


A large, dark blue, semi-transparent number '2024' is overlaid on a blurred background. The background shows a person's arm and shoulder, wearing a dark blue t-shirt with white text that reads 'LOVE', 'Give', 'SUPPORT', and 'uplift'. The overall image has a soft, out-of-focus aesthetic.



# CENTRAL IOWA SHELTER & SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT FY 2024





**CENTRAL IOWA  
SHELTER & SERVICES**

## **OUR MISSION**

Central Iowa Shelter & Services is committed to providing low-barrier shelter, meals, and support services at no cost to adults experiencing homelessness while also facilitating their move toward self-sufficiency.



# FROM OUR CEO

Dear Community,

As we reflect on another year of service, I want to take a moment to thank you for your unwavering support of Central Iowa Shelter & Services (CISS). Your generosity has made it possible for us to continue our mission of providing shelter, support, and a path to self-sufficiency for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in our community.

At CISS, we take great pride in being responsible stewards of the donations entrusted to us. Our team works hard to ensure that every dollar you contribute is used efficiently to provide the most effective services. Whether it's offering a safe place to stay, helping someone find a job, or providing access to healthcare, we are committed to making a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

One of the key factors in our success has been embracing innovation in the non-profit sector. From improving how we track and provide services to our clients, to exploring new technology solutions like our mobile app to connect individuals with resources, innovation has allowed us to reach more people and offer more support than ever before. These advancements have helped us to be more effective, reaching individuals in ways that are timely and meaningful.

Thanks to you, we continue to move forward with hope and purpose. As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to finding new ways to improve lives and strengthen our community. Together, we are making a difference.

With gratitude,  
Melissa



**Melissa O'Neil**  
Chief Executive Officer

# OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Central Iowa Shelter & Services, we believe in helping people move toward self-sufficiency. While we understand shelter is a key aspect in gaining safety and stability, we recognize that shelter alone falls short of solving homelessness.

Instead, we anchor our efforts in a holistic approach that harnesses the power of shelter, food security, a support network, low-barrier access to information and services, skills training, self-care, and community advocacy.

By combining these key resources with ongoing innovation, Central Iowa Shelter & Services continues to lead the way in providing sustainable solutions to systematically end homelessness.



# 2,448

**individuals served  
by our mission  
in FY 2024**

## OUR CLIENTS

♂  
**67%**  
MEN

♀  
**32%**  
WOMEN

\*  
**1%**  
NON-BINARY

**9%**  
18-24

**22%**  
25-34

**23%**  
35-44

**38%**  
45-64

**7%**  
65+

**62%**  
WHITE

**9%**  
HISPANIC/  
LATINO

**25%**  
BLACK/  
AFRICAN  
AMERICAN

**4%**  
OTHER\*

CENTRAL IOWA SHELTER & SERVICES DOES NOT WITHHOLD SERVICES FROM MEMBERS OF ANY CITY, COUNTY, OR STATE. RESIDENTS OF ALL AREAS ARE WELCOME IN OUR SHELTER.

\*Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander





## EMERGENCY SHELTER

Central Iowa Shelter & Services is one of the largest low-barrier shelters in the state of Iowa for individuals over the age of 18 years old.

**We have the capacity to accommodate over 300 individuals each night in our emergency shelter.**

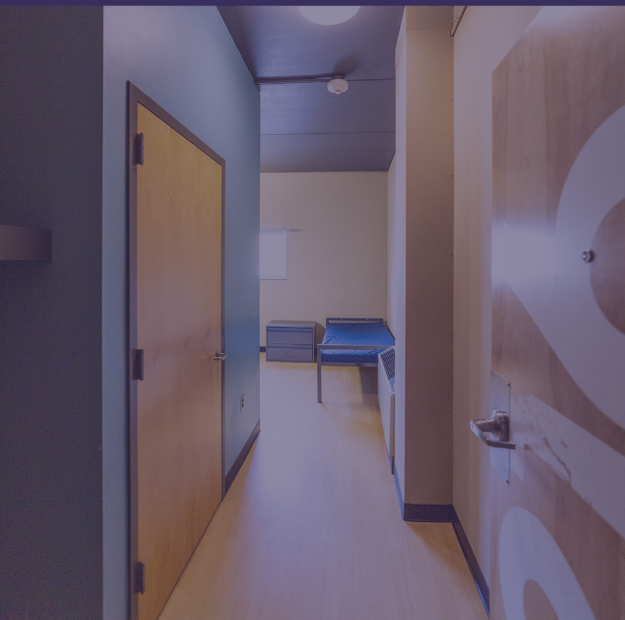
Founded on the principle of never turning people away, our staff works tirelessly to ensure our neighbors experiencing homelessness are given respite in their time of need.

# 326

**number of  
people in our  
shelter during  
January 2024  
severe winter  
weather event**

## SUPPORTED HOUSING

**Central Iowa Shelter & Services' campus hosts 62 single-unit efficiency apartments.** These apartments allow clients to build positive rental histories, learn how to care for a place of their own, and get on their feet so they can secure permanent housing.



## VETERAN HOUSING

Central Iowa Shelter & Services, in partnership with Veterans Affairs, offers a total of 19 single-unit efficiency apartments for Veterans transitioning to stable housing or in need of short-term transitional housing.

# 188

**total number of United States  
Military Veterans served by CISS**



# STREET OUTREACH

In the face of extreme Iowa temperatures that pose a significant threat to vulnerable populations like the unsheltered, the CISS Street Outreach Team exemplifies unwavering dedication and effort. This team is at the heart of two essential services that provide critical support to those in need.

## HOUSING FOR SHELTER INTAKES

The team offers comprehensive support to individuals entering emergency shelters. They work closely with these individuals to craft tailored housing plans, assist with locating vital documents, and strive to secure housing within the first 14 days of their stay. **Together, the team conducted a total of 1802 shelter intakes.**

## STREET OUTREACH

Team members visit unsheltered camps throughout Des Moines a few times each week. During these visits, they distribute clean drinking water and conduct thorough assessments of each situation, ensuring that anyone in need of medical care or additional assistance from CISS receives the help they need. **The Street Outreach Team's relentless efforts served 70 unhoused individuals, securing housing for 90% of those individuals.**

# ROLLING HILLS COALITION

Our Rolling Hills Coalition Team serves a total of 15 rural counties throughout central Iowa. By assisting with a person's search for housing, a deposit, first month's rent, and landlord communications, our RHC Team is able to help people find housing in their area near their support system.

**The Rolling Hills Team successfully helped a total of 365 individuals find housing in their area.**

Counties Served: Appanoose, Davis, Iowa, Jasper, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lucas, Mahaska, Marion, Monroe, Poweshiek, Van Buren, Wapello, Warren, Wayne





# MULBERRY STREET CAFE

Central Iowa Shelter & Services operates a fully-functional kitchen ran by a partnership of CISS staff members, generous community partners, and dedicated volunteers.

**3** meals provided  
each day

**250** guests per  
meal service

**270,000** meals  
served  
annually

**VOLUNTEERS**

**3,705**

\*Number of CISS volunteers  
across all volunteer opportunities.



## Providing Nourishment

Central Iowa Shelter & Services is dedicated to supporting the whole person. Not only does this include offering safe & secure shelter and comprehensive wrap around service connections, but also nutritious meals.

CISS is committed to providing all guests of our shelter with healthy, balanced meals.

## We can't do it alone!

Central Iowa Shelter & Services had the support of 3,705\* volunteers.

Volunteers give an average of 2 hours of their time per volunteer opportunity.







## FOOD PANTRY

Central Iowa Shelter & Services' community food pantry is a crucial resource for those in need, supported by the Food Bank of Iowa, DMARC, and public donations.

Operated by volunteers and AARP employees training to enter or re-enter the workforce, the pantry ensures access to nutritious food while also providing valuable work experience.

By addressing food insecurity and contributing to workforce development, the pantry strengthens community resilience and fosters a supportive environment for both recipients and volunteers alike.

## CLOTHING CLOSET

Central Iowa Shelter & Services' community clothing closet is a vital resource, offering free shoes and clothing to the public.

It spreads hope and dignity by providing community members and shelter clients with sturdy shoes and appropriate attire. These essentials support individuals in their daily lives, whether they're seeking employment, attending job interviews, or braving the harsh Iowa weather.

By ensuring access to shoes that fit properly and clothing suitable for work and personal protection, the clothing closet helps empower individuals to build a better future.







Growth Financial Services is a subsidiary of CISS that assists individuals with identifying and meeting their financial goals. This includes learning to use their paycheck to pay bills, build a savings account, pay down debt or past due bills, and work toward financial stability and independence.

Ensuring basic needs are taken care of is the first priority, including food, shelter, clothing and medical and dental expenses. Once those items are covered, clients learn how to budget, save, and separate out a monthly “allowance” based on income. This service is offered to anyone who would like this type of assistance, whether they are a shelter client or not.

**19**

**active clients: 2  
veterans, 17 social  
security recipients**

**\$533**

**client's average  
checking account  
balance**

**\$3,175**

**client's average  
savings account  
balance**





# MEET TRAVIS

In September of 2023, Travis embarked on a transformative journey that led him to Central Iowa Shelter & Services (CISS). Originating from a religion-centric program in Omaha, NE, Travis had

already overcome the uphill battle of addiction and was seeking a stable environment to continue his path to recovery. Since his arrival at CISS, Travis has not only found a place to call home but has also become a beacon of hope and support for those around him.

Travis's dedication to his own sobriety is reflected in his unwavering commitment to attending NA Recharge and AA Recharge meetings at CISS. His journey from being a participant to a mentor and cheerleader for his peers showcases his resilient spirit and willingness to give back to the community that has supported him.

Beyond his role in addiction recovery, Travis has taken upon himself the responsibility of welcoming and guiding new individuals seeking assistance at CISS. His warm and inclusive nature has made him a vital part of the community, ensuring that everyone

feels supported and valued during their time of need.

As Travis transitions from the CISS apartments to a group home, his aspirations remain focused on building meaningful friendships and staying actively engaged in his community. His vision of joining CISS's team as a mentor reflects his desire to continue supporting others in their journey towards sobriety, emphasizing the importance of peer-led support systems.

Travis's story not only highlights his personal growth and resilience but also underscores the invaluable role that CISS plays in providing a safe and stable environment for individuals facing addiction and homelessness. His perspective sheds light on the critical need for support, resources, and accountability in helping individuals maintain sobriety, find purpose, and ultimately transition into permanent housing and gainful employment.

Travis's resilience, compassion, and dedication serve as a testament to the transformative power of community support and personal determination. His journey is not just one of overcoming challenges but also of inspiring others to believe in their own capacity for change and growth. In Travis, we find a shining example of hope, redemption, and the enduring strength of the human spirit.

**CISS would like to congratulate Travis on his successful transition to permanent housing in 2024.**





# **SUPPORT OUR MISSION**

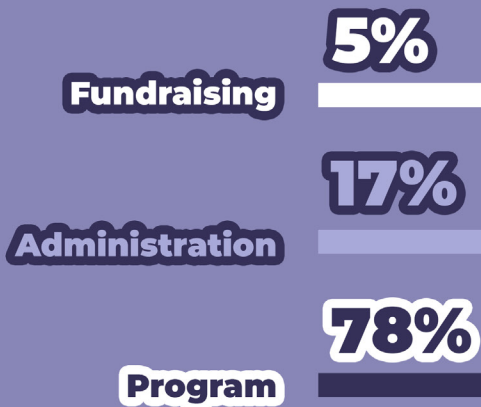
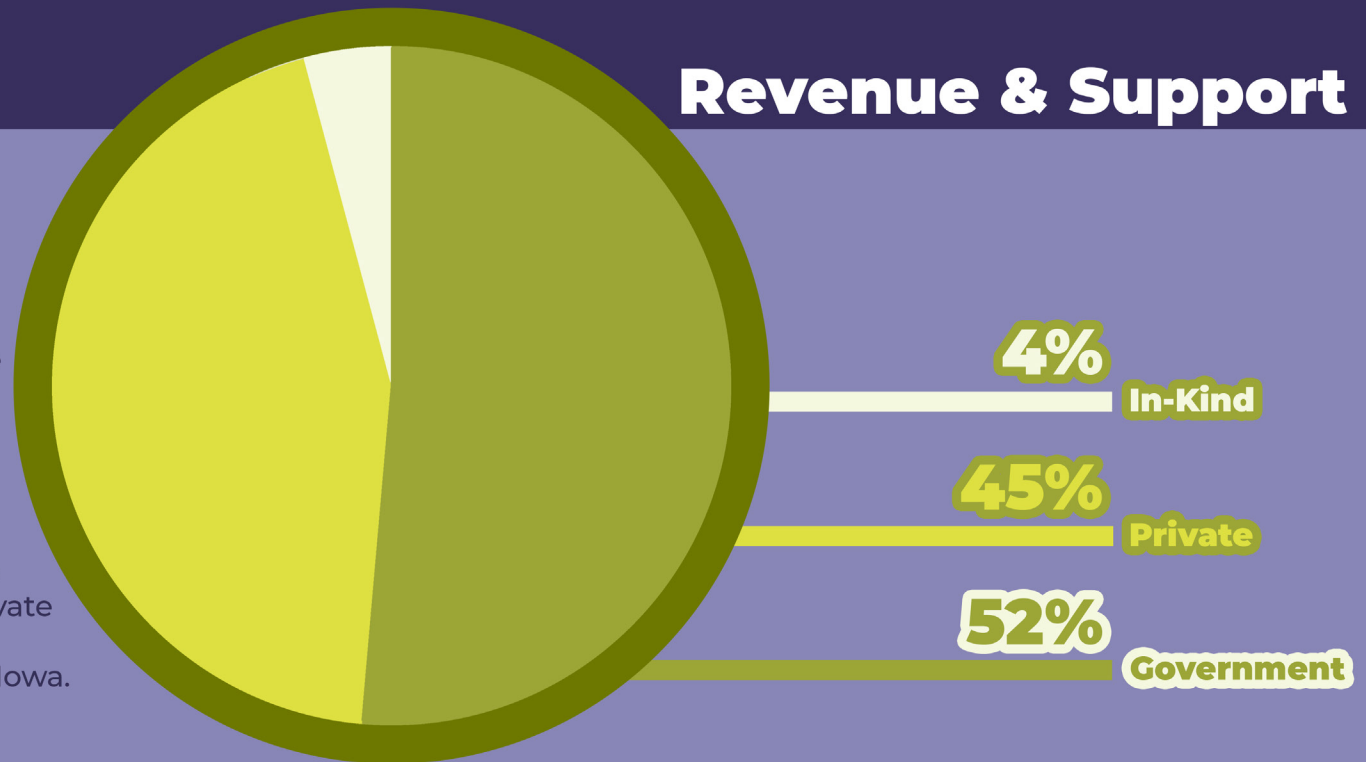
VOLUNTEER. DONATE. FUND. ADVOCATE.

Get started at [www.centraliowashelter.org](http://www.centraliowashelter.org)



## Revenue & Support

In the past year, Central Iowa Shelter and Services saw a strong and diverse income stream. Government funding represented 52% of total revenue, providing a solid foundation for our operations. Private contributions made up 45%, highlighting the generous support from individuals, foundations, and businesses in our community. Along with these, in-kind donations added another 4%. This balanced funding mix underscores the vital role played by both public and private partners in enabling us to serve those experiencing homelessness in Central Iowa.



## Expenses

The majority of Central Iowa Shelter and Services' expenses were dedicated to program-related activities. This reflects our ongoing commitment to providing shelter, services, and resources for those in need. Administrative costs accounted for 17%, ensuring that we maintain effective and efficient operations. Fundraising expenses were kept to 5%, allowing us to focus on maximizing the impact of every dollar raised to directly support our mission. These allocations reflect our dedication to using resources wisely to achieve meaningful outcomes for our community.



# LEADERSHIP TEAM

Central Iowa Shelter & Services would like to thank the members of our leadership team for their dedication to our mission and their ongoing commitment to develop sustainable solutions to end homelessness in our community.



**Melissa O'Neil**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Serving since 2016



**Tammy Weir**  
Chief of Staff  
Serving since 2021



**Amber Tompkins**  
Vice President of  
Operations  
Serving since 2020

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Central Iowa Shelter & Services would like to extend our sincerest appreciation for the unwavering support and guidance provided by the members of our volunteer Board of Directors.

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**Chad Bentzinger**, Board Chair  
Nationwide Insurance  
Serving since 2019

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Serving since 2022

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SHELTER & SERVICES**  
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**Central Iowa Shelter & Services**  
1420 Mulberry St.  
Des Moines, IA 50309

(515) 284-5719  
[info@centraliowashelter.org](mailto:info@centraliowashelter.org)

[www.centraliowashelter.org](http://www.centraliowashelter.org)

**LET'S CONNECT!**



@cishelter

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**SUPPORT  
OUR MISSION**

