



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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Mayor Brandon Johnson Announces Equitable Transition to a One System Initiative

Changes to New Arrivals shelter system will merge services with the State of Illinois in 2025 for unified shelter system as current process for sheltering asylum seekers ends Dec. 31, 2024.

CHICAGO –The City of Chicago is implementing a series of changes to consolidate the New Arrivals shelter system, accelerate the resettlement of current shelter residents, and move toward the One System Initiative (OSI) – a unified sheltering system to serve all Chicagoans. The current New Arrivals mission will end Dec. 31, 2024.

The transition from the current system and policies will begin October 21, 2024, through the end of the calendar year. This shift will focus on adding 3,800 beds to the 3,000 legacy DFSS beds in the homelessness services system in collaboration with State of Illinois partners and advocates.

“This transition is in line with the sharp decline in migration to Chicago and our current budget realities,” said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. “We continue the dedicated work with our agencies and community partners as we have from the beginning to usher in the next phase. This phase will demobilize the New Arrivals operation by the end of 2024 and initiate the first phase of a full transition to the One System Initiative in 2025. We are shifting to a more cost-effective, equitable, and strategic approach that addresses homelessness for *all* who need support in the City of Chicago.”

The Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) will continue to administer shelter services and lead the operational transition. DFSS and contractors will provide support services and facilitate connections to sponsors beyond Chicago. Additionally, they will continue to offer access to the State intake center with resources such as coats, food, and vaccinations. Those arriving in Chicago will have access to the 311 system to request shelter. DFSS will share a resource guide with information about City Key, community-based organizations, food pantries, legal services, and more.

Changes include:

- Elimination of the 30-day shelter extensions based on the “Public Benefit enrollment” extension for anyone currently in the New Arrivals shelter system or newly entering into the system
- Limiting first-time shelter placement at the Landing Zone to New Arrival families and singles that have been in the country for 30 days or less
- Changing the hours of the Landing Zone to reflect State Intake Center hours, to 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. by Nov. 1, 2024
- Closing the Landing Zone and the State of Illinois intake center by Dec. 31, 2024.
- Implementing a shelter decompression schedule to meet the budgeted target of 2,100 City-funded beds by the end of 2024.

“We forged a partnership with the State and Cook County, resulting in new investments and a more inclusive, regional approach,” **said Deputy Mayor for Immigration, Migrant and Refugee Rights Beatriz Ponce de Leon.** “We also quickly understood that having two shelter systems was inequitable, that we needed to do more to improve services for everyone and committed to partnering with the State and advocates to realize the One System Initiative.”

The Johnson Administration is proud of the City agencies, community partners and government entities who successfully responded to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The efforts at the Texas border by Republican Governor Greg Abbott were meant to destabilize welcoming cities like Chicago, but the City responded with community care in welcoming nearly 50,000 new arrivals.

The City of Chicago recognizes the evolution and success of the New Arrivals program thanks to the dedication of DFSS Commissioner Brandie Knazze, Deputy Mayor, Deputy Mayor Ponce de León, Chief Homelessness Officer Sendy Soto, Office of Emergency Management Director Jose Tirado and their teams.

In January 2025, there will only be one shelter system and all funding for shelter operations will be for DFSS Homeless Services. Chief Homelessness Officer Soto will lead efforts to transform City shelter services with the development of a 5-year plan that includes a deliberate and gradual process for combining shelter residents in the shift to OSI and enhancing services and programs for all people who are unhoused or experiencing housing instability in Chicago.

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