

Chicago Department of Family and Support Services

# NEWS RELEASE



City of Chicago  
Richard M. Daley, Mayor  
Mary Ellen Caron, Commissioner

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## **CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND SUPPORT SERVICES AND CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS ANNOUNCE \$3 MILLION IN STIMULUS FOR NEW HOMELESS STUDENT SUPPORT INITIATIVE**

**June 18, 2009** – Today, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) together with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) announced plans to utilize \$3 million in Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to support the Homeless Student Support Initiative. The pilot program will provide 500 CPS families in Chicago’s Englewood community with primary housing and employment assistance, as well as other supportive services as needed, during the 2009-2010 school year.

“A student’s success in the classroom relies in large part on the quality of life at home,” said Commissioner Mary Ellen Caron, Ph.D., Chicago Department of Family and Support Services. “The Homeless Student Support Initiative is a new strategy that allows us to address the basic needs of the entire household to foster a stable home life for our families, and ultimately advance the educational achievement of our CPS students.”

The Homeless Student Support Initiative will provide assistance to CPS students, as well as all household members who are affected by housing instability including parents, grandparents, siblings, and non-relatives. Services available to students can include, but are not limited to, access to after-school or summer activities, after-school care and health services. Services available to household members can include, but are not limited to, child care, job-training, credit repair assistance, health services, housing assistance, benefits enrollment and senior services.

“With more than 12,000 identified homeless students within the Chicago Public School system, funding support to address the needs and student living conditions of homeless students is crucial to their ability to learn and receive a quality education,” said Chicago Public Schools CEO Ron Huberman. “Collectively, we must continue to find ways to support after school programs, tutors and volunteers who provide a network of services to these families and students.”

The pilot program will target Englewood community families enrolled in CPS' Homeless Education Program that works to ensure homeless students have access to free and appropriate educational opportunities. The Homeless Student Support Initiative will focus on those families who are not yet in shelter, but qualify as "doubled up" (i.e. living with friends or relatives) and therefore may be at-risk of further displacement. All households served must be at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

In conjunction with the announcement, DFSS released the Homeless Student Support Initiative Request for Proposals (RFP), available now through July 9 at [www.cityofchicago.org/recovery](http://www.cityofchicago.org/recovery). The RFP will serve to identify community-based partners to provide supportive services to participating CPS families.

The Homeless Student Support Initiative RFP is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private and public. The term of contracts executed under this RFP will be from August 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010.

DFSS will host a Bidders Conference on Thursday, June 25, 2009, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Martin Luther King Community Service Center, 4314 S. Cottage Grove Ave. DFSS will also provide technical assistance to agencies not familiar with the RFP process.

For more information on CPS' Homeless Education Program, call 773-553-2242.

DFSS is dedicated to supporting a continuum of coordinated services to enhance the lives of Chicago residents, particularly those most in need, from birth through the senior years. For more information about DFSS, call 312-743-0300 or visit [www.cityofchicago.org/fss](http://www.cityofchicago.org/fss).

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