



Navigating the Intersection: Homelessness, Migration, and Equitable Response

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DFSS Program Divisions: Overview*

Children Services

What

- Early Head Start
- Head Start
- Child Care Partnership
- Preschool for All
- Prevention Initiative

How

- Community-based early learning sites

Division on Gender-Based Violence

What

- 24/7 Domestic Violence Hotline
- Counseling and case management
- Legal services
- Rapid Rehousing

How

- Counseling providers
- Legal advocates
- Youth advocates

Homeless Services

What

- Prevention
- Outreach and shelter
- Housing supports
- System coordination

How

- Service providers
- Call center
- Direct outreach through HOP team

Human Services

What

- Case management
- Public benefits assessment with referrals to services
- Rental Assistance Program (RAP)

How

- Community Service Centers with DFSS staffing
- Service providers

New Arrivals

What

- Emergency Shelter
- Legal Immigration Support
- Resettlement Assistance
- Healthcare Coordination
- Education
- Public Benefits Enrollment

How

- Service providers
- Coordination with City departments and sister agencies

Senior Services

What

- Food assistance
- Caregiving supports
- In-home support services
- Legal services
- Information & Assistance

How

- Regional Senior Centers staffed by DFSS employees
- Service providers

Workforce Services

What

- Job preparation, training, and placement
- Connection to supports
- Re-Entry Support

How

- Job training partners and providers
- Community Re-Entry Support Centers

Youth Services

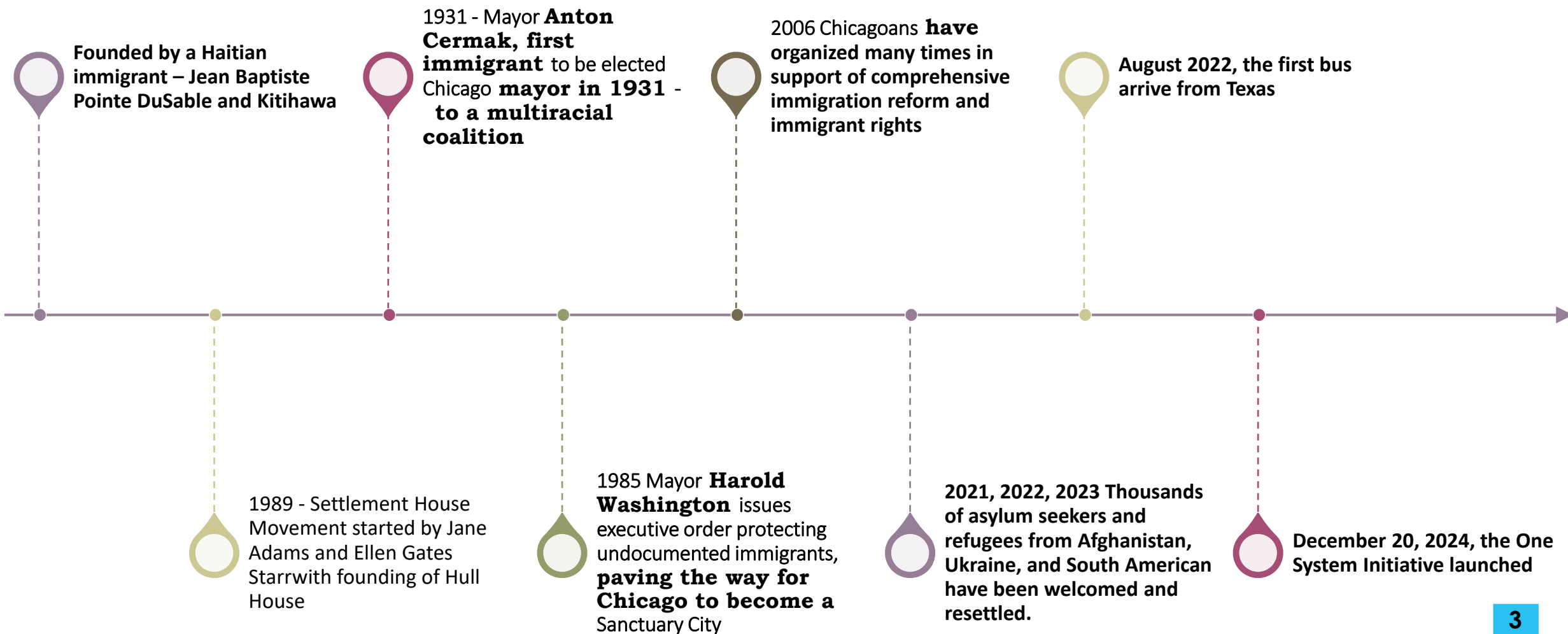
What

- Youth Employment
- Enrichment / Out of School Time
- Services for youth with complex needs

How

- Service providers
- My CHI. My Future. app

Welcoming City



★ Who Are New Arrivals?

- New arrivals from the southern border have entered the U.S. seeking asylum and are granted humanitarian parole allowing them to live in the U.S. temporarily.
- Seeking asylum is an internationally protected right afforded to everyone.
- The United States has admitted approx. **500,000 Venezuelan migrants**, which represents **6%** of the total population that has fled Venezuela. (8 million have fled with 85% migrating to South America & Caribbean)

Top 10 Countries

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Venezuela | 6. Honduras |
| 2. Colombia | 7. Angola |
| 3. Ecuador | 8. Nicaragua |
| 4. Peru | 9. Mauritania |
| 5. Haiti | 10. Mexico |





Overview of New Arrivals Mission

Chicago welcomed 50,000+ asylum seekers and other migrants entering the U.S. through the southern border

The City of Chicago developed an effective, fiscally responsible resettlement model despite, limited federal support.

Goal 1: Welcome new arrivals with dignity, meet their **basic needs for shelter, food, and urgent medical care**, and **connect them to resources** that put them on a path to self-sufficiency and resettlement.

Goal 2: Leverage the moment to **build the infrastructure Chicago** needs for **crisis response** and serving **people experiencing homelessness**.

★ Journey Map – Two pathways to shelter and services

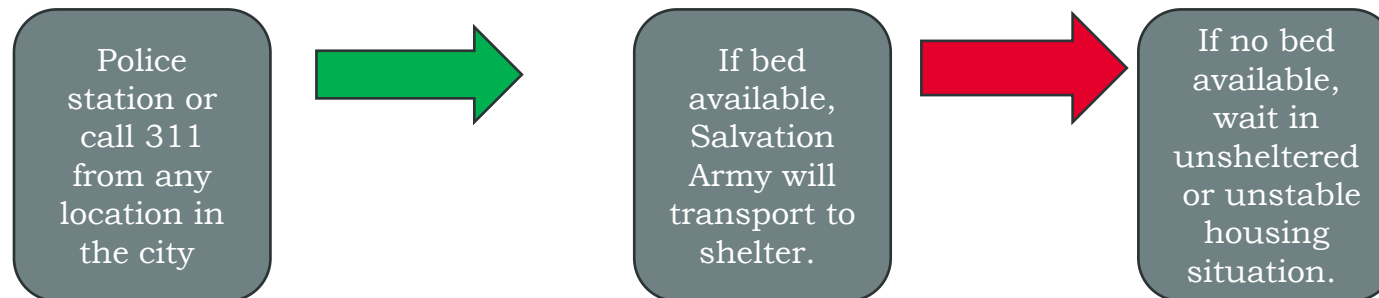


OEMC
Dept of
Aviation
DFSS

CPD, OEMC, CPS Mutual
Aid & Volunteers,
Healthcare Partners

City, Healthcare
Partners, CBO
support, State partners

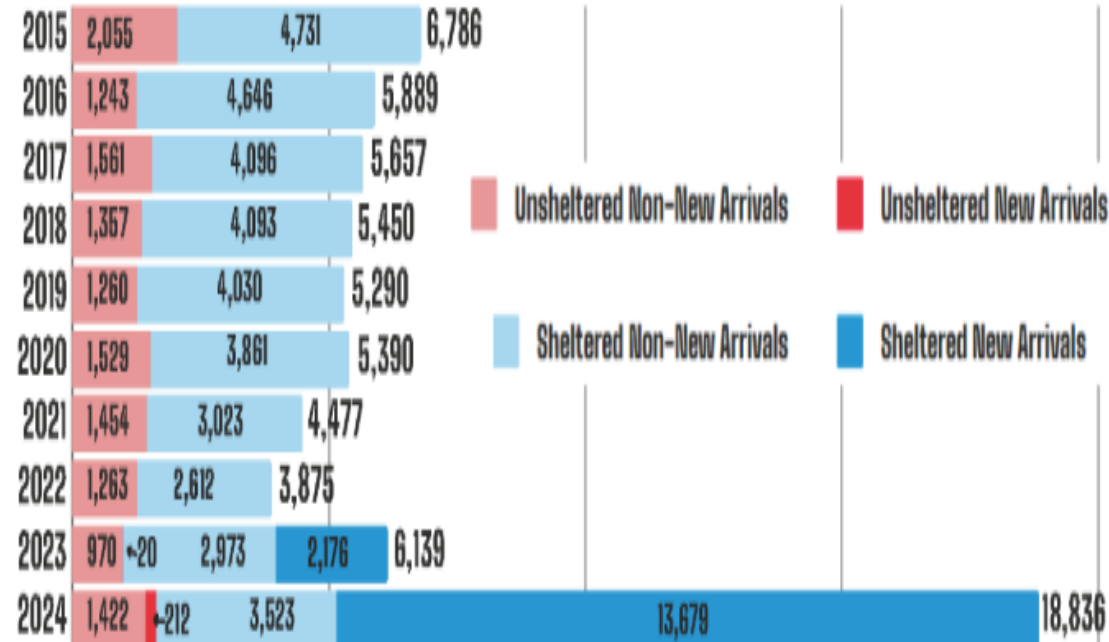
DOH, DFSS, IHDA, IDHS, Catholic
Charities, New Life, property
owners & CBOs





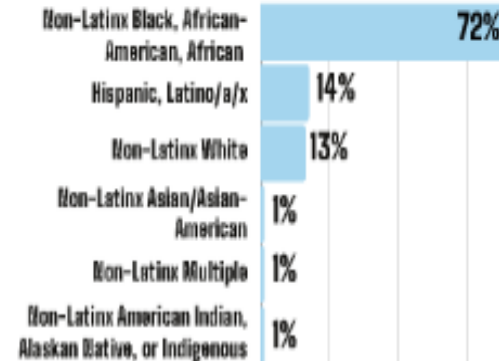
Point-in-Time Count Data

PIT COUNT: TOTAL ESTIMATE OF PEOPLE COUNTED, 2015-2024

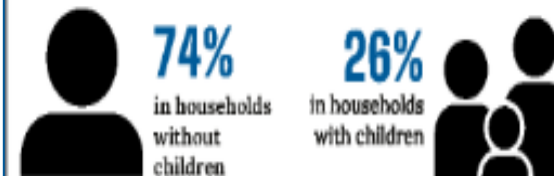


NON-NEW ARRIVALS

RACE/ETHNICITY

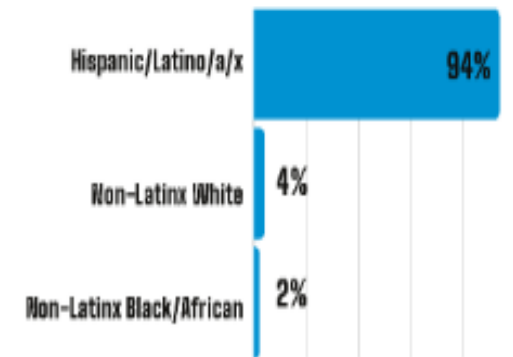


HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



NEW ARRIVALS

RACE/ETHNICITY



HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



★ The Narrative

U.S. NEWS

Chicago's response to migrant influx stirs longstanding frustrations among Black residents

US News, April 19, 2024



Woodlawn residents share deep frustrations as city outlines plans to open temporary shelter for asylum seekers in shuttered school

Chicago Suntimes, January 12, 2023

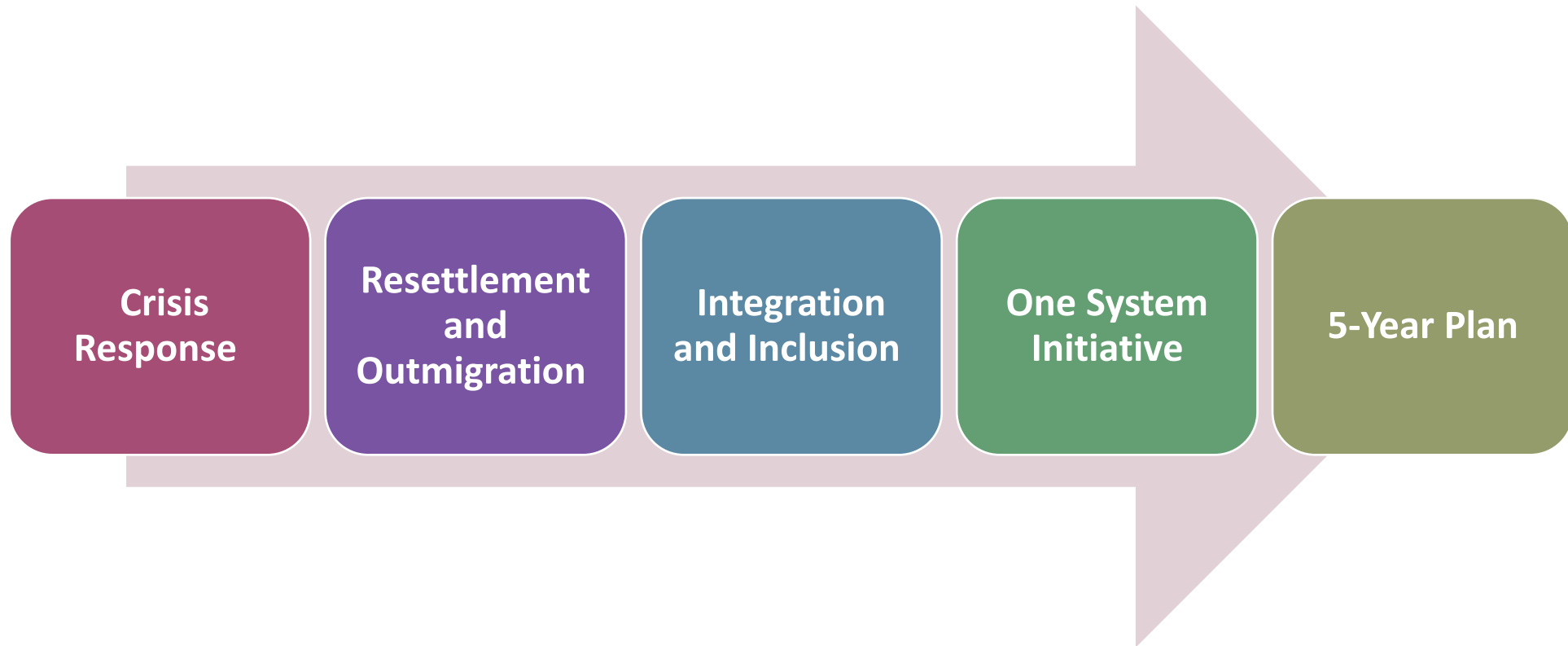


New Arrivals Mission Results

- 15,000 people in shelters at the peak of arrivals; 28 shelters
- 30,000+ measles vaccines administered
- 20,000+ children enrolled in CPS
- 17,000+ individuals resettled in apartments through State rental assistance and housing case management
- 7,600+ individuals reunited with friends/family in other cities with State out migration support
- 8,500+ TPS and work authorization applications completed
- 900+ volunteer opportunities through community partners

- ✓ Partnership with the State and County to share the financial and operational responsibility for the mission.
- ✓ Joint commitment to One System Initiative to create a more equitable shelter system

The Evolution of Chicago's Mission





One System Initiative

- The One System Initiative (OSI) aims to streamline how the city serves anyone in need of homeless services, all under one comprehensive and unified system.
- The One System Initiative is a result of months of discussions between government employees, community groups and social service organizations, and people with lived experience.
- The One System Initiative launched in January 2025 with a combined total of **7,400 shelter beds** available to anyone requesting shelter through 311:
 - 3,300 beds in the existing homeless system, including 150 winter beds
 - 3,800 beds formerly dedicated to New Arrivals (5 former new arrival shelters remained open and began serving anyone experiencing homelessness)
 - 275 overflow beds at shelter access points and resource centers: Emergency Homeless Assessment and Response Center (families, operational since 2016) and Shelter Placement and Resource Center (single adults, opened December 2024)
 - Unified pathway to shelter placement

★ From New Arrivals Mission to One System Initiative: Internal Alignment Operationalized

DFSS Homeless Services Division (August 2022)

~15 FTE

~51 shelters and 3,000 beds via delegate agencies (community based organizations)

DFSS New Arrivals Division (2023-2024)

~3-15 FTE

~28 shelters and 15,000 beds via contractors managed by DFSS at peak

DFSS Homeless Services Division (January 2025)

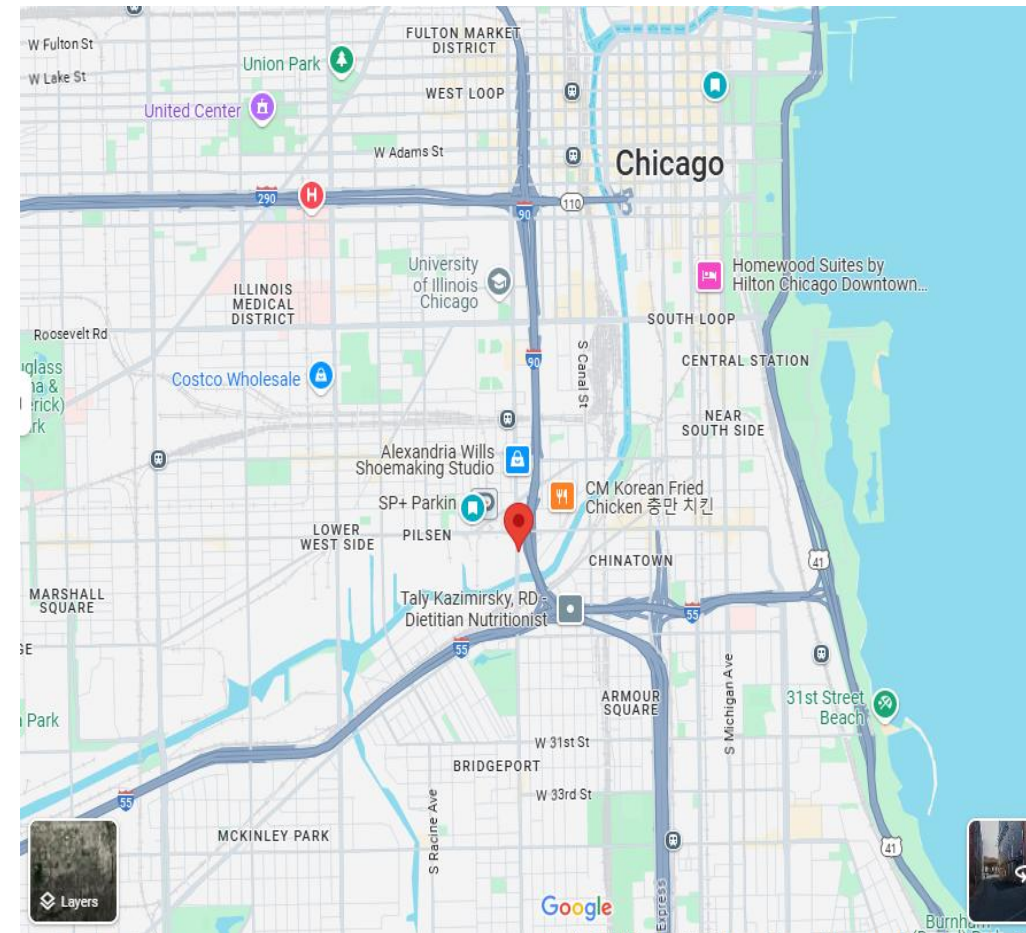
~32 FTE

~55 shelters and 7,400 beds via delegate agencies (community based organizations)



Shelter Placement and Resource Center (SPARC)

- Landing zone closed on Dec. 19, 2024, and the SPARC opened Dec. 20, 2024, for anyone in need of shelter.
- A central access point for shelter and basic services for **adults (18+) without children** experiencing homelessness in Chicago.
- The SPARC is in the Pilsen community and is open **24 hours a day, 7 days a week with a 200-person capacity**.
- Operated by community-based partners Franciscan Outreach and New Life Centers. Funding is provided by Illinois Department of Human Services.
- Services include diversion, outmigration, basic clothing items and meals for those waiting for shelter placement.
- Services available in English and Spanish. Language Line is used for additional language support.



Any Chicagoan in need of shelter can make a request by calling 3-1-1 from any location in the city.

One System Initiative Progress



Key workstreams, led by newly expanded DFSS Homeless Services Division:

- ✓ Merge New Arrivals Division into Homeless Services Division
- ✓ Decompress new arrivals shelters set for closure
- ✓ Stand up new 24/7 physical access point for connection to shelter, now named the Shelter Placement and Resource Center (SPARC)
- ✓ Open formerly new arrivals-dedicated shelters to anyone in need of shelter
- Stand up improved programmatic oversight, expanded data tracking, increased language access, and implementation of best practices across all homeless shelter programs
- Release RFPs for City to take over funding of operations of State-funded new arrivals shelters (1,700 beds) and select long-term operator for SPARC by July 2025
- Support street outreach programs and drop-in centers in responding to unsheltered homelessness, including improving language access and geographic coordination

Highlight: Equipping Shelter Delegates for One System

- **Training curriculum** beginning for all City-funded shelters on 1/8, developed in partnership with All Chicago, ICIRR, and the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness. Trainings include:
 - Chicago's homeless services sector
 - Housing First
 - Cultural Humility
 - Trauma-Informed Care
 - Harm Reduction
 - Case Management Skill Building
 - Immigration 101
 - *And many more*
- **New data collection** at OSI shelters began 1/1/25, in transition toward homeless system requirements



What's next?

- **OSI support for all providers**
 - Training curriculum for all delegates on foundational topics: serving people experiencing homelessness, immigration supports, and case management
 - Transitional support for shelters formerly serving new arrivals
 - Support and resource sharing for street outreach providers during monthly coordination meetings
- **HMIS transition** for shelters formerly serving new arrivals and SPARC
- **Five-year plan:** Led by Chief Homelessness Officer, developing a comprehensive strategy to address and end homelessness in Chicago, as part of Mayor Brandon Johnson's vision. The Plan is expected to be finalized in late Spring or early Summer of 2025.



Q & A