



Entry Form 2018 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Friday, June 15, 2018, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Rental Housing Support Program Special Demonstration

Category: Special Needs Housing

Subcategory: Combating Homelessness

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

A unique partnership connects high-need patients with supportive housing upon

discharge from the hospital.

HFA: Illinois Housing Development Authority

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Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Payment:

- ☒ My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.
☐ My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.

Overview:

Many hard-working, low-income families throughout the State of Illinois are forced to spend a disproportionate share of their income on rent due to the limited inventory of affordable rental housing. Often this leaves little leftover income to pay for the other necessities in life such as utilities, healthcare, education and sometimes even food. At the same time, there are thousands of households that face additional difficulty in finding affordable housing due to disability or special needs. These households face a frustrating array of barriers to stable and affordable housing due to employment issues, difficulty accessing benefits, and a simple lack of affordable supportive housing, leaving many persons with disabilities either vulnerably housed or at risk of homelessness.

Long-term hospital patients with disabilities are among those who are most at risk of homelessness. Former patients are often discharged from hospitals with inadequate or nonexistent plans for housing and care, and many are left with few options as a result. The discharge from a hospital is a critical point in ensuring persons with disabilities are connected to the housing and support they need, and IHDA recognized that careful planning was required to ensure a smooth transition to stable housing and community living.

Program Description:

The solution was a Special Demonstration round of the existing Rental Housing Support (RHS) Program, a rental assistance program created in 2005 to promote permanent housing through the funding of rent subsidies for these rent-burdened, extremely and severely low-income households.

The primary RHS Program has been an effective resource to assist priority populations – extremely and severely low-income households – by awarding program funds to organizations around the state that then become local administering agencies (LAA). The LAAs in turn provide subsidies to landlords, which allow extremely low-income households to afford their rents. The three primary goals of the program are to reduce the risk of homelessness for extremely low-income households, assist communities as they create and preserve long-term affordability, and provide rental assistance to areas in the state that are underserved by rental assistance and affordable housing programs.

The RHS Program is funded through a \$10 fee collected from real estate document recordings. Resources are allocated by the state legislature and then distributed by IHDA to four geographic areas: Chicago, suburban Chicago, small cities and rural communities. The program is publicized through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process and is open to local housing authorities, municipalities and non-profit community groups with the organizational capacity and experience to operate housing programs. Once selected as a local administering agency, the LAA helps to identify local property owners to participate in the program, help determine tenant eligibility and inspect all units included in the program. During the application period, IHDA conducts a series of trainings across the state for groups interested in applying to become administrative agencies. Another series of trainings covering program management requirements is held once the LAAs have been selected.

Under the RHS Program Special Demonstration, IHDA requested proposals from qualified social service providers to create a pool of housing that can divert persons leaving hospitals from becoming homeless, cycling through additional hospital visits or becoming unnecessarily institutionalized in nursing home

Illinois Housing Development Authority
Rental Housing Support Program Special Demonstration
Special Needs Housing – Combating Homelessness

care. The housing is intended for extremely low-income individuals with disabilities who are being released from hospitals and able to receive services outside of nursing home type settings and whose physical and psychosocial needs can be successfully served in the community. Eligible administering agencies are non-profit organizations engaged in nursing home diversion activities, with active relationships with one or more hospitals in their area.

Housing Forward was the first LAA to be approved under the Special Demonstration, bringing the program from concept to reality in March 2018. Well suited for the job, Housing Forward is a non-profit social service agency that works to transition people from housing crisis to housing stability, and it is the only social service agency in west Cook County with a comprehensive "housing plus services" solution for transitioning individuals and families out of homelessness. They received a RHS Special Demonstration grant of \$1,174,140 to subsidize 30 units of housing for an initial term of three years to assist extremely low- and severely low-income households and persons with disabilities who are being released from hospitals. As a part of the grant, Housing Forward will identify landlords with available qualified units and will collaborate with the Cook County Health & Hospital System – a safety-net healthcare provider for 5.2 million residents in Chicago and suburban Cook County – to identify eligible tenants to participate in the program. The Cook County Health System will identify and refer its highest need patients – frequent users of emergency rooms or inpatient mental health hospitals – and will monitor the outcomes for those housed through the program compared to frequent hospital utilizers who are not housed.

At this time, Housing Forward is establishing a portfolio of eligible landlords and units, and will begin placing residents referred by the Cook County Health & Hospital System by August 2018. They expect to be fully operational by the end of the year.

Conclusion:

IHDA's mission is to create and preserve affordable housing for Illinois residents. For tenants, this means having access to affordable and stable housing that can be used as a platform for health, recovery, and independence. The subsidies provided under the Rental Housing Support Program Special Demonstration enable us to do just that for a vulnerable and underserved population. While the 30 units funded as a Demonstration may seem like a small investment, the impact of the program has far-reaching consequences: residents avoid becoming homeless, reduce their use of expensive public services like emergency rooms and shelters and achieve a better quality of life with improved health and housing stability. If success is seen from this pilot, IHDA will expand program with Housing Forward, the Cook County Health System and other partners across the State.