

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

2022 Illinois Legislative Agenda

This year the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) is advocating for several statewide measures that would remove barriers for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. CCH policy and organizing staff, along with our grassroots leaders, are leading efforts to pass four bills that will impact students experiencing homelessness, extremely low-income families and children, and people using rental assistance or housing vouchers.

CCH is advocating for the following legislation:

HB 5265: Financial Equity in Education for Students (FEES)

Illinois school districts are permitted to charge students and their families annual mandatory fees. Fees can include textbooks, instructional materials, and school activities. These fees can add up quickly, putting a strain on low-income parents and guardians who are trying to make ends meet. Fortunately, public school students experiencing homelessness or whose families are classified as low-income have access to fee waivers. Charter schools are obligated to waive fees for students who are experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act but are not required to waive fees for low-income students and their families.

HB 5265 will create parity between students at public schools and charter schools to ensure students and families living in poverty are not burdened by financial barriers to their educations.

- *Sponsors:* Rep. Will Guzzardi, Sen. Ann Gillespie
- [HB 5265 Fact Sheet](#)

HB 4432/SB 3123: Creating Opportunity for Illinoisans in Need II (COIN II ACT)

Under federal law, states are permitted to use the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant any way they see fit, though the main purpose of the grant is to provide cash assistance to families living in extreme poverty. Of the billion dollars Illinois has in TANF funds, we use only 4% on cash assistance. The monthly grant for a family of 3 – a parent and their two children – living in Illinois is \$549. Parents share that the grant is not enough to meet their basic needs, including rent, utilities, clothing, personal hygiene products, diapers, transportation, etc.

Families receiving TANF must cooperate with child support enforcement efforts under federal law. They are mandated to assign their rights to child support payments to the state. In Illinois, families receive between \$100-200 depending on the number of children in the household. Child support cooperation requirements can present the conflicting choice for custodial parents to decide between pursuing a child support claim to receive cash assistance or declining cash assistance to preserve bonds and positive relationships with the non-custodial parent.

[HB 4423](#) / [SB 3123](#) will increase monthly TANF grants to 50% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), from 30%. Increasing the cash grant amount to at least 50% of FPL would lift a quarter of Illinois children living in extreme poverty out of extreme poverty, which would lead to improved economic, health, and educational outcomes.

The bills will also implement a full pass-through for TANF families receiving child support. Families living in extreme poverty greatly benefit from receiving full pass-through payments. They also serve as an additional incentive to non-custodial parents to pay child support when they know the money will go directly to their children, which can strengthen relationships between children and the non-custodial parent.

- *Sponsors:* Leader Marcus Evans, Sen. Adriane Johnson
- *Partners:* Heartland Alliance, Shriver Center on Poverty Law
- [HB 4423 Fact Sheet](#) / [SB 3123 Fact Sheet](#)

HB2775: Expanding Housing Protections for All Illinoisans

Source of Income (SOI) discrimination refers to instances when a landlord or other housing provider denies or otherwise treats unfairly households solely because the household utilizes public benefits, rental assistance, or other non-employment to pay for housing. Further, considering the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic, SOI discrimination is now impacting those who earn their wages through employment in the service industry and similar industries deemed to be unstable.

[HB 2775](#) will make it illegal to deny someone the opportunity to apply for housing based solely on their source of income.

It would also help protect:

- The over half of Illinois households (2.7 million) that earn some sort of non-wage income
- Vulnerable persons needing emergency assistance to cover rent
- Persons whose rent payments are being refused because they come from COVID-19 relief programs
- Housing Choice Voucher participants in Illinois (99,000 households)
- Persons needing vouchers to flee domestic violence, sex trafficking, or other dangerous situations
- Workers whose jobs are seen as unstable due to COVID-19 (e.g., service industry)
- *Sponsors:* Rep. LaShawn Ford, Sen. Ram Villivalam
- *Partners:* Illinois Coalition for Fair Housing
- [HB 2275 Fact Sheet](#)

HB 4242: Extend automatic eligibility to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) for families involved in the child welfare system

Young children ages 0-5 comprise nearly half of all Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) involved children in Illinois. Research shows that early exposure to abuse and neglect can severely damage the architecture of the developing brain. Providing young children access to

comprehensive, high-quality early care and education services represents a critical opportunity for mitigating the effects of trauma on the developing brain.

Unfortunately, despite a strong history of collaboration between the early care and education and child welfare systems, and systems in place to identify and enroll children and families with DCFS involvement in high-quality early care and education programs, data show that not enough children involved in the child welfare system are receiving those critical services. Fragmentation across these two complex systems creates many barriers to access for both families and the professionals that work with them.

[HB 4242](#) will make families involved in the child welfare system automatically eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

This legislation statutorily affirms a provision of the *Hill v. Erickson* consent decree, ensuring access to childcare for pregnant or parenting youth who are wards of the state. [CCH Law Project attorneys have represented the Hill class](#) since 2009.

- *Sponsor*: Rep. Lakesia Collins
- *Partners*: Start Early, Children's Home and Aid, Illinois Action for Children
- [HB 4242 Fact Sheet](#)

State Budget Advocacy

CCH will continue to advocate for adequate funding for all homelessness line items in the state budget, which include Supportive Housing, Homeless Youth, Homelessness Prevention, and Emergency and Transitional Housing. With the [Responsible Budget Coalition](#), which CCH co-chairs, we will continue to champion progressive revenue measures to address the state's structural deficit of nearly \$4 billion a year.

With Housing Action Illinois and Supportive Housing Providers Association, CCH is advocating a \$20 million increase in the state's FY23 budget to long underfunded programs serving people experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

Our proposal reallocates the \$15 million in COVID-19 eviction mitigation programs removed from the general revenue fund in Gov. Pritzker's FY23 budget proposal to support Homeless Youth, Homeless Prevention, and Emergency and Transitional Housing. It also adds \$5 million to Supportive Housing Services, which would fund services for 875 new units opening next year and cost-of-living increases for housing providers who haven't seen a raise in four years.

These investments will support Governor's Pritzker's recent executive order requiring development of a soon-to-be-released plan to achieve functional zero homelessness in Illinois.

- [FY23 Housing and Homelessness Budget Advocacy Fact Sheet](#)