

Homeless Headlines

A publication of the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies, 3435 Liberty Drive, Springfield, Illinois 62704 - (217) 789-0125

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New Holland Apartments: Danville's Green Pride

Twelve households comprised of formerly homeless women and their children enjoy their newly renovated historic, green and affordable apartments in a magnificent building complex in downtown Danville, Illinois. The twelve units are set aside within the forty-seven one, two and three bedroom apartments that make up the New Holland Apartments.

Green Development

Green features include geothermal heating and air conditioning. Metered at each apartment, the tenant controls their own comfort and its cost. There are circulating hot water pumps

supplied by energy efficient hot water heaters permitting instant hot water at the faucet everywhere in the building. All apartments are equipped with energy efficient stoves and refrigerators. Regional indigenous



New Holland Apartments, Danville, Illinois

flowering trees and shrubbery were used in landscaping to provide color and minimize watering.

Through controlled rents and lower utility costs the New Holland Apartments tenants enjoy affordable living. Coupled with building system designs comfortable living is also achieved. Three elements contribute. One is the newly installed or refurbished windows throughout the entire building. For historic preservation the windows on the north and east faces were removed, stripped of lead based paint and re-glazed. On

(Continued on page 5)

Green Building Technology Especially Good for Supportive Housing

A report published by Enterprise Green Communities (EGC) on October 16 assesses the cost-effectiveness of incorporating green energy-efficient measures in a range of housing developments. The conclusion of the report is that, in general, the lifetime savings generated through green building outweigh the upfront costs, though this can vary by building type.

As part of their "Green Communities" initiative, launched in 2004 in

partnership with the National Resources Defense Council, EGC established a building standard with 38 mandatory building criteria and 13 optional criteria. The criteria address areas such as site improvements, water conservation, and operations and maintenance.

The study was based on a sample of 27 single- and multi-family housing units that met all of EGC's mandatory criteria

(Continued on page 4)

Inside Headlines

- 2 NAEH Geography of Homelessness Aeries
- 2 Census Toolkits for Nonprofits
- 3 Impact of the Voucher Program
- 3 Making the Connection
- 4 Director Appointed for Interagency Council on Homelessness
- 4 National Conference on Ending Family Homelessness
- 8 Headlines Directory

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Illinois Department of
Human Services



NAEH Geography of Homelessness Series

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) has completed its release of a three-part series that discusses the geography of homelessness. NAEH aims to use new knowledge about where homelessness is concentrated to contribute to the discussion about the issue and its solutions.

The series uses as study units the 457 Continuum of Care (CoC) networks that are used by the government to award federal homelessness funding. CoCs can encompass areas ranging from individual cities to entire states.

The first part of the series, "Defining the Spectrum," was released July 16 and discusses homelessness in rural as compared to urban areas. The authors analyze homelessness in rural (74 CoCs), mostly rural (19), urban-rural mix (47), mostly urban (22), and urban (295) communities and find that of the estimated 671,859 people experiencing homelessness, 77 percent are in urban CoCs.

"Part 2: Prevalence of Homelessness," released in late August, discussed the rates at which homelessness occurs in the different CoC-classified geographic areas. Urban areas, the brief stated, have the highest rates of homelessness, with approximately 29 per 10,000 people homeless. Mostly urban CoCs were second (19 per 10,000) and rural areas were third (14 per 10,000). The second brief reports that the CoC with the highest rate of homelessness is Detroit, which has 216 people experiencing homelessness per 10,000. Los Angeles and Los Angeles County, which combine to form one CoC, have the highest estimated homeless population: 68,608 (75 per 10,000).

(Continued on page 7)

Census Toolkits for Non-profits

The Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network (NVEN) has free toolkits available for nonprofit organizations to assist them in getting involved in the 2010 census. Each toolkit contains factsheets in English and Spanish on topics such as "Why Nonprofits are Key to a Complete Census Count," "What's At Stake," and "Seven Things Nonprofits Can Do."

There are also sample census questionnaires in seven languages and a CD containing videos, photos, logos, and training PowerPoints.

April 1 is the official day of the 2010 census. Between now and then, nonprofit organizations can promote the census in e-communications, distribute materials at conferences and other events, and incorporate the census into ongoing outreach, services, and advocacy. Some nonprofits will want to ask about being a Questionnaire Assistance Center. These organizations will help "hard-to-count" communities answer questions, address concerns about privacy, and provide census questionnaires to those who do not have one.

Above all, nonprofits are amply wish to to convince "hard-to-count" populations to participate in the 2010 census. Due to foreclosures, language barriers, and lack of trust in officials, it is likely that many people will not be counted. However, because of their presence in communities and services offered, staff of nonprofits are trusted by many community members, encounter many people on a frequent basis, and speak languages spoken by many people who do not speak English; therefore, nonprofits play an important role in encouraging participation.

(Continued on page 7)

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The current issue of Homeless Headlines and back issues are available at <http://www.iacaanet.org/homelessheadlines/>.

Homeless Headlines



Chairperson, Kris White
President & CEO,
Dalitso Sulamoyo
Editor, Allan Timke
atimke@iacaanet.org

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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.iacaanet.org

Impact of the Voucher Program

The Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University has released a study of the effects of housing vouchers on families receiving TANF. The study focuses on how effective housing vouchers are in the following areas: allowing families to move away from areas of concentrated poverty, preventing homelessness, protecting families against hardship, and fostering economic improvement for families.

This report builds off data compiled and analyzed by HUD in its 2006 Housing Voucher Evaluation, "Effects of Housing Vouchers on Welfare Families" by providing further analysis of the original study and outlining policy implications based on the study's findings.

The new report shows that vouchers were most effective in improving

neighborhood quality for those families receiving welfare who were initially living in neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of poverty, especially those living in public housing. For the subgroup of people



living in public or assisted housing, use of the voucher lowered the proportion of families residing in neighborhoods with over 30 percent poverty by 49 percentage points and increased the proportion living in 20

percent to 30 percent poverty neighborhoods by 28 percentage points.

The authors also delve further into the subject of homelessness, building off of the Housing Voucher Evaluation's confirmations that use of housing assistance reduces homelessness. This new study looks more specifically at characteristics that make people more prone to homelessness. The study finds the best predictor to be initial housing instability, whether that be not having a place of one's own or moving frequently. Not having a place of one's own increased the probability of being homeless at some point in the next four years by 8.7 percentage points.

When analyzing the ability of housing vouchers to prevent hardship, the study shows that families that are more

(Continued on page 7)

Making the Connection

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Impact on Public Benefits

Contributor: DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform



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

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides a significant amount of money that can help persons struggling during the current economic downturn. Many of the benefits available to the public under this program continue to be discovered, including how the additional money that is received affects eligibility for public benefits.

Following are a few benefits available and information about the affect on state issued cash, medical and food assistance.

Unemployment Insurance (UIB)

Beginning February 28, 2009 Federal Additional Compensation (FAC) of \$25 a week has been included in Unemployment benefits issued. This benefit will continue through the week ending June 30, 2010 as long as eligibility for the benefit was established prior to January 1, 2010. For more information, www.ides.state.il.us/.

When applying for state benefits it is important to know that the \$25 FAC is not counted as income when the individual applies for the TANF and Medicaid/All Kids programs. The \$25 FAC is, however, counted as income for the SNAP (Food Stamp) programs.

So what happens when a person newly applies for benefits and receives Unemployment Benefits that includes the FAC. First when the application is completed always provide the full amount of the Unemployment Benefits received. If the person is newly applying for benefits, the application is handled by a state Intake worker. The Intake worker enters the information into the state computerized application system. The computer calculates the person's eligibility for benefits and is programmed to automatically deduct the \$25 FAC when determining eligibility for cash or medical assistance.

But let's say the person is already receiving benefits, and the state caseworker has to reestablish eligibility (this is called a redetermination). The

(Continued on page 6)

Director Appointed for Interagency Council on Homelessness

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan announced on October 19 that Barbara Poppe of Columbus, OH, has been appointed as the new Executive Director for the federal Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH). She begins her new job on November 16.

Ms. Poppe has served as executive director of the Community Shelter Board in Columbus for the last 15 years. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Ms. Poppe is the spouse of Bill Faith, former chairman and now honorary member of the National Low Income Housing Coalition Board of Directors.

The appointment of a dedicated leader in the homelessness field is seen as a recommitment by the Council to ending homelessness. The Council is comprised of 20 cabinet secretaries and agency heads whose policies and programs have some responsibility for homeless services.

The announcement was made at a Council meeting on October 19 at which Secretary Donovan moved into his role as chair of the Council, a position he was elected to in June. The position of chair rotates among the secretaries of HUD, the VA, Health and Human Services, and the Department of Labor.

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

National Alliance To End Homelessness

National Conference on Ending Family Homelessness

Millennium Biltmore Hotel
Los Angeles, CA
February 11 - 12, 2010

Please watch the Alliance website (www.endhomelessness.org) for more details as they become available.

Contact Name: D'Arcy Klingle - Email: dklingle@naeh.org ■

Green Technology

(Continued from page 1)

and earned at least 25 of the 125 points accorded through the optional criteria.

The study found that the average predicted lifetime utility cost savings for the entire sample of \$4,851 per unit in today's dollars exceeded the initial average \$4,524 cost per unit of complying with the criteria. This is in addition to improving residents' quality of life and cutting an average of two tons of carbon dioxide emissions per unit per year.

The study also found that supportive housing developments in particular benefitted from implementing the standards as compared to rental and for-sale homes. While all three building types had similar upfront costs of compliance, the resulting lifetime savings for supportive housing were predicted to be \$5,441, compared to \$3,608 and \$2,878 for rental and for-sale units respectively. The report finds that providers of special needs rental housing who pay all the utility bills have the most immediate and measurable incentives to embrace green building measures.

A policy finding in the report is that current federal rules governing rents and utility payments for subsidized

housing do not reward developers and operators for a building's energy efficiency, limiting their interest in these reforms. The report concludes that to provide a greater incentive for affordable housing developers to employ green technology, public housing authorities need to establish special utility allowance schedules for buildings that agree to meet higher efficiency design criteria such that both the owner and the residents share the cost savings.

Another policy finding is that federal assistance also currently factors into the financial benefits of installing photovoltaic (PV) panels. With high upfront costs, their implementation is cost-effective only when outlays are offset by government subsidies. Investment in PV panels shows a return on the cash investment of 194% per year. This is compared to just 3% when subsidies are not taken into account.

EGC's full report is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ylqmp32> ■

Homeless Headlines

Danville

(Continued from page 1)

the south and west faces, brand new double hung thermo pane windows were installed. Both techniques of window installation assured weather tight closures to ensure the tenant's comfort.

Another design element is the ventilation systems. They were installed to aid the natural movement of air and to ensure that pockets of stale air do not accumulate. The environment of common spaces such as halls, laundries and community rooms is refreshed regularly for tenant comfort.

The final element was to design around the tenant as many features of power consumption savings as possible. That way their pocket book and the environment benefit from individually metered geo-thermal heating and air conditioning and energy star appliances in each apartment.

During construction demoed materials were sorted for recycling and reuse in the building when possible. Steel, aluminum and copper were sorted to provide cash back to the project when sold. Nearby demolition of condemned properties provided the age, size and color appropriate brick for the exterior restoration. The reclaimed brick was used extensively to restore arches long ago removed from the corner of the building.

Among the numerous national, state and local awards the New Holland Apartments project has won was: 2007 Winner, LEED "GOLD" for New Construction, U.S. Green Building Council – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

Program and Amenities

Access to these apartment starts by entering the homeless shelter two blocks away operated by Crosspoint Human Services. Regardless of the

cause of homelessness the program provides a comprehensive array of services to the women and their children enabling them to regain their independence and self sufficiency.



Renovation uncovered this marvelous porcelain floor in the entrance way under multiple layers of flooring.



Beautiful woodwork was preserved in residential units.



Tenants enjoy the contemporary design of the apartments.

Until their life becomes settled the shelter provides a safe place for the entire family.

During their shelter stay the women can access mental health and substance abuse treatment, training in daily living skills and job placement. The children can be in day care while mom is busy during the day. School age children are picked up by the local school district bus at the front door. At no charge clothing and personal

items are obtained from the thrift store operated by the shelter.

When an opening occurs at the New Holland Apartments, the woman and her children move to their new home. Home furniture and furnishings are provided that mark the beginning of their permanent supportive housing. They join Danville's newest neighborhood.

With rent and utility assistance provided the family can ease in to their new life at the New Holland Apartments. The property manager on site throughout the week assists in meeting every resident's needs. The live-in maintenance person addresses repairs as they occur 24/7. The monthly resident council meetings enable the family in meeting their new neighbors and being involved in maintaining the quality of their new home and neighborhood.

Amenities of the New Holland Apartments include two on site laundries, two community rooms, an enclosed park with a child playground, barbecue grills, benches/chairs and tables for seating. Security is provided by electronic proximity card access, electronic coin card for operating all laundry machines, closed circuit cameras recording tenant and visitor conduct on the property. There is adjacent parking and covered bike racks. Public transportation and school buses pick-up and deliver just outside the front door. Available within walking distance are Vermilion County and City of Danville government services; medical, legal, and accounting services; museums; post office; grocery and other retail stores.

For further information, contact Thom Pollock of Crosspoint Human Services at (217) 442-3200, ext. 129, or tpol101986@aol.com. ■

Public Benefits

(Continued from page 3)

caseworker who is responsible for doing this work currently does not have a computer system that adjusts the income. The caseworker has to remember to manually deduct the FAC payment from the income when determining eligibility for the cash and medical programs, and then remember to include the FAC payment when assessing Food Stamp eligibility. Why is this important for you and your clients to understand? Let's look at three scenarios. You will notice that Scenario One and Two can result in higher costs to your client.

Scenario One: The caseworker does not remember to deduct the FAC: Mrs. Smith is told she and her child is approved for All Kids/Family Care Share which requires \$2 co-pays for doctor visits made by both her and the child. Mrs. Smith is also denied Food Stamps:

Scenario Two: The caseworker deducts the FAC payment for both the All Kids and SNAP benefits; Mrs. Smith is approved for All Kids Assist and receives a small SNAP benefit. Later the caseworker discovers the SNAP error and Mrs. Smith is notified she owes the state for SNAP benefits she should not have received.

Scenario Three: the caseworker does the calculation correctly and Mrs. Smith is enrolled in All Kids Assist with co-pays not required for the child's doctor visits and Mrs. Smith is denied SNAP benefits.

Premium Assistance for COBRA

Individuals who involuntarily lost their employment and became eligible for COBRA on or after 9/1/08 through 12/31/09 may be able to receive help with up to 65 percent of the COBRA premium being paid. The Premium

Assistance payments are exempt for all programs. In most situations these payments are in the form of a tax credit to employers. A qualified employee would simply pay less for COBRA coverage up front. In some instances a Premium Assistance Payment refund can be issued. If this happens the refund is exempt when the caseworker determines eligibility for benefits. For up-to-date information, contact the Department of Labor at 1-866-444-3272 or visit the agency's website (www.dol.gov/ebsa/COBRA.html) or obtain a fact sheet recovery.illinois.gov/documents/COBRAFACTSHEET.pdf.

World War II Veteran's Payments

U.S. veterans who served in WWII in the Far East (Philippine islands) may possibly qualify for a one-time payment of \$15,000 if a U.S. citizen or \$9,000 if a non-citizen. Individuals who believe they are eligible should apply through the U.S. Veterans Affairs office. If this benefit is received it is exempt for all benefit programs. A spouse of an eligible veteran may receive the payment if the veteran dies before he receives the payment.

Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program and LIHEAP

Even though the IHWAP and LIHEAP are not new, more individuals may be able to receive help. IHWAP has received additional funding through the ARRA program, and LIHEAP funding levels are much higher than in previous years. Benefits under both of these programs are not counted as income when eligibility for public benefits is determined.

The Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) assists low-income households improve their homes to make them more energy efficient resulting in reduced energy consumption and ultimately lower utility bills. Some free of charge services provided through IHWAP are: sealing cracks with weather-strip and caulk; insulating walls and attics; repairing or replacing windows and doors; furnace cleaning, safety

checking, repair, or replacement; smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers are installed in homes without them; and electric base load reduction (lighting and refrigeration). Eligibility for the IHWAP depends on the household's income and how many people live in the home; and whether or not the household can show proof of home ownership; or the landlord complies with the program requirements. The receipt of funds through the ARRA has increased income eligibility limit from 150 percent to 200 percent of FPL. Renters are eligible for the program and if approved, and the landlord agrees, repairs are completed at no cost to the landlord (prior to the ARRA landlords were responsible for 50 percent of the costs). IHWAP can provide up to \$5,200 in repairs. The costs of the repairs are exempt for all public benefit programs.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to help income-eligible households meet the high cost of home energy. Eligibility and the assistance level depend on: the household's income and number of members; whether or not the household pays for its home energy costs directly or the home energy costs are included in the rent, and if rent exceeds 30 percent of income; the type of home energy fuel, if the household pays directly; and the region in which the household is located. Payments approved under this program are exempt when the state determines eligibility for benefits.

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 Kathryn Nelson at knelson@dupagefederation.org ■

Voucher Program

(Continued from page 3)

vulnerable at the outset—for instance, those who have limited work experience and are from more distressed neighborhoods—are more likely to actually utilize the vouchers than those with higher earning capabilities.

The authors conducted in-depth interviews with families and found that many gave up their vouchers when they were still vulnerable, due to misconceptions and failures in program administration. Those who relinquish their vouchers are worse off than those who continue to use their vouchers. These families may have higher earnings, but because of their lower receipt of public assistance, they

experience more material hardship—and are more susceptible to homelessness—than those that continue using housing vouchers.

Finally, the original report showed that the voucher program increased housing independence, boosting by 23.4 percentage points the proportion of families who no longer lived in someone else's household, but instead were able to rent their own apartment. Further analysis of this finding shows that those families that became newly independent remained in precarious positions, exhibiting greater food hardship and food insecurity than families that remained independent throughout the study. The use of a voucher was shown to have no impact on a family's ability to live on its own

and afford housing with a reasonable rent burden in a four- to five-year time frame.

To view the full report, go to: www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/governmentprograms/w09-7.pdf.

HUD's original 2006 report is available in two parts on their website:

Part One: www.huduser.org/Publications/pdf/hsgvouchers_1.pdf

Part Two: www.huduser.org/Publications/pdf/hsgvouchers_2.Pdf

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

Geography

(Continued from page 2)

“Part 3: Subpopulations by Geographic Type,” released in late September, categorizes homelessness into three subpopulations: families with children (37 percent of the homeless population), non-chronically homeless individuals (45 percent) and chronically homeless individuals (18 percent). It also examines two subgroups: sheltered, including those in emergency shelters or transitional housing (58 percent), and unsheltered (42 percent).

NAEH concludes the third brief with discussion of three observations of note. First, the percent of families with children is the lowest in urban areas,

both when compared to other subpopulations and other geographic areas. Second, 66 percent of the chronically homeless population is unsheltered. This is true across geographic areas and is especially extreme in both rural and urban regions. Lastly, the NAEH observes that the “mostly rural” homeless population is atypical in that families with children are the most likely to be unsheltered, while chronically homeless are the most likely to be sheltered. It is possible that this abnormality could be explained by the low number of CoCs classified as “mostly rural” (only 17 of 457 total), almost all of which are state-wide.

Part 1 of the series can be found at: www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2437,

Part 2 at: www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2490

And Part 3 at: www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2529

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

Census Toolkits

(Continued from page 2)

NLIHC is an official 2010 Census Partner, and has agreed to disseminate information to encourage our members to support the goal of achieving a complete census count, particularly of low income people.

Free toolkits are available at <http://www.nonprofitscount.org> ■



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.ccdionline.org>

Corporation for Supportive Housing

205 W. Randolph, 23rd Floor
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 1601
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 Association of Community Action Agencies

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

2201 "P" St., NW
Washington, DC 20037-1033
Phone: (202) 462-4822 x234
Fax: (202) 462-4823
Email: info@nationalhomeless.org

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@nlihc.org
<http://www.nlihc.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

212 E. Ohio Street, 5th Floor
Chicago, IL 60611
Telephone: 773-935-4663, ext.123
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>