

Network NEWS

Updates from CRN

May 19, 2020

A Note from CRN

CRN members, partners, and friends,

As we approach nearly two months since the beginning of the stay-at-home order in Illinois, it is safe to say that there is still a long road ahead of us. Across the country, rising housing costs have posed an increasing threat to the well-being of communities for years. Here in Chicago, we were concerned about issues like the 120,000 affordable unit storage long before COVID-19; now, we are seeing the effects of a deeply inequitable housing landscape exacerbated by an unprecedented health crisis. In a city where [nearly half of renters are paying over 30% of their income toward rent](#), we are now seeing that [53.6% of renter households earning less than \\$30,000 have an at-risk worker](#), [while nearly 40% of Latinx and 37% of African American workers are in more vulnerable occupations](#). The newly-introduced [HEROES Act](#) provides \$175 billion in assistance for renters and homeowners, which has the potential to be a significant step in a larger comprehensive solution. As it moves forward, we hope it will be structured around a long-term vision for sustainable affordable housing that supports affordable community development, as well as the residents and staff of CDC housing--without a holistic approach, we fear an increase in housing insecurity and homelessness.

Here at CRN, we are continuing to collaboratively advocate for measures to address the challenges currently presented at the intersection of housing and health. We have heard from our members a desire for forward-looking assistance that establishes a stabilization package with the recognition of CDCs' strategic advantage for resident services and long-term affordability. How can we shape the present relief opportunity into a promising future? We appreciate the varied initiatives for our communities that we have seen so far, as our CDC community has always been committed to providing safe, decent, and affordable housing. We hope to encourage a broad support base to advance our collective vision--a vision that has created enduring results in housing development and preservation, rooted in our commitment to development without displacement. We remain focused on structural issues like property tax relief and modification of operating costs like water and sewer exemptions, and we look for long-term sustainability.



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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

Additionally, we have heard concerns about the cost of personal protective equipment and basic sanitation for affordable housing residents and staff. As we determine our advocacy priorities and try to gauge the scope of need for CDCs, we want to hear from our members and partners about the challenges your organization is facing with this issue. If you want to share your organization's experience, [please reach out via email](#).

We are working with the instructors of our Community Development and Empowerment Series to adapt these dynamic workshops into a virtual platform that will allow students to continue learning from local practitioners. Keep an eye out for more information about a restructured online Empowerment Series in the coming weeks.

As always, we extend our wishes for health and safety.

Sincerely,
Kevin Jackson, Executive Director and CRN Staff and Board

Check our Website for Resources

[We have added a page to our website](#) with CRN updates and 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](#).



COVID-19 Resources

Mortgage and Housing Assistance Website for Americans Impacted by COVID-19 Launched

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Federal Housing Finance Agency, and Department of Housing and Urban Development have launched a joint mortgage and housing assistance website for Americans impacted by COVID-19. From housing and credit counselor navigation to information on mortgage relief options, the website will provide updates about housing assistance information during this crisis. Find it [here](#).

Emergency Crisis Fund for Survivors of Domestic Violence

The Network, an organization advocating against domestic

including the Affordable Requirements Ordinance, the Tax Reactivation Program, the 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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CRN thanks our generous supporters:



The Elizabeth Dorse Charitable Trust



violence, has established an Emergency Crisis Fund for survivors of Domestic Violence to address critical gaps in the safety net for survivors. Resources include rental assistance and educational and social supports for e-learning for clients in shelter or community emergency housing. [Learn more.](#)

Affordable Housing and COVID-19: A Discussion with City and State Leaders

Join the Illinois Housing Council on Wednesday, May 27 for a live virtual panel with city and state public officials to discuss affordable housing and COVID-19. Speakers will share efforts underway to ensure both the long-term stability of our state's affordable housing stock and the well-being of low-income tenants living in both Chicago and communities across the state of Illinois. [Learn more and register on IHC's website.](#)

Emergency Relief for Affordable Multifamily Properties Program

Mayor Lightfoot introduced an ordinance in April that will create a new \$3 million emergency relief package to stabilize affordable housing developments across Chicago. The Emergency Relief for Affordable Multifamily Properties Program (ERAMP) ordinance will support up to 3,400 low-income households in 40 properties with grants or no interest, deferred payment loans of up to \$75,000 to affordable housing owners to help cover lost rent, general operating expenses, additional cleaning and other COVID-19-related costs. [Learn more.](#)

Illinois Housing Search

IHDA, the Department of Human Services, the Department on Aging, and the Department of Healthcare and Family Services sponsor a housing search tool that provides detailed information about rental properties and helps people find housing to best fit their needs. The free housing search engine lets people look for rental housing using a wide variety of criteria and mapping features. Housing listings display detailed unit features, building amenities, and local neighborhood information. This service also provides links to housing resources and helpful tools for renters such as an affordability calculator, a rental checklist, and information about renter rights and responsibilities. [Visit here.](#)

Center for Conflict Resolution

The City of Chicago's Center for Conflict Resolution is providing mediation services for tenants and landlords, including helping to develop payment agreements, in order to avoid tenant displacement as many struggle to pay rent in the midst of the current health crisis. [Learn more here.](#)

Virtual City Council Meeting

The Chicago City Council will hold a virtual meeting on Wednesday, May 20 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.](#)

House Democrats Introduce HEROES Act

On May 12, House Democrats introduced the HEROES (Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions) Act to further address the COVID-19 pandemic. The \$175 billion in assistance to renters and homeowners in the bill includes \$4 billion in tenant-based rental assistance, \$5 billion in CDBG funding, \$11.5 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants to address homelessness, and more. [Learn more in the press release](#), [read the full text of the bill](#), or get an overview from the [title-by-title summary](#).

Lissette Castañeda Named Permanent LUCHA Executive Director



After being involved with LUCHA for decades and serving as the Interim Executive Director of LUCHA since last June, Lissette Castañeda has been named the new permanent Executive Director. She will continue serving over 200 households through the organization, striving toward a vision for LUCHA as a "leading collaborator and convener, feeding the ecosystem around us, ensuring that even in the darkest moments, everyone has a home." Read the full announcement [here](#). Congratulations, Lissette!