

The South Side Office of Concern grew from an idea that was born in 1981 – an agency that would feed hungry people and get them information and referrals to enable them to improve their lives. Initially supported by the American Board of Catholic Missions, the early effort absorbed and managed the food pantry based at St. Patrick Catholic Church and helped establish the Peoria Anti-Hunger Coalition.

Incorporated in March 1985, the agency received funding from the Heart of Illinois United Way in 1986. That funding established payeeship services for people with disabilities. Growth continued and funding for mental health services began from the Illinois Department of Human Services.

In 1990, the agency offered its first permanent supportive housing. An employment program began in 1996 to compliment the growing agency's identified gaps in its services.

By 1999, talks were taking place about a future residential site for homeless or formerly homeless persons with a disability.

Services grew and talking turned to planning as New Hope Apartments began its road to construction and occupancy. The South Side Office of Concern moved into New Hope Apartments in April 2008.

1980-1989

1982 – SSOC opened as a neighborhood information and referral service

Assumed responsibility for South Side Food Pantry in July

1983 – Helped found Peoria Anti-Hunger Coalition

1985 – Incorporated in Illinois as a not-for-profit 501(C)3 agency & became a member of Heart of Illinois United Way

1986 – Implemented Life Management Program, providing case management services to SSI/SSDI recipients with mental disabilities

1988 – First federal monies received through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

1989 – Implemented first community housing program (HHH) with purchase of first house upon receipt of funding from U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)

1990-1999

1990 – 1st expansion of community housing program with 3 additional houses for HHH program

1991 – Began providing environmental maintenance services with grant from the City of Peoria to employ consumers

1992 – Funding secured from HUD to develop a new permanent housing program – renovation of future site of Phoenix House begins

1993 – 2nd expansion of community housing program with opening of Phoenix House, 30-unit single room occupancy for adult men with mental disabilities

Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA) program begins providing intensive supportive services to adults with developmental disabilities

1995 – Implemented Representative Payeeship services to adults with chemical dependencies
SSOC administrative and community service offices re-located to 1316 S.W. Adams, in same

building as Phoenix House

1996 – Funding secured from the Illinois Department of Public Aide to rehabilitate another facility for a new community housing program – rehabilitation of the future site of SOLO begins LIFE Program (job training) implemented

1997 – Received accreditation for behavioral health services through CARF

Representative Payeeship for persons with chemical dependencies terminated with elimination of program by the Social Security Administration

1998 – 3rd expansion of community housing program with opening of SOLO

1999 – 4th expansion of community housing program with 1 additional house for HHH program

2000-2009

2001 – Founding Executive Director leaves

2002 – 5th expansion of community housing program with opening of OASIS

2003 – Planning process undertaken for next expansion of community housing program

2004 – Partner with Peoria Opportunities Foundation for community housing expansion and 3rd Agency Executive Director begins

2005 – Funding secured from HUD to build new housing program – construction begins on OASIS

Operational funds awarded for development of New Hope Apartments

Washington Street IH building purchased for New Hope development

Expansion of Life Management into Homeless Outreach Services with new funding from the IDHS, Division of Human Capital Development, Bureau of Supportive Services for Homeless Persons

New Hope Apartments development held up for more than a year in a zoning and NIMBY controversy with community

2005 – Focused on infrastructure development and diversification of funding

Programs re-named and created 3 service divisions: Community Support Services, Community Housing Programs, Employment Services Program

Clinical Program Director position designated

Added positions and departments focusing on fiscal, human resources, & quality assurance responsibilities

Increased State funding by more than 100%

June 2006 – Food Pantry/Emergency Assistance program closed

December 2006 – 2nd building purchased for New Hope Apartments

March 2007 – Construction of New Hope Apartments begins

March 2008 – New Hope Apartments opens, doubling the agency's community housing capacity. Phoenix House closed.

March 2008 – Agency re-locates Administrative offices, Community Support Services and Employment Services to new facility

Increased State funding by another 150%

State of Illinois in extreme financial crisis – results in drastic cuts in service funding and late payments exceeding 6+ months impacts social service agencies' cash flow

At close of FY09, SSOC reduces workforce by 25% and opts to initiate the closure of the SOLO program

2010-present

At close of FY10, SSOC's fiscal health has significantly improved due to constraints initiated in FY09, has experienced only a 7% reduction in State funding, and is in a stronger financial position than many social service agencies throughout the State

SSOC assumes leadership role within the Heart of Illinois Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC)
SSOC maintains United Way program funding (100% for New Hope & 85% for ESP) based on successful program outcomes – significantly higher than the other 94 funded programs in our region

May 2010 – SOLO closes after successful re-location of all residents

June 2010 – converted to new multi-functional database and management software program
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) recognized as an Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) by SAMHSA – SSOC's service in compliance with EBP

September 2010 – awarded a new contract by U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs to provide housing and supportive services to an additional 5 homeless veterans with serious mental illness
SSOC's Board adopts strategic plan to pursue growth opportunities for the agency

2011

SSOC awarded a new HUD SHP grant to provide supportive housing at Monroe Manor
Form planning team for social enterprise development in order to employ more SSOC consumers and lower operational expenses

New Hope Apartments (partnership between SSOC, POF, and city of Peoria) given honorable mention HOME Knocker Award

Initiated search for new office building due to continued agency growth

Executive Director & Board make decision to purchase Monroe Manor & OASIS out of their long-term master leases

VA HCHV contract doubled due to exceptional outcomes and available housing capacity at Monroe Manor

UW funding for the Employment Services program eliminated – ramps up social enterprise efforts

New Hope Apartments – fire on site takes 14 apartments off line – all consumers safe and temporarily re-housed until units back on line

New Hope Apts receives an award for “physical environment” in accordance with best practice standards from the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)

2012

Acquired OASIS and Monroe Manor properties, achieving one of the agency's long-term strategic goals

Launched development process for new PSH project with 35 housing units for homeless veterans and their families – Veterans' Village

Launched planning process to assess agency's infrastructure with particular focus on executive staff positions to address long-term needs

Joined the collaborative Regional Economic Development Process underway for the Tri-County area as a job force development agency

With the community in crisis over the 2-week notice of the YWCA's closure and subsequent bankruptcy, SSOC steps up and assumes responsibility for 200+ homeless women and children in the YWCA's shelter, transitional housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing programs – resounding community support and partnerships result

2012 & 2013

With the assumption of the former YWCA's housing programs, significant effort is put into re-

tooling the SSOC service model to accommodate family housing services and housing that does not focus exclusively on MI/DD target populations

Most agency executive and management resources consumed by the “Y” situation, including the pursuit of property acquisition for the PSH program – all other pending developments (i.e. Social Enterprise, Veterans’ Village) tabled

Initiated search for new site to accommodate growth of the VA HCHV supportive housing program

CILA services terminated due to multiple year fiscal deficit and increased licensure requirements – remaining 4 consumers transferred to another CILA agency

August 2013 – Acquired new office building to accommodate growth in staff and programs
2013

October 2013 – Acquired new building to develop into Veterans Haven, a dedicated program for homeless veterans with mental illness – 2nd 24/7 program for the agency

November 2013 – Capital financing of \$4 millions conditionally approved by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) for acquisition, demolition, rehabilitation and new construction to salvage Glen Perry PSH

2014

February 2014 – Agency officially re-locates and opens new Administrative offices and Community Support Services and Employment Services programs

July 2014 – Veterans Haven opens