



# **From Awareness to Action: Creating Working Partnerships on Homelessness**

7/20/2025


# Older Adult Homelessness Is Rising

- Older adults are the *fastest-growing* age group of individuals experiencing homelessness.
- 1 in 5 people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. are 55 or older, and 46% of these individuals are unsheltered.
- Many are experiencing homelessness for the first time.

# Older Adults Who Are Unhoused:

- Tend to remain homeless longer than younger adults.
- Are more likely than housed peers to:
  - Have poor physical and mental health.
  - Develop adverse age-related health conditions.
  - Experience violent victimization.
  - Report feelings of humiliation.

**85% of AAAs report  
housing and  
homelessness as major  
concerns!**



# Limitations in Both Aging and Homeless Networks

- AAAs are not always able to deliver crucial aging services to individuals experiencing homelessness.
  - Funding restrictions may limit services to home settings; “new” population to learn to serve
- Homelessness services are not always able to address aging issues.
  - Homeless shelters are often not accessible; some are unable to offer services to individuals who are unable to complete ADLs unassisted.

# What Can Be Done About It? Collaborate!

- By fostering community-level partnerships, each service network can bring their respective strengths to the table to close the gaps in how their community assists older adults at risk for or experiencing homelessness.
- This is where USAging's new program comes in...

# Doors to Housing for Older Adults

## Goal

- Reduce older adults' homelessness by supporting new/deepened partnerships between AAAs and homeless continuums of care (CoCs...more about them later)

## Process

- **Stage 1:** Gather information and success stories from innovative AAA-CoC partnerships.
- **Stage 2:** Provide technical assistance resources and host a virtual summit to support additional partnership formation.

# Speakers

- Continuum of Care Lead
  - Katie Eighan, Continuum of Care Planning Director, Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County, Hillside, IL
- Area Agency on Aging
  - Jason Echols, Manager of Planning and Evaluation, AgeOptions, Oak Park, IL
- USAging Housing and Services Team
  - Connor Kelly, Research Associate
  - Molly French, Director



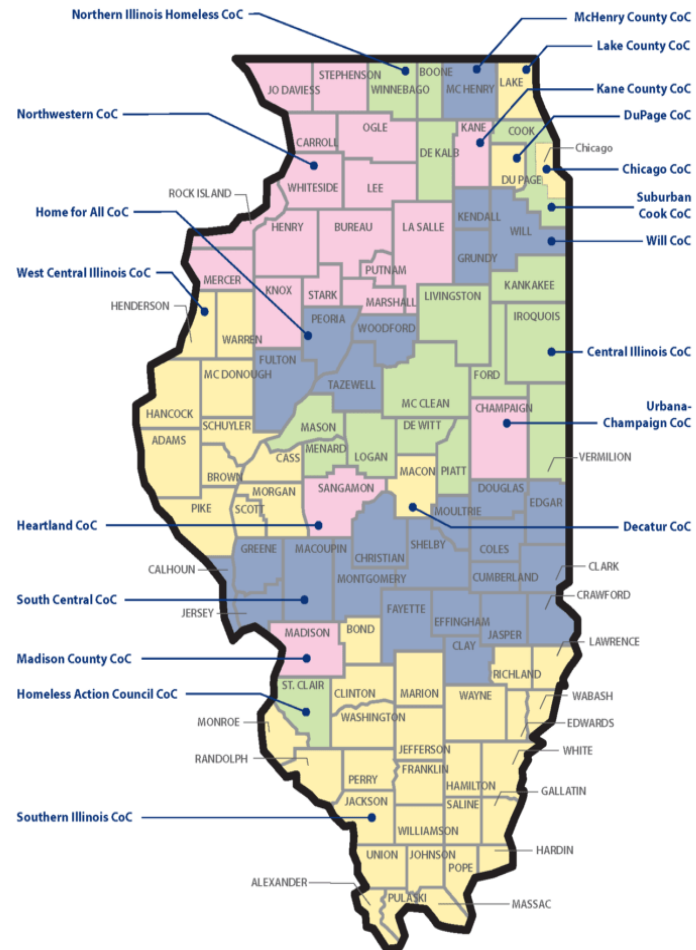
# What Is a Continuum of Care?

---

KATIE EIGHAN (SHE/HER)  
CONTINUUM OF CARE PLANNING DIRECTOR



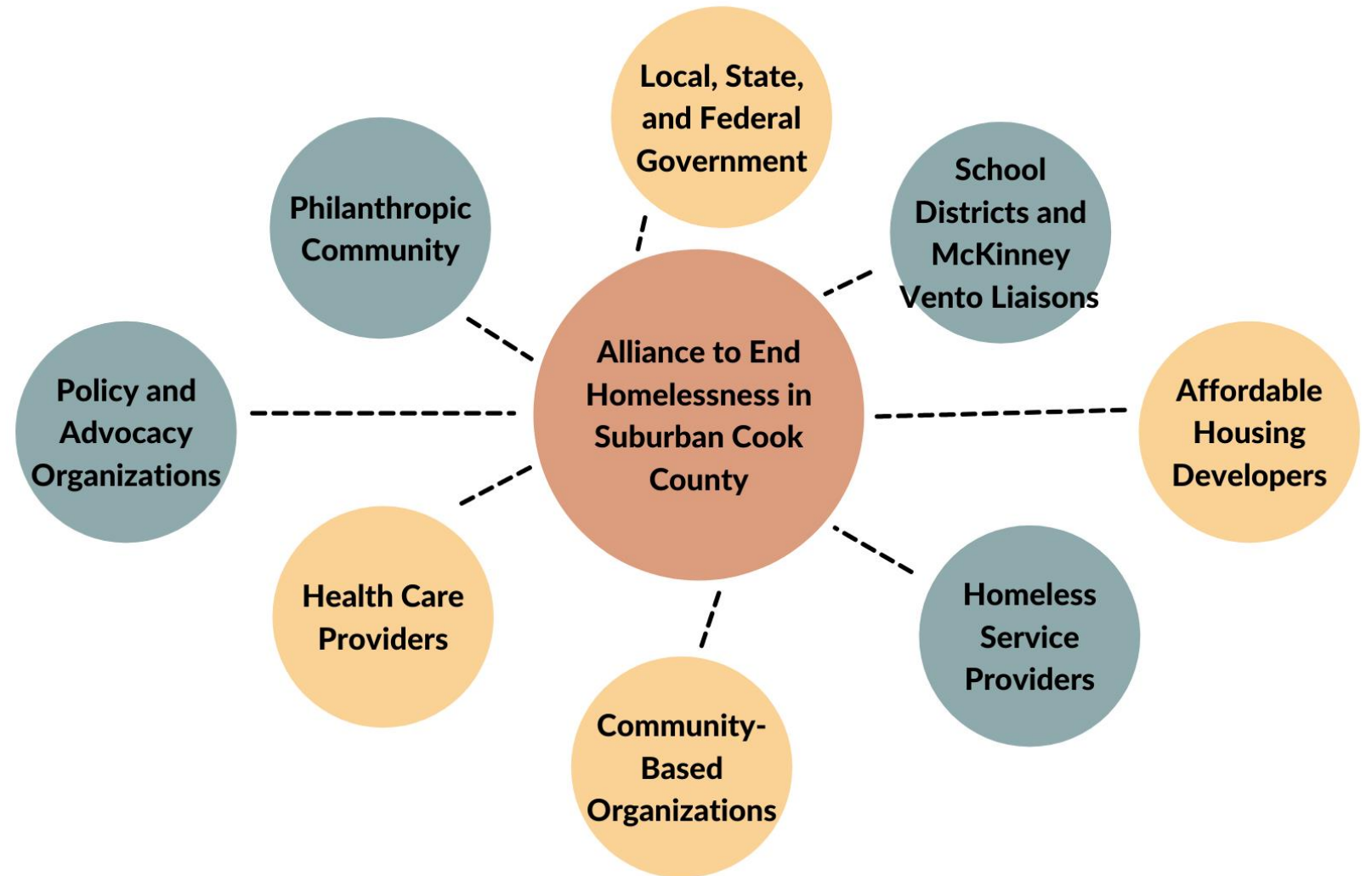
## ILLINOIS CONTINUUM OF CARE MAP



# HUD Continuum of Care Program

- Each CoC is responsible for planning and coordinating implementation of a **homelessness response system** within its geographic area.
- The HUD CoC Program is the largest source of federal funding for nonprofits to provide permanent and short-term housing assistance and supportive services for people experiencing homelessness.

**Continuum of Care** lead diverse networks of partners to develop, fund, and implement solutions to end homelessness.



**Housing is the solution to homelessness.** A **homeless response system** prevents homelessness whenever possible, provides crisis housing whenever needed, and prioritizes permanent housing and the services individuals need to thrive.



# HUD Continuum of Care Program Structure

## HUD

- Funder
- Holds grant agreement and administers funds
- Oversees grant compliance in accordance with federal regulations



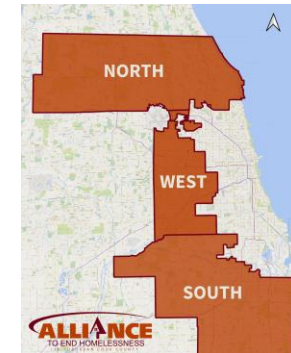
## CoC Lead

- Responsible for submitting annual funding application
- Responsible for administration, oversight, planning, and implementation of HMIS, Coordinated Entry, and other special awards and projects



## CoC Grantee

- Operates homelessness housing programs, adhering to HUD regulations and following locally established CoC rules and requirements



# HUD CoC Housing Interventions

---

HUD CoC dollars can be used to fund the following housing interventions for people experiencing homelessness:

- Transitional Housing
- Rapid Re-Housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- HUD CoC dollars can also be used to support CoC Lead agencies in administration, oversight, planning, and implementation

A large orange circle containing the text "Safe & Stable Housing Placement".

Safe & Stable  
Housing  
Placement

# Rapid Re-Housing

---

- **Population:** Individuals and families experiencing homelessness who are currently staying outside (unsheltered) or in an emergency shelter
- **Program Description:**
  - CoC-funded agency and individual/family work together to find an available rental unit that meets their needs and preferences
  - Lease is in individual's name
  - Rental assistance is provided for up to 24 months
  - Case management services provide progressive engagement for household to gain resources needed to sustain their housing costs going forward

# Permanent Supportive Housing

---

- **Population:** Individuals and families experiencing homelessness who are currently staying outside (unsheltered) or in an emergency shelter **and** have experienced homelessness for 12+ months **and** have a disabling condition
- **Program Description:**
  - CoC-funded agency and individual/family work together to find an available rental unit that meets their needs and preferences
  - Lease is in agency's name
  - On-going rental assistance is provided (no time limit)
  - Intensive case management services to assist with housing stability



# Find Your Local CoC!

---

- **HUD Exchange:** <https://www.hudexchange.info/housing-and-homeless-assistance/homeless-help/>
  - Search by State
- **Look for the helpers:** At community meetings, townhalls, social service sector collaborations, trainings - take notice when someone introduces themselves as being part of a homeless service agency and ask them who leads your local Continuum of Care

Katie Eighan, she/her  
*Continuum of Care Planning Director*  
email: [katie@suburbancook.org](mailto:katie@suburbancook.org)  
phone: 708-240-9533

Visit us online at <https://suburbancook.org/>

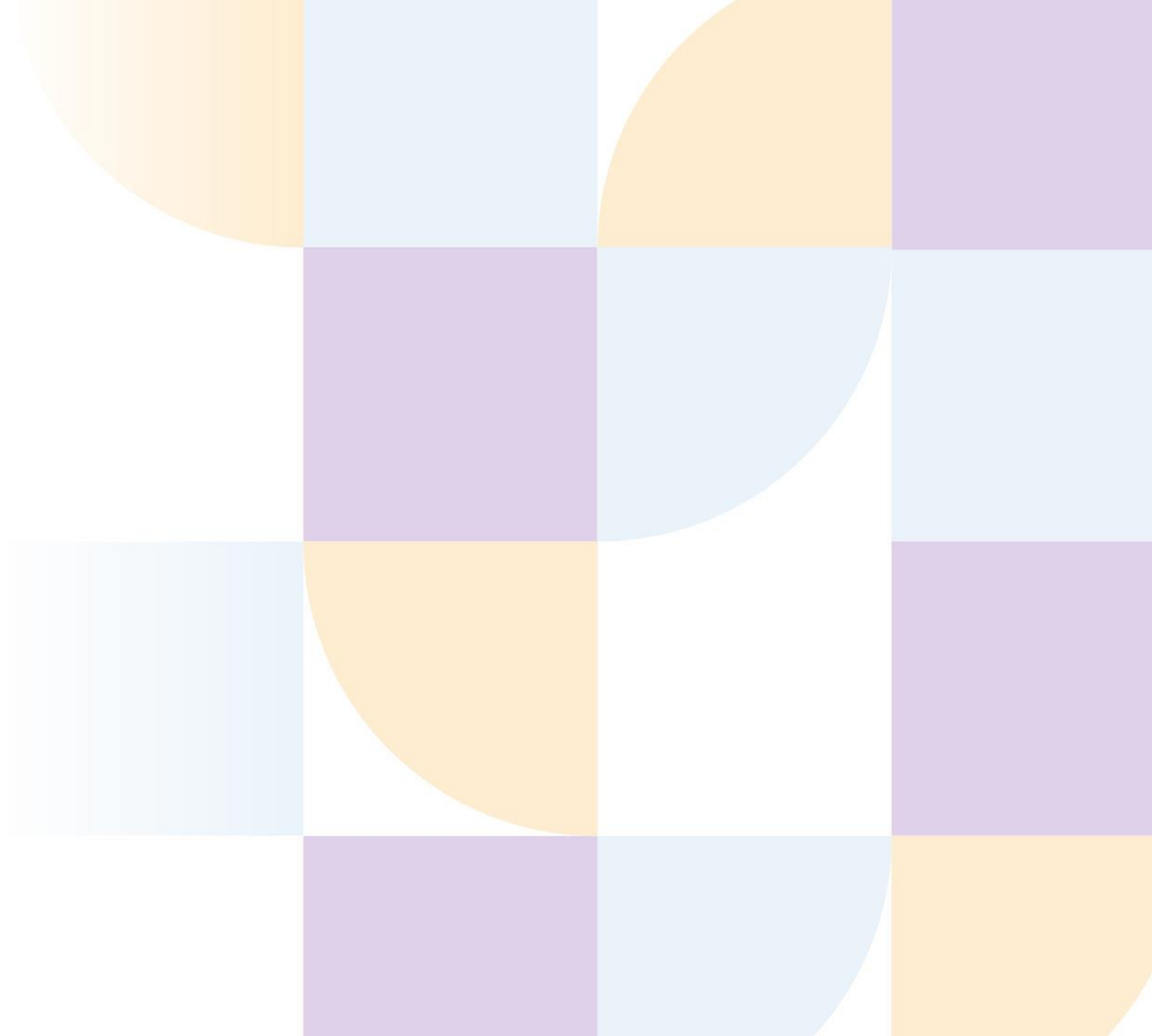


# AgeOptions Work with Partners in Suburban Cook County

- AgeOptions funded housing specialist staff at local ADRCs to address the needs of people in the gap (not yet homeless).
- AgeOptions Partners with:
  - CoC: Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County
    - Education, collaboration & mutual support
  - Legal Assistance Orgs – Doing work on home preservation
  - Local Law Enforcement (Entity serving eviction notices)
  - Agencies engaged in home repairs.
- Mutual Advocacy



**Q&A**



# Outlook for Doors to Housing for Older Adults

## Future Products

- 1. On-demand trainings** for AAA and homeless services partners
  - Building and sustaining partnerships
- 2. Action guide** on developing aging-homelessness partnerships with examples of community-driven solutions
  - Components released periodically
- 3. National call to action and virtual summit**
  - Generate broad-based support from community leaders for aging-homelessness partnerships

# Closing Out

- Stay in Touch
  - Reach out to us at [mfrench@usaging.org](mailto:mfrench@usaging.org) and [ckelly@usaging.org](mailto:ckelly@usaging.org).
- Keep up with us at [usaging.org](https://usaging.org)
  - QR code will take you right to our program
- Take a handout on your way out
- Join us for our housing roundtable
  - Housing Horizons: AAAs Reshaping the Future of Aging in Place
  - Monday, 10:30-11:30 am

