



Housing Authority of Cook County 2024 Annual Report

Welcome to HACC's 2024 Annual Report



Our Mission

To support residents of Suburban Cook County with equitable care and resources to attain affordable housing and opportunities to thrive.

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A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Stakeholders,

In 2024, it was both an honor and a privilege to officially introduce myself as the new Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC). I'm proud to lead the second largest housing authority in Illinois and I'm excited to inspire the employees of HACC to renew their commitment to professional excellence. To achieve this, we focused on strategic planning, identifying immediate areas for improvement, and addressing the key obstacles standing in our way. We worked diligently to enhance financial transparency and accountability within the agency, while also strengthening our relationship with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to ensure we met all required deliverables.

HACC successfully completed the Otto Veterans Square property in Chicago Heights and advanced progress on our Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) conversions. We also prioritized sustainability and inclusion, aiming to make our buildings more energy-efficient and accessible to residents with disabilities.

Simultaneously, we made it a priority to better understand the dynamics between union and non-union staff, ultimately overseeing the negotiation of a new collective bargaining agreement. The HACC staff improved customer service and the execution of all voucher programs. Recognizing the evolving landscape of the workplace, the Authority also dedicated new attention to staff performance, working conditions, office spaces, and policies through a post-pandemic lens.

Throughout the year, HACC remained focused on addressing the housing needs of our communities, creating a significant impact for our residents, and building stronger relationships.

At the heart of our success are collaboration and open communication. I encourage each of you to engage with us, share your experiences, and participate in our upcoming events and programs. Together, we can create a thriving community where everyone has access to a safe and affordable place to call home.

Your continued support is vital to our mission, and I look forward to working alongside all of you to improve the lives of our residents.

Thank you for being an invaluable part of our community.

Danita W. Childers
Executive Director



Strategic Planning and Improvements

Under the leadership of Executive Director Danita W. Childers, the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) is undergoing a strategic transformation aimed at enhancing its operational efficiency, financial stability, and service delivery. HACC is committed to becoming a high-performing and exemplary housing authority and has initiated significant corrective actions. These include hiring key finance personnel, reducing reliance on temporary staff, and engaging an external accounting firm that specializes in public housing agencies. Efforts are also underway to convert up to 107 units at Sunrise Apartments into Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) properties, which will ensure long-term financial sustainability and improved housing options. In addition, HACC has prioritized staff development by securing certification training for 40 Housing Specialists, strengthening maintenance policies to address health and safety concerns, and negotiating collective bargaining agreements to support a stable workforce. Looking ahead, HACC's three-year strategic plan targets modernizing operations, expanding affordable housing opportunities, increasing landlord participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, and fostering stronger partnerships with government agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders. By integrating structured financial processes, advancing digital modernization, and reinforcing accountability measures, HACC remains dedicated to delivering equitable housing solutions and cultivating thriving communities throughout suburban Cook County.

HACC's Six Strategic Goals



Become a High Performing and Exemplary Housing Authority



Preserve and maintain HACC's existing portfolio by improving asset management operations



Establish Opportunities for Residents to Thrive and Not Simply Survive



Increase Opportunities to Maximize HACC's Impact



Enhance HCV Program Experience for Residents and Landlords



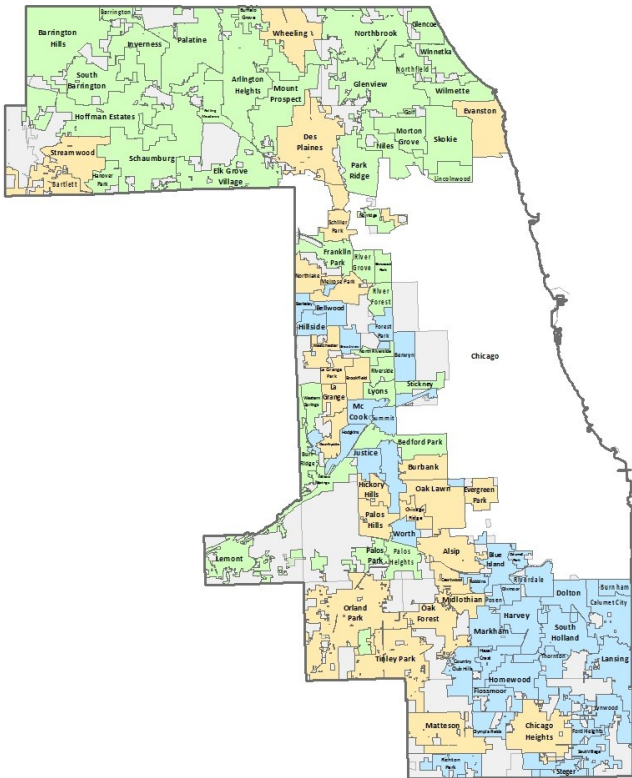
Explore Development and Preservation Goals to Accomplish HACC's Mission

HACC Snapshot

Established in 1946, the Housing Authority of Cook County is the second-largest public housing authority in Illinois, whose jurisdiction spans 108 communities. We are the primary provider of federal housing assistance for renters in suburban Cook, reporting to and receiving funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Service Area

Our jurisdiction spans 108 communities from the northernmost reaches of Cook County to the southernmost. We serve all Cook County municipalities except for the following, which have their own public housing agencies: Cicero, Chicago, Elgin, Maywood, Oak Park, and Park Forest.



179 Full Time Employees



40 Newly Certified Housing Specialists



14,330 Households



26,860 Residents



108 Municipalities

Office Locations

Downtown Office

10 South LaSalle Street, Suite 2200, Chicago, IL 60603

Central Management Office

1710 East End Avenue, Chicago Heights, IL 60411



19 HACC-Owned Properties

Achievements



The Housing Authority's Behavioral Health Care Initiative, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), was recognized as one of Cook County's top-performing resident services programs for 2024 by the National Association of Counties (NaCo). Each year, NaCo honors the achievements of county-based programs, and this year, the HACC BHC Initiative was among the 54 projects from Cook County acknowledged by the organization.



In the fiscal year 2024, over 30 members of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) received more than \$52.2 million in earmark funding. Individual awards ranged from \$45,000 to \$4 million for various projects. The Housing Authority of Cook County was granted \$1,544,000 for capital improvements to its properties, with support from Senator Tammy Duckworth.

Thriving at HACC: A Commitment to Wellness



At HACC, we believe that quality service begins with a balanced workplace. In 2024, our newly formed Health & Wellness Committee launched the HACC Walking Club, which brought together 36 staff members for team bonding and step challenges, fostering camaraderie among participants. Building on this momentum, we plan to expand the initiative in 2025 to include wellness topics such as nutrition, stress management, and preventative healthcare. Additionally, HACC hosted our first Wellness Connection Fair at our 10 S. LaSalle location, where staff from across the County explored physical, mental, and financial wellness services presented by local partners. We are proud of the dedication our team brings to HACC's mission every day, and we are committed to supporting their well-being in a holistic manner.

Our Voucher Programs

HACC oversees various affordable housing initiatives funded by HUD, including Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), Project-Based Vouchers (PBV), Multifamily/Low-Income Public Housing (MF/LIPH), and Special Program Vouchers. These programs, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, are implemented by 3,300 local Public Housing Authorities and serve over 5 million households across the nation.

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)

Formerly known as Section 8, the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is the primary low-income housing assistance initiative managed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It serves approximately 2.2 million households nationwide, which is about 45% of all households receiving HUD vouchers. Through this program, renters can use their vouchers to rent any approved unit in the private market, typically paying 30% of their adjusted gross income. The Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) covers the remaining balance directly to the landlord. These vouchers provide tenants with the opportunity to access a wider variety of neighborhoods and housing types, allowing them to choose a unit that best meets their needs and preferences.



14,330 HCV Vouchers

Project-Based Voucher (PBV)

The Project-Based Voucher (PBV) program, a component of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, allocates up to 20% of its HCV vouchers to provide place-based subsidies within HACC's service area. Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) contract with property owners, who set aside units for tenants eligible for that location. Similar to the HCV program, PBV renters across HACC's 43 PBV properties pay 30% of their gross income to the property owner, while HACC covers the remaining balance.



1,496 PBV Vouchers

Multifamily & Low-Income Public Housing (MF - LIPH)

Low-Income Public Housing (LIPH) is the oldest housing subsidy program in the United States and is the smallest of the three main voucher programs, serving approximately 970,000 households nationwide. In line with the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) efforts to provide more diverse housing options for low-income renters, Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) can re-designate LIPH properties as Affordable Multifamily or Project-Based housing. This encourages mixed-income living environments where residents can thrive. Out of the 19 properties owned by HACC, 4 are still designated as LIPH, while the remaining 15 are classified as Affordable Multifamily.



1,907 Multifamily & LIPH Vouchers

Providing Stable Housing to Help Residents Thrive

In Cook County, nearly half of all households spend 30% to 50% of their income on rent and utilities. This growing cost burden is making stable housing increasingly difficult for many renters in the area. To address these challenges and provide essential housing options for residents who are at a higher risk of housing instability, the Housing Authority of Cook County offers Special Purpose Vouchers. These vouchers provide targeted support to individuals and families who are working towards achieving lasting housing stability and self-sufficiency.

Fostering a Brighter Future

The Family Unification Program (FUP) helps families at risk of separation by providing access to reliable housing. This support aims to create and maintain stable households, ultimately promoting family well-being. For young people aging out of foster care, FUP-Youth (FUP-Y) and Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers offer affordable housing along with essential support services. These initiatives significantly reduce the risk of homelessness among this vulnerable population.



501 FUP & FYI Vouchers

Combating Homelessness

In 2024, homelessness reached a record high, with 771,480 individuals experiencing it across the nation—an 18% increase compared to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) count in 2023. The Housing Authority of Cook County helped address this crisis by providing direct rental assistance through the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program, aiding 302 unhoused and at-risk individuals referred through the Cook County Continuum of Care.



580 EHV Issued

Housing Heroes

The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program offers housing and social services to U.S. veterans who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) collaborates with the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs to provide rental assistance and comprehensive case management services for the many local heroes in Cook County.



371 VASH Vouchers

Accessible Housing for All

Individuals with disabilities frequently encounter significant challenges in obtaining housing, including issues related to affordability and a lack of accessible units. Mainstream Vouchers aim to address these barriers by assisting non-elderly individuals with disabilities in finding safe and affordable housing, allowing them to live independently.



180 Mainstream Vouchers

Our Housing Communities

At the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC), we are proud to serve a diverse network of communities through a portfolio of 19 HACC-owned properties across suburban Cook County. From high-rise senior residences to family-focused apartment complexes, our housing options are designed to meet the unique needs of residents at every stage of life. Each community reflects our commitment to providing safe, affordable, and well-maintained housing—offering more than just a place to live, but a foundation for stability, opportunity, and growth.



Albert Goedke Apartments

- 215 W. Miner Street, Arlington Heights, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 118



Armond King Apartments

- 9238 Gross Point Rd, Skokie, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 126



Edward Brown Apartments

- 3210 139th St, Robbins, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 72



Family Scattered Sites

- Evanston, IL
- Low-Income Public Housing
- Units: 45



Family Scattered Sites

- Wheeling, IL
- Low-Income Public Housing
- Units: 13



Franklin Tower

- 9535 W. Franklin Avenue, Franklin Park, IL
- Project Based Voucher
- Units: 125



Golden Towers

- 1706 East End Ave, Chicago Heights, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 125



Henrich House

- 1301 Ashland, Des Plaines, IL
- Project Based Voucher
- Units: 127



Huntington Apartments

- 1301 Ashland, Des Plaines, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 126

Our Housing Communities



Jane R. Perlman Apartments

- 1900 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 100



Juniper Tower

- 350 Juniper Street, Park Forest, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 105



Otto Veterans Square

- 1440 Otto Blvd, Chicago Heights, IL
- Project Based Voucher
- Units: 82



Richard Flowers Community Housing

- 13900 S Grace Ave, Robbins, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 100



Sunrise Apartments

- 1314 Wentworth Ave, Chicago Heights, IL
- Low-Income Public Housing
- Units: 107



Summit Senior Housing

- 7455 W 63rd Pl, Summit, IL 60501
- Low-Income Public Housing
- Units: 78



Turlington West Apartments

- 15306 Robey Ave, Harvey, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 148



Vera Yates Homes

- 1055 Berkeley, Ford Heights, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 115



Victor Walchirk Apartments

- 2300 Noyes Ct, Evanston, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 99



Wheeling Tower

- 200 N Milwaukee Ave, Wheeling, IL
- Affordable Multi-Family Housing
- Units: 98

Demographics

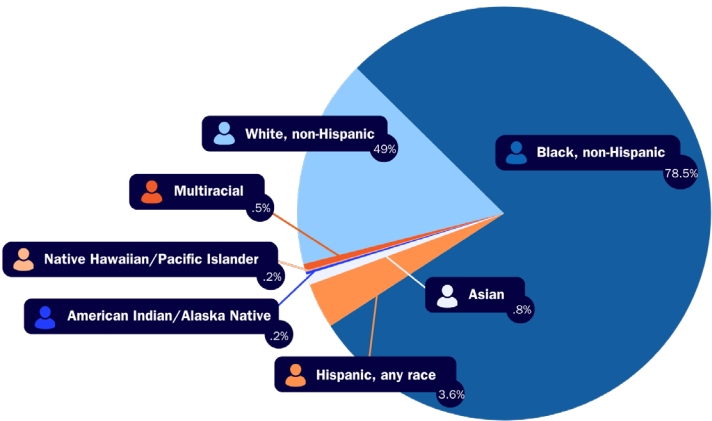
Supporting Families

HACC's housing voucher program supports various family structures, including single-parent households and larger families, in their journey toward independence. Additionally, the agency manages three family-oriented properties: Vera Yates Homes in Ford Heights, Sunrise Apartments in Chicago Heights, and Richard Flowers Community Housing in Robbins.



17% of HACC's Head of Households are male.

83% of HACC's Head of Households are female.

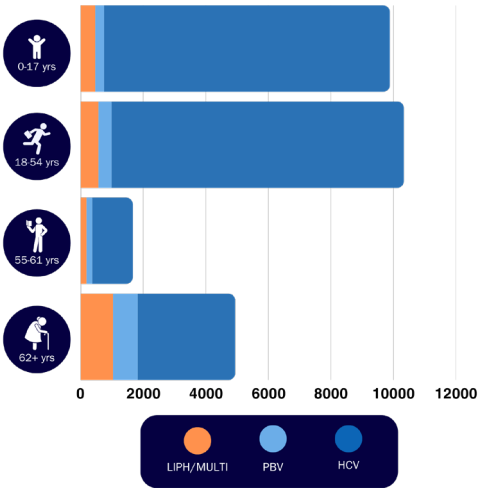


Addressing Inequity

In Cook County, the housing crisis extends beyond the simple lack of affordable units; it is also a racial equity issue rooted in decades of discriminatory policies and practices that have widened the wealth gap between white and Black residents. Affordable housing voucher programs, such as those administered by HACC, are essential in addressing this disparity. By providing a stable foundation, these programs enable Black and other BIPOC renters to achieve self-sufficiency, maintain their physical and mental health, succeed in the workforce, and ultimately thrive independently.

Stability for All Ages

Rising housing and maintenance costs are affecting households across all age groups. While all low-income renters face challenges in achieving housing stability, older adults and families with children are particularly impacted. The Housing Authority of the City of Camden's (HACC) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program serves residents at every stage of life. It helps individuals find homes that meet their needs and provides seniors with accessible and affordable options that enable them to age in place with dignity.



Financial Overview

Financial responsibility and transparency are paramount priorities to the Housing Authority. The financial overview below provides a summary of funding sources for FY 2024 and how those funds were allocated to vital housing programs, and community initiatives.

Operating revenues:	Primary Government	Discretely Presented Component Units	Total Reporting Entity (Memorandum Only)
Tenant revenue	\$ 794,368	\$ 12,581,521	\$ 13,375,889
HUD operating grants	163,707,019	-	163,707,019
Other government grants	20,909,913	-	20,909,913
Other revenues	<u>10,360,499</u>	<u>244,674</u>	<u>10,605,173</u>
Total operating revenues	<u>195,771,799</u>	<u>12,826,195</u>	<u>208,597,994</u>
Operating expenses:			
Administrative	18,556,553	3,246,077	21,802,630
Tenant services	521,173	-	521,173
Utilities	262,516	1,595,694	1,858,210
Ordinary repairs and maintenance	1,761,458	4,055,736	5,817,194
Protective services	13,861	62,601	76,462
Insurance	540,765	939,181	1,479,946
General expenses	713,866	2,553,712	3,267,578
Housing assistance payments	170,986,927	-	170,986,927
Amortization	268,920	-	268,920
Depreciation	<u>573,279</u>	<u>6,440,368</u>	<u>7,013,647</u>
Total operating expenses	<u>194,199,318</u>	<u>18,893,369</u>	<u>213,092,687</u>
Operating income (loss)	<u>1,572,481</u>	<u>(6,067,174)</u>	<u>(4,494,693)</u>
Non-operating revenues (expenses):			
Investment income	165,142	580,497	745,639
Interest expense	<u>(135,743)</u>	<u>(3,822,079)</u>	<u>(3,957,822)</u>
Net non-operating revenues (expenses)	<u>29,399</u>	<u>(3,241,582)</u>	<u>(3,212,183)</u>
Income (loss) before capital grants	1,601,880	(9,308,756)	(7,706,876)
Capital grants	<u>1,548,615</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,548,615</u>
Change in net position	3,150,495	(9,308,756)	(6,158,261)
Total net position, beginning of year	<u>115,402,292</u>	<u>89,359,424</u>	<u>204,761,716</u>
Total net position, end of year	\$ <u>118,552,787</u>	\$ <u>80,050,668</u>	\$ <u>198,603,455</u>

HACC's Newest Development



Honoring Veterans with a New Place to Call Home

The Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) proudly celebrated a significant housing milestone with the grand opening of Otto Veterans Square in Chicago Heights, located in the South Suburbs. This 82-unit, four-story community at 1440 Otto Boulevard is designed to provide safe, high-quality housing for those who have served our country. On September 13, 2024, HACC was joined by Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Chicago Heights Mayor David Gonzalez, HACC Executive Director Danita W. Childers, and other partners for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the opening of this innovative project. Following the ceremony, attendees toured the \$30 million development. In collaboration with the architecture firm HED (Harvey Ellis Devereaux), Otto Veterans Square offers modern and thoughtfully designed apartments, along with community spaces tailored to the unique needs of veterans. These amenities include a media room, fitness center, walking paths, and on-site social services provided by Respond Now. Otto Veterans Square represents more than just housing; it is a milestone in the community's progress. As the first development to emerge from the Downtown/East Side Chicago Heights Choice Neighborhood Plan, Otto reflects a shared commitment between HACC and the City to uplift veterans in the community. This investment, supported by a \$350,000 HUD grant, addresses a critical need for veteran housing while contributing to the economic revitalization of Chicago Heights. At HACC, we are proud to honor those who have served by ensuring that every veteran has a place to call home.



Otto Veterans Square Housing



Located at 1440 Otto Blvd. in Chicago Heights, Otto Veterans Square Housing is privately owned and operated. Residents are required to pay 30% of their income toward rent, with the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) subsidizing the remainder. Otto Veterans Square offers one- and two-bedroom project-based voucher (PBV) units specifically for veterans.



Amenities



Handicap Accessible



Laundry Facilities



On-Site Parking



Fitness Room



Community Room



Community Garden



HACC's Community Impact



Forest Preserve Experience

For ten consecutive summers, the Forest Preserve Experience (FPE) program has provided HACC youth with more than just a summer job; it offers a vital opportunity for them to recognize and achieve their full potential. Designed for teens aged 14-18 and in collaboration with the Friends of the Forest Preserves, this six-week paid work program combines environmental education with personal growth and development opportunities. Participants develop leadership skills, gain workforce experience, and build a deeper connection with nature. With over 70,000 acres of land, the Forest Preserves of Cook County is the largest forest preserve district in Illinois and one of the largest in the nation, making it the perfect setting for young people to make a significant impact. At the end of the summer, participants and staff gather at South Suburban College for a graduation ceremony to celebrate another successful season of ecological restoration and personal development.

The event honors the dedication of 71 participants and 16 team leaders, who arrived at their job sites each day ready to make a difference in the South Suburbs. Attendees heard participants share reflections on their diverse experiences with the program—ranging from environmental justice tours and museum visits to canoeing trips—and featured presentations on species native to the preserves. Special guests, including Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, attended to recognize the achievements and impact of this year's cohort. The FPE helps close the "environmental gap" that disproportionately affects Black and Hispanic communities by offering youth opportunities to build confidence, develop social skills, and enhance their well-being, all while restoring and preserving the natural spaces in their neighborhoods. Thanks to the continued support of HACC, Cook County, and the Friends of the Forest Preserves, the program continues to grow, empowering young people to create positive change in their communities and futures.

"My experience with FPE was life-changing. I've formed new bonds, learned a lot, and found peace in nature. This is something I'd love to pursue in college."- **Mia A.**



Supporting Families with Essentials

Nearly 1 in 4 students in the U.S. lacks access to basic school supplies, which is a significant national issue that can negatively impact their academic success and engagement. In response, HACC hosted back-to-school backpack distribution events in August 2024 at its three family sites: Richard Flowers Community Housing (Robbins), Vera Yates Homes (Ford Heights), and Sunrise Apartments (Chicago Heights). HACC volunteers distributed 500 backpacks filled with essential school supplies, ensuring that students felt confident and prepared for the new school year.

Recognizing the broader needs of residents, HACC followed this effort with a winter coat drive in November at the same properties. More than 425 coats were distributed, providing families with essential protection against the harsh Midwest winter. These community-based initiatives reflect HACC's holistic approach to resident support, extending services beyond housing to promote educational achievement, personal well-being, and a greater sense of security for our families.



500 Backpacks

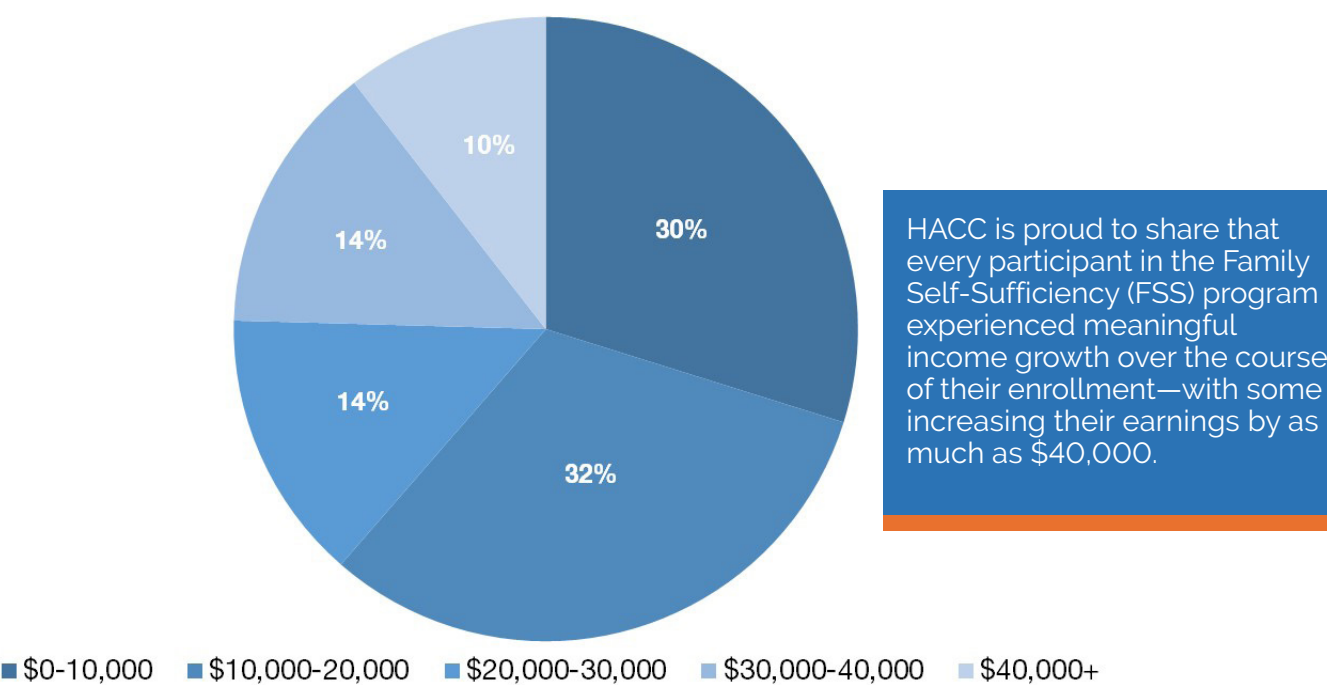


425 Coats

Empowering Residents Toward Independence

HACC's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) initiative provides residents with a structured path toward economic mobility. With the support of dedicated FSS Coordinators, participants set personalized goals—such as completing educational or workforce training, reducing debt, or becoming homeowners—and receive one-on-one guidance to help them overcome challenges along the way. The program empowers residents to develop essential life skills and take meaningful steps toward long-term financial stability without jeopardizing their housing security. As a participants income increases, the difference is placed into a HACC-managed escrow account, which is paid out upon successful completion of the program. This approach allows participants to pursue more fulfilling jobs and educational opportunities without the fear of exceeding income limits and losing their vouchers.

Increasing Income for Participants in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program



Success Stories from Our FSS Participants

“The most I've taken from the FSS Program was the mission to set up those goals for yourself. The idea of setting up goals gave me the feeling of some of the best quality missions. I'm still working to further myself in some of these goals. I can go further in becoming a homeowner. My financial literacy can go so much further in accomplishment. Even the money management, this is only a stepping stone for that mission to accomplished. Nevertheless this gift is something I can truly use. Thank you so much.” - **T. Burchett**

“The best thing about being in the FSS program was like being in an exclusive club! It gave me the opportunity for growth and an opportunity for hope. It has given me the hope that I (we) can do, must do better if I tried harder. I wanted to try harder for my kids that I wanted to give them hope and a better life by seeing their Mom live a better life using this program.” - **H.Lewis**



ARPA Behavioral Health: Two Years of Impact

In March 2023, HACC launched its Behavioral Health Coordination Program, funded by ARPA. This initiative brings on-site caseworkers to 16 different properties to help residents access behavioral health services, obtain resource referrals, and participate in social activities that promote their overall well-being. In collaboration with Impact Behavioral Health in the North region and Grand Prairie Services in the South, HACC has supported 300 public housing residents to date with comprehensive wraparound services aimed at fostering self-sufficiency and enhancing quality of life. While permanent, affordable housing is essential for stability, it does not fully address the wide range of challenges faced by low-income families, such as limited access to childcare, education, job opportunities, food security, and mental health services. Our holistic approach to supporting residents' health, made possible through ARPA funding, continues to provide significant benefits and guide residents on their journey to wellness. HACC is deeply grateful to Impact Behavioral Health, Grand Prairie Services, and our dedicated team for their efforts in making this program possible and for improving lives across Cook County.



Board of Commissioners



Wendy Walker Williams | Chair



Polly Kuehl | Vice Chair



Elaine Kroll | Commissioner



Herb Porter | Commissioner



Dr. Normah Salleh-Barone | Commissioner



Eric L. Slaughter | Commissioner



Nilda Soler | Commissioner

Together, We Make a Difference

As we reflect on the progress made in 2024, the Housing Authority of Cook County extends our deepest gratitude to our stakeholders, partners, and community advocates. Your continued support and belief in our mission have made it possible to expand opportunities, improve housing stability, and enrich the lives of thousands of residents across Suburban Cook County. With your collaboration, we've not only addressed critical housing needs but also invested in programs that promote education, economic mobility, and community wellness. Together, we are building stronger, more equitable communities and we look forward to continuing this work with you in the years ahead.



**Housing Authority of
COOK COUNTY**