



Mason Street Apartments Grand Opening

The Mason Street Apartments created 22 units of housing for individuals exiting homelessness. We are excited for the **22 individuals that call the Mason Street Apartments home** and incredibly grateful for the partnerships between Fifth Street Renaissance, Helping Hands, Springfield Housing Authority, Illinois Housing Development Authority, City of Springfield, Ward 5 Alderwoman Lakeisha Purchase, and Windsor Development to make this possible.



SIU Street Medicine Program Launched

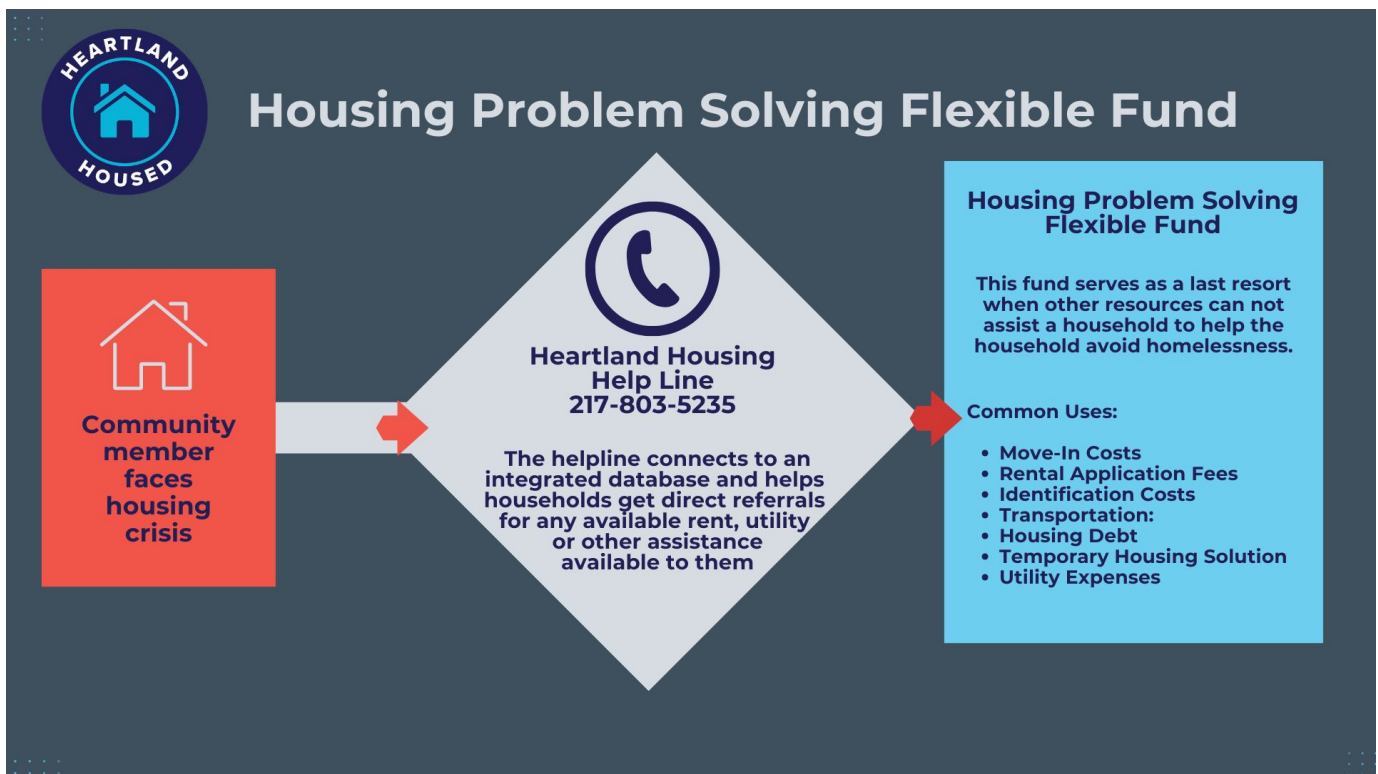
Successful efforts to address homelessness must foster close connections between housing access and healthcare services. By bringing high-quality, compassionate medical care directly to where people are, **SIU's Street Medicine Program is removing the traditional barriers** that often keep healthcare out of reach. This program isn't just about clinical visits – it's about building trust and meeting people exactly where they are. We have seen similar programs save and change lives in other communities and we are excited for what this new program means for Springfield and our vulnerable neighbors. [Read more about the new program here.](#)

100 Day Challenge on Homelessness Prevention

With support from the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness and RE!NSTITUTE, Heartland Continuum partners led by Shymeka Kerr began a 100 Day Challenge and set the goal of preventing 75 households from entering homelessness within the 100 day timeframe. We exceeded that goal by **identifying 126 households at risk of homelessness and providing prevention assistance to 114 households**, helping many remain safely housed. In addition, six partner agencies joined the collaborative effort, strengthening community partnerships, and expanding service coordination.

One key innovation resulting from the challenge is a new by-name case conferencing model that will create deeper collaboration to help households remain housed. Another was the launch of the **Housing Problem Solving Flexible Fund** that uses community donations to create an additional layer of

support when other community resources are not available to help more households stay in their homes. During the challenge, our first 4 households were served through the fund.



Housing Problem Solving and Housing Helpline

The Housing Helpline received nearly 1,000 calls each month in Q2 with 425 households completing the Online Housing Help Form. The helpline was able to make 40 direct referrals for homelessness prevention services and provided many callers with resource navigation and education services related to the eviction process and how to access shelter and other community resources.

Street Outreach

The Heartland HOUSED Street Outreach team continues to work with the HCoC Street Outreach Task Force and other community partners to connect with the 90 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the HCoC Street Outreach By-Name-List with services through housing focused outreach. The team work with individuals on IDs, shelter access, SSDI benefits, healthcare connections, treatment access, and other services. In Q2, Heartland HOUSED completed 16 notaries for Homeless Status Verification for individuals to get IDs. The team also provided education on overdose danger and distributed 2,872 naloxone kits with support from a grant from Sangamon County Department of Public Health.

SNAP Connect

Heartland HOUSED received a grant from the Illinois Public Health Association and began staff training to provide support to individuals at risk of losing SNAP benefits. As training is completed, staff will provide community education and help navigating the process of maintaining SNAP benefits for individuals impacted by recent eligibility changes.

Housing Navigation

HCoC Housing Navigation support helps organizations providing services locate and access available housing units throughout the community. In Q2, HCoC Housing Navigator acquired and inspected 30+ new units. In response to challenges we have heard from community members, our Housing Navigator advocated for the passing of the Junk Fee Bill HB 3564 which bans landlords from charging junk fees and caps application fees at \$50.

Additionally, our Housing Navigator supported landlords and agencies through the Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund and helped maximize local usage of State Referral Network units in the community. In support our neighboring community, Nick gave a seminar on the importance of Housing Navigation to the Decatur CoC and helped them work to onboard suitable Housing Navigators to support their supportive housing work.



The [Heartland Rental Resource page](#) was launched to support households seeking assistance finding new units in the community.

Home Illinois Summit

Springfield hosted the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness' fourth annual Home Illinois Summit in May and welcomed leaders, individuals with lived expertise, elected officials, experts, service providers, and philanthropists to share innovative solutions, address challenges, and celebrate progress in ending homelessness across our state. Mayor Buscher joined Executive Director Josh Sabo, Moline Mayor Sangeetha Rayapati, and Project NOW President and CEO Dr. Dwight Ford on a panel discussing Municipal responses to homelessness.



Welcome Home Baskets

When someone moves out of homelessness and into housing, they often spend everything they have just to get the keys. That can mean walking into an empty space with no pots, no bedding, no basic supplies to actually live there. Our Welcome Home Basket Initiative helps fill that gap. Each basket includes essentials donated by the community like cookware, dishes, bedding, towels, hygiene items, and cleaning supplies—simple things that make a new space feel like home. **39 baskets were distributed through community partners in Q2.**

Heartland HOUSED Staff & Continuum of Care Training

This quarter trainings were held for the Heartland Continuum of Care on Fair Housing, Housing Navigation, Resolving Encampments, Housing Problem Solving, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing came to Springfield to provide a training for all case managers and frontline staff on Effective Housing Support.

Heartland HOUSED staff completed trainings on Food Navigation, Community Health Worker 101, and Keegan Otwell graduated from a year-long CRSS class through SIU.

Community Events

Heartland HOUSED staff participated in community events throughout the county including the Community Collaboration Fair on April 29 at Packard Mental Health Center, Coordinated Entry Access Event at Washington Street Mission on May 22, the Juneteenth Celebration on June 13th, and the Pop-Up Farmers Market at Washington Street Mission on June 26 to share resources and connect with community members.



HCoC Job Board

The HCoC Job Board was launched so community partners can post employment opportunities in their organizations.

Quality Data Improvement Action Plan

Our Heartland HOUSED staff worked to develop an action plan to ensure our community continues to maintain quality data and increase its effectiveness for decision making and helping the community understand the challenges people are facing around homelessness and housing instability. In Q2, we completed an improvement action plan to ensure growth and progress continues. [You can view our Built for Zero dashboard here.](#)

Projects and Ongoing Efforts

- HUD CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity: Application and Rating and Ranking Process has begun with an anticipated project completion in late August.
- Income Maximization Summit: Heartland HOUSED hopes to hold a summit in Q3/Q4 of this year to pull together community partners to better understand opportunities, challenges, and barriers impacting community members as they seek to increase income and achieve housing stability and self sufficiency.
- HUD Youth Homelessness System Improvement Grant and Youth Homelessness Needs Assessment and Action Steps: The HCoC Youth Homelessness Task Group continues efforts to take next steps on action steps connected to our recently completed needs report. One action step is applying for HUD's Youth Homelessness System Improvement Grant in hopes of increasing resources to create a youth specific system of care related to youth homelessness.
- Heartland HOUSED will lead a new effort to streamline onboarding for community case managers. The first HCoC Quarterly Case Management Onboarding will be held to provide support for new staff hired by service partners.