



Updates from CRN

April 17, 2020

A Note from CRN

As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, the longevity of our community development sector is at risk. Solutions are required to repair the damage now before so much more is lost.

Affordable housing is foundational to our aspirations for dynamic communities. Before the pandemic, the affordable housing community and residents across the Chicago region were already sounding the alarm about the shortage of affordable housing. Now the existing stock is at threat of disintegrating right in front of us without serious intervention by both the public and private sectors. One cannot shelter in place without a place to call home—the time is now for housing for all. Housing is a right, and it is our responsibility to keep this idea at the forefront of conversation as policy is developed to respond to our current crisis. Community controlled solutions focused on economic and racial equity should be a fundamental guidepost.

The health crisis of COVID-19 has magnified the role of housing in the well-being of communities and the security of households, and has laid bare the structural inequalities in housing practice and policy. We have heard from members and others across the field that so many of the issues we were concerned with prior to the crisis have become more critical than ever, from the need for rental assistance and supportive housing services to new policies promoting equity like an appraisal gap finance program. Many are struggling without any property tax relief, despite our collective interest in reform and the urgency of this issue. The call for increased resources for rental assistance must be significant, and leaders including Representative Jesús "Chuy" García among others have called for \$100 billion in the next stimulus bill.

Here at CRN, we've been figuring out how to continue reaching out to our network and providing capacity-building education. We regret to announce that **several of our upcoming events will be postponed, including the first two workshops in the Community Development and Empowerment Series planned for April 29-30 and May 7-8, as well as our fundraiser at Revolution Brewing planned for May 12.** We are continuing to monitor recommendations of public health officials—stay tuned for updates on rescheduled dates. We remain mindful of the need for



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About CRN

Who We Are:

For 40 years, the Chicago Rehab Network has worked to train, coordinate, and empower community-based organizations developing affordable housing across Chicago and the region. CRN's advocacy has resulted in policies and resources including the Affordable Requirements Ordinance, the Tax Reactivation Program, the

daily supplies for residents and frontline workers, of the daily experiences of hopes and frustrations, and of the importance of ongoing communication. We extend our continued wishes for health and safety, and look forward to once again joining together to learn, celebrate, and connect when it is safe to do so.

Check our Website for Resources

[We have added a page to our website](#) with housing-related resources for navigating COVID-19 that we will continue to update as more information becomes available.

Position Open for 2020-2021 VISTA

CRN is hiring! We are looking forward to hosting another AmeriCorps VISTA member for the 2020-2021 term. Beginning this fall and lasting for 12 months, the Research & Capacity-Building VISTA position will involve duties including outreach, policy research, and more. [Learn more and apply through the AmeriCorps website.](#)



Supporting the Community Reinvestment Act

With proposed rule changes threatening the effectiveness of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), CRN is joining with housing advocates across the nation to oppose changes that would weaken the law. [Read our letter to the OCC and FDIC here.](#)

News & Resources

Virtual City Council Meeting

The Chicago City Council will hold a virtual meeting on Wednesday, April 22 at 10am. You can submit written comments and sign up for a speaking slot online or by calling (312) 744-6800. [Learn more about the virtual meeting on the City Clerk's website.](#)

LIHTC Awards Announced

Nearly \$400 million in affordable housing construction projects have been selected to move forward through the City's federal tax credit allocation distribution process. The 11 projects will create 1,083 affordable units throughout the city and are grouped into three focus areas: opportunity or high-income area projects, redevelopment or low-income area projects, and transitioning or gentrifying area projects. [Read the full list of selected projects.](#)

Tell Congress to Support Housing Stability

The CARES Act provides \$12 billion in housing and

State of Illinois Housing Trust Fund, and the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit. In addition to advocacy and training, CRN provides industry-wide thought leadership through regular policy updates, best practice case studies, and demographic and economic analysis related to housing needs and markets.

Support our Mission:

With your help, we can build strong neighborhoods, strengthen capacity, and foster community leadership.

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homelessness resources and partial moratoriums on evictions and foreclosures, but the fight for affordable housing both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over. NLIHC and other housing advocates around the country are calling for \$11.5 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants and at least \$100 billion in rental assistance with a complete moratorium on evictions and moratoriums. [Using NLIHC's template](#), you can find your representatives and customize a message to them calling for increased housing resources.

Virtual Legal Clinic

The Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights has expanded their emergency assistance to non-profits, entrepreneurs, and small businesses, and is offering a free virtual brief service and advice clinic featuring:

- Expanded eligibility to give free legal advice to more nonprofits and small businesses that need help
- Information about how to access federal, state, county, and City of Chicago loan funds
- Referrals to other organizations in Chicago that are providing more in-depth assistance to nonprofits and small businesses with actual loan applications
- Brief legal advice on issues including employment, leases, contracts, taxes, debt relief, real estate, dissolution or mergers

[Find out more and apply.](#)

CARES Act and Non-Profits

HUD has put together a guide for non-profit and faith-based organizations wondering how they will be affected by the CARES Act. From a breakdown of available loan programs to a list of frequently asked questions, the guide is a good place to get started on learning about the resources available to navigate this unprecedented time. [Find the guide here](#), or [visit the U.S. Small Business Administration's website for additional information](#).

IHDA Response to COVID-19

IHDA has put together a useful list of resources covering both updates to their programs as well as general Illinois housing resource updates. Find information about rental assistance, homeownership assistance, and more on [IHDA's website](#).

Get in Touch with Your Local Public Health Department

From the Illinois Department of Human Services:

"Examples of issues that your local public health department may be able to assist with include:

- Assistance procuring sanitizing supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Advising on clinical protocols and pathways for individuals who may be COVID-19 positive
- Locating and securing alternate housing options

for persons who test positive for COVID-19 who do not require hospitalization but need isolation (including those exiting from hospitals); these options will be wheelchair accessible as needed

- Arranging transportation to alternate housing sites or medical appointments; transportation will be wheelchair accessible as needed
- Coordination of follow-up medical care for individuals recovering from COVID-19 or management of chronic illnesses
- Mental health, substance use disorder, suicide prevention, and domestic violence resources/referrals that are beyond the reach of your organization
- Information on local food pantries"

[Find a directory of Illinois public health departments here.](#)

www.chicagorehab.org | (312) 663-3936