



February 1, 2024
News & Updates from the Chicago Rehab Network

UPDATES FROM CRN

Lisette Castañeda Announced as New DOH Commissioner

In December, Mayor Brandon Johnson announced the appointment of Lisette Castañeda to serve as Department of Housing (DOH) commissioner. Lisette comes to the role of DOH commissioner with two decades of experience in affordable housing development, housing services, and organizational leadership, including serving as Executive Director of CRN member organization LUCHA as well as a member of CRN's board. Castañeda will be tasked with streamlining the affordable housing development process as per Mayor Johnson's recent executive order and expanding homeownership to Chicagoans in historically disinvested communities.

"Stable, affordable housing is a cornerstone of community safety, economic development and mental health," said Castañeda. "I am honored to serve in this role where I can spearhead new housing developments while ensuring Chicagoans have the services they need to stay in their homes for the long term." Prior to serving at LUCHA, Castañeda served as the Interim Executive Director and the Director of Community Engagement for the Center for Changing Lives, where she worked to expand economic opportunities and revitalize neighborhoods across Chicago. She has served on a number of boards in addition to CRN's, including Palenque LSNA, Chicago Housing Trust, and the Illinois Housing Council. We will miss Lisette's guidance on our board, and send our best wishes for her continued success in this new role!



CRN's Testimony to the Committee on Finance

On January 22, CRN Executive Director Kevin Jackson presented testimony at the City of Chicago's Committee on Finance's subject matter hearing to discuss municipal depositories. CRN called for increased resources for affordable housing and the implementation of additional affordable housing policies. Read the testimony [here](#).

CRN's 2023 Holiday Party

Thank you to all who joined us for our 2023 Holiday Party in December! It was great to see faces new and old as we celebrated another year of affordable housing capacity-building, research, and advocacy. We look forward to continuing to work with you toward a more equitable Chicago in 2024!



NEWS & RESOURCES

Register for the Illinois Affordable Housing Forum

Every year IHC hosts a statewide affordable housing conference, the Illinois Affordable Housing Forum. The Forum provides an opportunity for hundreds of industry leaders from across Illinois to come together to share ideas, discuss best practices and make new connections. This year's Forum will be held February 26-27. [Learn more and register.](#)

Tools for Tackling Corporate Landlords

Tenant advocates and government officials are expressing mounting concerns over the acceleration of corporate investment in housing. Housing financialization first gained momentum following the 2007-2008 mortgage crisis when Wall Street firms acquired foreclosed homes en masse. In recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the problem of speculative housing investment as the residential sector became an attractive option for growing capital in the face of overall economic uncertainty. Consequently, housing affordability and the rights of renters have become more pressing than ever, with concerned voices emerging from diverse political backgrounds. *Tools for Tackling Corporate Landlords* is a series on state and local policy options for mitigating the impact of private equity and other institutional investors put together by the Private Equity Stakeholder Project. [Read more here.](#)



Call for Increased Funding for Housing in New CR

Congress passed and President Biden signed into law on January 18 another short-term continuing resolution (CR) that will extend funding for HUD programs through March 1, at which point Congress will need to finalize its fiscal year (FY) 2024 spending bills, pass another CR, or face a partial shutdown of the federal government. NLIHC and colleagues at the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF) are calling for Increased Funding for Affordable Housing and Homelessness Programs. Although their Day of Action has passed, [this memo from NLIHC](#) contains a useful overview of the issue and demands.

America's Rental Housing 2024

The Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard has released its Rental Housing 2024 report examining the state of rental housing in the US, including the critical affordability and policy challenges facing the nation. Takeaways from the report include unaffordability being at an all-time high as well as the fact that a record number of people are facing homelessness. Read the full report and find interactive maps and data [here](#), or find an overview of its six key takeaways [here](#).



Bipartisan Bill Could Reach House Today

From NLIHC: Advocates expect a bipartisan tax bill to be brought to the U.S. House of Representatives...though key reforms to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) have been left out of the bill. After the bill passed out of the House Committee on Ways and Means (see Memo, 1/22), NLIHC released a statement encouraging advocates to continue urging their members of Congress to include LIHTC reforms in any upcoming tax legislation.

It is not too late to urge your members of Congress to include LIHTC reforms in any upcoming tax legislation. While the tax bill has passed out of the House committee, it remains yet to pass in the full House or Senate. [Find out more.](#)

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Bring Chicago Home

On March 19, Chicagoans will vote directly on Bring Chicago Home—a measure to create dedicated funding for housing and homeless services. The Bring Chicago Home coalition—which includes CRN members Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, JCUA, and One Northside—wants to restructure the Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT), a one-time tax on properties when they are sold to create a substantial and legally dedicated revenue stream to provide permanent affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness. [Learn more.](#)

BRING CHICAGO HOME

Want to be featured in our newsletter? If you have an event, announcement, or resource to share, [let us know!](#)

About CRN

For over 45 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 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.

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