



### **100 Day Challenge on Veteran Homelessness**

We are excited to participate in a 100-Day Veteran Challenge, which kicked off in March. This powerful initiative is supported by RE!NSTITUTE, Community Solutions, and the IL Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, unites dedicated individuals, organizations, and community partners within the HCoC to create meaningful change for our veterans. Together, we are working to house 20+ veterans during the 100 days. 13 partners from 6 different organizations are collaborating to help reach the goals our community has set for the challenge.



### **Lived Experience Advisory Board Focus Group**

The Lived Experience Advisory Board is thrilled to be hosting more focus groups & peer support sessions! These meetings are a safe space for folks who have or are currently experiencing homelessness to come share experiences, offer support to each other, and help improve the homeless crisis response system in Sangamon County.

Individuals with lived experience from the community, along with members of the LEAB, shared their perspectives on gaps in available resources and discussed desired changes within the CoC. Key concerns included:



- A lack of available staff and difficulty engaging with caseworkers due to their large caseloads, which makes it challenging to build personal and vulnerable connections.
- Confusion about available resources and the steps required to access them, exacerbated by inconsistencies between information provided to them by organizations.

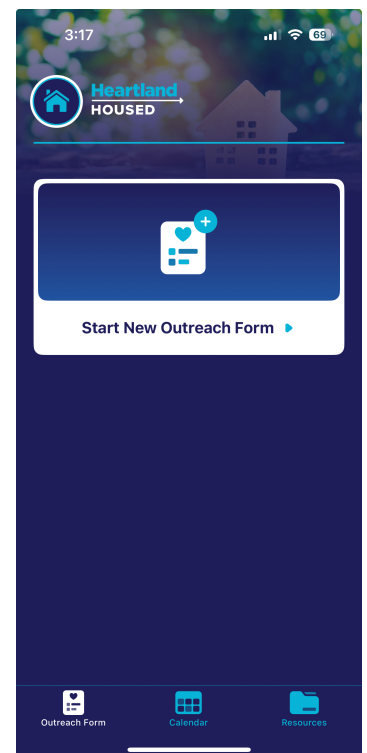
Despite these challenges, participants expressed enthusiasm about coming together for peer support and advocacy. Approximately 12 community members and three LEAB members participated in the discussion.

### **HCoC Connect iOS Phone App Public Launch**

In partnership with LRS and the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, we have created an iPhone App to support outreach efforts and community resource navigation. We publicly launched the app with at the April HCoC General Membership meeting and created a training to help community members know how to utilize the app! [You can download the app here.](#) Referrals come to our Street Outreach Coordinator who works with the Street Outreach Task Group to respond.

### **HCoC YOU COUNT! Youth Homelessness Count**

The Youth Homelessness Task Group and Youth Action Board organized our community's first ever Youth Homelessness survey that worked with community partners and area youth to create an avenue for youth to share about their experiences with housing insecurity. The data will be combined with other data sources to complete a Youth Homelessness Needs Assessment for Springfield & Sangamon County.



### **Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln Donor Learning Forum**

The CFLL organized an educational forum for local and statewide philanthropists to learn more about homelessness, the work of Heartland HOUSED, and spaces where new funding can help grow needed initiatives to more effectively address homelessness. Heartland HOUSED has identified three key areas where funding can accelerate community progress: Heartland Flexible Housing Pool, Heartland Housing Problem Solving Flexible Fund, and Street Outreach.

## **Allocation of State of IL Homelessness Prevention, Shelter Diversion, Rapid Rehousing, and Permanent Supportive Housing Funding**

In May, the HCoC Board held a rating and ranking process to allocate \$1,265,535 in State of IL CoC Program Funding to Heartland Continuum agencies. [The allocation report can be viewed here.](#)

## **Continuing Education: CSH Summit, NHSDC Conference, and Community Health Worker Training**

Heartland HOUSED staff and HCoC HMIS Administrator attended the Corporation for Supportive Housing Summit and National Human Services Data Consortium in April to continue learning about how we can move efforts forward in Springfield/Sangamon County. Three members of the Heartland HOUSED team have begun a year long training program to become trained Community Health Workers.



## **Community Ambassador Training Refresh**

The Community Education Task Group has updated our Community Ambassador training to include up to date information and current efforts and strategies. Over 100 community members have taken the previous version and we are excited for people to experience the new and updated training [that can be accessed here.](#)

## **Projects and Ongoing Efforts**

- Community Solutions Quality Data Technical Assistance work is ongoing to develop quality data for single person households. Our community is getting closer to becoming one of the few communities across the county who have certified quality data!
- 100 Day Challenge on Veteran Homelessness efforts continue with weekly meeting and just hit the midpoint.
- Establishing Heartland Flexible Housing Pool and Housing Problem Solving Flexible Fund and fundraising for these efforts to create additional supportive housing opportunities, provide security for housing partners, and support prevention and initiatives to address system gaps.
- We continue to support efforts to implement City of Springfield HOME-ARP funding in ways that align with our strategic plan to address homelessness and have the greatest local impact.