

Family Resource Guide

A Starting Point for Help in Illinois

June 2026



**The Illinois
ACEs Response
Collaborative**

a program of
**HEALTH & MEDICINE
POLICY RESEARCH GROUP**

**HEALTH &
MEDICINE**
POLICY RESEARCH GROUP

How to Use This Guide

This guide was created to help Illinois families find support for everyday needs, such as food, housing, health care, and more. Throughout the guide, you will find statewide resources that serve as a starting point for connecting with services near you.

To use this guide, start with the table of contents below to find the type of help you need. Then, click on or scroll down to that section to explore available resources and ways to find help in your area.

When you find something that might work for you, you can call, text, or visit to learn more. You do not need to have everything figured out before reaching out.

CONTENTS

Click on a section below to jump to that page.

Introduction	3
Food	4
Housing	6
Health Care	8
Mental Health/Crisis Support	11
Economic Assistance	16

If You Need Help Right Now

For immediate or emergency assistance, contact one of the 24/7 help lines below.

- **Call or text 211** to connect with basic resources, such as emergency shelter, groceries, and more.
- **Call or text 988** for mental health or crisis support.
- **Call 911** if you are in immediate danger or experiencing an emergency.

Introduction

What to Expect When Looking for Help

Finding resources can feel hard, especially when you are dealing with stress, uncertainty, or a difficult situation. It's okay to take it one step at a time. Here are some tips and things to expect as you use this guide:

- If many things feel hard right now, start with your most urgent need.
- You may need to contact more than one resource. Different programs have different eligibility requirements and availability.
- It's ok to ask questions and request more information to understand your options before accepting help.
- Keep important information nearby, as some programs may ask for income and other information.
- You do not need to share personal information beyond what feels comfortable.
- Ask for an interpreter if you need one.
- You have the right to choose which services feel right for you.
- If you start to feel overwhelmed, it's ok to take breaks and return when you are ready.

For Organizations, Providers, and Advocates

For guidance on making referrals using this resource guide, check out the ***Trauma-Informed Referrals Guide*** developed by Health & Medicine Policy Research Group. The guide provides practical tips on engaging families and facilitating connections to resources using trauma-informed principles.



Click to download the
***Trauma-Informed Referrals
Guide***

Food



Statewide Resources

Illinois 211

- Helps with:** Referrals to local food pantries and meal programs
- Who it's for:** Anyone in Illinois
- How to access:** • Call or text 211
• Use the [online statewide directory](#)
Available 24/7
- Languages:** Multiple
-

Feeding Illinois

- Helps with:** Local food pantries and distribution sites across the state
- Who it's for:** Anyone in Illinois
- How to access:** Visit the [website](#) to find food in your area
- Languages:** Varies by site
-

Public Assistance

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- Helps with:** Monthly food benefits to pay for groceries
- Who it's for:** Individuals and families who qualify based on income and other requirements
- How to access:** There are three ways to apply:
- In person at your local Family Community Resource Center. Use this [office locator](#) to find the nearest location.
 - Online at abe.illinois.gov/access
 - Over the phone by calling (800) 843-6154
- Find more information at wegotyouillinois.org/snap
- Languages:** Multiple

Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)

- Helps with:** Food, formula, nutrition education, and healthcare referrals
- Who it's for:** Pregnant and postpartum individuals and infants up to age 5
- How to access:** Find a local WIC office and eligibility information at wegotyouillinois.org/wic/
- Languages:** Varies by site

Chicago Resources

Greater Chicago Food Depository

- Helps with:** Local food pantries and distribution sites across Chicago and Cook County. SNAP application assistance is also offered.
- Who it's for:** Chicago and Cook County residents
- How to access:** • Use the [food locator map](#) to find food in your area
• Call (773) 247-3663 for assistance with SNAP enrollment
- Language:** Varies by site

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Chicago

- Helps with:** Food pantries, community meals, nutrition education, and referral services
- Who it's for:** Chicago, Cook County, and Lake County residents
- How to access:** • Visit the [website](#) for locations and more information.
• Call (312) 655-7700 weekdays from 8:30am to 4:30pm
- Language:** Varies by site

Housing



Statewide Resources

Illinois 211

Helps with:	Referrals to emergency shelter, rental assistance, and eviction prevention
Who it's for:	Anyone in Illinois
How to access:	• Call or text 211 • Use the online statewide directory Available 24/7
Languages:	Multiple

Illinois Department of Human Services

Helps with:	General information on where to seek housing and homelessness resources
Who it's for:	Illinois residents
How to access:	• Visit the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness FAQ page • Call the Customer Help Line: 1-800-843-6154
Languages:	Multiple

Chicago Resources

Homelessness Prevention Call Center (HPCC)

Helps with:	Referrals to prevention resources and short-term financial assistance (subject to availability)
Who it's for:	Metro Chicago area residents
How to access:	Call 311 and request financial assistance
Languages:	Multiple

Rental Assistance Program (RAP)

- Helps with:** Short-term rental assistance for Chicago residents at risk of homelessness (subject to availability)
- Who it's for:** Chicago residents regardless of immigration status
- How to access:** • Apply [online](#)
• Call or visit your nearest Community Service Center (CSC) for in-person assistance. [Find a CSC near you.](#)
- Languages:** English and Spanish

Eviction Prevention and Tenants Rights

Illinois Legal Aid—Get Legal Help Tool

- Helps with:** Referrals to legal assistance for evictions and tenants' rights issues
- Who it's for:** Anyone in Illinois
- How to access:** Complete the [online form](#) or text 'eviction' to ILAOLegal at 85622
- Languages:** English and Spanish

Cook County Legal Aid for Housing and Debt (CCLAHD)

- Helps with:** Resources for residents facing eviction, foreclosure, consumer debt, and tax deed issues
- Who it's for:** Cook County residents regardless of income, language, or immigration status
- How to access:** Learn more at www.cookcountylegalaid.org or by call the helpline at 855-956-5763
- Languages:** Multiple

Health Care



Statewide Resources

Illinois 211

- Helps with:** Referrals to clinics, insurance enrollment, dental care, mental health services, and low-cost medical care near you
- Who it's for:** Anyone in Illinois
- How to access:** • Call or text 211
• Use the [online statewide directory](#)
Available 24/7
- Languages:** Multiple
-

Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)

- Helps with:** A listing of medical and health care programs and services offered by IDHS and other state agencies, including programs for special populations
- Who it's for:** Illinois residents; eligibility varies by program
- How to access:** Explore the [online listing](#) of services
- Languages:** Multiple
-

Get Covered Illinois

- Helps with:** Finding health insurance coverage through the state's marketplace
- Who it's for:** Illinois residents who are uninsured or recently lost coverage
- How to access:** During the annual open enrollment period (typically in the fall):*
- Apply online at getcovered.illinois.gov
 - Call the Customer Assistance Center at (866) 311-1119, Monday through Friday, 8 am–6 pm
 - Find a local certified navigator or broker to help you understand your options using this [online search tool](#)
- Language:** Multiple

**If you missed the open enrollment period, you may be eligible for a Special Enrollment Period for a qualifying life event.*

Illinois Association of Free and Charitable Clinics

Helps with:	Finding free primary care, dental care, and specialty services
Who it's for:	Uninsured and underinsured Illinois residents
How to access:	Use their directory and interactive map to find a clinic near you
Language:	Varies by site

Public Assistance

Medicaid

Helps with:	Health care benefits for low-income individuals and families
Who it's for:	Children, adults, pregnant individuals, and people with disabilities who qualify based on income and other requirements
How to access:	There are three ways to apply: • In person at your local Family Community Resource Center. Use this office locator to find the nearest location. • Online at abe.illinois.gov/access • Over the phone by calling (800) 843-6154
Languages:	Multiple

Chicago Resources

211 Metro Chicago

Helps with:	Referrals to local health care resources
Who it's for:	Chicago and suburban Cook County residents
How to access:	• Call 211 • Text your ZIP code to 898-211 • Chat online Available 24/7, 365 days/year
Languages:	Multiple

Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Health Clinics

Helps with:	Immunization, STI treatment, and other preventative services free of charge to Chicagoans unable to pay
Who it's for:	Chicago residents
How to access:	Visit the website for a listing of clinic locations
Languages:	Varies by site

Mental Health and Crisis Support



If you or a loved one is in danger or experiencing a medical emergency, please **call 911 immediately**.

Crisis Support and Helplines

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Helps with:	Free and confidential mental health crisis support available 24/7, 365 days a year
Who it's for:	Anyone
How to access:	Call or text 988
Languages:	Multiple

Illinois CARES Line

Helps with:	Telephonic emotional support, local resources, and mobile crisis care available 24/7, 365 days a year
Who it's for:	Illinois residents
How to access:	Call (800) 345-9049
Languages:	Multiple

Chicago CARE Program

Helps with:	Mobile crisis support, brief on-site counseling, community resource referrals, and transport to community-based destinations by trained behavioral health professionals
Who it's for:	Chicago residents
How to access:	Call 911 and ask for the CARE team, Mon–Fri, 10:30 am–4:00 pm
Languages:	English and Spanish

Living Room Program

Helps with: Free, walk-in crisis respite centers offering de-escalation and stabilization support provided by peer support specialists

Who it's for: Adults 18+ in Illinois

How to access: See this [listing of locations](#) to find a center nearest you

Languages: Varies by site

Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline

Helps with: Free and confidential crisis safety planning, referrals, and support services to survivors of domestic violence and concerned loved ones. Available 24/7.

Who it's for: Anyone in Illinois

How to access: Call or text (877) 863-6338 (877-TO END DV)

Languages: Multiple

National Sexual Assault Hotline

Helps with: Free, confidential support, information, and referrals for survivors of assault, available 24/7

Who it's for: Anyone

How to access: • Call (800) 656-HOPE (4673)
• Text HOPE to 64673
• [Chat online](#)

Languages: English and Spanish

National Child Abuse Hotline

Helps with: Free support and guidance provided by crisis counselors for anyone concerned about or affected by child abuse, available 24/7

Who it's for: Anyone

How to access: • Call or text (800) 422-4453
• [Chat online](#)

Languages: Multiple

LGBT National Hotline

Helps with: Free, confidential peer-support, information, and local resources on sexual orientation or gender identity/expression issues

Who it's for: Anyone

How to access: Call (888) 843-4564
Available Mon–Fri, 1:00–10:00 p.m. CT
Sat, 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. CT

Languages: Multiple

Trans Lifeline

Helps with: Free, confidential peer-run helpline for trans and trans-questioning individuals

Who it's for: Anyone

How to access: Call (877) 565-8860
Available Mon–Fri, 12 PM – 8 PM Central

Languages: English and Spanish

The Trevor Project

Helps with: Free, confidential crisis support for LGBTQ+ youth

Who it's for: Youth ages 13 to 24

How to access: • Call 1-866-488-7386
• Text START to 678-678
• [Chat online](#)

Languages: English and Spanish

Statewide Resources

Illinois Warm Line

Helps with: Free non-crisis emotional support, recovery education, self-advocacy support, and referrals

Who it's for: Anyone in Illinois

How to access: Call (866) 359-7953, Mon–Sat, 8 a.m.–8 p.m

Languages: Multiple

BEACON

Helps with: Central hub for state-funded and community-based services for youth

Who it's for: Parents, caregivers, and service providers in Illinois

How to access: • Visit beacon.illinois.gov and select “Get Started” to enter a case
• Complete the intake questions to get a tailored list of state-funded and community-based services
• You can request to be connected to the BEACON team for direct help
• A Resource Coordinator will contact you within 24 hours to guide you through the consent forms
• The BEACON team will start working on your case

Languages: Multiple

Chicago Resources

211 Metro Chicago

- Helps with:** Referrals to local mental health resources
- Who it's for:** Chicago and suburban Cook County residents
- How to access:**
- Call 211
 - Text your ZIP code to 898-211
 - [Chat online](#)
- Available 24/7, 365 days/year
- Languages:** Multiple
-

Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Mental Health Centers

- Helps with:** Outpatient mental health services for adults and youth free of charge for Chicagoans unable to pay
- Who it's for:** Chicago residents
- How to access:**
- For help on getting started, call The Greater Lawn West 55th Street Health Hub at (312) 747-1020
 - [Visit the website or use the interactive map](#) to find a listing of location of CDPH mental health centers and partner providers
- Languages:** English and Spanish

Economic Assistance



Statewide Resources

Illinois 211

- Helps with:** Referrals to local cash assistance programs (subject to availability)
- Who it's for:** Anyone in Illinois
- How to access:** • Call or text 211
• Use the [online statewide directory](#)
Available 24/7
- Languages:** Multiple
-

Help Illinois Families Program

- Helps with:** Utility bills (LIHEAP), rent, financial management, employment, and other assistance for eligible households (subject to availability)
- Who it's for:** Illinois residents who qualify based on income and other requirements
- How to access:** Fill out and submit a Request for Services form:
• [Cook County form](#)
• [Other Counties form](#)
• Call the Help Illinois Families call center at (833) 711-0374
- Languages:** English and Spanish

Public Assistance

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- Helps with:** Temporary financial assistance for pregnant individuals and families with one or more dependent children to help pay for food, shelter, utilities, and expenses other than medical costs
- Who it's for:** Children, adults, pregnant individuals, and people with disabilities who qualify based on income and other requirements
- How to access:** There are three ways to apply:
- In person at your local Family Community Resource Center. Use this [office locator](#) to find the nearest location.
 - Online at abe.illinois.gov/access
 - Over the phone by calling (800) 843-6154
- Languages:** Multiple

Chicago Resources

211 Metro Chicago

- Helps with:** Referrals to local economic assistance programs, utility bill assistance, and job resources
- Who it's for:** Chicago and suburban Cook County residents
- How to access:**
- Call 211
 - Text your ZIP code to 898-211
 - [Chat online](#)
Available 24/7, 365 days/year
- Languages:** Multiple

About Us

Illinois ACEs Response Collaborative

Established in 2011, the Illinois ACEs Response Collaborative (the Collaborative) works to catalyze a cross-sector movement to prevent trauma and promote thriving across the lifespan and to place the impact of childhood experience at the forefront of the equity agenda in Illinois. The Collaborative envisions a thriving and equitable Illinois in which individuals, families, communities, and all systems and sectors work together to prevent trauma, heal, and flourish.

Learn more by visiting hmprg.org/programs/illinois-aces-response-collaborative/

Health & Medicine Policy Research Group

Health & Medicine is a Chicago based non-profit working to improve the health of all people in Illinois by promoting health equity. Founded in 1981 by Dr. Quentin Young, it was formed as an action-oriented policy center—nimble, independent, and focused on regional health issues. Health & Medicine's mission is to promote social justice and challenge inequities in health and health care. It conducts research, educates and collaborates with other groups to advocate for policies and impact health systems to improve the health status of all people. Health & Medicine has successfully developed health policy recommendations and implementation strategies for different public and private entities, earning the trust of the legislature, advocates, the media, researchers and policymakers at all levels of government in Illinois to become the region's "honest broker" on healthcare policy matters.

Learn more at hmprg.org

Funding for this resource is provided in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

**The Illinois
ACEs Response
Collaborative**

a program of
**HEALTH & MEDICINE
POLICY RESEARCH GROUP**

**HEALTH &
MEDICINE**
POLICY RESEARCH GROUP

29 East Madison Street
Suite 602
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 372-4292
www.hmprg.org