

# IL Metro Industrial Area Foundation (IAF) Action with Illinois Senate President Senator Don Harmon

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1. **Background and funding for housing:** In 2018-2019, LCU and affiliates led an effort to press for legislators to approve a capital budget that includes \$200 million to invest in housing. Capital budgets are for long-term projects, typically for infrastructure. Housing is part of the infrastructure and generates economic activity. Every 10 years, a capital budget is established and funded through bonds and other revenue streams. The money is designated for housing and needs to be released right away for shovel ready projects like in Lawndale and Oak Lawn and hopefully soon to be shovel ready in Waukegan.

**Our ask from Sen Harmon** - as revenue is generated for the capital budget, we want housing to be a priority. Before this assembly, a small team of leaders from United Power and DuPage United, the two counties where his district is located, met with Sen Harmon as his constituents. They took him on a tour of some of the homes built and presented a plan for 1000s more. He agreed this needs to be a priority, and he will need support from other Senators. One way to help make sure he follows through on his commitment is to have him commit in front of lots of people, not just a small group. Now our task is to make sure he follows through on his commitment.

2. **Background mental health issue:** The state is financially broke and spends enormous tax dollars on people sent the jail and chronically returning to jail, not to mention court costs. Diverting people from jail to a Crisis Stabilization Unit would free up funds to treat people with mental illness. According to the Sheriff, 25% of those in the Lake County jail have mental illness and return on the street worse off mentally. Lake Forest Police and other police departments have stated that most of their calls are mental health-related. In Miami Dade County, CSUs contributed significantly to diverting people from jail, allowing the county to close a jail pod and saved the county \$12 million. Shortly after Governor Pritzker was elected, five leaders from the four organizations (LCU, DU, UPAJ, and FRVI) met with the Governor in Springfield. Rabbi Ari Margolis from Or Shalom represented LCU. The Governor was unaware that Medicaid was not reimbursing for CSU services. He immediately arranged for a meeting with the state department that oversees Medicaid. That led to allowing hospitals to open a CSU and Sinai Holy Cross opened their doors as the first CSU in the State in July of 2019. Lake Behavioral Hospital committed to running a CSU if they could take Medicaid patients and get reimbursed for their service. Since they are only a behavioral hospital, they do not qualify for this funding unless they tweak the requirement. Yes, the state has this authority.

**Our ask from Sen Harmon** to reach out to the Governor and urge him to meet with us ASAP. Sen Harmon was invited to join us in the meeting and help press this issue with the Governor.