

Theory of Change: People who are stably-housed are healthier, perform better on their jobs and in school, and consume fewer public resources. Increasing the supply of stable housing improves individual lives and communities, saves taxpayer money and creates wealth.

Program Goal: To ensure that vulnerable populations, including the chronically homeless and low-wage workers, as well as those who need assistance building assets, have the opportunity to live in housing that is consistent with their income and service needs.

All proposals submitted to the Foundation should adhere to one of the following strategies:

STRATEGY A

Supportive Housing and Services

Target Population: Homeless and formerly-homeless adults and families.

Components: Provides interim housing, permanent supportive housing or non-housing based supportive services that align with Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness. The primary goal is to house people as quickly as possible (120-day goal for interim-housing) or to provide supportive services that help clients maintain stable housing. Includes comprehensive, intensive case management that may scale down as the household becomes more independent. For those with intensive needs the client/staff ratio is less than 25:1. Services include comprehensive assessment, assistance with public benefits and service linkages.

The Polk Bros. Foundation values programs that assist those hardest to serve using a harm reduction approach. These programs make services available for all consumers, including those with multiple barriers such as mental illness, substance use or high-risk behaviors. Services provided for support are voluntary. Housing is not conditional on participation in services.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Number of clients who enter the program
- Average length of time in program
- Number of clients placed in permanent housing
- Number who maintain stable housing; average length of time stably housed
- Number evicted or asked to leave a housing program because they are not following rules, number who leave the program because they no longer need/desire services, number who leave the program for unknown locations
- Number of clients who increase income/benefits
- Client outcomes related to employment, housing, substance use, health

STRATEGY B

Affordable Rental Housing Production and Preservation

Target Population: Adults and families earning less than 50% of area median income and/or living in buildings with expiring affordability requirements.

Components: Provide activities that increase the housing supply, including support for construction and rehabilitation projects undertaken by nonprofit developers or financial support through nonprofit intermediaries. Includes an experienced development team that promotes community input, local sub-contractor and employment opportunities, tenant leadership development, tenant association formation, and incorporates energy efficient technology.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Number of new units developed or preserved
- Duration of affordability
- Income levels served
- Percentage of household income paid for rent

Social Services

HOUSING

STRATEGY C

Homeownership Support and Preservation

Target Population: Low- to moderate-income first-time homebuyers and homeowners in or at risk of foreclosure.

Components: Provides support for new construction and rehabilitation projects, pre- and post-purchase homebuyer counseling, foreclosure prevention counseling, financial literacy training, credit counseling, legal assistance, home repair, alternative models such as land trusts and employer-assisted housing.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Number of units built or preserved
- Number who receive counseling
- Number of clients who purchase a home
- Number of foreclosures averted
- Number of abandoned properties returned to productive use
- Number of people who improve credit scores

STRATEGY D

Systems Improvement

Target Population: Local, state and federal policymakers; government decision-makers.

Components: : Advocacy for increased financial resources for supportive and affordable housing, advocacy for policies that increase housing supply including inclusionary zoning, density bonus and trust funds, public awareness campaigns, advocacy for removal of barriers that hinder production and increase costs.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Adoption of policies that encourage the development of supportive and affordable housing
- Increased financial resources for housing development