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# News Release

## State-funded Supportive Housing Institute graduates first class of students who will create 400 rental homes for the Illinois homeless



*Program helps non-profits construct more housing for the homeless by teaching them to cut through red tape*

**Chicago** – Hundreds of families and individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless in Illinois today moved one step closer to securing a safe and decent home with supportive services to help them get back on their feet. The Supportive Housing Institute, established by the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and funded by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), graduated its first class of potential supportive housing developers who plan to build an estimated 400 rental homes around the State for persons facing homelessness. The program helps small non-profits learn to efficiently navigate the complex process of developing housing with support services and is expected to reduce the time it takes to obtain funding for homeless housing by improving the planning process. The counties that will benefit from the program include Cook, DuPage, Massac, Vermilion, Warren and Williamson.

Ten teams of prospective non-profit supportive housing developers from all over Illinois were selected last October to take part in the Opening New Doors Program which provides technical assistance, pre-development funds, and six months of supportive housing building and management training. Today, each team presented plans that will put their work into practice and build supportive housing for homeless families and individuals in their respective cities. The program's goal is to increase housing options for persons facing disadvantages such as homelessness and mental illness, former substance abusers, and people living with HIV and AIDS. The type of housing and population served will be based on the needs of each local community.

“Today marks an enormous accomplishment for affordable and supportive housing providers across Illinois,” said DeShana Forney, executive director of IHDA, speaking at a graduation ceremony in Bloomington today. “IHDA is extremely proud to be implementing and investing in Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich’s vision for an increase in affordable housing options for all Illinois residents, including those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Supportive housing can make all the difference to families and individuals without housing who want to rebuild their lives. The Corporation for

Supportive Housing's Institute helps to increase the State's capacity to deliver quality housing and services to those who need it most."

"Thanks to the State's investment, we can generate new momentum for the creation of supportive housing in Illinois. The teams learned everything from budget development, service planning and property management during their training sessions and also received one-on-one technical assistance tutorials. Without this grant, we would not have been able to set up the Institute to empower local non-profits so that they can better help the State's most at-risk populations. We have every confidence our graduates today will go on to make a difference in addressing the State's homelessness needs," said Sue Augustus, director of CSH's Illinois office.

IHDA awarded a \$750,000 grant from the State Affordable Housing Trust Fund to CSH in 2006 to set up the Institute and to train 16 to 20 non-profit organizations to become supportive housing developers over a two year period. Of this sum, \$320,000 will provide technical assistance for the trainings, \$330,000 is earmarked for predevelopment funding such as architectural plans and site control, and \$100,000 will be used for capacity building grants. CSH has found that many non-profits with the experience and desire to provide housing and services to people facing homelessness could not because they lack initial start up resources because they were daunted by the process of applying for funding.

"We are hugely grateful to CSH and IHDA because we now feel equipped to rehabilitate a building in South Chicago and convert it into 23 homes with supportive services for people with HIV or AIDS," said Bart Winters, executive director of Chicago's Alexian Brothers. Like the majority of the participating teams, the group has plans to apply for IHDA funding for its project in the coming months.

"When we entered the Opening New Doors Program, we really didn't know how to create a supportive housing program from scratch. We were worried that the project would incur debt for the agency. This program taught us about all the different types of available funding and guided us through how to pull all these resources together. Now, with our services provider and partner Franklin-Williamson Human Services, we can move forward quickly with our plans to build homes in the City of Marion for 10 people," said Sharon Hess, executive director of the Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless. Franklin-Williamson Human Services will provide the residents with case management and counseling to help them become positive contributors to the community.

CSH will select another six to 10 organizations to participate in the second phase of the program when it commences this September. Around 50 non-profit groups statewide have already expressed interest in applying for phase two. A request for proposals will be issued in May for service providers who wish to be considered for phase two. Groups interested in the program should call Liz Drapa, Opening New Doors Program Manager at 312-332-6690 ext. 19. Eighty per cent of the teams selected will be from outside of the City of Chicago.

The Governor's Housing Task Force, chaired by IHDA's Executive Director, identified the housing needs of the homeless and those at risk of homelessness as among six priority populations. IHDA's support of the Supportive Housing Institute will result in many more viable and successful units being built across the State to address the Governor's priorities. Illinois' affordable housing work is guided by the Governor's annual Comprehensive Housing Plans, compiled by the Task Force. The recently released *Affordable Housing Dimensions: Illinois' 2007 Comprehensive Housing Plan* continues this work. All Housing Plans are available at [www.ihda.org](http://www.ihda.org).

About the Illinois Housing Development Authority

IHDA ([www.ihda.org](http://www.ihda.org)) is a self-supporting state agency that finances the creation and the preservation of affordable housing across Illinois. Since its creation by an act of the Illinois legislature in 1967, IHDA has allocated more than \$7.27 billion and financed more than 174,000 units of affordable housing across the state. IHDA accomplishes its mission through a number of federal and state funding sources, including the Illinois Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credits Fund, the allocation of federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits, HOME Investment Partnership funds and others. IHDA is also a bonding authority, and independently sells bonds, based on its own good credit, to finance affordable housing across the state.

About the Corporation for Supportive Housing

CSH ([www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org)) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to helping communities create permanent housing with services to prevent and end homelessness. It offers technical assistance, grants and loans, trainings, publications, and resource tools, and works to reshape public policy and systems to improve the nation's response to long-term homelessness. Since inception in 1991, CSH has committed nearly \$124 million in loans and grants to support the creation of 16,329 units of supportive housing that are now operational, with an additional 10,557 units in the pipeline now. The units in operation have ended homelessness for at least 21,000 adults and children.

Opening New Doors Program - Phase One Teams

	<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>Area To Be Served</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Units</b>
1.	Alexian Brothers	Chicago	23
2.	Bethel Human Resources	South Suburban Cook County	30
3.	Bethel New Life	Chicago	20
4.	Bridgeway Inc.	Monmouth, IL	15
5.	Catholic Charities	Western Cook County	50
6.	Crosspoint Human Services	Danville, IL	11
7.	DuPage PADS	DuPage County	12
8.	Massac County Mental Health	Metropolis, IL	16
9.	Southern IL Coalition for the Homeless	Marion, IL	10
10.	Trilogy	Niles, Skokie, Rogers Park	50

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