

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON POVERTY ELIMINATION AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (IWGP)

The State of Illinois continues to prioritize the needs of families and children experiencing poverty and addressing the inequities that are at the root of their challenges.

As it has since its inception, the Interagency Working Group on Poverty Elimination and Economic Security supports the work of the Illinois Commission on Poverty Elimination and Economic Security to “end the intergenerational transmission of poverty by addressing the root causes of economic insecurity, racial disparities, and other contributing social, economic, and cultural factors” as called to do in the [Intergenerational Poverty Act \(IPA\)](#) that established both bodies in June 2020.

In the two years since the Commission on Poverty Elimination and Economic Security (Commission) released its [five-year strategic plan](#), the Interagency Working Group (Working Group) has met quarterly and has continued to improve interagency coordination, study systems that perpetuate poverty, and implement policies and programs that interrupt the cycles of intergenerational poverty.



The Commission’s strategic plan outlines strategies to meet its statutory goals of:

1. Reducing deep poverty in Illinois by 50% by 2026;
2. Eliminating child poverty in Illinois by 2031; and
3. Eliminating all poverty in Illinois by 2036.

The five overarching objectives the Commission has identified to reach these objectives are to:

1. Ensure Illinois is the best in nation for raising families;
2. Stabilize homes and communities;
3. Ensure just and equitable access to economic security programs;
4. Address barriers to paid work, education, and advancement; and
5. Support trusted community-based providers to serve the needs of those in deep poverty.

In 2022, Illinois saw a 4.3% drop in low-income residents and a 1.9% decline in those in poverty. However, extreme poverty increased by nearly 3% from 2021. From 2012 to 2022, the number of Illinoisans experiencing extreme poverty fell 7%, while poverty and low-income rates each dropped by over 20%.

While the highest number of households living in deep poverty reside in the Chicago metropolitan area (Cook, DuPage, Lake, and Will Counties), according to the 2022 data, the highest rates of poverty continue to exist elsewhere in the state, with significant disparities statewide. As the table below shows, the top 10 counties with the highest number of families in deep poverty are all relatively small in population, with Rock Island County in northwest Illinois as the largest on this list with a population of 141,527. The Illinois county with the highest percentage of families living in extreme poverty in 2022 was Pope County, the southeasternmost county in the state, which has a population of 3,770, and is the second smallest county by population in the state.¹

¹ <https://data.census.gov/table?q=poverty%20Alexander%20county%202022&q=050XX00US17003>

Illinois Counties with the Highest Percentages Experiencing Extreme Poverty:

Geography	Total number of families for whom poverty status has been determined, 2022	Number of families experiencing extreme poverty (<50% of Federal Poverty Level), 2022	Percent of families experiencing extreme poverty (<50% of Federal Poverty Level), 2022
Pope County	854	69	8.1%
Tazewell	35,596	2,693	7.6%
Kankakee	26,103	1,950	7.5%
Pulaski	1,129	81	7.2%
Rock Island	38,893	2,627	6.8%
Macon	25,615	1,690	6.6%
Bond	3,843	246	6.4%
Jackson	11,430	715	6.3%
Gallatin	1,378	86	6.2%
St. Clair	65,339	3,842	5.9%

Of those living in extreme poverty, 29 percent are children under 17 and 12 percent are older adults (age 65+). This data highlights the substantial number of children and working-age individuals facing severe economic challenges, with older adults also significantly affected.

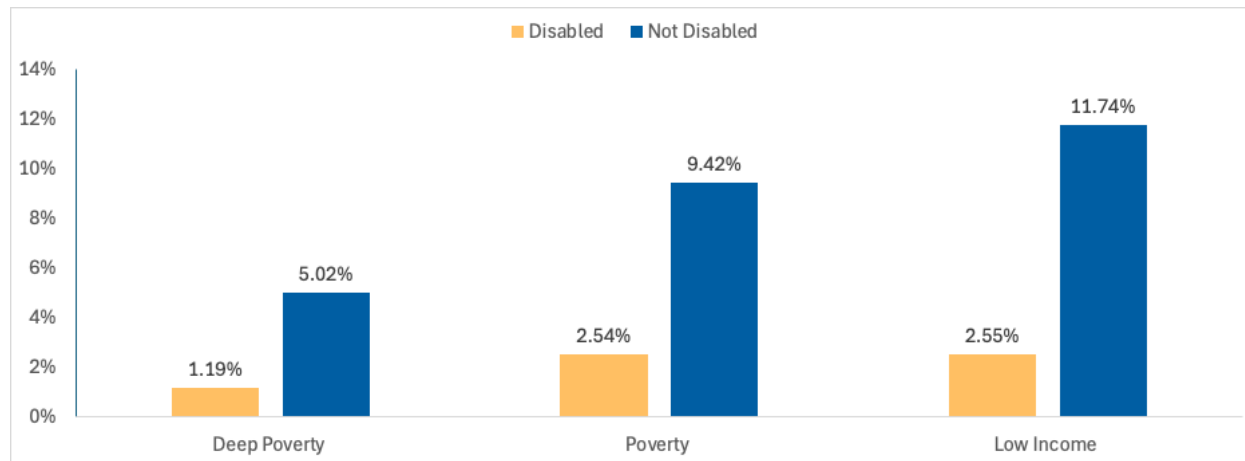
Number of People Living in Poverty and Deep Poverty in Illinois by Age Group²

Group	Number of People Living in Poverty (<100% FPL)	Number of People Living in Extreme Poverty (<50% FPL)
TOTAL	1,469,643	763,512
Children	424,983	218,044
Working Age	830,755	457,582
Older Adults (Age 65+)	213,905	87,886

Illinois residents with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty and substantially more likely to be low-income than those who are not disabled. Of the total population of disabled individuals in Illinois, 41 percent live in poverty, compared to 24 percent of the non-disabled population. Nearly 10 percent of people living with disabilities live in extreme poverty compared to 5.7 percent of the non-disabled population living in extreme poverty.

² <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S1701?q=povetry%20Alexander%20county%202022&q=040XX00US17>

Poverty and Low Income Among Illinois Residents with Disabilities³



People of color in Illinois are substantially more likely to live in poverty than White Illinoisians, with 25.4 percent of Black/African American residents and 13.6 percent of Hispanic/Latino residents falling below the poverty line, compared to just 8.6 percent of White residents. In Illinois, one in four Black residents is living in poverty and one in seven is living in deep poverty, compared to one in 22 White residents living in deep poverty.

Poverty by Race/Ethnicity in Illinois^{4 5 6}

	Deep Poverty	Poverty
Black/African American	14%	25.4%
Hispanic/Latino	6.2%	13.6%
Am. Indian/Alaska Native	4.9%	12.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.8%	9.7%
White	4.6%	8.6%

The following report details the State’s progress made on reducing poverty and economic insecurity in Fiscal Year 2024, and outlines commitments for Fiscal Year 2025.

³ <https://data.census.gov/table?q=C18131:%20Ratio%20of%20Income%20to%20Poverty%20Level%20in%20the%20Past%2012%20Months%20by%20Disability%20Status&g=040XX00US17>

⁴ <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSSTIY2022.S17>

⁵ <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSSTIY2022.S1703?q=poverty%202022&t=Black%20or%20African%20American&g=040XX00US17>

⁶ <https://data.census.gov/table?q=S1701&g=040XX00US17>

Illinois Commission on Poverty Elimination and Economic Security Five-Year Strategic Plan Pillars and Associated State Actions



Pillar 1: Ensure Illinois is Best in Nation for Raising Families

Ensure Access to High Quality Early Childhood Services, Including Early Intervention, Home Visiting, and Affordable Child Care

Explore Methods for Tax Credit Support for Families Raising Children in Poverty

Expand Access to Free and Reduced School Meals

Increase Participation in WIC by Improving Accessibility for Those Who are Eligible

STATE ACTIONS

Ensure Access to High-Quality Early Childhood Services, Including Early Intervention, Home Visiting, and Affordable Child Care

In February 2023, the Governor announced Smart Start Illinois, a multi-year plan to increase access to preschool and to increase funding for the child care workforce, classroom quality, and family support.

As a first step in this program for child care, from October 2023 through September 2024, Smart Start Transition Grants invested more than \$248 million in the child care workforce, supporting 4,450 programs and more than 175,000 children. These grants afforded providers the opportunity to invest in their workers, improve their services, and stabilize their operations, while helping Illinois mitigate the nationwide child care availability cliff. FY24 also included an historic \$40 million increase in Early Intervention investments in support of increased caseloads and a 10% rate increase, and a \$5 million increase in IDHS home visiting investments.

Building off this success, the FY25 budget will provide over \$400 million in total funding for the second year of Smart Start Illinois across IDHS and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

These investments include:

- \$122 million in Smart Start Child Care, featuring Smart Start Workforce Grants aimed at boosting wages in exchange for stable, ongoing funding to strengthen and expand child care; as well as the continued exploration of a broader Smart Start Quality Support program supporting providers in attaining a higher level of quality, education, and credentials.
- \$36.5 million in additional early childhood investment to cover an expected participation increase in the State's subsidized Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).
- \$5 million increase for the continued expansion of IDHS' Home Visiting Program.

- \$6 million in new funding for Early Intervention program growth, targeting 1,800 new children.
- Governor Pritzker also signed into law Public Act 103-0594, which created the new Illinois Department of Early Childhood, effective July 1, 2024. The new state agency focuses exclusively on early childhood programs and services for young children, with the aim of improving equity and accessibility for families and caregivers. The State invested \$14 million to provide operational funding for the new Department, which is beginning to build out the needed infrastructure to realign and streamline early childhood services in Illinois..

Reducing complexity in early childhood services will result in better-coordinated programs, more equitably allocated resources, less bureaucracy for providers, and greater access to services for families. The new Department will improve ease of access and availability for families and providers seeking State resources for preschool and early childhood programs, child care assistance, home visiting, early intervention, and daycare licensing.⁷

Smart Start Workforce Grants offer child care programs stable, ongoing funds that they need to cover costs and invest in quality staff without burdening families by raising tuition or Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) co-pays. Eligible programs will receive consistent funding in advance, and funds will cover the cost of higher wages and operating a classroom. Programs receiving these grants will be required to pay classroom staff a wage floor. These competitive wages will help to attract more staff and meet parents' needs at a rate that they can afford.

The Smart Start Quality Support Program is an IDHS program targeting support for quality improvement at center-based child care facilities. The program, currently in a pilot phase, assists participating centers cover staffing costs associated with higher quality and guide staff in their quality improvement work.

In FY24, the State invested an additional \$75 million in the Early Childhood Block Grant as part of Smart Start Illinois. The increased investment targets the reduction of the number of preschool deserts throughout the state.⁸

In addition, as part of Smart Start, cost model has been developed to understand the best way to utilize these funds and will guide strategic investment to support IDHS' Home Visiting programs and workforce.

FY25 Smart Start Home Visiting investments will support home visiting and doula expansion in new high-need communities, parallel investments in current grantees, and infrastructure supports like professional development, data, and quality improvement. This investment will support an estimated 250 additional families in home visiting and 120 families in doula services, and includes slot expansion in four Illinois communities.

With regard to Early Intervention, Illinois has taken various steps to increase access and quality of the system. Notably, Illinois has maximized its funding by drawing from multiple funding sources, including Medicaid, and has also expanded its eligibility criteria to include "at risk" infants and toddlers. The State also implemented a 10% rate increase for Early Intervention providers and, like Home Visiting, is in the process of developing a cost model to more accurately determine the real cost of Early Intervention service delivery to help guide future funding and service improvements.⁹

Smart Start Illinois is a multi-year plan to provide every child with access to preschool, increase funding to child care providers to raise wages and quality, and reach more vulnerable families with early support.

⁷ [Welcome - Illinois Department of Early Childhood](#)

⁸ [Governor Pritzker Announces 5,800 New Pre-K Spots Created by Smart Start \(illinois.gov\)](#)

⁹ [26757-Pritzker_Administration_Invests_in_Early_Childhood_with_Early_Intervention_Incentive_Payments.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](#)

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) and IDHS continue to coordinate and plan to implement home visiting services within the Illinois Medicaid program. Stakeholder feedback was received from the Early Learning Council's Health and Home Visiting Committee¹⁰ and home visiting organizations in Illinois. To increase access to home visiting services in Illinois, home visiting organizations will be able to enroll in Medicaid and bill Medicaid for home visiting services for Medicaid customers in FY25.

The Illinois Department of Public Health's (IDPH) Office of Women's Health and Family Services (OWHFS) also collaborates with home visiting programs, including the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program¹¹ (MIECHV) and early childhood providers, to support the alignment of activities coordinated intake for home visiting.¹²

IDPH-OWHFS also participates in the Illinois Early Learning Council to facilitate coordination between early childhood systems to assure that health is recognized as an integral component of improving children's educational outcomes as well as overall health and well-being.¹³

Explore Methods for Tax Credit Support for Families Raising Children in Poverty

The State legislature and Governor Pritzker approved a permanent Child Tax Credit (CTC) on May 29, 2024 to assist low-income households. The tax credit provides up to \$300 for tax filers with young children (ages 0-12) who qualify for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). For the first year, the credit is equal to 20% of the EITC before doubling to 40% of the EITC in the second tax year, providing up to \$600 for households with three children. After the second year, the value of the Illinois CTC will grow via inflation. The first year of the credit is expected to cost the state \$50 million, before increasing to \$100 million in future years.¹⁴

Expand Access to Free and Reduced School Meals

IDHS and ISBE have implemented the new Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program in summer 2024.¹⁵ The program is designed to reduce childhood hunger by providing eligible families a one-time \$120 benefit per child per summer on an EBT card, to go toward food purchases over the summer months.¹⁶ IDHS, along with ISBE and the Commission to End Hunger and others, are working hard to get out the word around this benefit in its first year to ensure as many eligible families as possible receive this vital assistance.

To provide additional support to families in the summer months when children are not receiving meals at school, ISBE implemented the new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Rural Non-Congregate Meal Service option to allow schools and other entities in designated rural areas to provide meals in non-congregate settings to expand access for families in rural areas to receive nutritious meals during the summer.¹⁷ In FY25, ISBE will continue to expand and target designated rural areas with low summer meal participation to implement the Summer Rural Non-Congregate option to remove transportation and other barriers, creating greater access to breakfast and lunch during the summer.

¹⁰ [Health & Home Visiting Committee \(illinois.gov\)](https://www.illinois.gov)

¹¹ [IDHS: Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Plan Guidance \(state.il.us\)](https://www.state.il.us)

¹² [fy2021-il-title-v-action-plan-073020.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](https://www.illinois.gov)

¹³ [fy2021-il-title-v-action-plan-073020.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](https://www.illinois.gov)

¹⁴ [ESIL Release – 2024 CTC Budget \(economicsecurity.us\)](https://www.economicsecurity.us)

¹⁵ [IDHS: Summer EBT \(state.il.us\)](https://www.state.il.us)

¹⁶ [030124-sebt.pdf \(isbe.net\)](https://www.isbe.net)

¹⁷ [sfsp-admin-guidance-sponsors.pdf \(isbe.net\)](https://www.isbe.net)



ISBE also received waivers from USDA to allow Summer Food Service entities to provide non-congregate meals to children during extreme heat or poor air quality, allowing children to take the meals without requiring them to try to eat the meals on site during these extreme conditions, and will continue in FY25 to apply for such waivers that help increase access to meals.

In FY24 and continuing into FY25, ISBE’s expansion of the Community Eligibility Option through the National School Lunch Program to eligible schools helps provide nutritious breakfasts and lunches to all students at no cost to the family.¹⁸ ISBE received a USDA School Breakfast Expansion grant to provide additional funding to schools in FY25 to purchase necessary equipment to implement and expand breakfast access to students.¹⁹

In FY25, ISBE will partner with the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD) to determine participation goals for the USDA Child Nutrition Programs to expand access to nutritious meals, with a particular focus on continuing the State’s work of expanding access to school breakfast, access to summer meals in rural counties or counties with a low number of feeding sites, and expansion of after school at-risk programs.

In line with these goals, ISBE will implement the State-funded Breakfast After the Bell grant that provides funding up to \$7,000 (\$300,000 total) per school to implement or expand the provision of breakfast after the school day has officially begun, which increases student participation in breakfast programs.²⁰

In FY25, the State plans to reestablish the Chicago Summer Workgroup to partner with the USDA, the Illinois Hunger Coalition, and the large summer food service providers in Chicago to identify areas with no feeding sites or low participation to expand the number of feeding sites/promote feeding sites in the area to expand access to nutritious summer meals in Chicago.

IDHS and ISBE will continue to improve the Electronic Direct Certification system to expand and improve the matching processes between IDHS data to identify additional students that automatically qualify for free meals further reducing the need for families to complete household applications.

Increase Participation in WIC by Improving Accessibility for Those Who are Eligible

The United States has seen reduced participation in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program over the past fifteen years. WIC caseloads have declined from a high of 10 million participants in 2010 to a current participation level of around 6.2 million participants, nationally.²¹ Children represent the greatest opportunity for program growth. In 2021, Illinois WIC served about 36 percent²² of eligible individuals, down from 48 percent²³ in 2019. While local agencies served over 71 percent of eligible infants and 44 percent of eligible women, only 26.4 percent of eligible children were served.²⁴ This was due, in part, to the launch of the Management Information System (MIS) EBT program occurring at the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020.

¹⁸ [National School Lunch Program \(isbe.net\)](https://www.isbe.net)

¹⁹ <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/sbp-expansion-grant-nofo-rfp.pdf>

²⁰ [School Breakfast Mandates \(isbe.net\)](https://www.isbe.net)

²¹ [caseload-one-pager.pdf \(nwica.org\)](https://www.nwica.org)

²² [National- and State-Level Estimates of WIC Eligibility and WIC Program Reach in 2021 Final Report, Volume I \(azureedge.us\)](https://www.azureedge.us)

²³ [National- and State-Level Estimates of WIC Eligibility and WIC Program Reach in 2021 Final Report, Volume I \(azureedge.us\)](https://www.azureedge.us)

²⁴ [State Fact Sheets: Trends in WIC Coverage and Participation | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities \(cbpp.org\)](https://www.cbpp.org)

Since then, caseloads have been on the rise. The number of participants served increased from 160,814 in September 2022 to 166,229 in September 2023. The most current Illinois data indicates more than 170,000 individuals were served in May 2024.

Based on information gathered from the National Outreach and Retention Survey conducted by the National WIC Association, Illinois WIC has identified the following themes to serve as the foundation for strategic planning:

- Awareness
- Perceptions
- Barriers
- Referrals
- Clinic Experience
- Shopping Experience

The number of participants served increased from 160,814 in September 2022 to 166,229 in September 2023.

Illinois WIC is working to build its social media presence to reach eligible families, including production of a series of *WIC 101*²⁵ videos to share on social media and with stakeholders to increase awareness in specific priority populations. Illinois WIC will continue work with GCFD, co-chair of the Illinois Commission to End Hunger, to launch the distribution of new marketing materials aimed towards recruitment and retention.

Illinois WIC plans to increase efforts to recruit retail vendors in underserved areas as part of the WIC 101 outreach campaign. Illinois is looking to improve access to the full WIC nutrition benefit through its partnership with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago (CCAC). CCAC and Illinois WIC secured USDA Modernization funding for a two-year Mobile WIC Grocery pilot that will enable WIC families on Chicago's West Side – starting in Chicago's West and East Garfield Park communities – to access WIC-approved foods. By meeting new and existing participants where they are, this innovative approach creates a supportive and equitable shopping experience for moms and caregivers who face barriers to accessing their full nutrition benefits. Operating in parallel with CCAC's WIC food and nutrition centers in other parts of Chicago, Mobile WIC Grocery provides a new entry point for moms and families to utilize their benefits and engage in WIC.

Illinois WIC is working to launch the *WIC With Me* clinic campaign in FY25. The clinic campaign aims to train staff on best practices and help current and eligible participants know what to expect during their clinic visits. The campaign will include a fact sheet, with corresponding plain text website content, and a series of videos that provide a “walk through” of the clinic experience.

Additionally, Illinois WIC secured a USDA grant to implement a statewide secure texting option that can facilitate secure document uploads. This technology will streamline appointment reminders and other administrative business for both the clinics and the clients. The State aims to launch this resource by the end of 2024.

IDPH-OWHFS and the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) as well as two State women's correctional centers are working together to support ongoing health promotion activities for incarcerated women and staff training, and to ensure women and infants receive WIC services while residing in IDOC facilities.²⁶

²⁵ [WIC 101: What Do College Students Need to Know About WIC? \(youtube.com\)](#)

²⁶ [fy2021-il-title-v-action-plan-073020.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](#)



Pillar 2: Stabilize Homes and Communities

Reduce Homelessness by Half and Ensure Housing Affordability and Accessibility

Invest in High-Quality, Specialized Supports for Persons Experiencing Mental Health and Substance Use-Related Crises

Invest in Interventions that Address Cycles of Trauma and Violence in Our Communities

STATE ACTIONS

Reduce Homelessness by Half and Ensure Housing Affordability and Accessibility

Early in FY24, Gov. JB Pritzker signed Public Act 103-0269, codifying the Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness (Task Force), the Community Advisory Council on Homelessness (Advisory Council), and the permanency of the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH). OPEH coordinates statewide efforts in preventing and ending homelessness and housing instability. Home Illinois, Illinois’ Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, sets the foundational vision to ending homelessness in the State through both established and innovative strategies. Illinois residents, community agencies, and State government continue to work together to prevent entries into shelter. When literal homelessness does occur, the vision of Home Illinois is that the experience will be brief and one-time.²⁷

The Racial Equity Roundtable on Black Homelessness commissioned a research study and report, completed by the University of Illinois-Chicago’s Institute for Research on Race & Public Policy (IRRPP), on Black Homelessness in Illinois. The report provides a first-of-its-kind Statewide analysis of the systemic factors driving racial disparities in homelessness and formulates an Action Plan for Racial Equity.²⁸ The report underscores that Black Illinoisans are almost eight times more likely to experience homelessness compared to their White counterparts. This issue is exacerbated by significantly higher eviction rates in Black communities, which directly contribute to their increased risk of homelessness. The analysis delves into the root causes, including the enduring effects of racial segregation and discriminatory practices, which have historically limited access to affordable and quality housing for Black residents. OPEH is hoping to support a similar report from IRRPP in FY25, focusing on Latine Homelessness in Illinois, which can provide the data to help inform future advocacy strategies.

²⁷ [‘Home Illinois: Illinois’ Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness - Annual Report 2023 \(state.il.us\)](#)

²⁸ [The State of Illinois Newsroom \(prezly.com\)](#)

Following historic investment in emergency rental assistance during COVID-19, the State has once again invested in housing stability by putting \$75 million in FY25 toward the Court-Based Rental Assistance Program (CBRAP), which helps low-income renters navigate and prevent eviction and the devastating consequences that can follow.

IDHS, in partnership with the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), supported New Arrivals from the southern border with 3 to 6 months of rental assistance through the Asylum Seeker Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ASERAP). The program, which launched in November 2022, helped to stably house more than 14,000 individuals comprising more than 6,000 households, who were otherwise residing in City of Chicago shelters. Recipients also received case management support. Based on program feedback collected in Spring 2024, 80 percent of households surveyed remained in their units after the expiration of their rental supports. In partnership with the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus, IDHS also administered two rounds and is currently administering a third round of grant funding to municipalities assisting New Arrivals. The Supporting Municipalities for Asylum Seeker Services (SMASS) grant provides funding for eligible services such as emergency shelter, transitional housing, rental assistance, food services, and other wraparound services. The third round of SMASS will also allow community-based organizations to apply for funding with support from local municipalities and will allow a portion of funding to be used to support Illinoisans who are unhoused or at risk of homelessness.

As part of its commitment towards ending homelessness and achieving Functional Zero homelessness in Illinois, IHDA has aimed to double its annual production of supportive housing units through 2026. In FY24, IHDA exceeded this goal by awarding financing to support 550 Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units under Round X of its Permanent Supportive Housing Development Program and its 2024 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) round. Round X was designed for individuals at risk of homelessness, those with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations. Fourteen developments consisting of 392 PSH units were approved for funding, totaling more than \$123 million under the PSH Development Program²⁹, and three developments consisting of 158 PSH units were approved for 4,500,000 of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, 3,800,000 of Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credits, and nearly \$10 million in additional gap financing.³⁰

To further support the production of supportive housing units, for the first time in the agency's history, IHDA created a competitive scoring track under its 2024-2025 Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP), released in FY24, which allows for and encourages supportive housing unit production via LIHTC. This QAP will also govern the 2025 LIHTC round, under which IHDA expects to receive additional applications seeking financing for PSH units. Additionally, in FY25, IHDA expects to make awards under Round XI of its PSH Development Program and its HOME-ARP Non-Congregate Shelter Development Program. Funding under both programs will support units that aim to reduce homelessness through the provision of PSH units, non-congregate shelter units, and critical services for residents.

IHDA approved 14 new developments under its Permanent Supportive Housing Development Program, which included 393 units.

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) expanded transitional housing and stable long-term housing options for individuals releasing from custody in collaboration with community partners, and with the City of Chicago's Spring Forward pilot program for long term stable housing placement and programming for individuals on mandatory supervised release (MSR).³¹ In FY25, IDOC will continue to improve placement options for special populations and individuals with high needs. This will include continuing a collaboration with IHDA on a 3-year Re-Entry

²⁹ [2024.04.29_PSH_Round-X_FINAL-002.pdf \(ihda.org\)](#)

³⁰ [30237-Governor_Pritzker_and_IHDA_Announce_2024_Affordable_Housing_Tax_Credit_Developments.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](#)

³¹ [City of Chicago :: DFSS RFP SPRING Forward Reentry and Employment Navigation \(RFP\)](#)

Housing Pilot Program³² to place 34 individuals into long-term, stable housing across the locations of the pilot and potential expansion.

Invest in High-Quality, Specialized Supports for Persons Experiencing Mental Health and Substance Use-Related Crises

Illinoisans experiencing severe mental illness and substance use disorder are more likely to experience poverty than the general population. The State continues to invest in the tools needed to ensure that people in crisis do not become unhoused or wind up in jail or emergency rooms. IDHS's Division of Mental Health (IDHS-DMH) is working closely with HFS, the University of Illinois-Office of Medicaid Innovation, and the State's Chief Behavioral Health Officer to expand and coordinate the State's continuum of crisis services. This plan, called the Unified Crisis Continuum, will align services funded by IDHS-DMH with those funded by HFS, and ensure that individuals who are experiencing a crisis have access to high-quality crisis supports when they need them.³³

In addition to utilizing the State's network of community mental health centers (CMHC), this work is also being helped by the recent news that Illinois was selected as one of 10 states to participate in the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Medicaid Demonstration Program, designed to expand and improve access to coordinated mental health care and substance use services. Implementation will begin October 1, 2024, and the State will have 19 CCBHC locations that will offer mental health, substance use recovery, and primary care screening for all individuals (regardless of the individual's insurance coverage) in their service area. These 19 locations will also be providing Supported Employment, Supported Housing, and connection to service/support providers to address Health-Related Social Needs.³⁴ The CCBHC initiative seeks to ensure that all individuals have access to integrated behavioral health services within their communities. This exciting initiative focuses on addressing behavioral health and physical health needs that can impact an individual's housing and employment stability.³⁵ ³⁶ CCBHCs are required to be able to serve all individuals regardless of payor, and also have to be able to provide integrated physical, mental, and substance use care, as well as around-the-clock crisis response services.



The State also continues to invest in Illinois' 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline call centers; this investment has substantially increased the State's in-state call answer rate from 17 percent in mid-2022 to approximately 80 percent now. This ensures that individuals who are experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis will have their call, text, or chat answered by an Illinois provider who can help connect them to supportive resources. IDHS-DMH continues to work with call centers and the federal government to improve the State's call center performance and are working towards a 90 percent in-state call answer rate.³⁷

IDHS's Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (IDHS-SUPR) also supports the helpline, helping to connect people in crisis situations with treatment including medications that can dramatically reduce overdoses. IDHS-SUPR additionally funds more than 100 substance use disorder treatment organizations that provide services for the uninsured and creates flexibility in engagement options outside of traditional treatment facilities. The Division also supports recovery homes that provide long- and short-term support for those recovering from substance use disorders to avoid being unhoused or unstably housed.

³² [07.15.2020-Pritzker-Administration-Launches-Program-to-Reduce-Housing-Insecurity.pdf \(ihda.org\)](#)

³³ [Strengthening and Transforming Behavioral Health Crisis Care in Illinois January 28, 2024 \(state.il.us\)](#)

³⁴ [Pritzker Administration Announces Federal Funding for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics \(illinois.gov\)](#)

³⁵ [CCBHC Model of Care and Overview \(illinois.gov\)](#)

³⁶ https://www2.illinois.gov/IISNews/30107-Pritzker_Administration_Announces_Federal_Funding_for_Certified_Community_Behavioral_Health_Clinics.pdf

³⁷ [IDHS: 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline \(state.il.us\)](#)

IDHS and IDOC will continue their Housing is Recovery Pilot Program for placement of individuals with high mental-health needs into stable supportive housing and continued care.³⁸

IDPH-OWHFS convenes and facilitates the State’s Maternal Mortality Review Committees (MMRC-V) that reviews deaths of women who died within a year of pregnancy due to homicide, suicide, or substance use-related causes. The committee develops recommendations that address the causes and enabling factors of these deaths³⁹.

Invest in Interventions that Address Cycles of Trauma and Violence in Communities



Firearm violence is a multifaceted challenge that requires a broad approach to stop the cycles of violence in disproportionately impacted communities. Illinois created the Office of Firearm Violence Prevention (OFVP) as a result of the [Reimagine Public Safety Act \(RPSA\) \(430 ILCS 69\)](#) (RPSA), which was passed by the Illinois General Assembly in 2021.

The RPSA is a comprehensive approach to violence prevention that includes grant-making to community-based organizations in areas most affected by firearm violence to provide services in youth development, trauma-informed behavioral health, technical assistance, community capacity building, and Community Violence Intervention (CVI) strategies that aim to reduce violence within communities by deploying coordinated, community-driven approaches.⁴⁰

The State awarded \$158 million in grants to RPSA programs in FY24. Included in that was nearly \$70 million for CVI in the fiscal year, with another \$30 million for Peacekeepers initiatives. RPSA’s FY25 budget is nearly \$140 million in total, \$10 million of which is designated for scaling CVI in Chicago. This brings total FY25 investments in CVI to \$47 million, with an additional \$30 million for Peacekeepers. Illinois’ FY25 budget includes \$45 million in State funds for the fourth year of the RPSA grant program, which builds upon initial federal fund investments, targeting youth development, violence prevention and victim services. Overall program expenditures will be increased in FY25, compared to FY24.



The State, led by HFS, was approved for new 1115 Waiver proposals to add Health-Related Social Needs and other healthcare transformation initiatives by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, including violence prevention and intervention benefits. This set of newly approved health-related social needs interventions will address housing supports; violence prevention and intervention; addressing adverse childhood events; medical respite; community reintegration; transition from incarceration and institutions; food and nutrition services; employment assistance; and non-medical transportation.⁴¹

Illinois Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton convened the Healing-Centered Illinois Task Force, drawing a large cross-section of State leaders to propel a trauma-informed and healing-centered approach to the State’s work across disciplines. The Task Force is working to identify existing State resources that are being invested to support trauma-informed and healing-centered work, and then expand these – in partnership with community and by using a data-drive approach – through an overarching organizational structure that ensures coordination, alignment, and progress across the State.⁴²

³⁸ [405 ILCS 125/ Housing is Recovery Pilot Program Act. \(ilga.gov\)](#)

³⁹ [Maternal Morbidity and Mortality \(illinois.gov\)](#)

⁴⁰ [IDHS: Reimagine \(state.il.us\)](#)

⁴¹ [il-healthcare-trans-appvl-07022024.pdf \(medicaid.gov\)](#)

⁴² [Healing-Centered Illinois Task Force](#)

ISBE supported continued expansion of the Resilience Education to Advance Community Healing (REACH) Statewide Initiative.⁴³ REACH is an evidence-informed program that provides educators with tools to support the well-being of their students and staff. Illinois expanded its infrastructure through seven statewide Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Hubs that provided critical support, professional development, and resources to help schools improve their trauma-responsiveness.⁴⁴ The SEL Hubs support the implementation of the REACH initiative that trains educators, school

mental health professionals, and community members to recognize the signs and indicators of trauma to address students' social-emotional and mental health needs.⁴⁵ REACH and the SEL Hub programs received State funding to continue into FY25, and ISBE is supplementing the State funds with additional federal funds to grow both programs, which will help schools plan to intervene more fully in the four pillars of the Roadmap: healing-centered/trauma-informed practices, mental health supports, equity and anti-racism, and social-emotional learning.

REACH is an evidence-informed program that provides educators with tools to support the well-being of their students and staff.

ISBE is also developing a Children's Adversity Index by partnering with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. The Index will be completed in 2025 and available for statewide use to raise awareness of adversity and resilience to better support communities.

IDPH-OWHFS identifies gaps in mental health programs and resources for Illinois children, develops partnerships within organizations focused on improving mental health among children and adolescents, and supports the implementation of mental wellness programs that facilitate system level improvements as well as address social determinants of health.⁴⁶

IDPH-OWHFS collaborates with organizations and programs to address the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and toxic stress on mental and physical health in children and adolescents.⁴⁷

⁴³ [What is REACH? — Center for Childhood Resilience](#)

⁴⁴ [REACH Statewide Initiative \(isbe.net\)](#)

⁴⁵ [Social-Emotional Learning Hubs \(isbe.net\)](#)

⁴⁶ [titlev_fy2325.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](#)

⁴⁷ [titlev_fy2325.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](#)



Pillar 3: Ensure Just and Equitable Access to Economic Security Programs

Create a Single, Accessible Platform for Individuals to Enroll in All State Benefits

Increase Uptake, Access, and Value of Public Benefits for Those in Extreme Poverty

Deploy Direct Cash Assistance Programs to Lift Families Out of Deep Poverty

STATE ACTIONS

Create a single, accessible platform for individuals to enroll in all State benefits

HFS, IDHS, and the Illinois Department of Insurance begin implementation planning for a State-Based Marketplace for Plan Year 2026. Work is underway to implement a fully operational State-Based Marketplace by fall 2025 for the Plan Year 2026 open enrollment period. This will increase coordination and integration between the Marketplace and Medicaid Eligibility Systems.

The State is working to implement an electronic statewide National School Lunch Program household eligibility application that can be included on a platform to enroll for all State benefits.

Increase uptake, access, and value of existing public benefits for those in extreme poverty

Illinois will invest \$10 million to eliminate up to \$1 billion in medical debt for nearly 340,000 Illinois residents. This addresses a financial barrier that impacts people’s health and well-being and is part of a broader strategy.⁴⁸

IDHS partnered with IDOC to pilot a Prisoner Pre-Release Program to improve access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for formerly incarcerated individuals upon release who are unlikely to have the resources necessary to ensure food security. IDOC personnel began assisting incarcerated individuals in the completion and submission of a SNAP application. Upon receipt of the application, IDHS conducts a telephone interview with the individual and on the day of release the application is certified. The SNAP benefits are available within two workdays. IDOC personnel issue the Link card to the individual upon release. Working together, the agencies received 11,651 SNAP and medical benefits applications from the inception of the pilot in 2020 through FY24.

⁴⁸ [The State of Illinois Newsroom \(prezly.com\)](https://www.prezly.com)

As noted above, in FY24, ISBE continued expansion of the Community Eligibility Option through the National School Lunch Program to eligible schools to provide nutritious breakfasts and lunches to all students at no cost to the family. The agency will continue this work in FY25. The agency will also continue to expand its Summer Rural Non-Congregate option for greater access to breakfast and lunch in the summer months, and its work with the Greater Chicago Food Depository to expand access to school breakfast through Breakfast After the Bell models.

ISBE and IDHS partnered with the Greater Chicago Food Depository to improve data systems and data requirements that would allow IDHS to target and expand access to benefits for families to purchase food through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, and this work also continues in FY25.

In 2024, Illinois announced \$28.8 million to provide free locally produced food to vulnerable communities through grants awarded to organizations in partnership with the Illinois Department of Agriculture and IDHS. The Illinois Equitable Access Towards Sustainable System (Illinois EATS) program is funded through the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement (LFPA) and allows the State of Illinois to purchase food directly from socially disadvantaged farmers at fair market value. Food will then be distributed by providers, including food banks, farming collaboratives, and other non-profits to communities in need at no cost. This includes schools, churches, and non-profit organizations.⁴⁹

The Illinois Department of Agriculture also announced a \$6.4 million grant program to help strengthen the State's food supply chain. The Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program adds federal funding to the State's supports for small and mid-sized agricultural producers to strengthen local food supply chains and economies.⁵⁰

Deploy direct cash assistance programs to lift families out of deep poverty

IDHS continued its partnership with the University of Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab (IEL) on the Stability Housing Investment for Families (SIFH) Guaranteed Income Pilot. The program focuses on families experiencing homelessness, seeking to help them exit shelters and stabilize through the provision of a one-time cash transfer. Data collection and research activities continue and will help Illinois make data-driven policy decisions on methods for reducing homelessness and supporting families out of deep poverty.

Cook County's Promise Guaranteed Income Pilot, which began in 2022, will continue to provide cash transfers to participants through December 2024. Fifty-eight percent of participating households include children, 56 percent are working, and the median household income is \$21,000.⁵¹

⁴⁹ [Gov. Pritzker Announces \\$28.8 Million in USDA Grants to Provide Free Local Food to Communities \(illinois.gov\)](#)

⁵⁰ [29508-RESILIENT_FOOD_SYSTEMS_INFRASTRUCTURE_GRANTS_AVAILABLE.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](#)

⁵¹ [The Promise Guaranteed Income Pilot Program | Cook County - American Rescue Plan \(cookcountyil.gov\)](#)



Pillar 4: Address Barriers to Paid Work, Education, and Advancement

Address Barriers That Prevent Consistent Work at a Living Wage, by Investing in Transportation, Child Care, Paid Leave, Broadband, Legal Aid, Reentry Services, Disability and Rehabilitation Supports, and Immigrant and Refugee Services

Invest in Apprenticeship, Work Based Learning, and Barrier Reduction Programs so Individuals Can Learn and Train While Supporting Their Family

Expand Access to Legal Counsel for Illinoisans and Ensure Equitable Access to Court and Legal Processes

STATE ACTIONS

Address barriers that prevent consistent work at a living wage, by investing in transportation, child care, paid leave, broadband, legal aid, reentry services, disability and rehabilitation supports, and immigrant and refugee services

Access to quality and affordable child care is a significant barrier to employment across many communities, and even more so for families living in poverty. As noted above, under Pillar 1, the State has made significant efforts toward growing and strengthening child care by supporting providers and working to increase access.

In 2024, IDHS made increases to reimbursement rates for family child care homes and decoupled Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) reimbursement rates from private tuition rates for the first time, allowing providers to offer discounts, scholarships, and other resources to families who may not qualify for CCAP but who may still struggle to afford the cost of child care. Through June 30, 2024, IDHS also continued to offer three months of CCAP eligibility to parents or guardians seeking employment or seeking to enroll in school. These expansions to the CCAP program complement the launch of Smart Start Child Care, part of the Governor's Smart Start Illinois initiative.

In 2024, IDHS's Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS-DRS) set a focus toward increasing equity in employment and housing, broadening the reach of IDHS-DRS, and expanding awareness and inclusivity.

IDHS-DRS worked toward these goals by responding to internal and external feedback from employees, customers, and constituents. They deepened their outreach by opening all four categories under the Order of Selection, serving the most severely disabled people first. This helped to open doors to more Illinoisans with disabilities who have the desire to work, and increased outreach to youth with disabilities across the state. IDHS-DRS also awarded a \$10 million Pathways

to Partnership Disability Innovation Fund Grant, which aims to improve transition outcomes, competitive integrated employment (CIE), and independent living outcomes for students with disabilities ages 10 to 24. Finally, IDHS-DRS improved the landscape to incentivize employment for Illinoisans with disabilities by strengthening partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers.

This resulted in 39,398 customers served and nearly 4,000 individuals with disabilities gaining competitive employment, while also successfully placing 1,327 customers earning Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) into competitive jobs (FY23) with approximately 46 percent of DRS customers being minorities.

The Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) created Supportive Services and Barrier Reduction Services, which are provided as a resource to people participating in job training or work-based learning programs. Participants receive the support needed to ensure that they have access to resources they need to continue attending and complete the program.



This support extends beyond the training to assist as they seek jobs and acclimate to employment. Recipients of this service are typically low income, with children, in debt, do not have their own vehicle, and have many other barriers that make it more difficult for them to participate in long trainings, especially in work-based learning programs where they are not compensated.

There are three categories of programs in which DCEO offers supportive and barrier reduction services: WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Title I Programs;⁵² Job Training and Economic Development Program (JTED)⁵³ which has been federally funded through the American Rescue Plan Act; and Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) Job Training Programs,⁵⁴ which are anticipated to continue until 2045.

Through JTED's Barrier Reduction funding, 2,095 services have been provided a total investment of \$602,585. A majority of the services provided were related to (1) other services category which includes stipends, broadband, cellphone acquisition, and various fees; (2) transportation, including car repairs, fees, and rideshare; and (3) housing, including rent, arrears, and utilities. DCEO will continue to identify opportunities where they have flexibility to use barrier reduction funds.

The State provides broad supports for immigrants and refugees. HFS continues to provide Medicaid-like coverage to noncitizens through the Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors (HBIS) and Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults (HBIA) programs. HFS also continues to provide coverage to children up to age 19, pregnant people through 12 months postpartum, emergency medical for noncitizens, presumptive eligibility for family planning services, coverage for asylum seekers and victims of trafficking, torture, and other serious crimes (VTTC), and End Stage Renal Disease coverage for noncitizens coverage programs.⁵⁵

⁵² [WIOA | Illinois Workforce Partnership](#)

⁵³ [28377-Governor Pritzker Announces \\$13 Million Investment in Job Training and Economic Development Program.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](#)

⁵⁴ [CEJA Workforce Training Programs \(illinois.gov\)](#)

⁵⁵ [Health Benefits for Immigrants \(illinois.gov\)](#)

Throughout FY24, IDHS has provided a range of supports for New Arrivals from the southern border, including legal services to help people navigate legal proceedings related to their immigration status, as well as by funding community partners who provide know-your-rights trainings and other help for those who may face wage theft and other forms of economic exploitation.

The Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) has also invested in a pilot community-based outreach grant to ensure that New Arrivals are familiar with labor standards protections and know how to access resources if they find themselves in labor exploitation or trafficking situations. The effort comes in part in response to national reporting of instances of migrant children working and being injured in hazardous facilities, including warehouses and food processing plants.⁵⁶

In addition, IDHS's Division of Family and Community Services (IDHS-FCS) continues its strong support of Illinois Welcoming Centers, which provide a range of services and connections to community-based assistance to help immigrant Illinoisans succeed.⁵⁷

Applying for a job, creating a resume, and enrolling in education and job training are all essential to the path out of poverty. These activities are nearly impossible without reliable home internet and basic digital skills. Studies suggest that rural broadband access is positively associated with gross domestic product (GDP) growth, median household incomes, farm revenues, and non-farm rural business growth—with faster broadband having greater impact.

The Illinois Office of Broadband (IOB) launched its Connect Illinois grant program in 2020⁵⁸ to connect communities without access to high-speed internet. The IOB's mission is to eliminate disparities in broadband access, adoption, and use in communities with the greatest barriers to connectivity. Achieving this mission depends on collaborative efforts among Illinois stakeholders -- making space for those with lived experience at the decision-making table and welcoming innovative ideas that best serve and empower under-resourced communities. The IOB defines equity as both a process and an outcome that results in fair, just access to opportunities and resources that enable everyone to participate fully in our society, democracy, and economy. To date, the IOB has awarded more than \$350 million across 75 projects, statewide, with many deployments completed or nearing completion.

IDOC's Employment Services has been strengthening relationships with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), and the local workforce areas across the state to increase access to employment information and options for individuals in custody. IDOC will continue holding regular pre-release job fairs and will implement a resume database, develop a relationship with the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) to increase partnerships and collaboration, as well as opportunities for professional certification and licensure pre-release.⁵⁹

Invest in Apprenticeship, Work-Based Learning, and Barrier Reduction Programs So Individuals Can Learn and Train While Supporting Their Family

Illinois is actively expanding its apprenticeship programs through the Apprenticeship Illinois Framework, spearheaded by the State of Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Apprenticeship Committee. With approximately 424 Registered Apprenticeship programs and over 20,000 apprentices, the State aims to create a robust workforce development strategy.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ [Illinois Department of Labor, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights Partner on Labor Rights Outreach Initiative - West Chicago Voice : Local News News For Locals by Locals](#)

⁵⁷ [IDHS: Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees \(state.il.us\)](#)

⁵⁸ [icc-summary.pdf \(illinois.gov\)](#)

⁵⁹ [IDOC Highlights Re-Entry During Second Chance Month \(illinois.gov\)](#)

⁶⁰ [Apprenticeship Illinois \(illinoisworknet.com\)](#)

The State’s vision for apprenticeship expansion is a commitment to cultivating a robust and inclusive apprenticeship ecosystem that empowers individuals, strengthens industries and employers, and propels Illinois to the forefront of innovation and productivity. By expanding apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities, Illinois aims to bridge the gap between education and industry, fostering a transition for individuals from diverse backgrounds into rewarding and sustainable careers.

In the past five years, the State has been building the apprenticeship ecosystem and expanding apprenticeship opportunities through various initiatives. The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Apprenticeship Committee advises the State on policies and practices to expand apprenticeship. Members represent industry, education, unions, community colleges, community-based organizations, local workforce areas, and Core State WIOA partners. The Committee’s charge is to (1) Expand apprenticeships geographically and to new industries, normalizing work-based learning and apprenticeship models with employers as a value-added workforce solution; (2) Increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and access to quality apprenticeship programs leading to careers and economic stability; (3) Formalize the apprenticeship ecosystem and statewide coordination across partnering State agencies and other workforce, education, and economic development professionals; and (4) Grow statewide capacity to provide apprenticeship opportunities to job seekers and employers.

Registered apprenticeships in Illinois are growing. According to www.apprenticeship.gov, registered apprenticeships have recovered from the COVID slump and are increasing.

Illinois Registered Apprenticeship Data 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Active Apprentices	17,221	17,137	17,726	19,140	20,470
New Apprentices	6,419	4,892	5,963	7,930	8,512
Apprenticeship Completions	2,854	2,862	3,098	3,458	3,808

ISBE is partnering with DCEO to launch a Teacher Apprenticeship Pilot grant opportunity that will support the development of a high-quality teacher apprenticeship program by offering funding and coaching. The Teacher Apprenticeship Pilot Program will create approximately four pilots throughout the state to upscale currently employed paraprofessional educators. The period of performance is expected to be July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025, for the planning phase and July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2027 for the implementation phase.⁶¹

IDOC is also planning to expand its offering of U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) certifications to include trade crafts, align its current programming with Illinois labor market projections to meet the future needs of employers and improve earning potential of individuals upon release, and strengthen relationships with IDES, DCEO, and the local workforce areas across the state to increase access to employment information and options for individuals in custody.

In August 2023, the Illinois Department of Labor was awarded a \$1.35 million federal grant from the USDOL to support tradeswomen-led efforts to train and support the entry of more women into infrastructure and construction careers. IDOL is partnering with Chicago Women in Trades, which is also a grantee of the DCEO Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship program, to provide

⁶¹ [WIOA \(illinoisworknet.com\)](http://WIOA(illinoisworknet.com))

specific guidance on program design and best practices to construction companies, unions, public bodies, and other stakeholders to promote workforce equity on infrastructure projects.⁶²

DCEO, IDHS, and the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness launched a \$5 million Home Illinois Workforce Pilot Program, which seeks to support individuals experiencing homelessness by improving employment opportunities through workforce training and wraparound services and is part of the Illinois Job Training and Economic Development Program (JTED).⁶³

Expand Access to Legal Counsel for Illinoisans and Ensure Equitable Access to Court and Legal Processes

The State funds the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, which helps provide civil legal support including eviction prevention services, to those who would otherwise be unable to afford assistance. Throughout FY24, IDHS supported a range of programs to provide legal services to new immigrants in the state. Through partnerships with community legal service providers, IDHS helped new immigrants access legal remedies related to their immigration status through a series of large-scale workshop and legal clinics, while also expanding access to limited scope services and direct representation.

IDHS will continue to support access to legal services for newly arrived and long-term immigrants in Illinois during FY25 through the Immigrant Legal Support Program (ILSP). ILSP aims to increase access to legal remedies by expanding limited scope and pro se services, strengthening referral networks among providers, and increasing funding for direct representation.



Pillar 5: Support Trusted Community Based Providers to Serve the Needs of those In Deep Poverty

Support our Caregiving Workforce by Ensuring Equitable Wages and Develop Meaningful Supports for Unpaid Caregivers

Provide Community Based Providers with Consistent and Equitable Access to State Funding that Adequately Keeps Pace with Rising Costs

⁶² [Governor announces federal grant supporting tradeswomen in Illinois – Illinois Business Journal \(ibjonline.com\)](#)

⁶³ [Governor Pritzker Announces \\$5 Million in Funding for the Home Illinois Workforce Pilot Program](#)

STATE ACTIONS

Support our Caregiving Workforce by Ensuring Equitable Wages and Develop Meaningful Supports for Unpaid Caregivers

Illinois has consistently been working to increase rates for providers in IDHS's Division of Developmental Disabilities (IDHS-DDD), Home Services, Child Care, and Community Care.⁶⁴ In FY24, IDHS-DDD direct service providers (DSP) saw a wage increase of \$2.50/hour, effective January 1, 2024; in FY25, another increase of \$1.00/hour will go into effect January 1, 2025. Other IDHS-DDD direct-care staff, including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and dietitians will have increases tied to the Bureau of Labor.

Additional rate increases include: IDHS-DRS Home Services Program Homemakers, IDHS-DRS Home Services Program Individual Providers, IDHS-DEC Child Care Assistance Program for home providers, IDHS-DEC Early Intervention (10 percent in for FY24), IDHS-DMH targeted Medicaid rate increases, and IDHS-SUPR (30 percent rate increase for residential treatment services as of January 2024, and, along with HFS, FY24 and FY25 2 percent rate increases for outpatient services). The Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA) received a 10 percent cost of living increase in FY24.

The Illinois Department on Aging (DoA) increased reimbursement rates to Community Care Program (CCP) In-Home Services providers from \$26.92 to \$28.07 per hour, supporting a minimum wage of \$17 per hour for home care aides in FY24, and conducted more than 20 caregiver roundtables across the state to gather feedback on how best to support unpaid family caregivers.⁶⁵

DoA additionally launched a survey of home care aides in 10 languages to gather feedback on the quality of current training and areas for improvement and applied for and secured a technical assistance opportunity through the Administration for Community Living's Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center focused on recruiting and retaining the direct care workforce.

HFS sustained wage increases for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) in Medicaid-funded nursing homes, directly related to the nursing home rate redesign which originally passed in 2022. Data indicates that more than 20,000 CNAs are women, specifically women of color. CNAs received an average of \$4.50/\$5.00 more per hour; many received more than \$6.50 more per hour because of the new law. This means an annual raise of \$10,000 for the direct caregivers.

HFS intends to continue the commitment to the increased wages for CNAs in Medicaid nursing homes through its rate methodology, which places emphasis on both staffing levels and quality services for Medicaid residents. The frontline caregivers will continue to receive the increased wages and residents will receive quality services. By increasing the wages of largely female frontline caregivers, these wage efforts also tackle the [*feminization of poverty*](#), which impacts whole families.

⁶⁴ [IDHS: January 1 Wage/Rate Increase \(state.il.us\)](https://state.il.us)

⁶⁵ [Department on Aging Recognizes National Family Caregivers Month \(illinois.gov\)](https://illinois.gov)

Provide Community-Based Providers with Consistent and Equitable Access to State Funding that Adequately Keeps Pace with Rising Costs

As part of an effort to align home visiting programs in the State, ISBE, through the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Prevention Initiative,⁶⁶ provides funding to raise the base salary requirements of home visitors, home visitor supervisors, doulas, and doula supervisors to align with similar positions at IDHS.

Illinois' historic, equity-driven Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives⁶⁷ (HTCs) are designed to create partnerships and bring entities together to find innovative ways to bridge gaps in the healthcare delivery system and increase access to quality healthcare services in underserved communities across the state. The HTC program makes available as much as \$150 million per fiscal year for collaborations amongst care providers, including preventive care, primary care, specialty care, hospital services, mental health and substance use disorder services, and community-based entities that address the social determinants of health. Priority is given to collaborations that include safety-net hospitals or critical access hospitals.⁶⁸

In FY24, five HTCs deployed a total of 147 Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs) in hard-to-reach communities, providing culturally and linguistically appropriate access to health care services to families in need. Through HFS, in FY25, an additional two HTCs deployed an additional 16 Community Health workers in hard-to-reach communities. To date, a total of 163 CHWs have been deployed across the state.

⁶⁶ [Prevention Initiative \(isbe.net\)](https://isbe.net)

⁶⁷ [Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives \(illinois.gov\)](https://illinois.gov)

⁶⁸ [Healthcare Transformation FAQs \(illinois.gov\)](https://illinois.gov)

APPENDIX A

Number of IL Residents at Various Income Levels

Year	Extreme Poverty	% Change	Poverty	% Change	Low Income	% Change
	0-49% FPL		0-99% FPL		100-199% FPL	
2022	763,512	+2.9	1,469,643	-1.9	1,757,880	-4.3
2021	742,192	+17.8	1,498,523	+5.5	1,836,332	-1.0
2020	[no data available]					
2019	630,012	-9.4	1,420,542	-5.9	1,854,973	-6.8
2018	695,247	-4.01	1,509,247	-3.9	1,989,265	-1.9
2017	724,307	-2.0	1,569,753	-3.2	2,027,266	-1.6
2016	738,806	-5.8	1,621,508	-4.8	2,060,534	-1.7
2015	784,584	-5.4	1,703,258	-5.6	2,095,725	-2.8
2014	829,130	-3.1	1,804,535	-2.2	2,156,083	-0.6
2013	855,537	+4.3	1,845,393	-0.3	2,169,443	-2.2
2012	820,554	-5.01	1,850,562	-1.6	2,217,821	-1.2
2011	863,868	+2.13	1,879,965	+8.6	2,245,506	+1.1
2010	764,391		1,731,711		2,220,781	

<https://data.census.gov/table?q=poverty%20Alexander%20county%202022&g=050XX00US17003>

Poverty: 2000 to 2012 (2011, 2012, 2000- below poverty and extreme poverty).

Number of People Living in Poverty by Age Group

Year	Group	Number of People Living in Poverty (<100% FPL)	Percent Below Poverty Level
2022	Children	424,983	15.9%
	Working Age	830,755	11.0%
	Older Adults	213,905	10.2%
2021	Children	442,261	16%
	Working Age	851,062	11.2%
	Older Adults	205,200	10%

2020	Children	454,654	16.2%
	Working Age	864,994	11.3%
	Older Adults	169,022	8.8%
2019	Children	436,327	15.7%
	Working Age	814,173	10.7%
	Older Adults	170,042	8.6%
2018	Children	456,926	16.2%
	Working Age	881,959	11.4%
	Older Adults	170,362	8.8%
2017	Children	486,196	17.0%
	Working Age	921,313	11.9%
	Older Adults	162,244	8.6%
2016	Children	511,679	17.7%
	Working Age	943,685	12.1%
	Older Adults	166,144	9.2%
2015	Children	558,784	19.1%
	Working Age	995,263	12.6%
	Older Adults	149,211	8.5%
2014	Children	593,186	20.2%
	Working Age	1,059,126	13.4%
	Older Adults	152,223	8.8%
2013	Children	616,060	20.7%
	Working Age	1,081,022	13.6%
	Older Adults	148,311	8.8%
2012	Children	624,272	20.7%
	Working Age	1,082,219	13.7%
	Older Adults	144,071	8.8%
2011	Children	658,340	21.6%
	Working Age	1,091,542	13.8%
	Older Adults	130,083	8.2%
2010	Children	600,045	19.4%
	Working Age	1,001,778	12.7%
	Older Adults	129,888	8.4%

Children: Under 18
 Working Age: 18-64
 Older Adults: 65+

<https://data.census.gov/table?q=S1701&q=040XX00US17&y=2022>

Number of Poor and Poverty Rate in Illinois: 2000 to 2022

(Population in thousands. Population as of March of the following year. Information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions is available at <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar23.pdf>>)

Note: data exists in this spreadsheet from 1980-2022

Year	Percent below Poverty (<100% FPL)	Percent Extreme Poverty (<50% FPL)	Percent below 125% FPL
2022	11.9	6.2	15.3
2021	12.1	6.0	15.4
2020	12.0	5.5	15.7
2019	11.5	5.1	15.0
2018	12.1	5.6	16.1
2017	12.6	5.8	16.7
2016	13.0	5.9	17.1
2015	13.6	6.2	17.8
2014	14.4	6.6	18.7
2013	14.7	6.8	18.9
2012	14.7	6.5	19.0
2011	15.0	6.9	19.6
2010	13.8	6.1	18.1
2009	13.3	6.0	17.5
2008	12.2	5.4	16.3
2007	11.9	5.3	15.8
2006	12.3	5.5	16.2
2005	12.0	5.5	15.7
2004	11.9	5.8	16.0
2003	11.3	5.2	15.1
2002	11.6	5.6	14.8
2001	11.2	4.9	14.5
2000	11.1	4.6	14.7

Poverty: 2000 to 2012 (2011, 2012, 2000- below poverty and extreme poverty).



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