

April 2012

## Housing News:

### Illinois Housing Search Web Site

[ILHousingSearch Web site](#) is Illinois' premier housing locator service, offering almost 6,000 available rental units each day with an equal number of daily searches generated across the state. Property listings include extensive details about amenities, accessibility features, eligibility criteria and photos. Listing and searching is always free, and the service is supported by a toll-free, bilingual call center available to assist landlords, tenants and caseworkers.

[ILHousingSearch Web site](#) also provides the foundation for many creative and effective special needs housing solutions. As programs increase focus on independent living with community-based services, intensive landlord education campaigns and a specialized housing search tool have proven to be essential to successful transitions out of institutionalized settings. By targeting property providers with vacant listings in areas where caseworkers are supporting housing location and service coordination, suitable, affordable units can be placed in a pool of viable housing options, managed by landlords already familiar with programs like Money Follows the Person.

Currently, [SocialServe Web site](#) offers Money Follows the Person transition coordinators access to listings in the ILHousingSearch.org system, flagged for special needs populations. Additionally, the possibility of implementing an outreach campaign in the greater Chicago area that would educate landlords about the benefits of renting to assisted tenants is being explored, which would work in conjunction with e-blasts and marketing pieces that would increase awareness of Money Follows the Person. *\*Courtesy Megan McGinnis of SocialServe.com*

### Section 811 – Project Rental Assistance

The Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) option was authorized under the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act of 2010 to improve supportive housing options for persons with disabilities. The Illinois Housing Development Authority is awaiting final federal guidance before applying for this housing opportunity. One requirement of this funding opportunity is for the state to establish a formal agreement between the housing authority, the Medicaid agency, and the Human Services Agencies. In Illinois, the agreement will be between the Illinois Housing Development Authority, the Department of Healthcare and Family Services, the Department of Human Services, and the Department on Aging. The agreement will focus on the target populations, referral processes, and supportive services that will be in place.

This option will help to create integrated and cost effective supportive housing units in affordable rental housing developments. Section 811 PRA units are projected to cost 60-80% less than traditional 811 units, and funds are to be used only for rental assistance. Individuals eligible for these units will include households with one or more persons with a disability who is at least 18 years old and less than 62 years old, is extremely low income, and who can benefit from the supportive services offered. Low income means someone who is at or below 30% of the Area Median Income level. To ensure integration, the number of units for persons with disabilities cannot exceed 25% of the total units in the housing project.

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### Outreach & Marketing News:

#### Print Material

The new marketing and outreach material developed for the Pathways to Community Living program is now available on the [Pathways to Living Web site](#)! This material is cross population in nature and includes a program brochure, a consumer Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), a general fact sheet, a legislative fact sheet, and program guidance for nursing home administrators and staff. Program staff members are moving forward with the process for printing material for distribution.

#### Web Site –

The [Pathways to Community Living Web site](#) is up and running! The Web site is complete with background on the state and federal program, links to numerous resources, and electronic referral capability. Please send feedback on the Web site to Pathways to Community Living staff by selecting the “contact us” link on the Web site. Additionally, the marketing and outreach material can be downloaded from the Web site.

We appreciate any help in getting the word out on this important program! Please feel free to let others know about the information available on the Pathways to Community Living Web site and through the material available on that site.

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### Implementation of *Colbert* Consent Decree – Paul Bennett Joins HFS

Paul Bennett recently joined HFS’ Chicago Office to serve as the lead staff person responsible for the Implementation Plan on behalf of the *Colbert v. Quinn* Consent Decree. The suit was settled on December 20, 2012, at which time the decree set forth a series of time frames. Plaintiffs in the *Colbert* lawsuit alleged that Defendants have denied them the opportunity to live in appropriate integrated settings where they could lead more independent and productive lives in their own communities. The *Colbert* Consent Decree could potentially affect 16,000 to 20,000 residents of approximately 186 nursing homes in Cook County.

Paul brings much education and expertise to this position. As a Project Director within the University of Illinois–Chicago Department of Disability and Human Development, he worked closely with HFS program staff to implement key provisions of the Pathways to Community Living program and authored several significant reports under a grant used to inform long term care reform. He previously served as Director of a large Case Management Unit serving Chicago's senior population. Paul's knowledge regarding the challenges in transitioning individuals from nursing home care to the community, coupled with his advocacy orientation and ability to view the long term care system across disability populations, makes him an invaluable asset to HFS. Welcome, Paul!

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### Aging and Disability Resource Center Collaboration

A focal point of the Pathways to Community Living program is the ability to use the transition program and enhanced federal dollars to make improvements in Illinois' community based long term care system. As envisioned by the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), along with the Federal Administration on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) are a key partner in effecting system change. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) enabled MFP programs throughout the country to have flexibility in testing new ideas and partnerships and also implementing key policy changes.

In December 2011, the Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) received approval from Federal CMS to utilize MFP/ADRC supplemental funding through Federal CMS to support the hiring of one transition engagement specialist at three Illinois ADRCs; Age Options in suburban Cook County, the Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging in extended suburban Cook County, and the Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging in Peoria. This project will pilot a coordinated, cross disability approach to outreach and the initial screening and enrollment processes for Pathways to Community Living.

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### Division of Mental Health Expansion outside Cook County

In addition to the ADRC collaboration, we are pleased to announce that the Division of Mental Health will be expanding Pathways to Community Living services outside of Cook County. The utilization of enhanced federal match on Pathways to Community Living services, also called "rebalancing funds" is enabling local mental health centers in Springfield and Peoria to hire a transition coordinator that will focus on supporting individuals with mental illness. Rebalancing funds will be utilized to support the housing costs associated with transitioning to the community from a nursing home. The Mental Health Center of Central Illinois in Springfield and Human Services Center in Peoria will be taking part in this initiative.

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### Calendar Year 2012 Transition Statistics:

As of April 5, 2012, the Pathways to Community Living partner agencies have successfully transitioned 526 individuals from institutional settings to Qualified Home and Community Based residences. The total transition goal for this year (2012) is 357 individuals. Thank you to all the transition coordinators and stakeholders for their continued efforts.

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### Future Stakeholder Meetings and Newsletters

Future Pathways to Community Living Stakeholder Committee meetings are fast approaching! They are scheduled for **June 27 and November 7 from 10 a.m. to Noon**. We would like to encourage greater consumer participation in the committee meetings. If you would like to refer an individual or know someone who would like to participate, please let us know! You may [e-mail HFS.MFP](mailto:HFS.MFP) with the information. You can also complete a referral online by visiting the [Pathways to Community Living Web site Online Referral Web page](#).



## Pathways to Community Living Stakeholder Newsletter

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**April 2012**

In addition, future newsletters will be distributed **every other month**. The next newsletter will be sent out in June 2012. Originally planned as a monthly newsletter, feedback received has indicated that a less frequent distribution of the newsletter is preferred. The Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) and partner agencies strive to ensure the newsletter is informative and a valuable piece of information for stakeholders. Communication is a high priority of the Pathways to Community Living Program.

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Sincerely,

Lora McCurdy  
Pathways to Community Living/MFP Project Director  
Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services