



HOME Illinois Summit

The State of Illinois' Office to Prevent and End Homelessness held their annual Home IL Summit in Springfield on June 4th and 5th. Continuums, partners, State Agencies, and agency staff from across the state gathered for two days of presentations, training, and networking. We were excited to see many partners from the Heartland Continuum participate in the summit and take advantage of the summit's close proximity. A few takeaways:



- Josh Sabo represented our community on two panels, “Leveraging Dynamic, Real-time Homelessness Data to Enable System Performance Improvement” with Community Solutions and “Illinois Medical Respite Capacity Building Initiative” with the Illinois Public Health Institute
- The State of Illinois' commissioned report is a very important read: “Black Homelessness in Illinois: Structural Drivers of Inequality.” We are looking into opportunities to bring a presentation of the report to Springfield.
- Another report on Health and Mortality for Homeless Individuals was presented on and will be released soon. The report has significant ramifications for healthcare partnerships, medical respite, and other service delivery efforts.

Supportive Housing Task Group Launch

Following our Supportive Housing Learning Lab series, we launched the Supportive Housing Task Group which provides support, training, and fosters idea and resource sharing among housing case workers in agencies throughout the Continuum. The first meeting was held at Salvation Army in June.

Community Engagement

- Our team had a table at the Juneteenth celebration.
- Masonic Central Lodge Number 3 held an Outreach event in partnership with SPD that we participated in and passed out outreach supplies.



System Improvement Efforts

- Community Solutions / Built for Zero Quality Data Initiative - efforts continue to reach the Quality Data benchmark. This is a big emphasis for the HCoC now. We are working with partners to increase data collection (specifically outreach) and to improve the quality of data collected (service providers). The July HCoC General Membership meeting included a 30-minute training from the Technical Assistance Collaborative on the importance of quality data and strategies to improve data collection. Data dashboard development is a part of this work.
- Veterans Homelessness Challenge Preparation - We recently met with the Veteran's Assistance Commission, VA, and Supportive Services for Veteran Families to begin laying the groundwork for a 50 day Challenge on Veteran Homelessness that we anticipate beginning after Veteran's Day. The goal will be develop a needs assessment, strategy, and target date for reaching functional zero for veterans experiencing homelessness.
- Coordinated Entry System is a significant part of our system and we are addressing growing pains. Over the past years we have mandated funded agencies to have two trained assessors on staff. We are currently working to improve the quantity and quality of assessments being done to improve connectivity to housing opportunities.

Outreach Expansion

The 100 Day Challenge on Unsheltered Homelessness highlighted opportunities and needs around Street Outreach.

- Opportunities include strengthening partnerships and increasing data collection. Washington Street Mission and Phoenix Center have taken significant steps that will have an impact on Street Outreach Data. We are still working with SPD's SEED initiative to help them better collaborate through data sharing and integration in HMIS.
- Needs are currently focused on Street Outreach staff and considerations for bringing devoted SO staff onto the Heartland HOUSED team.

Projects and Ongoing Efforts

- Heartland HOUSED Audit moving forward with Eck, Schafer, and Punke.
- We are working with a potential System Support Specialist candidate.
- Efforts ongoing to develop the HMIS side of the Heartland Housing Help Line, we have soft launched the program at this time.
- You can preview [our new website here](#). Final edits are being made to launch. We have entered into an agreement with LRS on the development of a phone application to support Outreach efforts and Continuum communication.
- Medical Respite - the IPHI grant spend down happened in June, work shifting now to policy, partnership, and staffing.