



Heartland Flexible Housing Pool Established

Heartland HOUSED established the Heartland Flexible Housing Pool to create an avenue for local community support to further increase supportive housing opportunities. Contributions from community members, faith communities, local governments, and other funding avenues will create a pool of money that can then be granted out to local organizations to continue to fuel growth in the number of people exiting homelessness and progress toward our goal of making homelessness rare and brief.

Winter Planning Efforts

Each year, Heartland Continuum of Care partners work to establish winter plans to maximize shelter capacity to ensure safe places for people during inclement weather. Planning for this year involves expanded shelter capacity, transitional opportunities for individuals with income, expanded street outreach efforts, and a Coordinated Entry and housing surge to increase the number of individuals and families exiting shelters and entering permanent housing. To increase information available to the community, weekly capacity checks showing the number of beds available at various shelters are being updated each Monday at www.heartlandhoused.org

Online Housing Problem Solving Form

To increase pathways for people facing a housing crisis to search for available programs, Heartland HOUSED developed an online problem solving form that asks questions about the housing crisis and helps guide people toward organizations and programs who might be able to assist. The form can be found on the [Heartland HOUSED Resource page](#).

United Way of Central Illinois Launches ALICE Fund

Increasingly, we are seeing families and individuals in our community who are employed but don't make enough money to pay for the basics like food, housing, and childcare. ALICE stand for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed which represents community members in this situation. To provide additional support for these households, United Way is piloting the ALICE Fund through the Heartland Housing Helpline to identify households who often don't qualify for other forms of assistance.

Projects and Ongoing Efforts

- The social service landscape is in constant motion, current federal transitions are anticipated to have a significant impact on HUD's Continuum of Care program in addition to SNAP and Medicaid resources relied upon by many to avoid housing crisis. Heartland HOUSED is working to understand how these shifts will impact our community and the organizations that serve those facing housing challenges so that we can proactively work and contingency plan with the ultimate goal of continuing to advance efforts to make homelessness rare and brief in Springfield and Sangamon County.
- Heartland HOUSED has been selected to participate in a 100 Day Challenge on Homelessness Prevention with planning beginning in December of this year and an early 2026 launch. The goal of this project will be to learn about how to improve local prevention and problem solving efforts as part of a cohort of 5 other Illinois communities to reduce the number of people who experience homelessness for the first time in Sangamon County.
- Strategic Planning processes are ongoing with Homebase. One project is working to evaluate implementation of the Strategic Plan and to make recommendations for future progress and another is focused on better understanding the challenge of Youth Homelessness and developing strategies focused on reducing youth homelessness.