	\$71,800	\$89,700
3	\$15,135	\$30,270	\$40,360	\$50,450	\$60,540	\$80,750	\$100,900
4	\$16,815	\$33,630	\$44,840	\$56,050	\$67,260	\$89,700	\$112,100
5	\$18,165	\$36,330	\$48,440	\$60,550	\$72,660	\$96,900	\$121,100
6	\$19,515	\$39,030	\$52,040	\$65,050	\$78,060	\$104,100	\$130,100
7	\$20,865	\$41,730	\$55,640	\$69,550	\$83,460	\$111,250	\$139,100
8	\$22,200	\$44,400	\$59,200	\$74,000	\$88,800	\$118,450	\$148,000

**Chronically Homeless:** those who are literally homeless, have a qualifying disability, and have been continuously homeless for 12+ months or for 12 months within 3 years and 4 incidences of homelessness.

**Continuum of Care:** a membership-based organization, whose mission is to prevent and end homelessness in its assigned region by planning a coordinated, comprehensive approach to providing housing and services for people experiencing homelessness. The structure and composition is mandated by HUD.

**Coordinated Entry System:** connects people who are experiencing homelessness to housing opportunities in Chicago. It uses a standardized housing assessment to understand the needs of households and follows a prioritization plan to refer youth, individuals, and families to housing.

**Doubled-up:** are unhoused people who are temporarily living with others, such as friends or family. Those who are doubled up are not included in HUD’s literal definition for experiencing homelessness, thus are not included in the Point-In-Time (PIT) Count estimates.

**Drop-in Centers:** offer residents experiencing homelessness basic need services such as meals, showers, laundry and quiet safe spaces during the daytime. These centers are staffed to engage residents living in public spaces and help them identify more stable indoor housing.

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**Literal Homelessness:** The definition mandated by HUD and is used for the Point-In-Time Count. If a person or family is experiencing literal homelessness, they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and are staying in either a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., street encampment, a car or park) or a shelter, Safe Haven or transitional housing program.

**Multifamily affordable housing:** developed through varied funding streams that finance projects based on household AMI eligibility, usually ranging from extremely low income up to market rate ranges.

**New Arrivals:** Includes the over 40,000 individuals and families sent to Chicago through bus and air transportation who originally entered along the Mexico/US border on or after August 1, 2022 with the intent to stay permanently, and who do not process any permanent or interim U.S. legal status (which does not include being in parole status, such as legal permanent residency, a student or work visa, etc.) The majority of people seeking asylum are from South America, Asia, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, and the African continent.

**Non-congregate shelter:** shelter that provides residents with a private or semi-private rooms for sleeping, adequate space and security for residents and their personal belongings, in-unit or communal bathrooms and sanitary facilities, in-unit or communal cooking and dining spaces, accessibility to residents with disabilities, and access to communal space, including living and recreational spaces.

**Permanent Supportive Housing:** non-time limited affordable housing with supportive services, often dedicated to households experiencing chronic homelessness, in either project-based or scattered site units. Typically for individuals earning  $\leq 30\%$  AMI (Area Median Income). Most often requires chronic homelessness to access, but requirements vary by subsidy source. DOH, for example, includes returning residents in eligibility with or without disability.

**Rapid Rehousing:** short-term rental assistance for up to 24 months with case management, supportive services and without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record or sobriety). Typical Chicago clients stay 11 months on average.

**Rent Cost-Burdened:** a household that spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing.

**Severely Rent Cost-Burdened:** a household paying more than half of their income towards rent.

**Sheltered Homelessness:** refers to those sleeping in emergency shelters, Safe Havens or transitional housing.

**Shelters:** a supervised facility that provides temporary accommodations for the unhoused; measured in number of beds. Reminder: people staying in shelters are still considered homeless.

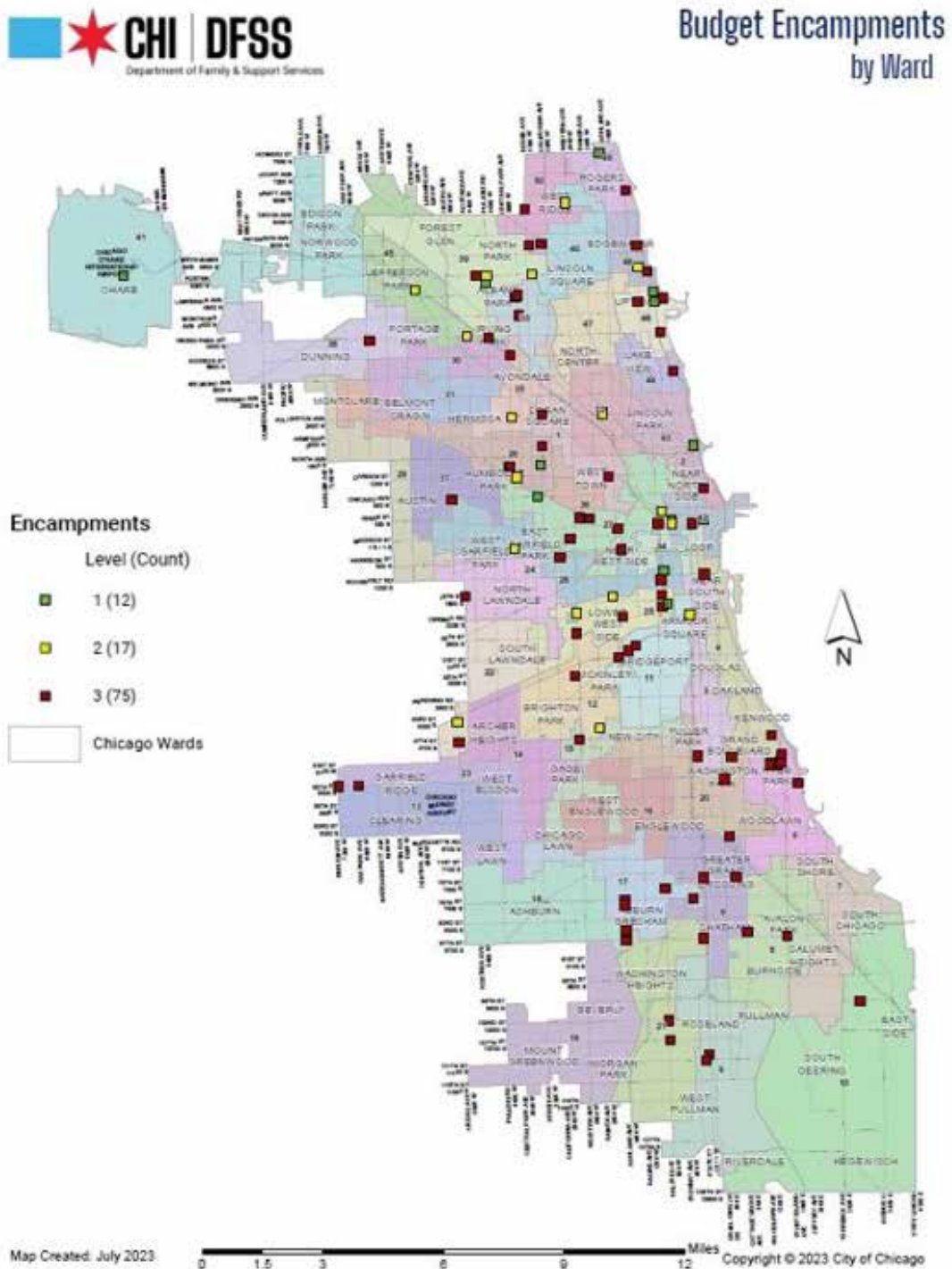
**Transitional Housing:** site-based, supportive accommodation for up to 24 months that is meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing by offering structure, supervision, support (for addictions and mental health, for instance), life skills, and in some cases, education and training. Typically targets specific populations like youth or families.

**Unsheltered Homelessness:** refers to those sleeping in places not meant for human habitation such as in street locations, parks, abandoned buildings or cars.

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## Encampments by Ward, as of July 2023





Department of Family  
and Support Services

