

Contact: Bob Palmer Policy Director, Housing Action Illinois, 312-282-3959 (cell); bob@housingactionil.org.

For Immediate Release

**Not Even A Place In Line for Illinois Families Who Need Affordable Housing
Congress Can Act Before Thanksgiving to Restore Housing Vouchers Lost to Budget
Cuts**

Chicago, IL; November 4, 2015—Seventy-two percent of waiting lists for Housing Choice Vouchers in Illinois are closed, according to a [report released today](#). The 51 public housing authorities (PHAs) with closed waiting lists administer 95 percent of the vouchers available in the state.

Closed waiting lists mean that people in need of affordable rental housing in most every part of Illinois do not have the opportunity to even get in line to secure a federally funded subsidy that would alleviate their poverty and put their household in a better position to thrive.

The last time this information was collected in 2007, the number of PHAs with closed voucher waiting lists was significantly lower—only 56 percent of all PHAs with a voucher program.

In 2007, the poverty rate in Illinois was 11.9 percent; in 2014 it was 14.4 percent. The increase in poverty is likely a contributing factor to more PHAs closing their voucher waiting lists, as more households seek out resources to help them afford housing and the other costs of living.

This report by Housing Action Illinois and Heartland Alliance's Social IMPACT Research Center comes at a time when budget caps have severely constrained federal housing assistance funding. Congress has just agreed to lift these caps and is debating how much funding to provide for Housing Choice Vouchers and other critical housing programs.

For the voucher program, the choices made about the budget will determine whether there is enough funding to maintain the current number of vouchers and provide additional resources to restore the 67,000 vouchers not yet restored after mandatory across-the-board "sequestration" spending cuts implemented in 2013.

In December 2014, nearly 82,000 low-income households used Housing Choice Vouchers in Illinois to afford decent, privately owned housing. This is a significant number, but far less than the number of vouchers needed to address the lack of affordable rental housing. Based on data released in 2014, there is a deficit of 321,394 rental units affordable and available to extremely low income households in Illinois, those with income at or below 30 percent of area median income.

"To assist households whose need for affordable housing is not served by the private market, to help reduce the risk of homelessness, and to help lift thousands of households out of poverty, Congress should appropriate enough money to fund all current vouchers and restore vouchers that have been lost due to previous budget cuts," said Bob Palmer, Policy Director for Housing Action Illinois.

It is widely anticipated that Congress will come to an agreement on the fiscal year 2016 federal budget by the Thanksgiving of this year. If Congress restores vouchers lost to sequestration in this year's budget, it will help lift 67,000 households out of poverty across the nation and demonstrate a commitment to provide the resources necessary to alleviate the long-standing affordable housing shortage.

Download the report here:

http://socialimpactresearchcenter.issuelab.org/resource/not_even_a_place_in_line_housing_choice_voucher_capacity_and_waiting_lists_in_illinois_2015

Housing Action Illinois is a statewide coalition formed to protect and expand the availability of quality, affordable housing throughout Illinois.

The Social IMPACT Research Center at Heartland Alliance works with nonprofits, foundations, and governments to measure and grow their social impact. We are experts on issues related to poverty, housing, homelessness, employment, human services, health and nutrition, education, and asset development.

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