

Homeless Headlines

Poverty Jumps in 2003

In a report released yesterday, the U. S. Census Bureau announced that 1.3 million more people fell below the official poverty thresholds in 2003, leading to a total of 35.9 million people, or 12.5 percent of the total population. Much of that increase was among children, whose number in poverty rose from 12.1 million to 12.9 million during 2003. The coinciding increase in the nation's child poverty rate was statistically significant, jumping from 16.7 percent in 2002 to 17.6 percent in 2003.

In addition, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported in its own analysis of the data that the percentage of poor people living in extreme poverty reached the highest level on record. The level for extreme poverty is less than 50 percent of the poverty threshold: \$4,787 for a single adult, 7,412 per year for a parent with two children. In comparison, the average income for a homeless person is about \$5,600 per year. In 2003, the number of households living in extreme poverty increased by 1.2 million to 15.3 million, which amounts to 43 percent of the total number living in poverty. The number of children living in extreme poverty rose by over half a million.

The full U. S. Census report, which also includes the numbers related to health insurance coverage in the United States, is available at: www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty03.html

The report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is available at www.cbpp.org/8-26-04pov.htm

Currently, data for all areas of Illinois is not available in the ACS. Coverage will expand over the next couple of years. Data will be updated annually thereafter. ■

Census: American Community Survey

Housing Problems

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), the median gross rent in 2003 was \$679, up from \$668 the year before and \$649 in 2000 (all numbers are in 2003 dollars). The ACS is the Census's largest and most detailed

general population survey outside of the decennial census. It is conducted on an ongoing basis, with results on the demographic, economic, housing, and social characteristics of American communities published annually.

There has been a statistically significant increase in median gross rents every year since ACS data started being released in 2000. According to the new 2003 data, the proportion of renter households living in unaffordable housing also increased from 41 percent in 2000 to 47 percent in 2003. The proportion of renters renting for less than \$750 fell from 63 percent in 2000 to 59 percent in 2003. Similarly, while 15.32 percent of renters paid more than \$1000 in gross rent in 2000, this jumped to 19 percent in 2003.

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Housing Costs and Wages

The National Housing Conference's Center on Housing Studies has announced two new additions to its series of reports documenting the growing numbers of working families with critical housing needs. Over the last five years, the Center's "Paycheck to Paycheck" reports have provided comparisons between rental and homeownership costs in different housing markets and the prevailing wage rates for six occupations vital to communities - police officers, firefighters, elementary

school teachers, retail salespersons, janitors and construction laborers.

The newest additions to the series include the first attempt to take the Paycheck analyses to the county level on a nationwide basis - completed in coordination with the National Association of Counties - and a new interactive version of "Paycheck to Paycheck," which allows visitors to the NHC website to select among 64 occupations for each of more than 130

of the nation's largest housing markets.

To view the report, "Paycheck to Paycheck: Wages and the Cost of Housing in Counties, 2004," see www.nhc.org/nhcimages/Paycheck_Counties2004.pdf

To view the database, "Paycheck to Paycheck: Wages and the Cost of Housing in America" see www.centerforhousingpolicy.org/p2p

Housing Problems

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Difficulties were not limited to renters. From 2000 to 2003 the proportion of owners with a mortgage living in unaffordable housing increased from 27 percent to 30 percent. Despite declining interest rates, median monthly housing costs for these households increased from \$1,153 to \$1,204 over this period.

Crowding, however, appears to have remained fairly steady with no statistical change over the past four years in the proportion of households living with more than one person per room. There was, however, a statistically significant decline in households with more than one and a half persons per room in the last year.

It is important to note that, according to the ACS, median household income also fell in the past four years in inflation adjusted terms from \$44,270 in families and all households earning less than \$10,000 a year both increased significantly over this period.

With each year, data is becoming available at lower geographic levels. ACS data for 2003 are available for the entire United States, more than 800 counties and places with populations of 250,000 or more, and more than 200 Congressional districts. Also included are data profiles and narratives, ranking tables for some variables, and access to the public use micro samples (PUMS).

This data is the most up-to-date and comprehensive local data available until the next decennial census.

Data can be found at www.census.gov/acs/www/Products/Profiles/Single/2003/ACS/index.htm, including data specific to many area in Illinois.

Currently, data for all areas of Illinois is not available in the ACS. Coverage will expand over the next couple of years. Data will be updated annually thereafter.

CSH Request for Proposals

The Corporation for Supportive Housing has announced a Request for Proposals for its Capacity Building Initiative (CBI). Grants for up to \$30,000 will be made to nonprofit service and housing providers in Illinois. Funds must be used to help increase the internal capacity of providers to develop and

manage viable, sustainable permanent supportive housing. Funds awarded through the CBI can be use for organizational development, financial management, property and asset management, and service program development.

For applications, please go to www.csh.org and click on Local Programs and Illinois Program or call Michelle Hoereth at (312) 588-1236 x13 to receive a hard copy. Proposals are due October 1, 2004.

Homeless Headlines



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The **Illinois Community Action Association** has published the monthly *Homeless Headlines* and the *Homeless Hotline* since 1991 under contract with the **Illinois Department of Human Services**.

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New Housing First Resource

The National Alliance to End Homelessness has released a new handbook, *Housing First For Families*, which summarizes strategies and models for implementing a housing first approach. It includes information about program designs, staffing models, working with landlords, outcomes, financial assistance, and funding sources.

many examples of how communities came to adopt this approach. For example, one housing first provider noted, “We were finding that homeless families going through transitional housing were really struggling with graduation in a tight housing market. There was nowhere to transition to from these programs... It led us... to rethink our programs.”

from the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation.

For a copy of *Housing First For Families*, see: <http://www.endhomelessness.org/pub/HousingFirstResearch.pdf>.

For more information about the housing first approach, see: <http://www.naeh.org/networks/housingfirst>.

Housing First

ousing first approach helps es move into permanent housing ckly as possible and provides management and other stabilizing rt services. The handbook cites

The document also includes summaries of a variety of existing housing first programs that serve homeless families across the country. It was produced by La- France Associates, with support

Housing First, Families, and Substance Abuse

A new article describes how to use a housing first approach with families affected by substance abuse. The most recent issue of “The Source,” a publication of the Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center, describes the essential components of housing first and discusses some of the outcomes and sources of funding. The Housing First methodology emphasizes “mov [ing] homeless families into

permanent, affordable, rental housing as quickly as possible, and then provid [ing] time-limited support services after they have been relocated out of the homeless services system.”

children removed from their home and are in the process of reunifying.

A copy of the newsletter can be found at socrates.berkeley.edu/~aiarc/media/pdf/source_vol13_no1.pdf

The article highlights the Beyond Shelter program in Los Angeles, which has used a housing first approach for the last 15 years. About half the families served by Beyond Shelter are in recovery, and many have had

For more information about Beyond Shelter, see www.beyondshelter.org

For more information about the housing first approach for families, see www.naeh.org/networks/housingfirst

Section 8 Saga

HUD has begun to distribute \$156 million to public housing authorities, the result of agencies’ appeals to the voucher program funding changes announced by HUD on April 22. The funds are needed to meet FY04 Section 8 voucher costs, since HUD’s April 22 notice cut funding to local voucher programs and brought hardship and fear to many voucher holders. The money will be distributed to 379 of the 398 housing authorities that filed appeals.

demonstrate their need for a higher inflation factor for FY04 than HUD had allowed in its April 22 notice. Agencies had until July 15 to appeal their funding levels, and HUD committed to notifying agencies by August 31

and unusual rent increases and operating costs increases due to changes in property tax and utility costs. However, after asking HUD to explain the rationale for the award, the agency was advised that the original amount was incorrect and they would be receiving \$927,000. Another agency was told that it would qualify for an increase, but that since the agency has reserves in excess one-month requirement, HUD would offset their approved appeal amount by an amount equal to its existing excess reserves.

After Members of Congress, agencies, and advocates argued that housing authorities were underfunded for FY04 and that tenants were in jeopardy of losing their vouchers, HUD set up an appeals process to allow agencies to

The reports available thus far suggest that housing authorities’ appeals were met with mixed results. On one hand, New York City reported that HUD has agreed to restore almost the entire \$55 million shortfall it faced.

One agency initially received notice it would receive \$29,519, or an additional 62 cents per unit, despite demonstrating in its appeals letter that its HAP costs were much higher due to changes in tenant’s income, a shift to larger units

The information available suggests that the notices include no explanations as

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HUD HMIS Standards Drop Protections for Domestic Violence Survivors

Among the changes to the final HMIS rule released by HUD on July 30 is the elimination of a provision that allowed providers serving domestic violence survivors to withhold identifying information about the clients they serve. This has raised alarm among advocates who are concerned that the reporting of identifying information, such as social security numbers or even unique identifiers, will compromise the safety of domestic violence survivors.

The HUD final rule reports that it will instruct continuum of care representatives to meet with the staff of local domestic violence programs to develop procedures that will protect the safety of domestic violence survivors and address those programs' concerns regarding the community's HMIS system. HUD reports that it anticipates that domestic violence providers may not be included in a community's HMIS system until after compromises have been established at

a local level and the department will take this into consideration when assessing local continuum of cares for progress in establishing community-wide HMIS system. HUD has also reported the capacity to provide "extensive technical assistance to communities to develop the best possible solution for domestic violence providers."

For more information about the concerns of domestic violence providers and proposed efforts to protect that the safety of domestic violence survivors, visit the National Network to End Domestic Violence website at www.nnedv.org/default.asp?Page=58

The discussion on exemptions for domestic violence providers under HMIS in the original proposed rule can be viewed on page 43435 of the July 22, 2004 Federal Register and on page 45902-45903 of the July 30, 2004 Federal Register. ■

FY 2005 Food Stamp Income Eligibility Guidelines

Food Stamp Program maximum allotments, deductions, and income eligibility standards have been adjusted for Fiscal Year 2005. The U. S. Department of Agriculture makes the cost of living adjustments (COLA) at the beginning of each federal fiscal year based on changes in the cost of living. COLAs take effect on October 1 each year. Income eligibility standards

are set by law. Gross monthly income limits are set at 130 percent of the poverty level for the household size. Net monthly income limits are set at 100 percent of poverty.

www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/fsp.html ■

Section 8 Saga

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to how HUD calculated the additional amounts provided.

Still to be learned is whether the additional funds being distributed will be enough to help agencies that have indicated they will have to terminate vouchers because of the shortfall in FY04 funding. Another unknown is how the many agencies that did not file appeals will fare. Housing authorities and advocates remain committed to both working through the appeals process and reversing the budget-based approach sprung on housing agencies by HUD that led to the shortfalls.

The Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (CLPHA) issued a statement this week questioning HUD's recent actions regarding the voucher program, saying HUD's announcement of additional funding for some housing agencies should not be portrayed as a positive response to their needs. "The truth is," said CLPHA Director Sunia Zaterman, "Congress had appropriated enough money to fund the vouchers, and made its intent clear. HUD manufactured a crisis that it is now claiming to have solved."

In other Illinois news, the Housing Authority of Elgin has temporarily been blocked from ending voucher assistance to three low income families. The ruling, by a Kane County Circuit

Judge, protects the families until the next hearing on September 14. The housing authority has been forced to cut spending because of the April 22 funding notice from HUD. The judge indicated that it is unclear what authority he has to force the housing authority to provide the rental assistance if their actions are a result of cuts in the federal housing Section 8 program.

For further information, contact the National Low Income Housing coalition at the address in *Headlines Directory*. ■

House HUD Funding Levels

The chart below details HUD funding levels resulting from recent action in the U.S. House of Representatives reported in the July *Homeless Headlines*. Senate action is pending.

For further information, contact the National Low Income Housing Coalition at the address in *Headlines Directory*.

U.S. House Committee HUD FY2005 Budget Chart for Selected Programs <small>Dollars in Millions 8/14/2004</small>			
HUD Program <small>(set-asides indented)</small>	FY04 Enacted	FY05 Request	FY05 House Committee
Housing Certificate Fund	\$19,257	\$18,465	--
Tenant-based rental assistance			14,677
Housing Assistance for Needy Families	0	0	--
Contract Renewals	19,001	18,196	--
New Section 8 Vouchers	0	0	0
Project-Based Rental Assistance	0	---	5,341
Contract Administration	100	102	102
Public Housing Capital Fund	2,695	2,674	2,580
Resident Opp'ty & Self Sufficiency	55	55	53
Public Housing Operating Fund	3,579	3,573	3,425
Drug Elimination Grants	0	0	0
HOPE VI	149	0	143
Native American Housing Block Grants	650	647	622
Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant	9	10	--
Elderly Housing (Section 202)	774	773	741
Disabled Housing (Section 811)	249	249	238
Rental Housing Assistance	0	0	0
HOME Investment Partnership Prog.	2,005	2,084	1,920
Downpayment Assistance	87	200	85
Housing Counseling Assistance	40	45	38
Community Dev't Block Grants	4,921	4,618	4,711
Self-Help Homeownership Opp'ty	27	65	26
Youthbuild	65	65	62
Economic Development Initiative	276	0	137
Homeless Assistance Grants	1,260	1,257	1,206
Shelter Plus Care Renewals	0	0	--
Samaritan Housing	0	50	0
Emergency Food and Shelter	153	153	153
Housing for Persons with AIDS	295	295	282
Rural Housing and Economic Dev't	25	0	24
Brownfields Redevelopment	25	0	24
Fair Housing Assistance Program	28	27	26.5
Fair Housing Initiative Program	20	21	19.5
Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction	174	139	167
Salaries and Expenses	1,116	1,179	1,117
TOTAL (Discretionary)	\$30,415	\$31,264	\$32,579

A fully footnoted version of this table is available from the National Low Income Housing Coalition at www.nlihc.org/news/081404chart.htm. For further information you can also contact the Coalition at the address in *Headlines Directory*.

Ensuring the Right to Vote

People experiencing homelessness face unique challenges to participating in the electoral process. Impediments such as a lack of address, identification, or residency requirements may prevent homeless people from voting in some states.

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty has released a report that examines the barriers to voting for people experiencing homelessness and what can be done to ensure those barriers do not prevent homeless people from voting in the upcoming election.

Examples include:

- An individual who discovers she/he is not listed as a registered voter on going to the polls can submit a statement indicating they are indeed a registered voter. They must then be allowed to cast a "provisional ballot" which will be counted if further examination finds the individual was eligible to participate in the election.
- Individuals can use shelter, churches, service providers or other places in which they can regularly check their mail in order to satisfy state laws that require voters to have a mailing address.

For more information, including voting laws and regulations that affect homeless individuals in each state, see www.nlchp.org ■

Web-Based HOME Underwriting Training Module

HUD has announced that a new “hands-on” training module on HOME Program multifamily underwriting is now available to on the web. This significant new technical assistance tool can be accessed at:

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/training/underwriting/index.cfm>

This training module has as its centerpiece a rental project pro forma template to be filled out by the trainee

as part of the training exercise. The training module walks the user through the pro forma template by way of accompanying section by section instructional narratives that explain the technical terms used, and the basic components of underwriting, including their interrelationships, while describing related HOME Program rental requirements. Users can create their own projects as they complete the underwriting template or may enter multifamily rental project information taken from actual project pro formas. They may also play “what-if” scenarios to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the various elements comprising the pro forma.

This is the latest in a wave of HOME Program technical assistance products and offerings recently issued or soon

to be made available. For more information on the HOME Program, go to:

www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/programs/home/index.cfm

For more information about your local HOME Participating Jurisdiction (PJ) and HUD State and Local Field Office contact information go to:

www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/programs/home/contacts/index.cfm

If you would like more information, please visit Community Connections on the Web at www.comcon.org, or by phone at 1-800-998-9999. ■

Healthy Habits Harder in Low-Income Areas

*(Contra Costa Times, July 23, 2004
www.contracostatimes.com/mld/cctimes/living/health/9224406.htm?1c)*

Residents of low-income areas face special barriers to obtaining healthy food. The lack of grocery stores in impoverished urban communities creates “food deserts,” as nutritionists call them. To improve nutrition options for low-income families, about 200 representatives from East Bay food banks, and other hunger prevention agencies recently gathered to discuss the issue. The convenience of takeout meals, schools serving prepackaged

meals from fast food vendors, and ads for sugary cereals and sodas make it hard for people to change their diets. The California Association of Food Banks is addressing the short shelf life of produce by setting up a toll-free hotline that growers and retailers can call for same day delivery of the items to a soup kitchen or food pantry. California’s 5-A-Day campaign is taking unneeded refrigeration units to convenience stores so they can offer fresh produce to underserved communities. “We want to educate [people] to make better choices,” says Leslie Mikkelsen, managing director of the Prevention Institute. “But we also have to create a system... where healthy choices are realistic options.”

For further information, contact the Food Research and Action Council at the address in *Headlines Directory*. ■

Homeless Headlines



**U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
State of Illinois
Illinois Facilities Fund**

Will present an opportunity for you to learn about:

**Organizational Development
Grant Opportunities
Financing Possibilities
Successful Projects**

Tuesday, September 28, 2004

9 AM – 3:30 PM

(8:30 AM Registration)

**Grace Church
5151 N. Illinois (Rt. 159)
Fairview Heights, IL**

Register by sending an e-mail message to:
Kenneth_Brucks@hud.gov
Naomi_J._Lear@hud.gov
With the word "Registration-Fairview Heights"
in subject line.

Include your Name, Organization, Address,
Phone, Fax and e-Mail address

Attendance will be limited to a maximum of 2
people per agency.

Register by 5 PM, Monday, September 20, 2004

Register Early

Workshop Capacity is limited to the first 100.





Headlines Directory

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<http://www.communitychange.org>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

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Washington, DC 20002
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Fax: (202) 408-1056
<http://www.cbpp.org>

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

1325 S. Wabash, Suite 205
Chicago, IL 60605
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Fax: (312) 435-0198
<http://www.enteraact.com/~cch/index.htm>

Coalition of Citizens With Disabilities in Illinois

300 E. Monroe, Suite 100
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Corporation for Supportive Housing

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Food Research and Action Center

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Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness

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Illinois Community Action Association

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Illinois Department of Human Services

Homeless Services and Supportive
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Springfield, IL 62762
Telephone: (217) 782-1317
Fax: (217) 524-6029
<http://www.state.il.us/agency/dhs/>

Illinois Food Bank Association

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Illinois Housing Development Authority

401 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 900
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National Alliance to End Homelessness

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National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

333 1/2 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
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E-mail: nchv@nchv.org
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National Coalition for the Homeless

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National Community Reinvestment Coalition

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National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

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National Low-Income Housing Coalition

& National Low Income Housing
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National Rural Housing Coalition

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Rural Development

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Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless

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Statewide Housing Action Coalition

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Supportive Housing Providers Association

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