



# Chicagoans, we want to hear from you!

## How can we make our housing healthier, more affordable, more accessible, and our communities stronger?

An opportunity to comment and share your thoughts on Chicago's Blueprint for Fair Housing.

**When:** Now through May 28<sup>th</sup> | **How:** [www.chicago.gov/fairhousing](http://www.chicago.gov/fairhousing)

### What is the Chicago Blueprint for Fair Housing?

The Chicago Blueprint for Fair Housing is a draft report that:

- Identifies barriers to affordable and safe housing;
- Identifies disparities in community assets and opportunities (like employment, schools, transportation, and retail) and the populations and geographic areas that are most harmed;
- And creates new commitments from the City of Chicago and the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) to advance policies and programs that begin to address the disparities.

### Overview

The below is an overview of findings of the community engagement process and how the City of Chicago and CHA plan to address the issues raised. *All the quotes come from direct resident comments at community engagement sessions or through surveys for Blueprint report.*

We heard from community members across the city noting, "40 hours a week just does not earn enough to maintain." We know that the demand for affordable housing far outpaces the supply, and for many residents "It takes one paycheck away from being homeless." **To help meet the need for affordable housing, the city proposes to:**

**Chicago does not have enough affordable housing.**

- Enforce the 2021 amendments of the Affordable Requirements Ordinance so that every community meets a 10% threshold for legally restricted affordable housing.
- Improve the city-owned vacant land programs to encourage more affordable housing development.
- Increase dedicated revenue for affordable housing programs by 25% in five years
- Enforce the demolition and deconversion restrictions in areas where housing costs are increasing.
- Expand city supported stock of affordable housing for very low-income households (below 30% AMI).
- Study property tax freeze programs for low-income owners facing rapid property tax increases to prevent displacement in partnership with the Cook County Assessor's Office.

## Chicago does not have enough accessible housing for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities face additional hurdles in securing homes they can both afford and fully enjoy due to the lack of housing stock that is affordable

and accessible. It is also a noted struggle to modify existing housing and housing policies to meet the needs of people with disabilities: “Residents with disabilities and in need of affordable housing are denied basic reasonable accommodations.” **To help meet the needs of people with disabilities, the city proposes to:**

- Improve 8,000 ADA ramps per year.
- Create incentives for accessible housing through the Equitable Transit Oriented Development Ordinance and program.
- Generate 50 new pedestrian-friendly signals.
- Create new central housing locator website for accessible affordable units.

Securing housing is not easy. Often, households have to pay numerous application fees and face consistent denials: “It’s pointless for us to keep paying application fees, we know we will be denied. It’s depressing, stressful, constant denial.” Notably, credit score, background checks including arrest/ conviction and eviction, income requirements, and high security deposits and fees were all highlighted as severe barriers in Chicago. **In response, Chicago proposes to:**

## Common housing application requirements keep families out of housing.

- Recommend alternative tenant screening models that minimize barriers to affordable housing.

## Chicagoans face unjust illegal housing discrimination.

In Chicago, discrimination based on race (“When property managers see a heavy-set black woman it doesn’t fit their image.”), having children in the home (“The kids are often the last straw.”), having a disability

(“I’m a disabled vet with PTSD and brain injury and people would say, ‘you’re not fit for this building”), and using a voucher or other housing subsidy (“If you have a voucher, people treat you like you aren’t trying.”) are common and harm our communities. **To address this, Chicago proposes to:**

- Advocate for increased funding for the enforcement of fair housing protections.
- Increase accessibility of fair housing educational materials.

Without opportunities for healthy and safe recreation, city services, and job opportunities, we are holding our

## Chicago’s resources are not shared equitably across all communities.

Black and Brown communities back from their full potential to thrive and are needlessly risking the safety of our youth: “I feel like this is a dead zone. No stores no jobs, and they are needed very badly.” **To more equitably target community resources, Chicago proposes to:**

- Prioritize public investments through Invest South/West in communities that have experienced underinvestment by investing \$750 million in 10 target neighborhoods.
- Enhance community input in community development decision making by creating community review guidelines for Planned Developments (PDs).
- Convene interdepartmental work group to develop equitable process and metrics to guide infrastructure investments.

## Eviction, displacement, and unhealthy housing conditions are public health issues.

Many residents feel that even the most basic health and safety conditions are lacking from their current housing situations. Housing conditions noted include lack of

property upkeep and maintenance leading to health issues especially for children and seniors, lead poisoning, insect and rodent infestation, plumbing and heat issues, and a fear of making complaints about housing conditions. “They have to do something about mold. It is everywhere. The maintenance staff don't have the credentials to deal with it.” Eviction filings disproportionately silo African American women into substandard housing based on the cycle of penalties an eviction record can trigger. **In response, Chicago proposes to:**

- Establish an eviction working group to develop new eviction prevention policies.
- Expand eviction and lockout defense programs.
- Build long-term resources for emergency rent programs.
- Reform the health and safety requirements for home repairs grants to better serve low-to-moderate homeowners (mold & lead remediation).

### More Information

To review the full report and related documents, please visit any of the following links:

- <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/sites/chicagos-blueprint-for-fair-housing/pdfs/Full-Report-Blueprint-for-Fair-Housing-Chicago-CHA.pdf>;
- <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/sites/chicagos-blueprint-for-fair-housing/pdfs/Fair-Housing-Goals-and-Strategies-ONLY-Blueprint-for-Fair-Housing-Chicago-CHA.pdf>;
- <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/sites/chicagos-blueprint-for-fair-housing/pdfs/Executive-Summary-ONLY-Blueprint-for-Fair-Housing-Chicago-CHA.pdf>.

If you need a hard copy, please reach out to [CCHR-AFH@cityofchicago.org](mailto:CCHR-AFH@cityofchicago.org).

We want to know if we got this right. Your input is needed to let the City of Chicago and CHA leadership know where our plan is strong, and what areas can be improved. This is important because this plan will guide Chicago's efforts to create equitable opportunities to live, work, and flourish across all 77 communities.