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Fiscal '08 End Game

According to the National Rural Housing Coalition, on December 11, the Congressional Leadership instructed the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to prepare an FY 08 Appropriations bill at the President's overall budget level. Last night House Chairman Obey also de-coupled the supplemental appropriations request for the Iraq war from the ongoing debate for domestic discretionary spending.

This level, \$933 billion, is \$22 billion below the increase originally proposed by Congressional Democrats. Over the last week, Appropriations Committee

staffs prepared a consolidated appropriations bill based on an \$11 billion increase in domestic spending. Unable to deal with the White House and facing opposition from their own



caucus over an accompanying, additional spending for the war, Democrats last night pulled the plug on the new bill and this morning the word went out to prepare a bill at the President's budget request level.

It is certain that all earmarks will be cut out. Following that, White House initiatives will be cut. After that the most likely approach is first setting all other programs at the FY 07 level and making cuts from that total to get to the President's number.

This may be the last tool available to the Democrats to get the White House and Congressional Republicans to come to the table. Eliminating earmarks, providing less money than requested for the war and eliminating Republicans initiatives in homeland security, foreign aid, and drought relief may be enough. If not, it is very likely that Congress

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Housing and Public Safety

The United States leads the world in the number of people incarcerated in federal and state correctional facilities. There are currently 1.4 million people in America's prisons and more than 700,000 people in America's jails. According to survey research on the correctional population, approximately 26 percent of people in jail reported that they were homeless in



the year prior to their incarceration, and 19.5 percent of state prisoners reported being homeless. The United States continues to have the highest incarceration rate in the world and, with an estimated 3 million people living without a home every year, continues to

struggle with the policy challenges of chronic homelessness, the lack of

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Headlines/Hotline on the Internet - The Illinois Community Action Association publishes both Homeless Headlines and Homeless Hotline on the Publications page of its web site at www.icaanet.org. To receive both by email, send a blank email to: headlines-hotline-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. (Self service only.)



SAMHSA Reauthorization Moves Forward

The week of December 4, the Senate introduced legislation reauthorizing programs within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This would reauthorize SAMHSA programs through 2013 and includes several provisions important to homeless providers and clients:

☪ It includes the Services to End Long Term Homelessness Act (SELHA) as a new program within SAMHSA;

☪ It renames the Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals program the Grants for Treatment and Recovery for Homeless Individuals (GTRHI);

☪ It authorizes SELHA and the new GTRHI program together for \$100 million;

☪ It adds a new program targeted to integrating systems for those with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders. Homeless populations are a priority in this new program. It is authorized at \$14 million for the first year, \$20 million in the second, and such sums as necessary thereafter; and

☪ It addresses funding issues within the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) by increasing the state minimum to \$600,000 (from \$300,000 in current law) and increasing the Territory allotment to \$100,000 (from \$50,000 in current law).

The bill will be available online after it is introduced. It is expected to be considered by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee next week.

For further information, contact the National Alliance To End Homelessness at the address in *Headlines Directory*. ■

End Game

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will indeed pass a consolidated appropriations bill that lowers spending on a number of important programs.

Background

The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) conference agreement, passed by the U. S. House of Representatives on November 14 by a vote of 270-147, did not go to the Senate as a stand-alone bill. Instead, when the House and Senate reconvened the week of December 3, they began to develop an omnibus spending bill to deliver to the president after House and Senate passage. This omnibus spending bill included all or most of the eleven unfinished FY08 spending bills, including the THUD bill.

Since the president has threatened to veto the THUD and other spending bills because they exceed his budget requests, Democrats hoped to develop an omnibus spending bill that splits the difference between what they want for FY08 and what the president has requested. For HUD programs, this would be devastating. Any cuts would mean the actual loss of housing assistance for some people currently being served.

House and Senate leadership will work to avoid a year-long continuing resolution to fund programs through FY08. Since the year-long continuing resolution of FY07 funded many HUD programs at FY06 levels, another year-long continuing resolution would mean two years of flat-funding for some programs. While programs could see small increases in a continuing resolution, the scope of increases would be very limited, as would any policy improvements.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) position on the

appropriations includes support for the funding levels for HUD in the THUD conference agreement.

NLIHC holds that these HUD funding levels will barely sustain existing housing for people in the public housing and voucher programs. There are about 20,000 new vouchers nationally in the bill for homeless veterans, non-elderly disabled people and for the Family Unification Program. Funding for project-based Section 8 contract renewals needs an additional "advance appropriation" of \$2 billion in order to protect 500,000 units in FY08.

Rural Issues

Even with an allocation at no better than a freeze from FY 07, the House passed and Senate Reported Ag Appropriations Bills restored funding for loan programs and increased appropriations for self help housing. The House appropriation for farm labor housing was the largest in the history of the program.

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Homeless Headlines



Chairperson, Dwight Lucas
President & CEO, Dalitso Sulamoyo
Editor, Allan Timke
 atimke@icaanet.org

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

For a free subscription, contact:

Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies
 3435 Liberty Drive
 Springfield, Illinois 62704
 Telephone: (217) 789-0125
 Fax: (217) 789-0139
 www.icaanet.org

Supportive Environments for Homeless Preschool Children



There are many ways that we can all help to provide supportive environments for preschool age children who experience homelessness, regardless of where we work (Head Start, Early Head Start, early care and education, Early Intervention, family shelter, health care facility, public school). Below are some tips for creating supportive environments.

Stability and Consistency:

Most families who have experienced homelessness have also experienced many transitions. Many families have moved several times during a year, doubled up with friends and family, and

experienced a disruption to their routine. Building and supporting consistent routines can provide children with a sense of control, comfort and predictability and help them move toward stability.

Tips:

- ☪ Create a welcome plan for new children and families that is sensitive to cultural, ethnic and language differences.
- ☪ Discuss what would make a new child feel comfortable in a new setting. This could mean meeting with, for example,

liaisons, early care and education providers, teachers, or administrators.

- ☪ Build consistent routines into your environment, such as consistent schedules and classroom layouts, clean up procedures, story time.



Making the Connection Public Benefits and Criminal Convictions

Contributor: Kathryn Nelson



The authors of this column welcome your comments and questions. See contact information at the end of the article.

Last month I talked about the impact incarceration has when an individual is receiving public benefits at the time the individual is convicted or incarcerated for committing a crime.

Criminal records and access to *public housing programs* varies from area to area, with housing authorities establishing individualized rules.

Federal laws require that local housing agencies permanently bar individuals convicted of certain sex offenses and methamphetamine production. The federal laws also give local public housing agencies discretion to deny eligibility to anyone with almost any other type of a criminal background, but universally housing authorities tend to also bar individuals who participate in or are convicted of violent crimes (source: www.lac.org/lac/). Contact your local housing authority to determine the specific rules for your area.

Student loans, grants or work assistance are universally denied to anyone convicted of a drug-related crime.

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- ☪ Provide clearly defined areas for children's belongings, such as cubbies, places to hang coats, clearly defined areas for toys and books, all with labels for pre-reading skills.

- ☪ Provide books for children that emphasize repetition, routine, and predictability, such as *Caps for Sale*, or *One Fish Two Fish*. This helps promote consistency.

- ☪ Be sure to communicate frequently and on a consistent and regular basis with families about their children's activities and progress.

Individual Attention:

Children who are homeless have experienced many losses: family, friends, pets, neighborhood, and familiar surroundings. All children need one-on-one time, trustworthy adults and time to build trust hi newcomers. You may be the first consistent, long-term relationship a child has had. Children need opportunities to express their feelings in a calm and safe environment.

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housingactionillinois



Housing Action Illinois / NeighborWorks Trainings

Housing Action Illinois is excited to announce a series of NeighborWorks® trainings to be offered January 16th - 18th, 2008 in Bloomington, Illinois. These trainings will include:

HO107 Understanding Credit Scoring:

Find out how credit scoring really works so you can effectively help clients with credit challenges improve their financial status.

HO307 Advanced Foreclosure: Case Study Practicum:

Examine actual foreclosure case studies in order to better help clients avoid foreclosure

HO240 Combating Predatory Lending:

Identify and understand the latest predatory lending practices to effectively help clients avoid these unscrupulous activities.

AM121 Asset Management:

Identify long-range performance trends, establish benchmarks of high performance, and provide a truly useful reporting structure for your organization.

B100 "Board Source" Development Training

What do boards really do? Gain an introduction to the fundamentals of effective governance by defining the basic roles and responsibilities of the board and examining strategies for building effective board structures.

These courses will be offered between Wednesday, January 16th and Friday January 18th, 2008 at the Doubletree Hotel and Convention Center, 10 Brickyard Drive; Bloomington, Illinois 61701. For more information or to register, please contact Heather Hain at Housing Action Illinois, 312-939-6074 Ext. 108 or email heather@housingactionil.org. The cost for this training is \$25 and should be mailed separately to Mid Central Community Action; 1301 W. Washington; Bloomington, Illinois 61701.

Future Trainings

Please visit www.housingactionil.org/training to read about upcoming trainings in 2008. We have set dates for our Community Housing Development Institute (CHDI) series and are hopeful to bring the 5-day HO250 Housing Counseling Certification: Principles, Practices and Techniques to Illinois in the Spring. All of our trainings are offered at a low cost to community development professionals. ■

Homeless Headlines

Convictions

(Continued from page 3)

Next month: Expungement and identity verification

The DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform, a non-profit

501(c)(3) organization focused on advocacy and planning in DuPage County, Illinois and designer and trainer of Making the Connection: A Guide to Accessing Public Benefits. The DuPage Federation is affiliated with Northern Illinois University,

Regional Development Institute. Questions can be directed to knelson@dupagefederation.org or cking@dupagefederation.org. 📧

	CASH	MEDICAL	FOOD STAMPS	SSI	Social Security	General Assistance
Disability is related to the commission of a felony or due to incarceration for a felony	NA	NA	NA	Ineligible, unless another disability is able to be established §507.4	Ineligible, unless another disability is able to be established §507.4	NA
Convicted of a Class X or Class 1 Felony	Ineligible, if act committed after 8/22/96 PM 03-23-02	NA	NA	NA	NA	Ineligible, if act committed after 8/22/96 and conviction under the Illinois Controlled Substances Act or the Illinois Cannabis Control Act (3.34)
Convicted of a Drug-Related Felony other than Class X or Class 1 if crime committed after 8/22/96	Ineligible for 2 years after the conviction unless in drug treatment or aftercare program, or successfully completed the program PM 03-23-03	NA	NA	NA	NA	Ineligible for 2 years after the conviction unless in drug treatment or aftercare program, or successfully completed the program -3.35
Convicted of misrepresentation about residence to obtain assistance (TANF, SSI, FS or medical aid in 2 or more states)	Ineligible for 10 years after conviction if committed after 7/1/97 PM 03-23-04	NA	After 8/22/96 Ineligible for 10 years after conviction PM 03-23-04	NA	NA	After 8/22/96, Ineligible for 10 years after conviction (3.33)
Conviction as a sexual predator and held in an institution other than a prison	NA	NA	NA	NA	Ineligible §1850	NA
Conviction for Subversive Activities	NA	NA	NA	NA	Ineligible, dependent benefits are still able to be issued §1837	NA
Criminal violation of Public Aid Code	A review board determines if eligible PM 03-23-06	NA	NA	NA	NA	Ineligible if convicted two or more times of public aid fraud (3.27)
Fugitive Felon[1] or fleeing to avoid testimony involving the commission of a felony	Ineligible PM 03-23-05	NA	Ineligible PM 03-23-05	Ineligible §2119	Ineligible §1854	Ineligible (3.30)
Home Monitoring	Eligible (PM 03-05-04)	Eligible PM 03-10-01	Eligible PM 03-10-01	NA	NA	Eligible (however, may be denied if not able to meet Workfare requirement)
Violation of Probation or Parole	Ineligible PM03-23-05	NA	Ineligible PM03-23-05	Ineligible §2120	Ineligible §1854	Ineligible, if currently in violation of a condition of probation or parole (3.29)

[1] In 2001 Social Security conducted a review of persons receiving SSI and found over 22,000 fugitive felons receiving benefits. A fugitive felon is someone who is:

- fleeing to avoid prosecution for a crime which is a felony under the laws of the place from which a person flees;
- fleeing to avoid custody or confinement after conviction of a crime which is a felony under the laws of the place from which the person flees; or
- violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under Federal or State law.

Homeless Headlines

Children

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Tips:

☞ It is helpful to recognize the need for individual attention and to provide ways for children to explore and express their feelings through play.

☞ Create opportunities for play such as dress up, block play, doll houses. These activities can allow children to play out their experiences and help children gain a sense of control and comfort.

☞ Be available to listen to children if they need to talk about their experiences.

☞ Be sensitive to a child's cues and comfort level about an activity or new situation.

Safety:

Children who are homeless may have been in unsafe situations or may feel, unsafe. Some children may act out unsafe behavior as a way of testing limits and boundaries and asking adults to make a situation safe for them.

Tips:

☞ Routines and an established structure and schedule can provide children with a renewed sense of safety.

☞ Be clear about expectations so that children can anticipate activities and know what is expected of them and what is going to happen next in a situation. " Reassure a child who appears concerned, that you are the adult and will keep him/her safe.

☞ Outside play is important but also recognize that wide-open spaces may feel overwhelming to a child who has not been living in a safe environment.

☞ When taking children to a playground, take the time to explain to them the boundaries of the playground and that you are there to keep them safe.

Appropriate Stimulation:

Doubled-up situations or shelters can be crowded, noisy and overwhelming

to a young child. Children may become withdrawn or anxious as a result of too much or too little stimulation.

Tips:

☞ It is important to respond to children's individual cues, and to recognize that children may need more attention., less attention or quiet time.

☞ Support children when they enter into activities and allow them to go at their own pace and engage in their own way.

☞ Art activities such as finger painting, music, playing with blocks and water play provide children with sensory stimulation.

Sensitivity and Inclusion:

Children who are homeless have varied experiences of what "home" means. Some children have never lived in their own home, but rather in shelters or doubled-up for their whole lives. It is important to be sensitive to this when speaking with children or families, or planning and implementing classroom activities and lesson plans.

Tips:

☞ Be sensitive to the fact that children may have experienced a variety of living situations.

☞ If possible, avoid using the term 'homeless' when speaking with children as it can be stigmatizing.

☞ Explore the meaning of home in a broader context; discuss different examples of homes from around the world.

☞ Avoid classroom activities that ask children to draw pictures of their homes or share information about where they live as this can be upsetting for children.

☞ Assign tasks that can be completed with classroom resources and don't require additional resources.

Sensitivity Among Adults:

Children may have experienced direct or indirect trauma. Children will react in many ways, such as acting out or withdrawing, having difficulty sharing

or 'hoarding', difficulties with personal boundaries, heightened sensitivity to touch. Some children may express their feelings immediately or several months later.

Tips:

☞ Try to provide multiples of toys, art supplies and books, especially when introducing a new activity so that all who want to participate in the activity can do so.

☞ Use a calm voice and clear directions.

☞ Emphasize that what is important is that everyone is safe and that the environment is a safe place.

☞ Activities., such as decorating shoeboxes can allow children to keep their belongings in a special place.

Additional Tips:

These can be useful in a variety of settings, depending on space and available resources.

Tips:

☞ Depending on how much room you have, set up a resource/lending library for the children and parents. Provide helpful resources for the parents on available services (e. g. brochures, Parent's Paper) and books for the children.

☞ Cultural, ethnic and language sensitivity is important when communicating with a family. A translator may be needed to work with a family.

☞ Provide children and families with welcome kits and orientation information about the school and the community. Be sure that these are available in different languages or can be translated.

☞ Provide age-appropriate toys in your office both for older children as well as preschool age siblings.

☞ Provide areas where just one or two children can play.

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Public Safety

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affordable housing, and the exclusion of certain people from federal housing subsidies.

A report by the Housing Justice Policy Institute summarizes recent findings on what is known about access to quality or substandard housing as it relates to public safety and the use of incarceration. Along with conducting a brief literature review, the Justice Policy Institute (JPI) has compared data on state housing expenditures with crime rates and incarceration rates. While there is no single solution that will entirely reduce the probability that a person will be involved in criminal activity, and the literature is not conclusive on any one factor that would solve every community's various challenges, the research suggests that increased investments in housing can have a positive public safety benefit. JPI's findings include:

“ Some studies found that substandard housing—particularly where exposure to lead hazards is more likely to occur—is associated with higher rates of violent crime. Two recent independent studies have shown that exposure to lead, associated with older, deteriorated, and lower-quality housing, can result in increased delinquency, violence, and crime.

“ For populations who are most at risk for criminal justice involvement, supportive or affordable housing has been shown to be a cost-effective public investment, lowering corrections and jail expenditures and freeing up funds for other public safety investments. Additionally, providing affordable or supportive housing to people

leaving correctional facilities is an effective means of reducing the chance of future incarceration.

“ States that spent more on housing experienced lower incarceration rates than states that spent less. Of the ten states that spent a larger proportion of their total expenditures on housing, all ten had incarceration rates lower than the national average. Of the ten states that spent a smaller proportion of their total expenditures on housing, five had incarceration rates above the national average and two had incarceration rates just below the national average.

For the full report, go to www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-11_REP_HousingPublicSafety_AC-PS.pdf ■

Children

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☺ Provide a “cozy space” where a child can sit quietly alone or with an adult.

☺ Limit activities that have long waiting periods.

☺ Have multiples of toys so that children do not have to share all the time.

☺ Make books with the children that have pictures of the child, friends, family, and a new school. These can help the child with the difficulty of loss and many transitions.

For more information, please contact:

Stacy Dimino

Horizons for Homeless Children

1705 Columbus Avenue

Boston, MA 02119

Phone: (617)445-1480

Fax: (617)445-2124

sdimino@horizonsforhomelesschildren.org ■

End Game

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Rural Housing interests this is a particularly perilous moment. The FY 08 budget cut millions from rural housing programs including section 502, 515 self help and farmworker housing. This includes \$203 million for loan subsidies, \$36 million from rural housing grant programs, and \$83 million from rental assistance and \$100 million from water sewer grants. The Administration's budget request for the Ag Appropriations bill was over \$2 billion below the FY 07 level. In addition, there is now a shortfall of \$450 for the WIC program that will have to be included under the new regime. So, the Committee is facing a shortfall of \$2.5 billion out of a total of \$19 billion for the entire bill.

Resources

NLIHC's budget chart is can be found at www.nlihc.org/doc/FY08_BudgetChart.pdf.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' November 14 paper comparing the conference agreement to the president's FY08 request and offering state-by-state examples of the impact of funding at the president's levels is at: www.cbpp.org/11-14-07hou.htm.

National Housing Trust's list of at-risk project-based Section 8 units by Congressional District is here: www.nlihc.org/doc/PB-Rental-Assistance-Units-by-Cong-District.pdf.

The National Housing Trust has developed a one-page description of the project-based Section 8 funding shortfall. It can be found here: www.nlihc.org/doc/Sec-8-funding-shortfall.pdf.

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



Headlines Directory

Center for Community Change

1536 U Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
Telephone: (202) 339-9300
<http://www.communitychange.org>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

820 First Street, NE, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20002
Ph: (202) 408-1080
Fax: (202) 408-1056
<http://www.cbpp.org>

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

1325 S. Wabash, Suite 205
Chicago, IL 60605
Telephone: (312) 435-4548
Fax: (312) 435-0198
<http://www.enteract.com/~cch/index.htm>

Coalition of Citizens With Disabilities in Illinois

300 E. Monroe, Suite 100
Springfield, IL 62701
Telephone: (217) 522 7016
Fax: (217) 522-7024
TDD: (217) 522-7016
<http://www.inwv.net/~ccdi/>

Corporation for Supportive Housing

203 N. Wabash, Suite 410
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: (312) 332-6690
Fax: (312) 332-7040
Email: il@csh.org
www.csh.org

Food Research and Action Center

1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, # 540
Washington, D.C. 20009
Telephone: (202) 986-2200
Fax: (202)986-2525
foodresearch@frac.org

Housing Action Illinois

11 E. Adams, Suite 1501
Chicago, IL 60603
Telephone: (312) 939-6074
Fax: (312) 939-6822
<http://housingactionil.org>

Housing Assistance Council

1025 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 606
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 842-8600
Fax: (202) 347-3441
<http://www.ruralhome.org>

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence

801 S. 11th
Springfield, IL 62703
Telephone: (217) 789-2830
Fax: (217) 789-1939
<http://www.ilcadv.org>

Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness

Matthew Hanafee, Executive Director
P.O. Box 3956
Oak Park, IL 60303-3956
Telephone: (708) 263-3590
Email: ILHomeless@aol.com

Illinois Community Action Association

3435 Liberty Drive
Springfield, IL 62704
Telephone: (217) 789-0125
Fax: (217) 789-0139
<http://www.icaanet.org>

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

620 E. Adams, CIPS-3
Springfield, IL 62701
Telephone: (217) 785-6142
Fax: (217-782-1206
<http://www.commerce.state.il.us/>

Illinois Department of Human Services

Homeless Services and Supportive
Housing
400 W. Lawrence, 2C
Springfield, IL 62762
Telephone: (217) 782-1317
Fax: (217) 524-6029
<http://www.state.il.us/agency/dhs/>

Illinois Food Bank Association

P.O. Box 8293
Springfield, IL 62791
(217)522-4022
E-mail: cifbank@aol.com

Illinois Housing Development Authority

401 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 900
Chicago, IL 60611
Telephone: (312) 836-5200
Fax: (312) 836-5286
TDD: (312) 836-5222
<http://www.ihda.org/>

National Alliance to End Homelessness

1518 K Street, NW, Suite 410
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 638-1526
Fax: (202) 638-4664
E-mail: naeh@naeh.org
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/>

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

333 ½ Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20003-1148
Telephone: (202) 546-1969
Fax: (202) 546-2063
E-mail: nchv@nchv.org
<http://www.nchv.org/home.html>

National Coalition for the Homeless

1012 14th Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005-3406
Telephone: (202) 737-6444
Fax: (202) 737-6445
<http://nch.ari.net/>

National Community Reinvestment Coalition

727 15th St., NW, #900
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 628-8866
Fax: (202) 628-9800

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

918 F Street NW #412
Washington DC 20004
Telephone: (202) 638-2535
Fax (202) 628-2737

National Low-Income Housing Coalition & National Low Income Housing Information Service

727 15th St NW, 6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 662-1530
Fax: (202) 393-1973
E-mail: info@nlhlc.org
<http://www.nlhlc.org>

National Rural Housing Coalition

601 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 850
Washington, D.C. 20004
Telephone: (202) 393-5229
Fax: (202) 393-3034
<http://www.nrhweb.org>

Rural Development

2118 W. Park Ct, Suite A
Champaign IL 61821
Telephone: (217)403-6222
Fax: (217)403-6231

Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless

P.O. Box 955
801 N. Market
Marion, IL 62959
Telephone (618) 993-0094
Fax: (618) 993-4013

Supportive Housing Providers Association

3417 North Monticello
Chicago, IL 60618
Telephone: (773) 588-0827
Fax: (773) 267-1294
supportivehsg@aol.com

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Community Planning and
Development
77 W. Jackson 24th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3507
Telephone: (312) 353-1696
Fax: (312) 353-5417
<http://www.hud.gov/local/chi/chihome.html>