



TRANSFORM THE FAIRBRIDGE INN INTO A COMMUNITY SHELTER

PADS Lake County

JUNE
2024

Proposed Use

PADS Lake County seeks to operate the Fairbridge Inn (located at 3740 Grand Avenue, Gurnee) as a fixed shelter for single adults. As the largest homeless services organization in Lake County, PADS must now identify and leverage resilient assets to respond to the growing homeless crisis occurring in Lake County. Fixed shelter, as opposed to rotating night-by-night shelter is such an asset that can improve the community landscape by ending a neighbor's homelessness.

Since the COVID pandemic, PADS Lake County (PADS) has shifted its operation from traditional rotating church sites to a temporary hotel model, leveraging multiple locations and scaling operations to serve approximately 507 clients in shelter. PADS is interested in continuing this effective form of shelter operation through the purchase of the Fairbridge Inn. This innovative approach is consistent with other suburban Chicago communities, like Connections for the Homeless (Evanston, IL.), and DuPage Pads, (DuPage County) who have made the necessary switch from underperforming and less dignified pads on the floor to using hotel structures with beds in the air and wrap-around services.

The Need for Fixed Shelter

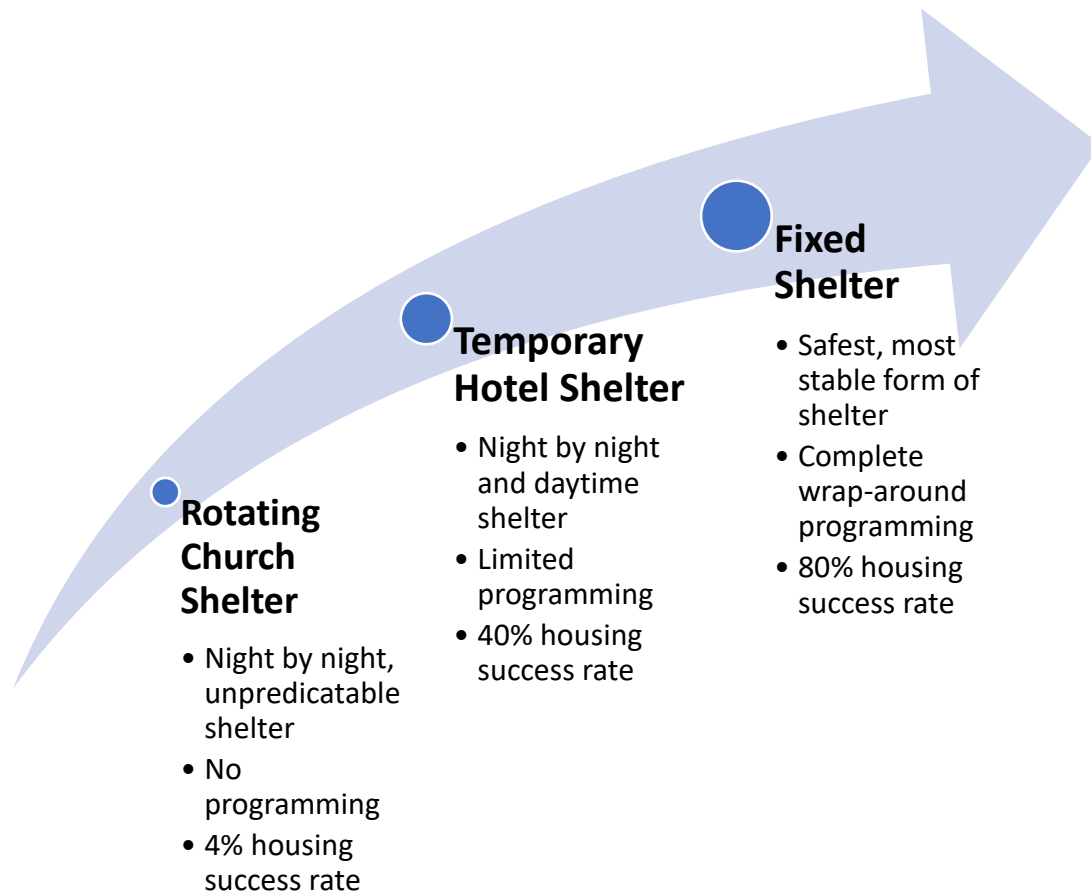
The homeless crisis in Lake County can no longer be managed without real assets to fight the problem. Homelessness is an entrenched social problem in Lake County, requiring government, business, and nonprofit leaders to work together to change the system that perpetuates it throughout our communities.

- In 2019 the national nonprofit thinktank, Corporation for Supportive Housing, conducted a gap analysis that demonstrated the need for fixed shelter in Lake County.
- According to Lake County PUMA data, 30%, or 214,000 residents live in poverty or are severely income restricted. These households are extremely vulnerable to external volatilities like current rising rent and food prices.
- According to the Lake County Coalition for the Homeless, the county experienced a 50% increase in homelessness from the year 2023 to 2024.
- There has been a 75% increase in family homelessness.
- 310% increase in homeless children.
- 85% of 211 referrals were for housing or shelter.
- Gurnee, IL. rounds out the top 5 municipalities requesting help for basic needs like shelter, housing, and food.
- From 2018 to 2023, Gurnee has seen its low-income student population more than double.
- Unfortunately, PADS now has 507 Lake County neighbors in hotel shelters across the county.

Food prices are the highest they have ever been and wages are not keeping up, forcing many households to make difficult decisions between paying their rent or going hungry for the night.

How Our Neighbors in Need Benefit from A fixed Community Shelter

- There are exponential benefits to transitioning from church shelter to fixed shelter. *Fixed shelter data provided by DuPage Pads.



- Dignity- A bed with a private bathroom is more dignified than a pad on the floor in a room shared by many.
- Neighbors can focus on improving their situation instead of working on getting from one church site to the other.
- Shifting from just overnight shelter provision to a more programmatic approach to shelter supports efforts in modifying some of our neighbors' behavior for better outcomes. This ensures that our neighbors' homelessness is solved rather than managed.
- Fixed shelter keeps neighbors off the street during the daytime as well as night.
- Fixed shelter allows for more co-located services, which increases partner collaboration and maximizes resources. A model to be leveraged across the county.
- Best Practices- Fixed shelter is an innovative best practice adopted by other nonprofits across the country, including Connections for The Homeless (Evanston, IL.), and DuPage Pads (DuPage County).

How The Community Benefits from A Fixed Shelter

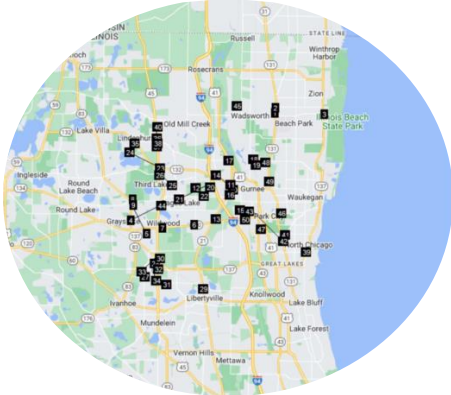
- **Beautification Reduces Visual Pollution:** Currently, the Fairbridge Inn is a blight on the community. PADS will renovate the property, including a new garden, and opaque fencing along Grand and Waveland that blends well with community.



- **Reduces the Potential for Crime:** PADS screening process and 24-hour monitoring system ensures that we know who is in every room at any given time, and our 10pm curfew and 9pm quiet time reduces activity into the late hours. Much different from the current hotel business who rents to anyone who can pay.
- **Reduces taxpayer dollars by reducing the use of police resources.**
- **Discreet:** PADS plans to close off the entrance to the property from Grand Avenue using opaque fencing. PADS will not include any logo or signage on the property. The only way people will know that it is a shelter is if it is explicitly communicated by residents.
- **Reduces Parking & Traffic at Grand and Waveland:** The entry/exit from Grand Avenue will be closed off. Because less than 20% of our residents have cars, the shelter would drastically reduce the number of vehicles at the site.
- **Economic Development**
 - The total project includes an investment of approximately \$7 million in acquisition and renovation, providing jobs to architects, construction workers and local residents.
 - Annual operations will add approximately 10 extra jobs for county residents.
 - PADS Partners with a local small business for property management services.
 - The improved renovations and potential reduction in crime should attract more businesses and make the area more walkable.
 - Clients who enter shelter engage in wrap-around programming that improves their mental, financial, and physical situation, allowing them to return as contributing members of society.

How We Chose the Fairbridge Inn

- PADS' search for a fixed shelter took two years and spanned most of the county.



- Best Practices- Hotel conversions to shelter have been effective for agencies across the country as well as for our regional partners like DuPage Pads and Evanston's Connections for The Homeless, and represent the next step in homeless shelter provision.
- Proximity to other operations- Fairbridge is located only 2 miles from our processing center on Grand Avenue in Waukegan. This proximity allows us to centralize operations and maximize our resources.
- Immediately feeds high-need areas: Waukegan and Gurnee are among the top 5 municipalities whose residents request shelter and housing resources.
- Hotel structures are well suited for dignified short-term stays and the facilities are easily updated to provide space for wrap around services.
- New developments are more costly and more time-consuming with the potential to create significant gaps in our service delivery. PADS must be strategic in how we pursue community solutions while ensuring neighbors in need do not fall through the cracks.

PADS Shelter Programming at The Fairbridge Inn

The shelter will be owned and operated by PADS Lake County with twenty-four-hour (24) operations under the supervision of PADS staff trained in effective service delivery, high-level property supervision, therapeutic crisis intervention, and de-escalation techniques. The property will be professionally managed by Riverside Property Management who currently provides customized management for local organizations like A Safe Place and Nicasa.

PADS will install a robust security system that prevents entry into the building, except through the front door where, among other property locations, staff will be stationed for monitoring purposes. PADS will equip all doors with necessary security that restricts clients from secretly bringing in unauthorized guests. There will be no guests allowed in the shelter rooms at any time. Room checks will be conducted twice per shift, four times per day. Property walkthroughs happen every hour.

A robust screening process is used to determine literal homelessness, county residency status, appropriateness for shelter, and registered sex offender status. This screening process is an administrative function that will take place at PADS' administrative building at 1800 Grand Avenue in Waukegan

The shelter will cater specifically to adults (clients) without children who are literally homeless and are residents of Lake County. Clients will be given 90-day shelter stays with the opportunity to renew their stay if they are on track for housing and employment.

Each hotel shelter room (27) will hold two to three residents (**number could decrease depending on room size and village code authorization**), providing them with access to a private bathroom and private sleeping quarters. Clients will be allowed to sleep at night and participate in programming in the daytime, removing the need to wander the streets of the neighborhood. Clients will work towards employment and self-sufficiency during the day. Each shelter room will keep its current structure with sleeping, bathroom, lighting, and microwave. Clients will not be allowed to bring in hot plates or any other cooking instruments. Food will be brought to clients in shelter via PADS' traditional volunteer network and weekly sustainable food bags containing non-perishable items. A food pantry will also be on site.

PADS does not anticipate changing the external structure of the hotel, but renovate it to include an enclosed garden. PADS will renovate the sleeping quarters, interior lobby to include a warming station to be used by volunteers, and activity rooms for programming.

While in shelter, clients will have access to onsite food pantry services, onsite clothing room, onsite social services/programming.

General Operations

- 24-hour, 365-day supervision provided by PADS staff trained in building security, mental health first aid, de-escalation, therapeutic crisis intervention, collaborative problem solving, harm reduction, and motivational interviewing.
- 90-day stays with options for extensions.
- No visitors are allowed in shelter or on the property.
- No Loitering on grounds except in garden area and only for registered residents.
- Maximum 90 residents at any given time.
- 10pm curfew enforced for all clients that are not working or on “pass” for the night. This is not a residential facility, and clients will not be allowed to consistently enter and exit the shelter throughout the night.
- Residents will be required to participate in shelter programming, including mental health services, employment and workforce development services from The Job Center of Lake County, substance use rehabilitation (if applicable) by Nicasa, and life skills groups offered by staff and volunteers.
- PADS, in coordination with volunteers, will provide clients with warm meals, and clothing when needed while in shelter.

Entry To Shelter

- Prior to entry, neighbors will undergo screening at PADS’ processing center at 1800 Grand Avenue in Waukegan. The screening process establishes county residency, literal homelessness, sex offender status, and appropriateness for shelter. Appropriateness includes but is not limited to clients’ ability address and manage their mental and physical health, hygiene, sleeping area, and follow shelter rules and expectations.
- All residents entering shelter receive a PADS ID.
- All residents sign a contract acknowledging the rules of the shelter. Some are below.
 - 90-stays with option for extension based on progress.
 - No substance use allowed in or on shelter premises.
 - No unsafe or violent behavior, this includes violent threats, aggressive language, destruction of property, theft, and physical violence.
 - Residents must participate in shelter programming while in shelter.
 - No lending or borrowing among shelter residents.
- All shelter residents develop a service plan with their case manager that outlines their goals (housing, employment, health and well-being, family reunification) to guide their activities, and measure their progress.
- Residents not engaging in programming will be at risk of losing their shelter bed.

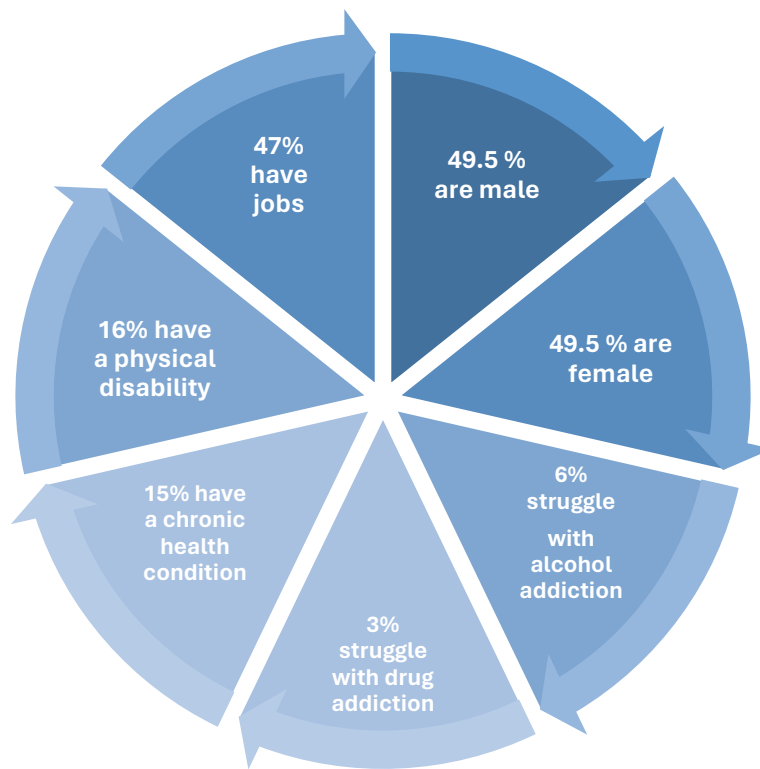
While In Shelter

- Clients are expected to keep their areas clean, engage in programming, refrain from negative interactions, and regain their self-esteem as they become the architects of their own futures.

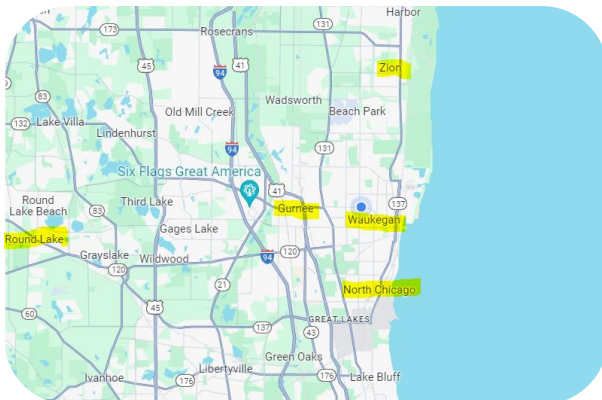
Exits From Shelter

- Clients exit positively by securing housing, employment, and stabilizing their mental health. Fixed shelters boast an 80% positive exit rate, as opposed to 40% with hotels and 4% with churches.
- Clients exit negatively by coming into conflict with the program expectations including negative behavior/rule breaking or a general lack of progress. Clients who exit this way would have generally received warnings and interventions. Clients will be given time to prepare and will be instructed to and supported in returning to PADS' processing center to evaluate next steps. Often, by this time in a client's journey, they have repaired relationships and can be transported to family or friends for housing.

Demographics of PADS' Shelter Clients?



Where Our Residents Come From



**In order from greatest to least*

- Waukegan
- North Chicago
- Zion
- Gurnee
- Round Lake

Homeless Myth Busters!

Myth: Providing services to homeless people only attracts more homeless.

FACT: A recent national study found that 75% of homeless people are still living in the city which they became homeless.

Myth: Homeless people just lack ambition.

FACT: Experiencing homelessness is a condition, not a character defect. Lawyers, doctors, film directors, entrepreneurs, university professors, professional musicians and many others have experienced homelessness. Anyone can become homeless if they have no way to pay for housing and no other resources or support.

Myth: Homeless people aren't trying hard enough to get a job or find a place to live.

FACT: Getting a job is a challenge for most people these days, and incredibly difficult for a homeless person. Homeless people do work (some reports estimate as many as 44% nationally) and live in their cars, emergency shelters and even outside. Surviving on the street takes more work than we realize. (Source: <http://bit.ly/29ryV5t>) If a homeless person is fortunate to have a job, it is hard to maintain employment when you don't have a place to bathe, prepare meals or electricity to set an alarm.

Myth: Homeless people are all drunks and drug users. We're just enabling them!

FACT: Research shows that substance abuse is often a result of homelessness, rather than a cause. Roughly 32% of individuals experiencing homelessness suffer from addiction to drugs and alcohol—a figure approximately 20% higher than reported abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs by the general population. Homelessness, which is usually accompanied by loss of income, isolation, and loss of self-worth, drives people to substance abuse.

Myth: People who are homeless are violent, dangerous, and/or are lawbreakers.

FACT: A person who is homeless is no more likely to be a criminal than a housed person, with one legal exception: camping ordinances. People who are homeless break that law merely by being homeless. A person who is homeless is less likely to perpetrate a violent crime than a housed person and is in fact more likely to be the victim of a violent crime, especially if they are a homeless woman, teen, or child.

Source: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/hau-chg-mythsfacts-12-8-2016.pdf>

FAQ's

1. **How is the fixed shelter different from PADS' processing center at 1800 Grand Avenue?**
 - a. PADS' processing center, located at 1800 Grand Avenue in Waukegan, is where all individuals in the county are assessed for homeless services. This means that residents experiencing a housing crisis, hospitals treating homeless neighbors, law enforcement dealing with homeless individuals, government officials who get calls from residents with housing crises, nonprofits that refer their clients in crisis are all pointed to our processing center. The fixed shelter is two miles from the processing center and will be a discreet location where only those screened and processed for shelter will be transported. Neighbors in crisis will have no reason to and will not be allowed to approach the building for PADS services and will be re-directed to our processing center.
2. **Will residents be walking the streets and socializing with neighbors?**
 - a. Our residents were recently your neighbors as 85% of our clients are new to homelessness. Since less than 20% of our residents own cars, you may find some walking to the bus stop for work, walking to the library for resources, and walking to work where they serve members of the community their morning coffee.
 - b. Unsheltered homelessness is exhausting, sheltered individuals do not aimlessly walk the streets, however, *unsheltered* neighbors would possibly do so. The goal is to ensure that all neighbors are housed or sheltered so that there is no need for anyone to aimlessly walk the streets.
3. **How will the shelter impact our schools?**
 - a. No children will reside at the shelter presenting no potential impact on nearby schools.
 - b. Our screening process filters sex offenders. No sex offenders will be allowed on the property at any time.
4. **How is the shelter paid for?**
 - a. The shelter is paid for using HUD funds appropriated by Congressman Schnieder and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds appropriated through the county specifically for fixed shelter opportunities.
5. **Will the fixed shelter increase panhandling in the area?**
 - a. Most panhandlers are not homeless (it's just how they make their money).
 - b. However, if there are any residents that panhandle outside the shelter, they will be at risk of losing their shelter. Given that most panhandlers are not homeless and that our employment services will support clients in accessing gainful employment, we believe we can mitigate the risk of panhandling substantially.

6. What will this mean for our property values?

- a. The Fairbridge Inn is not in a residentially zoned district. However, in 2022, Evanston's Connections for The Homeless Agency conducted a housing study to determine the impact of shelter on housing values as they were pursuing a fixed shelter. The data demonstrated no material change to housing values.
- b. Homeless shelters can have varied impacts on property values, often shaped by local perceptions and contextual factors. Research generally indicates that while initial concerns about property devaluation are common among nearby residents, these fears are often unfounded. Proximity to well-managed shelters does not necessarily lead to long-term declines in property values; in some cases, it can have a neutral or even positive effect by stabilizing vulnerable populations and reducing visible homelessness. Effective community engagement, maintenance, and integration of services are key in mitigating negative perceptions and ensuring that shelters contribute positively to neighborhood dynamics, thereby minimizing adverse effects on property values.

7. How will a shelter impact crime in the area?

- a. Studies show that homeless individuals are no more likely to commit a crime than housed individuals, however, the impact of homeless shelters on crime is complex and often influenced by the shelter's management and community integration. While *concerns* about increased crime rates are prevalent, studies show that well-operated shelters generally do not lead to significant rises in local crime. Properly managed shelters can actually help reduce crime by providing stable environments, social services, and oversight for homeless individuals, thereby lowering the likelihood of survival crimes or anti-social behaviors. However, inadequate shelter policies or poor community relations can contribute to localized issues, underscoring the importance of comprehensive support services and robust security measures to ensure positive outcomes and maintain community safety.

8. PADS says that no unregistered guests will be allowed on the property, however, PADS has created a drop-off room for law enforcement. Please explain.

- a. PADS will have an overnight drop-off room specifically for the Gurnee Police Department. We anticipate that drop-offs will not be frequent as the resource is only available to Gurnee PD. Clients will sleep next to our security office for the few hours that they are with us, then will be transported to PADS' processing center in the morning. Clients encountered by Gurnee PD during regular daytime business hours will bypass the shelter drop-off and go straight to our processing center.