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IN THE OFFICE OF  
SECRETARY OF STATE

September 3, 2021

Executive Order 2021-21

### **EXECUTIVE ORDER TO FIGHT HOMELESSNESS IN ILLINOIS**

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 has required Illinois to be strong, cooperative, and adaptive. The pandemic has also laid bare the deepest fissures in our social fabric and magnified them. Homelessness continues to be a pervasive challenge for our State with multiple drivers that include behavioral health, re-entry, trauma, and substance use disorders, as well as the social and environmental determinants of poverty, race, and education; and,

**WHEREAS**, the current crisis has created waves of economic instability which have affected Illinoisans most vulnerable to housing insecurity. It requires the strengthening of our State's safety nets so that homelessness becomes an experience that is rare, brief, and non-recurring. Success requires coordination of State efforts so that Illinoisans have access to resources that address homelessness holistically; and,

**WHEREAS**, this is a momentous opportunity to stand on the foundation built by the Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty, and to execute a robust and sustainable solution to homelessness. Illinois' legacy to future generations will be a State that values the dignity of human life and the right for everyone to have a home; and,

**WHEREAS**, Illinois has an estimated 10,000 persons experiencing homelessness on any given day, including families, veterans, and unaccompanied young adults, as reported by the State's Continuums of Care to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in January 2019; and,

**WHEREAS**, an estimated 52,978 Illinois public school students experienced homelessness over the course of the 2017-2018 school year, as reported to the U.S. Department of Education. Of that total, 467 students were unsheltered, 5,140 were in shelters, 2,037 were in hotels/motels, and 44,875 were doubled up (having one or more adults in addition to the head of household and spouse or partner, such as an adult child living at home, two related or unrelated families residing together, or a parent living with an adult child); and,

**WHEREAS**, according to the COVID-19 Eviction Crisis Study by the University of Illinois, Chicago and Southern Illinois University, there were 414,000 Illinois households who were low-income renters and had at least one member who was working in an industry impacted by COVID-19; and,

**WHEREAS**, an estimated 60,000 evictions are expected to occur in 2021, triple the number in 2019 due to the economic impact of COVID-19 and the end of the eviction moratorium, according to The Eviction Lab at Princeton University; and,

**WHEREAS**, people of color are experiencing disproportionate negative outcomes from COVID-19. Communities of color, disadvantaged from a long history of racism that has

undermined their financial stability and housing security, now find their hardships further exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic. Homelessness prevention and housing security programs and policies must include and prioritize a race-conscious framework and equity-based decision making; and,

**WHEREAS**, recovery from the pandemic should include innovative and longer-term approaches to support individuals at risk of housing insecurity as a direct result of the current COVID-19 crisis, as well as individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Because homelessness is rooted in a complex array of issues, including mental health, substance use disorder, poverty, racism, experience with the correctional system, and violence-induced trauma, implementing systemic change to end homelessness requires a high degree of coordination and cooperation among federal, state, and local governments, as well as private sector and philanthropic stakeholders; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Illinois Homeless Prevention Act (310 ILCS 70) requires the Illinois Department of Human Services to establish a family homelessness prevention and assistance program to stabilize families in their existing homes, to shorten the amount of time that families stay in emergency shelters, and to assist families with securing affordable transitional or permanent housing; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Illinois Youth Homelessness Prevention Subcommittee Act (15 ILCS 60) was created to drive the State's strategic vision for preventing homelessness among youth leaving State systems of care; and,

**WHEREAS**, forming a statewide Interagency Task Force and a Community Advisory Council is an important and effective tool in the plan to prevent homelessness and support people and families who experience homelessness, building upon the interagency coordination initiated in response to COVID-19 and bringing together State resources for this common goal, prioritizing community partnerships in developing and implementing solutions, and drawing from the deep knowledge of assets like local housing authorities, continuum of care networks, and housing advocates;

**THEREFORE**, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of Illinois, by virtue of the executive authority vested in me by Article V of the Constitution of the State of Illinois, hereby order as follows:

1. An Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness ("Task Force") is established.
2. A Community Advisory Council on Homelessness ("Community Advisory Council") is established.
3. A State Homelessness Chief ("Chief") has been established, to be housed in the Illinois Department of Human Services ("IDHS") and to report to the Secretary of IDHS. The Chief shall chair the Task Force, co-chair the Community Advisory Council, and lead the State's comprehensive effort to decrease homelessness and unnecessary institutionalization in Illinois, improve health and human services outcomes for people who experience homelessness, and strengthen the safety nets that contribute to housing stability. The Chief shall serve as a policymaker and spokesperson on homelessness prevention, including coordinating the multi-agency effort through legislation, rules, and budgets and communicating with the Illinois General Assembly, federal, and local leaders on these critical issues.
4. The Task Force, under the leadership of the Chief, shall meet at least four times a year and shall:
  - a. Plan for and develop a State plan, to be delivered to the Governor and the General Assembly by March 30, 2022, to address homelessness and unnecessary institutionalization with the goals of achieving functional zero homelessness, improving health and human services outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, and strengthening the safety nets that contribute to housing stability.
  - b. Recommend policy, regulatory, and resource changes necessary to accomplish goals and objectives laid out in the State plan.
  - c. Serve within State government and in the State at large as an advocate for people experiencing homelessness.

- d. Provide leadership for and collaborate with those developing and implementing local plans to end homelessness in Illinois, including, but not limited to the Community Advisory Council and its members.
  - e. Convene stakeholders, customers, and advocates to inform the Task Force's policy recommendations, as needed.
  - f. Recommend the resources needed for successful implementation and oversee that implementation.
  - g. Recommend and promote effective interagency collaboration and system integration to converge related efforts, including coordination with the Illinois Youth Homelessness Prevention Subcommittee, the Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty, and the Illinois Commission to End Hunger on drafting policy recommendations related to the intersection of homelessness and poverty.
  - h. Recommend needed policy, regulatory, and resource distribution changes; make oversight recommendations that will ensure accountability, results, and sustained success; and develop specific proposals and recommendations for action to provide to the Governor and the General Assembly.
  - i. Prepare an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly by December 1 of each year, starting December 1, 2022, summarizing the Task Force's activities, summarizing progress on preventing and ending homelessness in Illinois, summarizing the recommendations of the Community Advisory Council and the Task Force's responsive recommendations and actions; and reporting on outcomes and measures relating to homelessness.
5. Task Force membership shall consist of senior members of State agencies to be appointed by the Governor, in consultation with the Chief, that have relevancy to ending and preventing homelessness.
- a. The Task Force membership shall include the following:
    - i. The Chief, who will serve as Task Force Chair.
    - ii. One member representing the Illinois Housing Development Authority.
    - iii. One member representing the Illinois Department of Human Services.
    - iv. One member representing the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services with expertise on issues related to healthcare delivery systems.
    - v. One member representing the Illinois State Board of Education, with expertise on education programs serving students and families experiencing homelessness.
    - vi. One member representing the Illinois Board of Higher Education, with expertise on education programs serving students and families experiencing homelessness.
    - vii. One member representing the Illinois Community College Board, with expertise on education programs serving students and families experiencing homelessness.
    - viii. One member representing the Illinois Department of Corrections.
    - ix. One member representing the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs.
    - x. One member representing the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.
    - xi. One member representing the Illinois Department of Public Health.
    - xii. One member representing the Illinois Department on Aging.
    - xiii. One member representing the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice.
    - xiv. One member representing the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, with expertise on issues related to workforce development.
    - xv. One member representing the Illinois Department of Employment Security.
    - xvi. One member representing the Illinois State Police.
    - xvii. At the recommendation of the Chief, one member, each, from additional State agencies may be appointed as necessary for the work of the Task Force.
6. The Community Advisory Council shall meet at least four times per year to discuss and make recommendations to the Task Force regarding homelessness and unnecessary institutionalization with the goals of achieving functional zero homelessness, improving

health and human services outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, and strengthening the safety nets that contribute to housing stability.

7. The Community Advisory Council shall consist of diverse stakeholders that represent the goals and population described in this executive order, to be appointed by the Governor. Members should be geographically diverse to represent the needs of urban, suburban, and rural communities across Illinois. The Chief may include any State agency staff that they deem necessary as *ex officio*, non-voting members of the Community Advisory Council.
  - a. The Community Advisory Council shall consist of:
    - i. The Chief will serve as a co-chair with another Community Advisory Council member, from the appointments below, to be appointed by the Governor.
    - ii. Three members with lived experience, which may include, but are not limited to the formerly incarcerated, veterans, and youth (16 to 25 years old).
    - iii. Member representing people with disabilities.
    - iv. Two members from the philanthropic private funding sector.
    - v. Member representing a statewide behavioral health advocacy organization.
    - vi. Member representing a statewide housing advocacy organization.
    - vii. A minimum of two members representing local Continuums of Care.
    - viii. A minimum of three members representing local units of government (municipal, county and/or township).
    - ix. Two at-large members, who may or may not meet the qualification requirements for the other appointees.
8. Both the Task Force and the Community Advisory Council shall strive to operate by consensus; however, so long as they each have a quorum, they may approve measures and make recommendations based on an affirmative vote of a majority of the members present.
9. Members of the Task Force and of the Community Advisory Council shall serve at the will of the Governor and have a tenure of three years. If there is a vacancy for any cause, the Governor shall make an appointment to become immediately effective for the remainder of the three-year term. So long as they continue to qualify for the seat that they occupy, members shall continue to serve until a succeeding appointment or a re-appointment is made.
10. In addition to any by-laws, policies, or procedures that they may adopt, all operations of the Task Force and of the Community Advisory Council will be subject to the provisions of the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 *et seq.*) and the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/1 *et seq.*). This shall not be construed so as to preclude other statutes from applying to the Task Force and to the Community Advisory Council and their respective activities.
11. The Illinois Department of Human Services shall provide administrative support to the Task Force and the Community Advisory Council.
12. Nothing in this Executive Order shall be construed to contravene any federal or state law or regulation. Unless specifically referenced in this Order, nothing in this Order shall affect or alter the existing statutory powers of any State agency or be construed as a reassignment or reorganization of any State agency.
13. This Executive Order supersedes any contrary provision of any prior Executive Order.
14. If any part of this Executive Order is found to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect. The provisions of this Executive Order are severable.
15. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately upon its filing with the Secretary of State and shall remain in effect until rescinded.

*JBPA*

JB Pritzker, Governor

Issued by the Governor September 3, 2021  
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