



Long-Term Residential Services

# Phoenix Hall

Phoenix Hall is The Night Ministry's year-round residence for Chicago high school students experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Opened in August 2017 and located in the North Lawndale neighborhood on Chicago's West Side, the program supports educational achievement while serving the needs of both students and their families.



## Background

Homelessness and housing instability greatly impact a student's ability to stay in school. Chicago Public Schools reported serving nearly 16,500 homeless students during the 2018–19 school year.<sup>1</sup>

The Voices of Youth Count, the first comprehensive national study on the prevalence of youth homelessness in the United States, found that young adults without a high school diploma are 4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness,<sup>2</sup> emphasizing the importance of education as a protective factor from homelessness later in life as youth transition into adulthood.

## The Program

Staffed 24 hours each day by Program Specialists and providing a family-like atmosphere with bedrooms, living space, meals, and study space, Phoenix Hall houses up to eight students at a time. The facility is a hybrid between home and more independent, dorm-like environments.

Students live at Phoenix Hall with the consent of a parent or guardian and can stay as long as they need to while a family situation stabilizes or until they graduate. The Night Ministry staff, including a Case Manager, assist families with stabilization and work to help find resolution within families that are in conflict. Parents continue to be involved in their children's education and development.

In addition to providing safe and stable housing, staff at Phoenix Hall are committed to helping students achieve their educational goals by providing individualized case management and life skills development as well as links to community resources such as health services, recreation, and counseling.



## A Community Partnership

Phoenix Hall is a collaborative effort among The Night Ministry and several community-based organizations. The program began as a partnership with North Lawndale College Prep High School, which recognized a need for housing services among a segment of its student body. The school provided vision and student leaders to help inform the initial design of the program. Funding for renovation of the greystone that houses Phoenix Hall as well as initial operating expenses came from Empower to Succeed, an independent nonprofit of Old St. Patrick's Church. Phoenix Hall's staff work to develop



contacts within area schools and social service agencies to help identify students who may benefit from the services provided by the program.

### **Program Achievements and Outcomes in Fiscal Year 2020**

- Phoenix Hall served 15 high school students experiencing housing instability, who stayed a total of 2,106 nights
  - Five students residing at Phoenix Hall graduated from high school
  - 100% of students transitioned from Phoenix Hall to safe and stable housing
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<sup>1</sup> Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

**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](http://www.thenightministry.org) or call (773) 784-9000.**