

2026 Community Services Block Grant Proposal

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet

Kathy Paulsen Hope House Shelter &

Back to School Fair

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet desires to participate as a sub-grantee of the County's Community Services Block Grant. Catholic Charities is requesting a total of \$58,000 which includes \$55,000 for Kathy Paulsen Hope House Shelter and \$3,000 for the Back to School Fair.

Located in DuPage County, Kathy Paulsen Hope House is a 24 hour, 18-bed shelter serving individuals and families made homeless by a crisis (e.g. job loss, divorce, depleted savings, eviction or home foreclosure). It provides short-term shelter, case management and support services to assist and empower clients to find employment and permanent, stable housing leading to self-sufficiency. Kathy Paulsen Hope House also operates a 24 hour crisis hotline, which serves as a primary access point for all those in DuPage County seeking homeless services.

In FY 2025, Kathy Paulsen Hope House served 100 individuals (22 children ages 1-17; 73 adults ages 18-61 and 5 seniors 65+). Of the total served, 33 were Caucasian; 46 African American; 4 Asian; 8 Hispanic; and 9 identified as multi-racial. During the past fiscal year, 56% of the adults who entered the shelter program, exited with full-time or equivalent employment earning enough income to obtain and maintain housing in the community, allowing 64% of Hope House clients to exit into permanent, stable housing.

The Back to School Fair (BTSF) is a long-standing program through which Catholic Charities partners with local agencies to provide school supplies and essential basic needs support to children in grades K-12, helping them prepare for a successful return to school. The families served through this initiative include individuals from the working low-income community, as well as those currently residing in homeless shelters, transitional housing programs, rapid rehousing programs, and permanent supportive housing. These families often have limited or no resources available to adequately prepare their children for the upcoming school year. Eligible participants must reside in DuPage County, provide self-certification of income, proof of Medicaid eligibility, and their children must qualify for the federally-sponsored free school lunch program.

Through the distribution of backpacks, school supplies, and access to critical resources and services, the BTSF helps reduce barriers to academic success for extremely low-income children and their families. The 2025 BTSF, held on July 30, served approximately 500 families. For 2026, Catholic Charities is intentionally scaling the event to serve a reduced number of 75 families and an estimated 100 children under the age of 18. This more focused approach will allow the agency to prioritize families actively enrolled in Catholic Charities programs, ensuring deeper engagement and more personalized support for those with ongoing service needs.

The funding requested through the County's Community Services Block Grant will be used to perform the following activities for the benefit of the County in a timely fashion:

1. Maintain a 24 hour, 7 day crisis line to serve as a central clearinghouse for all shelter needs in DuPage, having on call 24 hours per day, a staff member with a Masters of Social Work or equivalent degree and experience.
2. Screen, assess and refer clients in need of shelter.
3. Provide case management services to 75 CSBG eligible individuals who are homeless (200% of Federal Poverty Level or Below). Additional Services provide as needed will be:
 - a. Provide emergency shelter
 - b. Provide employment and vocational counseling support through one-on-one counseling and group classes.
 - c. Provide housing navigation support to households as they seek safe, permanent stable housing that is subsidized or unsubsidized.
 - d. Create and monitor an Individualized Service Plan detailing individuals' goals and objectives to obtain permanent stable housing; revising this plan every 30 days.
 - e. Provide direct housing support in the form of basic needs, security deposit, rental payment, moving expenses, basic household furnishings and car repairs for 30 households (35 individuals) at or below 200% poverty level exiting Hope House to safe, permanent housing.
 - f. Partner with HOME DuPage to provide financial Literacy.
 - g. Provide up to 6 months of aftercare services including follow up, case management, advocacy, referrals and resources to 100% of households who exit Hope House shelter.
4. Obtain proof of 30 day income, household members, and proof of residency or homelessness maintain in client file
5. Plan and organize the DuPage Back to School Fair
6. Comply with all assurances as further detailed in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated as part of the 2026 Community Service Block Grant Agreement

Catholic Charities Diocese of Joliet agrees that the requested CSBG funds will be expended between the dates of 01/01/2026 to 12/31/2026 with a final budget due by January 15, 2027. Invoicing for the Back to School Fair will be submitted by September 30, 2026. Final invoice for Kathy Paulsen Hope House activities will be submitted by January 22, 2027.