



Early Intervention Services

Response-Ability Pregnant and Parenting Program (RAPPP)



RAPPP is The Night Ministry's housing program for expecting and parenting young mothers experiencing homeless and their infants and toddlers. It is the only shelter program in Chicago that reserves beds for pregnant and parenting mothers as young as 14.

Background

Unmarried parenting youth are three times more likely to experience homelessness in America than their non-parenting peers.¹ In Chicago and suburban Cook County, one third of homeless young women ages 13 to 25 are pregnant or are a parent.² Homelessness affects not only the health of the mother but that of the child as well. Research shows that homelessness has adverse effects on the well-being of a child both before and after birth, including increased hospitalizations, poor overall health, and developmental delays.³

The Program

The primary goal of RAPPP is to increase the safety and stability of pregnant and parenting homeless young women and their children. Located in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood, it provides supportive shelter for up to eight clients between the ages of 14 and 21 and up to eight of their young children at a time. Although equipped to offer services for as long as necessary, RAPPP works to reunite minor-aged clients with a supportive family members within 21 days of intake and strives to place all residents in housing within 120 days.

The program is designed to improve the physical and emotional health and wellness of clients and their children while increasing each client's self-sufficiency through education, access to public benefits, and parenting skills training. On site-support groups focus on improving mental health and fostering healthy relationships. After leaving the program, residents receive support through The Night Ministry's Aftercare Services which includes continued assistance in acquiring or maintaining safe housing and reaching long-term goals.



RAPPP residents form strong bonds with Case Managers and other program staff, who will often accompany them to appointments in the community. When a young woman comes to the program pregnant, staff will often be at her side when she delivers the baby, if that support is needed. Because of the strong relationships formed between staff and the residents, after leaving the program, former residents often call and visit staff for years afterward to report positive milestones in their lives.

Partnerships

RAPPP works with various community partners to provide additional support for the residents and their children. Rush University Medical System, for instance, provides psychiatric evaluations, medical prescriptions, and counseling sessions with Rush post-doctoral fellows. Volunteers from Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital have facilitated a monthly group called "Ask the Doctor" at RAPPP. In addition, a volunteer Nurse from Elmhurst College conducts a "Mommy & Me" group with the residents and their children.



Program Achievements and Outcomes in Fiscal Year 2020

- RAPPP served 60 pregnant/parenting young women and 35 of their infants/toddlers who stayed a total of 1,856 nights
- 88% of residents and their children had current immunizations and well-being check-ups
- 82% of residents staying over 21 days showed improvement in life skills assessment
- 74% of residents transitioned to more safe and stable housing upon exiting the program

¹ Morton, M. H., A. Dworsky, & G. M. Samuels. *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2017.

² Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. *Youth homelessness in Cook County, Illinois: Findings from the youth count, brief youth survey, and provider survey*. Technical report from the Voices of Youth Count Initiative. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2017.

³ Sandel, M. et al. "Timing and Duration of Pre- and Postnatal Homelessness and the Health of Young Children." *Pediatrics* 142, 2018.

The Night Ministry is a Chicago-based nonprofit that provides housing, health care, and human connection to individuals experiencing homeless or poverty. For more information, please visit www.thenightministry.org or call (773) 784-9000.