



Heartland HOUSED continues Street Outreach Expansion.

In July, Heartland HOUSED hired and began training two part-time staff who will focus primarily on evening and weekends to expand outreach efforts to connect with individuals who are unsheltered and respond to referrals from community members. Additionally, work began with LRS to develop a version of the Heartland Connect mobile app for Android devices and add additional opportunities for referral. Through additional partnerships, Heartland HOUSED anticipates adding additional Full-Time Street Outreach staff by the end of 2025.

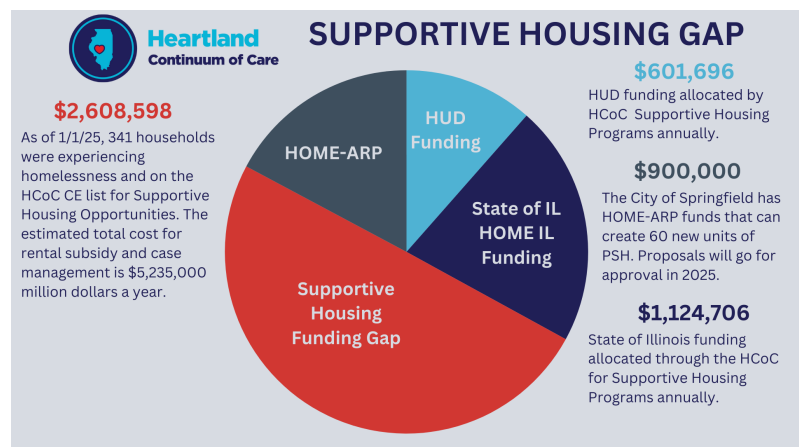
Renewing Strategic Planning Efforts

Work began with Homebase who guided the completion of Springfield and Sangamon County's 2022-2028 Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness to do a review of progress made so far in the plan's implementation and identify key areas for continued growth. Additionally, Homebase is working with the Heartland Continuum of Care Youth Homelessness Task Group on assessing needs and developing strategies to improve access to stable housing for youth. We anticipate both efforts will conclude in Winter of this year.

New Opportunity to Expand Services in Partnership with the State of IL

The Heartland Continuum of Care Board of Directors allocated an anticipated \$2 million grant from the State of Illinois to expand Heartland HOUSED Street Outreach efforts and significantly increase Supportive Housing

opportunities by growing the Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing programs of Helping Hands, Fifth Street Renaissance, and MERCY Communities. The grant process is still developing but we hope to be seeing new households exit homelessness through this funding by the end of 2025!



Welcome Home Basket Initiative

New partnerships with faith communities, doctor's offices, and senior living complexes among others have led to a continued increase in the number of Welcome Home baskets distributed each month. Over 40 baskets have been distributed since May of this year.

SOAR Leadership Academy

Josh attended SAMSHA's final SOAR Leadership Academy with

communities from throughout the country who are working to increase access to SSI/SSDI benefits for those that are eligible. Utilizing the SOAR methodology to increase the acceptance rate for eligible applicants is an important part of increasing stability for households receiving services through Heartland Continuum of Care partners and a priority for improvement in the year ahead.

City of Springfield Renews Support for Heartland HOUSED

Ongoing support from City, County, and Capital Township are a crucial component of ongoing success. The City of Springfield passed an ordinance in August renewing support for continual improvement of our local system of care. [Our recent Illinois Times article](#) highlighted how unique and significant this support is to continue our community's progress.

Projects and Ongoing Efforts

- Efforts are ongoing to establish the Heartland Flexible Housing Pool and Housing Problem Solving Flexible Fund. These efforts will create additional supportive housing opportunities, provide security for housing partners, and support prevention and initiatives to address system gaps.
- 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.
- Efforts to create new resource navigation tools are in the works that we anticipate will help people navigate shelter, rent, utility, and other housing services.

