



Chicago
Coalition to end
Homelessness

YEAR IN REVIEW

2024



ABOUT

Chicago Coalition to End Homelessness (CCH) builds community power and advances racial equity through organizing, advocacy, legal assistance, and education to prevent and end homelessness because housing is a human right. We advocate for policies and funding to address the root causes of homelessness.

Our strategic campaigns, policy initiatives, and community outreach aim to meet the immediate needs of people impacted by poverty while developing long-term solutions to homelessness. Through community organizing, we center people who have experienced homelessness, because we understand that the people closest to the problems are also closest to the solutions. Our Law Project provides direct legal assistance to people experiencing homelessness, with a special focus on supporting youth.

As we reflect on 2024, we are proud to share our accomplishments and are deeply grateful for partners like you who make this work possible.



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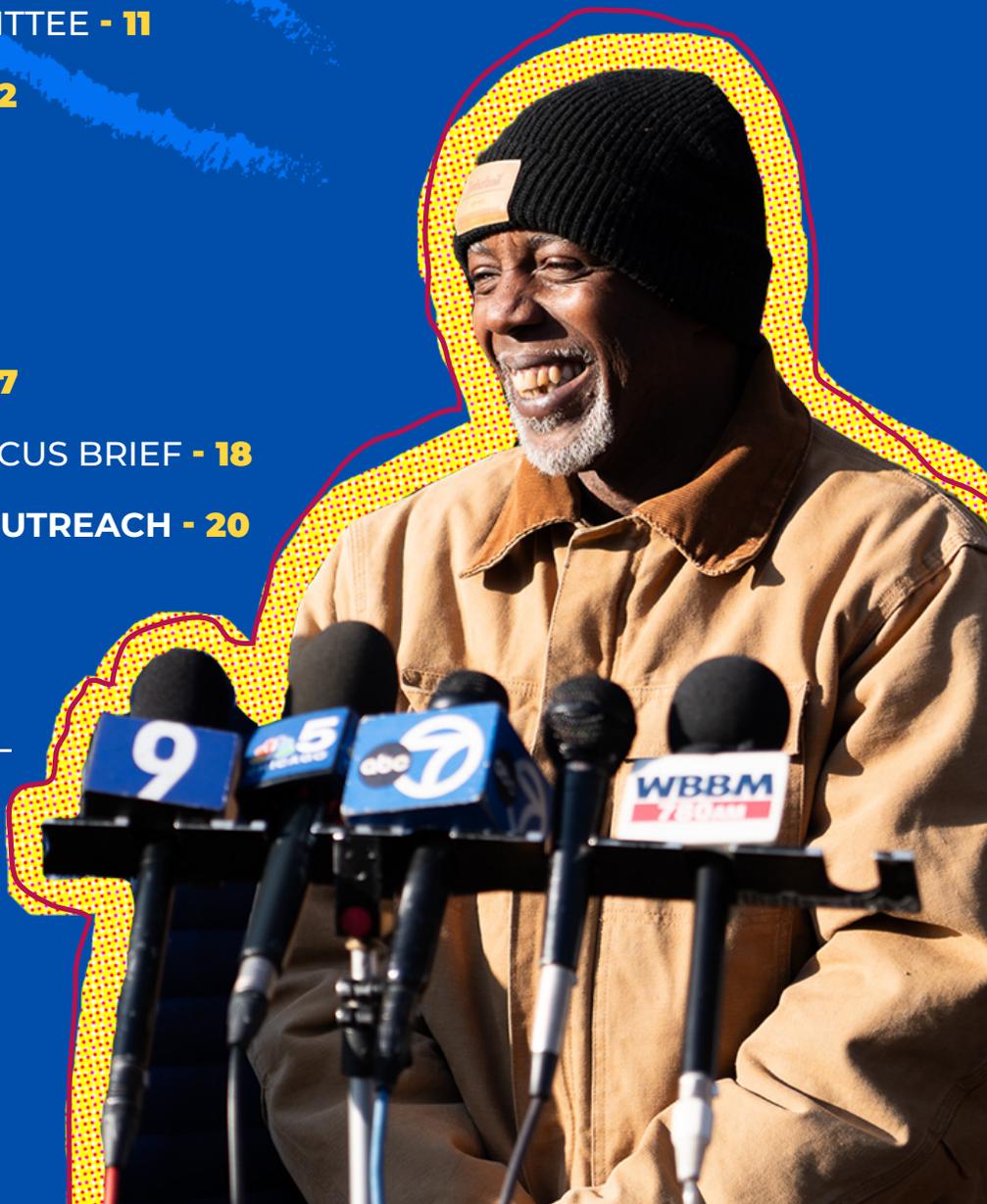
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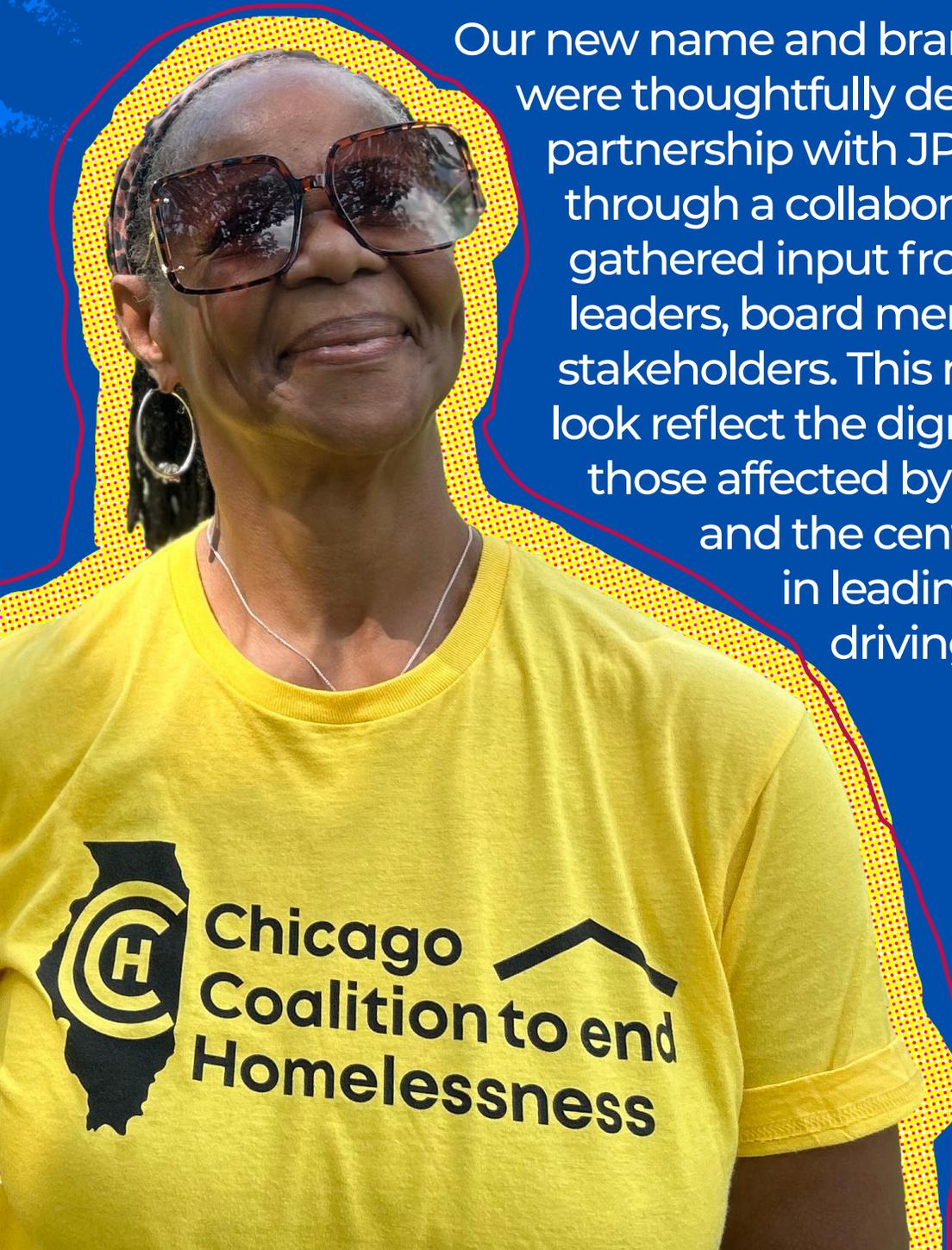
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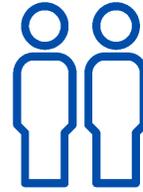


NEW NAME, NEW LOOK, SAME GOAL

After 44 years as the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, we recognized the need to evolve our name and brand to more accurately reflect our mission. In August, we announced we are now the **Chicago Coalition to End Homelessness**.

Our new name and brand identity were thoughtfully designed in partnership with JPD Studio through a collaborative process that gathered input from staff, grassroots leaders, board members, and other stakeholders. This new name and look reflect the dignity and power of those affected by homelessness and the central role they play in leading our work and driving solutions.





Alongside our new name, we also launched a revamped website, built with community needs in mind. The fresh, modern site is user-friendly and accessible to CCH's varied audiences, including community partners, policymakers, researchers, funders, concerned individuals, and people seeking emergency resources.

Explore the new site at chicagohomeless.org.



// This rebrand elevates placing those with the expertise of housing insecurities at the table to build power, advocate and lobby for policy changes with our voices and with dignity. The change in name reflects this, we must end homelessness.

— **Maxica Williams,**
Former CCH Board President and
long-time grassroots leader



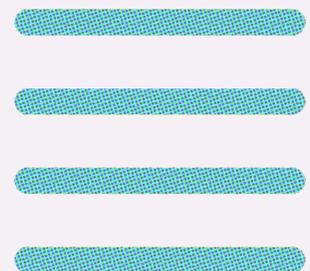
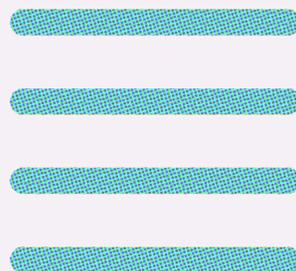
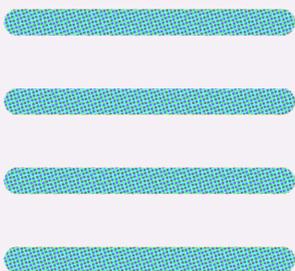
POLICY & BUDGET ADVOCACY

CCH partners with advocacy organizations, service providers, and people with lived experience to drive local and statewide policy initiatives to address homelessness and increase funding for human services.



“The Chicago Coalition to end Homelessness fills an absolutely vital role in advocating, educating, and organizing around the largest humanitarian crisis in our state and country.

— Nick Dodson,
Housing Navigator at Heartland
Continuum of Care



STATEWIDE VICTORIES

CCH staff, leaders, and partners advocated to pass the following measures during the 2024 legislative session:

→ Protecting Tenant Rights

HB 4768 increases protections against landlord retaliation, ensuring tenants can't be punished for standing up for their rights. Under this bill, landlords cannot raise rent, decrease services, or terminate or refuse to renew a tenant's lease in retaliation for the tenant requesting repairs or reporting code violations to the landlord or an outside agency or group.

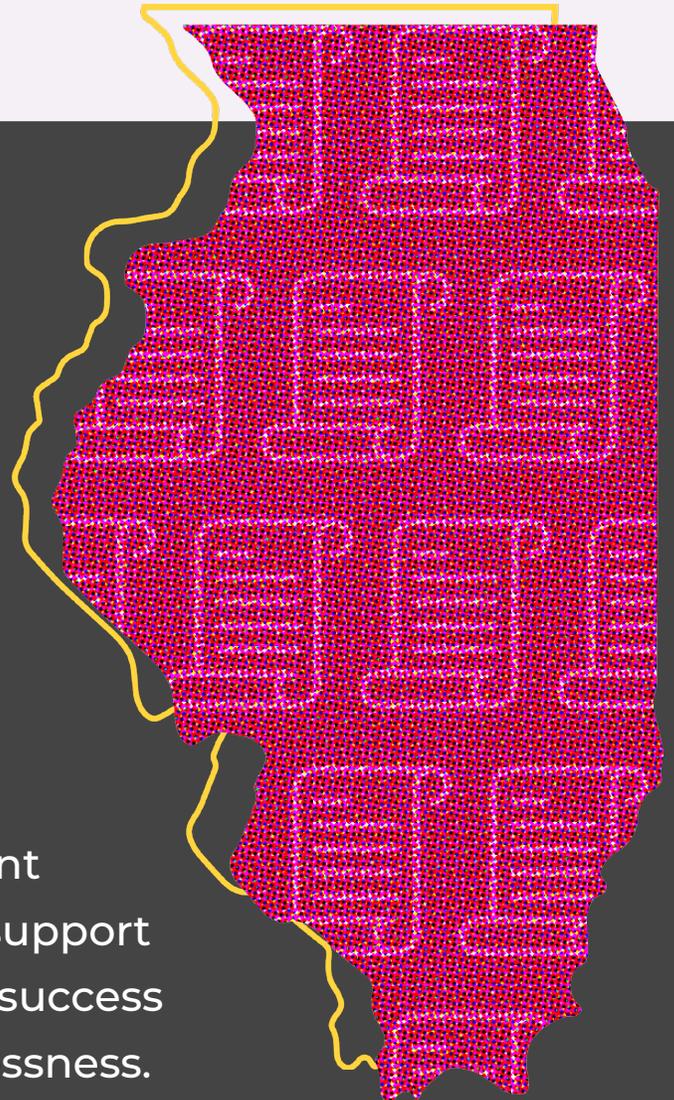


→ Improvements to the Homeless Prevention Program

For more than 20 years, the Homeless Prevention Program has helped Illinois residents in danger of eviction or foreclosure stay housed through emergency rental, mortgage, and utility assistance. This bill strengthens the program by allowing providers to use up to 20% of their funding for case management to ensure program participants remain housed after receiving assistance.

→ Supports for Homeless Students

Illinois has not dedicated funds to support homeless students for more than 15 years. With COVID relief funding from the federal government expiring and homelessness increasing steeply among Illinois students, this bill re-establishes a state grant program that allocates funds to support the enrollment, attendance, and success of students experiencing homelessness.



→ State Budget

CCH's advocacy helped secure increased funding for Homeless Youth (\$1.5M) and the Homeless Prevention Program (\$5.4M) in the FY25 budget.

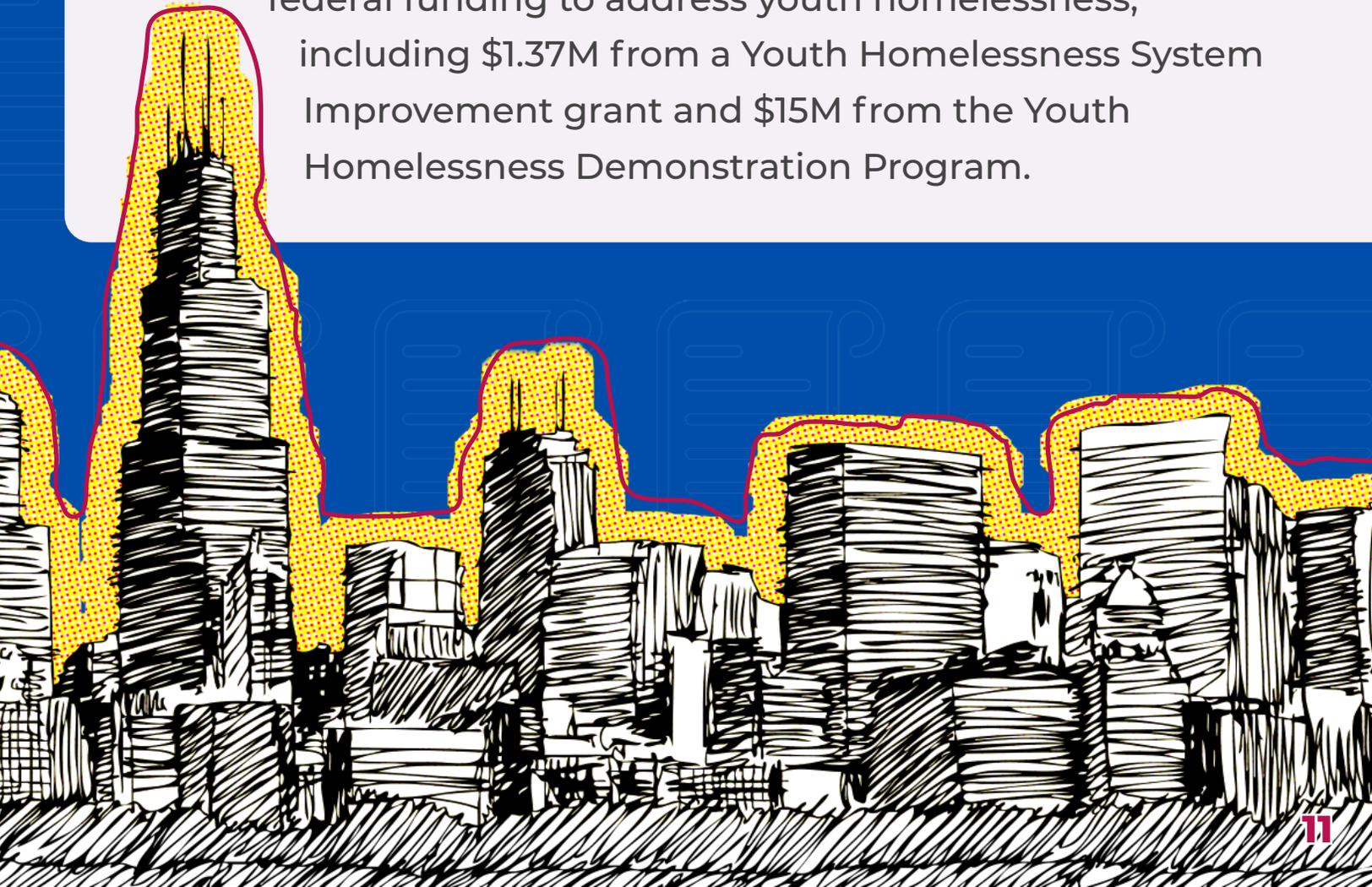


In response to CCH action alerts, supporters submitted nearly **1,000** witness slips in support of our legislative agenda, helping to pass **three** new bills into law.

→ Homeless Youth Committee

CCH convenes the Homeless Youth Committee, a group of 30+ youth-serving organizations focused on statewide advocacy for policy solutions impacting young people experiencing homelessness. Thanks to the Committee's advocacy this year, several youth shelters were awarded city and state funding to operate 24-hours for the first time. These include youth shelters in the Back of the Yards, Logan Square, and Greater Grand Crossing neighborhoods.

The Homeless Youth Committee also helped secure new federal funding to address youth homelessness, including \$1.37M from a Youth Homelessness System Improvement grant and \$15M from the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.



→ Bring Chicago Home

CCH is a lead partner of Bring Chicago Home (BCH), a broad coalition of policy advocates, elected officials, and community groups. Together, we advocate to secure sustained funding for housing solutions to support Chicagoans experiencing homelessness. Though the coalition's ballot initiative to amend the city's real estate transfer tax came up just shy of winning the majority needed on the March primary ballot, our work continues.

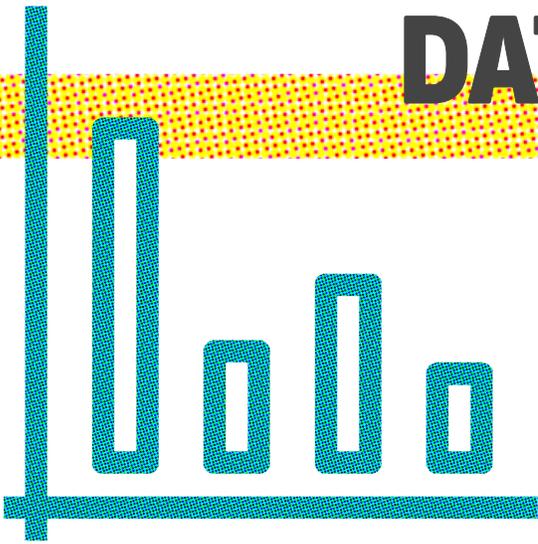
Since 2018, the BCH coalition's work has built community power, shifted the public narrative on homelessness, and shaped long-term solutions to homelessness. From the years of organizing and coalition building that led to the City Council resolution that put the referendum question on the ballot to the five-month ballot campaign, CCH staff and leaders worked tirelessly to educate the public on homelessness and how to solve it.

Between November 2023 and March 2024, CCH mobilized over 200 volunteers to share their testimony, canvass, and phonebank – with grassroots leaders presenting at 60 community events as part of a BCH ambassadors program. CCH energized Chicagoans—including people with lived experience—to vote yes on the BCH referendum by knocking on thousands of doors on the West Side of Chicago and organizing a series of “March to the Polls” events at shelters.

Following the election in March, 2024 was a year of reflection and rebuilding for the BCH coalition. Together, we thoroughly debriefed this disappointing setback, and a research committee was established to inform strategic decision-making for BCH's path forward. Though our strategy will look different, our goal has not changed: we are committed to securing stable, long-term funding to ensure all Chicagoans have a safe place to call home.

BRING CHICAGO HOME

DATA & RESEARCH



CCH conducts an annual estimate of homelessness in Chicago using a census-based methodology that counts people staying in shelters or living on the street, as well as those temporarily staying with others due to economic hardship or “doubled-up.”

Our most recent estimate, released in December, found that **76,375** Chicagoans experienced homelessness in 2022—a 12% increase from the previous year. Skyrocketing housing costs, wage stagnation, and the expiration of pandemic-era support have made it increasingly difficult for Chicago families to find and keep affordable housing.

More than 50,000 new arrivals have sought asylum in Chicago since August 2022 and are not reflected in CCH’s homeless estimate.

2024 Estimate of People Experiencing Homelessness in Chicago, IL

CHICAGO COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS
Reporting data 2015-2022

Since August 31, 2022, the City of Chicago has welcomed over 46,000 new arrivals from the southern border. Chicago Coalition to end Homelessness recognizes the pressing refugee crisis in Chicago, where many new Chicagoans find themselves without a place to call home. No matter when or how someone arrives in this city, all Chicagoans experiencing homelessness needing help should be able to get help. We firmly believe that sustainable solutions require adequate funding to support initiatives that provide shelter, resources, and assistance to those who are displaced from their homes. **Whether facing homelessness for two days, two months, or two years, all Chicagoans deserve a place to call home.**

City and Census data suggest roughly **76,375** Chicagoans experience homelessness in 2022. Today, another **5,501** new Chicagoans are seeking asylum and residing in temporary shelters.

HERE'S HOW WE GOT THERE: 31,333 people experienced street or shelter homelessness in 2022, 45,042 people experienced homelessness by doubling up (per an analysis of the U.S. Census American Community Survey) in 2022, and 5,501 new arrivals are currently residing in a migrant shelter. Refer to Methodology for more information.



CHICAGOHOMELSS.ORG/ESTIMATE

ORGANIZING

Through community outreach to shelters, housing programs, and tent cities across Chicago and 15+ suburban and downstate communities, CCH organizers build our membership base by engaging impacted people interested in joining our advocacy efforts.



Our community organizers develop and train people with lived experience of homelessness to become grassroots leaders. These leaders guide our strategy, lead our advocacy campaigns, and provide testimony to elected officials and the media.

In 2024:

- Organizers connected with **2,934** people impacted by homelessness during outreach, meetings, one-on-ones, events, and actions in Chicago and across Illinois.
- Organizers engaged **2,503** institutional partners, including service providers, community groups, and elected officials.
- Organizers brought **105** leaders, students, and providers on seven trips to Springfield to support CCH's statewide advocacy, speaking with 100+ legislators.

“As long as I’m able to advocate and tell others how my experience was, and where I’m at today, I will never stop doing it. As my kids grow up, they see momma is consistent in fighting for others.”

— Taishi Neuman,
CCH grassroots leader



LEGAL AID

CCH's Law Project is the only legal aid program in Illinois exclusively focused on the needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. We represent clients with varied legal needs including educational rights, public benefits, family law, housing, criminal records relief, and accessing identification documents.



Our attorneys and legal professionals offer broad community outreach to educate people experiencing homelessness on their rights and options and ensure people receive the legal assistance they need. We serve students and unaccompanied youth ages 14-24 through Youth Futures, a mobile legal clinic. We also train educators and service providers on legal issues relevant to people impacted by homelessness.

In 2024, the CCH Law Project:

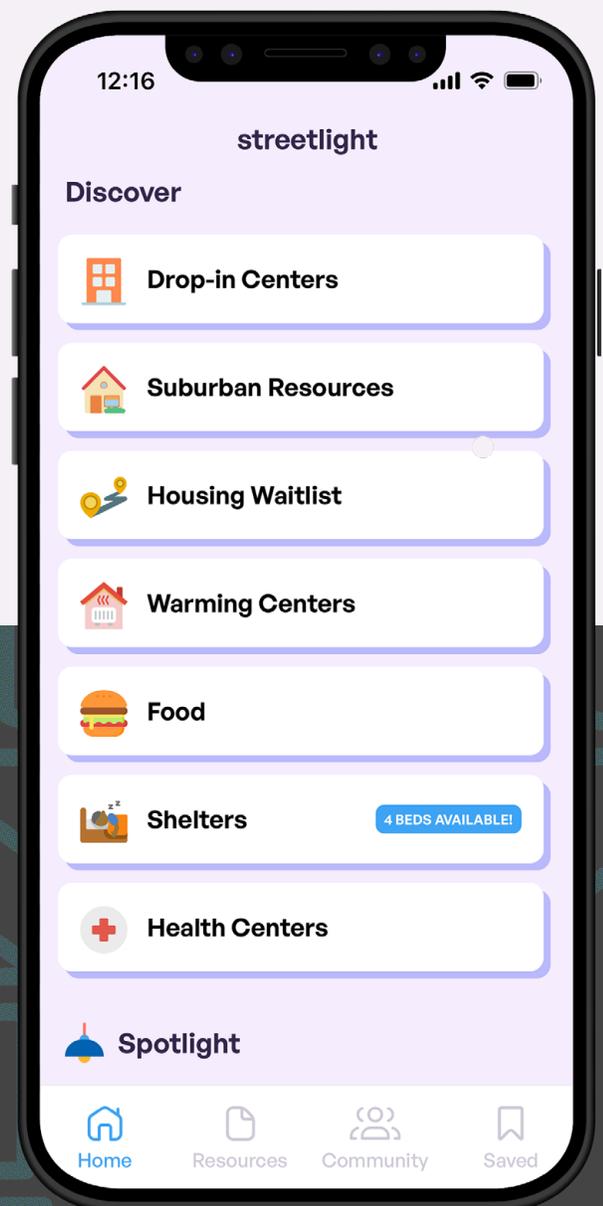
- Closed **379** legal cases for 295 clients
- **68%** of clients were students or youth clients aged 24 or younger
- Reached **1,776** people experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- Trained **2,220** service providers, educators, and attorneys
- Awarded **\$92,000** in college scholarships to 23 students impacted by homelessness

→ Streetlight Chicago

This year, CCH refreshed and relaunched Streetlight Chicago, a free app and website for unstably housed young people. Available online at streetlightchicago.org and for download on [Apple](#) and [Android](#), Streetlight helps users access programming and resources such as shelter, food, and health care.



New features include filters to find specific resources, enhanced mapping and directions, the ability to tag and save resources, user reviews, and much more.



→ U.S. Supreme Court amicus brief

In April, the Law Project filed an amicus brief in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, a U.S. Supreme Court case deciding if cities have the right to penalize people experiencing homelessness for sleeping outdoors. The brief highlighted that homelessness is a serious and growing problem, that criminalization is ineffective and not a solution to homelessness, and that reversal of the 9th Circuit decision would be harmful to people experiencing homelessness.



Photo by Alexandra Charitan

CCH partnered with the law firm Much Shelist, Legal Council for Health Justice, and the Law Center for Better Housing to file the brief and rallied 27 statewide partner organizations to sign on and provide statements of interest.

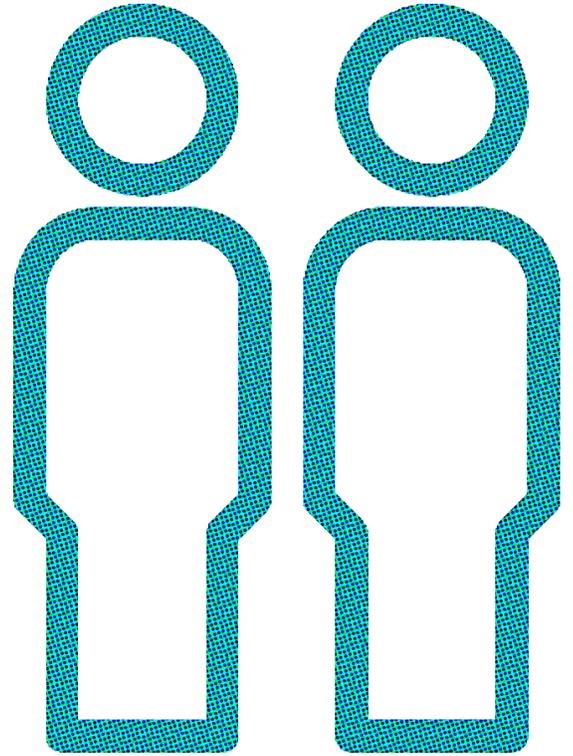
In June, the Supreme Court decided that fining and arresting people for sleeping outdoors when they have nowhere else to go does not constitute “cruel and unusual punishment” under the 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

CCH vehemently opposes this ruling and will continue to advocate for the rights of people experiencing homelessness. CCH is currently working on legislation to protect Illinoisans experiencing street homelessness by prohibiting local governments from imposing fines or criminal penalties on people experiencing homelessness for occupying or engaging in life-sustaining activities on public property.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & OUTREACH

CCH conducts outreach at schools, shelters, drop-in centers, housing programs, and encampments. Through this work, we educate people experiencing homelessness about their rights and options, connect them to resources and legal assistance, and invite those interested to join our advocacy efforts.

We also distribute staff-authored materials on key issues, including access to health care and public benefits, educational rights, obtaining legal identification documents, and sealing or expunging cannabis records.



→ Speakers Bureau

Led by grassroots leaders, our Speakers Bureau educates community members on the realities of homelessness through speaking engagements sharing lived experiences and perspectives. Topics include youth homelessness, educational rights, affordable housing, community reentry for justice-involved individuals, and more. The Speakers Bureau also shares opportunities for community members to get involved with CCH advocacy efforts.

This year, the Speakers Bureau reached 2,692 people at events hosted by schools, universities, and civic groups. This included five training sessions with the Medical Home Network, equipping more than 100 medical providers with the skills and insights needed to serve patients experiencing homelessness with dignity and compassion.

The Speakers Bureau's grassroots leaders reached an audience of **2,692** during **57** events.



→ Horizons

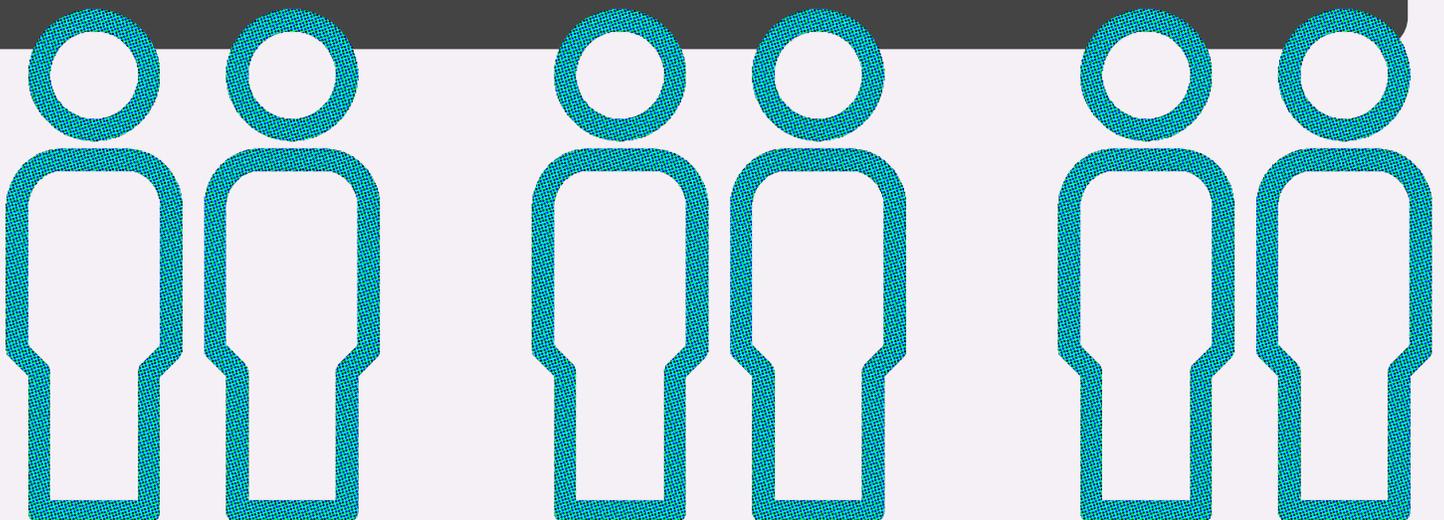
Our Horizons creative writing program is offered on-site in shelters, providing a space for self-expression and storytelling. In June, Horizons hosted its annual showcase at the American Writers Museum, emceed by outreach assistant Myron Byrd. Sixteen program participants—including grassroots leaders, their children, and residents from Sarah's Circle—shared original poems at this year's showcase.



→ Edrika Fulford Mutual Aid Fund

Now in its fourth year, the Edrika Fulford Mutual Aid Fund distributed **\$175,000** to **350** households experiencing or at risk of homelessness in 2024. Eight grassroots leaders serve on the fund's governing board, leading all aspects of program implementation including reviewing applications.

Since the fund was established in May 2020, CCH has distributed more than **\$630,000** in emergency grants to over **1,200** households facing homelessness.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are deeply grateful to the strong coalition of people with lived experience, service providers, advocates, institutional partners, donors, supporters, and volunteers who stand with us to ensure everyone has a safe, welcoming, and permanent place to call home.

CCH is proud of what we have accomplished together but we know there is still much work to do. Our strength lies in our collective efforts, so thank you for being part of our shared mission to prevent and end homelessness.

TAKE ACTION

chicagohomeless.org/take-action/

