

2013 Policy Priorities

At the Chicago Alliance, we believe that ending homelessness is possible and that, in our community, everyone should have a home. It is with this vision that we will move forward in 2013, ready to be strong advocates for Chicago's homeless assistance system and the people who depend on it. Chicago's Plan 2.0: *A Home for Everyone* will guide our efforts as we build on the accomplishments of last year, cultivate new champions at all levels of government, and work to increase resources and effective policies for those experiencing homelessness in Chicago.

Federal Initiatives

Protect and Increase Appropriations for Homeless Services and Affordable Housing

During the FY 2013 and FY 2014 appropriations processes, the Chicago Alliance will pursue every opportunity to protect and increase funding for federal programs that support Chicago's homeless system, including but not limited to HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants; Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs; veteran-specific homeless programs; and Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8). We will also oppose any legislation that makes indiscriminate, across-the-board funding cuts that deeply threaten the safety net for people facing a housing crisis.

Foster Cross-Systems Integration through the "Dedicating Opportunities" Initiative

Chicago was recently chosen as one of ten critically important communities to launch a new joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). In 2013, the Chicago Alliance will play a key leadership role in the "Dedicating Opportunities to End Homelessness" initiative in order to identify opportunities to more strategically target mainstream resources. We are working closely with our partners at HUD and USICH to secure commitments from stakeholder agencies and participate fully in this national systems integration effort.

Champion Reauthorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

The Chicago Alliance will advocate for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) to be reauthorized by Congress in 2013, thereby ensuring that youth experiencing homelessness continue to have access to the continuum of resources administered by the Act. We will also encourage Congress to take the opportunity of reauthorization to specifically incorporate LGBTQ and pregnant or parenting youth into the legislation, so all populations of young people can benefit from these federal programs.

State Initiatives

Prevent Additional Cuts to Homeless Prevention and Service Funding

State funding for homeless services has suffered cuts totaling over \$10 million since FY 2008. It was only through determined and coordinated advocacy efforts last year that we were able to prevent even further cuts – an impressive victory in this dismal budget climate. In partnership with state housing advocates, the Chicago Alliance will work to maintain level funding in the FY 2014 budget for the following programs: Homeless Prevention, Emergency and Transitional Housing, Homeless Youth, and Supportive Services in Supportive Housing.

Support the Fair Tax Campaign to Create “A Better Illinois”

The Chicago Alliance has joined with fifty other organizations from across the state to work with the Fair Tax Campaign to amend the state constitution to provide a more fair tax system. After years of severe budget deficits, Illinois needs to create a more accountable government, budgets that prioritize human need, and a more equitable and prosperous tax base. In 2013, the Campaign’s focus will be on community engagement and legislative outreach, with the goal of getting a ballot measure included in the 2014 election.

Local Initiatives

Partner with the City of Chicago to Implement Plan 2.0

Successful implementation of Plan 2.0 requires the commitment and participation of the entire community, including Mayor Emanuel’s administration and the Chicago City Council. The Chicago Alliance will continue to build support for the homeless assistance system within city government to ensure that legislation, budgets, and administrative plans and practice reflect the vision of a home for everyone.

Advocate for the Needs of Homeless Youth

The Chicago Alliance will continue to participate in and support the efforts of the City Task Force on Homeless Youth, including increasing the capacity of the youth housing system and implementing youth-friendly service models throughout the homeless system. We will also partner with the Task Force and the City of Chicago to conduct a special Youth Point-in-Time Count in 2013 in order to inform resource allocation and to set targets for reducing youth homelessness in Chicago.

Host Advocacy Training for Service Providers and Consumers

In order to achieve these 2013 Policy Priorities, the full spectrum of the Chicago Alliance community needs to be prepared for and engaged in our advocacy initiatives. Therefore, the Chicago Alliance will conduct an Advocacy Training to provide tools and strategies for service providers and consumers to become more effective advocates and to encourage their participation in system-wide policy efforts to prevent and end homelessness.