

# APPENDIX B

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

### Summary of Public Comments

Nine individuals or agencies submitted comments on the proposed Chicago Blueprint for Fair Housing. Some individuals submitted several comments, resulting in 29 total comments received. The comments fell into three broad categories: policy-related comments, comments related to the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), and comments concerning personal housing issues. All comments will be considered when finalizing the Chicago Blueprint for Fair Housing.

The policy-related comments generally praised the comprehensive approach in the Blueprint. However, many comments proposed various ways to address fair housing issues, including working with the private financial industry to address the harms committed by lenders, such as redlining and predatory lending; addressing the needs of people with disabilities that reach beyond finding affordable, accessible, and safe housing; as well as the creation of a Social Housing Acquisition Fund.

The comments related specifically to the CHA included suggestions that the CHA amend its occupancy policies; allow Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) participants to have a voice similar to that of public housing residents; shorten leasing approval periods; take a lead role in the lease-up process by creating and requiring use of a uniform lease agreement; require that property owners in the HCV program be licensed by the State of Illinois; take a more proactive role in addressing housing discrimination; and address the issue of building conditions faced by HCV holders.

### *Policy-Related Comments*

1. I commend the regional approach taken by this report. The municipalities that participated in the report should continue to enlist other local municipalities implementing the report and to persuade them to participate in future assessments. The recommendations in the report are feasible. I would suggest regular procedures to report on how they are implemented and to study their effectiveness in overcoming the problems identified. **Michael P. Seng**
2. I would recommend that more emphasis be given to inspecting new multi-family construction to see that it meets the accessibility requirements of the 1988 Amendments Act. I know there is a lawsuit pending against the City of Chicago that impacts on this issue, but enforcement of the requirements should proceed regardless of the outcome of the lawsuit. Study should also be given to whether the 1988 requirements should be enhanced. **Michael P. Seng**
3. I think more emphasis should have been given to having the local municipalities work with the private financial industry to be sure that lending is equal throughout all communities. This could involve the local or branch offices and the creation of better financial products. Redlining was done by the government and real estate brokers, but it was also done by the lending industry. Also, the financial industry engaged in predatory lending practices that partially caused the financial meltdown in 2008 and that devastated communities of color. We still see the effects of these practices. The availability of good financial products in communities of color is essential to reverse the segregation that we have today. Regulation of the financial industry is done at the

federal and state levels, but local governments can be very influential in seeing that local lenders serve the community equitably. **Michael P. Seng**

4. It is good to see such effort towards people with disabilities (PWD); however, to truly address this issue, we need to confront the systems currently in place and end institutionalization. Institutions, including nursing facilities and group homes, design their programs to trap residents there and profit off of their subsidy programs, thereby preventing them from living in community as the ADA promises us. I, myself, have spent the last 5 years desperately trying to stay in community with help from friends and family so that I do not become trapped as many of my PWD comrades are. That comes at a rent-burden of 99%, not including utilities. I have \$14 every month left over after paying rent. Many don't have the kind of support needed to do this. We must specifically engage people in these institutions when we do these planning studies, address programs specifically to get them out of those institutions and paired with Home and Community Based Services and Supports (HCBS) and ensure that they can sustainably have a living income level, currently not provided by SSI or SSDI. **David Zoltan**
5. Housing is not the only deficiency for people with disabilities (PWD). There are well-known problems and shortcomings in the paratransit program that services the city and county. While the draft acknowledges the program's existence, it does not do enough to talk to PWD and discover how they have been mistreated and mishandled as a participant in the program. I am glad to have the free public transit made available through the state, but a true paratransit program that can service our community is essential as well. **David Zoltan**
6. Again, I appreciate the free public transit access as a PWD, however this access should extend not just to people in affordable housing as suggested in the draft, but to all people. Fees for transit are a low-key tax on the poor and working class and thus regressive. Removing payment systems entirely and paying for public transit with taxes on the businesses that most benefit from the workers and customers that use it would save the transportation system money in enforcement and technology, save tremendous money for passengers, and increase usage of the system. Many cities around the world have free public transit systems, paid by taxes, and we should join them to increase opportunities and access. **David Zoltan**
7. In combatting NIMBYism, we must ensure that all people, even those with sexual assault records and thereby residency restrictions, can find housing. Those residency restrictions have been disproven to have any effect on recidivism whereas homelessness is highly correlated to recidivism. It should be a priority for the city to remove the use of those restrictions and ensure housing for all. **David Zoltan**
8. I am discouraged by the bias towards training of the literal agents of the real estate industry who are promoting racial and ableist segregation. There are systemic barriers and rampant racism and ableism in the industry that can't simply be trained away. We must set up alternate systems to replace the bigoted ones. **David Zoltan**
9. While a noble goal to ensure federally funded units meet UFAS standards, we are beyond 30 years of living with the ADA. We must become mandated to create accessibility for all. Not just for the tenants who we hope will be able to age-in-place either, but for community members that might visit as well. I recommend requiring ALL new housing construction to meet minimum standards of using Universal Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) including 100% of units to at

least American National Standard Institute (ANSI) Type A accessibility as well as the requirement in Goal 3.D for the higher ANSI Type B Standards for 10% of units to UFAS Mobility Standards and 4% of units to Vision and Hearing Impairments Standards. **David Zoltan**

10. I strongly recommend in the attempt to increase affordable housing and better promote use of the Community Land Trust, that Chicago adopt a Social Housing Acquisition Fund which it can use to buy properties that would otherwise be sold to investors and corporations, especially those from outside the city. In conjunction with appropriate Pergovian taxes that disincentivize the commodification of land and housing, a Social Housing Acquisition Fund would allow the city to purchase properties, move them into the Community Land Trust, and make them permanently affordable while allowing the residents to have democratic control over their housing and its maintenance. Especially if paired with a first-opportunity-to-purchase law as was put into the Woodlawn/Obama Center Ordinance, this would be a powerful tool to ensure affordability for Chicago residents rather than corporate interests forcing further gentrification and displacement. **David Zoltan**

#### *CHA-Related Comments*

11. "Two Hearts Beat As One" should be reviewed for the possible elimination of this policy. It is inappropriate to ask or require mixed cohabitation sleeping arrangements with fathers and daughters sharing the same room, mothers and sons sharing the same room, sisters and brothers sharing the same room, especially when the ages of minors must be taken into consideration with these accommodations that are being demanded by CHA for economic reasons. **Charlotte Starks, Housing Choice Voucher participant**
12. The CHA must take responsibility for unfair housing conditions and treatment of tenants by including and abiding by the Chicago Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance either in the Administrative Plan in its entirety or by including it in its policy. To not abide by the ordinance is unlawful because it encourages owners to use CHA as their attorney in actions against the tenant especially in cases of retaliation. **Charlotte Starks, Housing Choice Voucher participant**
13. Investigations for approval for leasing must be shortened so that participants can secure decent housing before the apartments are given to other candidates who do not have vouchers, therefore do not have to wait for lengthy approvals from CHA. **Charlotte Starks, Housing Choice Voucher participant**
14. The CHA should review leasing agreements for voucher participants to ensure the leasing agreements are legal and valid. CHA should require a uniform leasing agreement for all participants printed by CHA and distributed as part of the rental and HAP agreement. **Charlotte Starks, Housing Choice Voucher participant**
15. Allowing property owners to secure a year's lease agreement for one year and then revert to month-to-month tenancy permits housing abuses that can lead to evictions and homelessness. It permits the owner to raise rents on a month-to-month basis above the 30% to 40% for low-income participants. **Charlotte Starks, Housing Choice Voucher participant**
16. Inspection failures in common areas must not be charged to individuals at the time of HQS inspections. This could impact the tenants to a required move instead of requiring the owner to

bring the codes up to the standards of the City of Chicago and CHA/HUD requirements. **Charlotte Starks, Housing Choice Voucher participant**

17. Required moves/evictions sanctioned by CHA on behalf of property owners as a result of retaliation from owners due to complaints against the owner must cease immediately. CHA must require owners to improve their services rather than to inconvenience the tenant. **Charlotte Starks, Housing Choice Voucher participant**
18. CHA must require all property managers and management companies to be licensed by the state of Illinois as required by law and give proof of the license. Too many property managers do not have the skills to handle tenants legally resulting in illegal evictions and egregious offenses against the Chicago Landlord and Tenant Ordinance. **Charlotte Starks, Housing Choice Voucher participant**
19. The Chicago Blueprint for Fair Housing highlights significant and troubling patterns of housing discrimination, particularly against voucher holders in Chicago. As a group, voucher holders and our families are some of the most stigmatized and discriminated against households in the city. This discrimination locks us out of housing opportunities and harms our ability to provide for our families. In reviewing the Chicago and CHA goals regarding the enforcement of our fair housing protections, we are disappointed to see a lack of concrete action steps. Greater resources for the enforcement of our fair housing rights are needed for households facing discrimination to seek justice. Additionally, the City and CHA must take a more proactive stance in addressing discrimination, as currently, the burden too often falls on housing seekers, and for voucher holders working under a strict timeline to secure housing, we do not have the time to educate landlords on the law and/or pause our housing search to file complaints of discrimination. We recommend the City and CHA aggressively target housing providers with an education campaign on fair housing and other relevant laws and responsibilities and launch a public campaign to signal to landlords that the city takes a hardline stance against illegal discrimination in all its forms. **Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance and Chicago Housing Choice Voucher Participant Leader Board**
20. The Chicago Blueprint for Fair Housing notes that Chicago residents face severe buildings conditions issues, including those that pose hazards to health and safety. As voucher holders, we are acutely aware of such conditions and are often at a disadvantage in reporting such conditions and issues. Because landlords hold a disproportionate amount of power in the landlord/tenant relationship, particularly for voucher holders, we often feel inhibited from reporting issues for fear of losing our homes, and with the lack of alternative housing options available to us due to discrimination, discrepancies in market cost and voucher value, and other factors, losing our homes could mean losing our long-term housing stability. The Blueprint fails to adequately address the buildings conditions issues that voucher holders and other renters face. We recommend that the City and CHA coordinate to define and implement better, more proactive healthy homes policies and programs, such as those outlined in the proposed Chicago Healthy Homes Check-up Program ordinance. **Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance and Chicago Housing Choice Voucher Participant Leader Board**
21. The CHA must address the areas where its current policies and programs may put voucher holders at a disadvantage when competing with market tenants for housing. As a Moving to Work PHA, the CHA has greater flexibility in implementing innovative programs to improve

housing access for voucher holders; yet we fail to see this flexibility used to the benefit of voucher holders. For example, delays in the lease-up process (which are more significant than other large public housing authorities), failure to address discrimination from landlords, and problems with CHA contractors, including issues with delays in inspections, all create a landscape that limits housing access for voucher holders. The CHA goals in The Blueprint fail to address these key issues that limit fair housing access for voucher holders, and we strongly urge the CHA to create goals and measurable benchmarks on these points. **Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance and Chicago Housing Choice Voucher Participant Leader Board**

22. The CHA should conduct an internal audit of all policies and programs and identify and mitigate discrepancies with HUD requirements and/or local laws and regulations. For example, policies and programs regarding the following: tenant background checks and compliance with the Just Housing Amendment; reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities; upholding tenants' rights and addressing retaliation issues; support for households experiencing domestic violence and/or sexual harassment; language accessibility; and public comment and engagement requirements. **Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance and Chicago Housing Choice Voucher Participant Leader Board**
  
23. Voucher holders need a voice in the policies that impact us. Unlike public housing residents, voucher holders do not have a formal outlet within the CHA to take part in the decisions that affect us. There have been several attempts throughout the years to create a forum for voucher holders to formally advise the CHA, but these attempts have failed, largely due to a lack of commitment, resources, and follow-through from the CHA. We need a seat at the table in influencing the policies that impact us. To that end, we urge the CHA to create dedicated seats on the Board of Commissioner for voucher holders. These seats should be filled through a democratic election process by and for voucher holders. **Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance and Chicago Housing Choice Voucher Participant Leader Board**

#### *Personal Housing Comments*

24. I have been living at Mulvey Place for 3 years. My apartment A/C unit was not working when I moved in and is still not working. There have been two contractors that came out to fix the unit, but it has not been fixed and my wife is asthmatic bronchitis with severe allergies. I am asking for help to get this issue resolved. Looking forward to a response in this matter. **Esmond B.**
  
25. I think that it is wonderful to provide public housing for people like me because I really need somewhere to stay because I can't afford market rent. The Dearborn Homes is a mess, and I don't think that the management cares about the elderly or the children that live in those buildings. The buildings' upkeep is poor. I think the 2710 State Street building is the worst building of all. I have complained about that building since I lived there, and no change has come. The shooting and drug selling is out of hand. The children can't play outside safely without having to dodge bullets. People sleeping in the stairways or using the elevator or stairs for the bathroom. What do you think about the change to the area? I would love to invite my family and friends over to see how wonderful the apartment looks but coming into a building like this is impossible and makes me ashamed of the building. Will it ever be a nice place to live? The apartment is beautiful I love my house it's when I go outside. **Cynthia S.**

26. I would like you all to discuss how you all will deal with management that does not fix issues such as no screens on windows (been here over 5 years and still don't have any), broken tile (put in numerous work orders), bars on all windows (still have not been removed). If there is a fire me and my daughter are dead. I don't have a key to my back building entrance door. These issues that keep living conditions unbearable and it seems you don't care. Let's discuss!! **Mieshia R.**
27. I have lived where I am for 20 years. It's no longer safe in my neighborhood. I don't be out at night or hardly in the daytime. I am a rape victim. I suffer from PTSD. I take medication. I need help in finding a new place. Is there somewhere I can get help? My sister used to help me. She died of COVID last February. I need help. **Patricia J.**
28. My question is if you're located housing in a bad area and you're scared to live there, can you request for an emergency move? **Shay H.**
29. I moved into my unit Dec 5, 2020, after viewing the apartment. I moved forward with signing my lease. I was told by the viewing agent what I should expect and if I should have any issues, I should contact resident care. When I didn't receive my mailbox key, I contacted resident care with no follow up. After the time allotted for the follow up, I called again as I was told by the rep that I would hear from the property manager who I left voicemails for I never heard anything from it took a month and a half to get my mailbox key. After that I had to contact resident care due to the fact my cabinet doors were painted shut, after calling at least twice and 3 weeks later maintenance came out to open the cabinet doors. We experienced heavy snow and waiting to see if maintenance would remove the snow and ice from the back of the building where we pay to park. I contacted resident care via email with pictures to show how dangerous it was for us to exit the building. Again, no communication or follow up from anyone. March 15, 2021, my sister informed me that she was taking herself and her husband to the hospital. Later that evening she texted that they tested positive for covid. On March 19, 2021, my son and I were tested for covid. My results were negative; however, while waiting for his test results, I stopped by the leasing office to pick up my parking sticker. I was told that I needed to schedule an appointment to pick up my sticker and on March 22, 2021, I was at work when I received a call telling me my 13 yr. old had tested positive for covid. I called the leasing office to inform resident care of my situation knowing the expiration date was coming up and I would not be able to come in the office. I was told that the property manager would get in contact with me regarding my parking sticker. I called on the April 1, 2021, to pay my rent and parking fee and to let the resident care rep know I now have covid and I have not heard from the property manager regarding my parking sticker. I asked if a family member would be able to pick up the sticker for me. The rep simply stated that she has noted my account and that the property manager would get in contact with me on April 4, 2021 I receive a call from my niece informing me that her father has passed away from covid. I have not received any communication from the property manager until my car is towed from my address on May 8, 2021. This is after I contacted the office asking why my car was towed, and also asking where the location of the recovery company was to get my car back. Please keep in mind I have just returned to work April 22, 2021 upon receiving my negative results and quarantining another 4 days as advised. I was unable to attend my brother-in-law's services or be there for my sister in her time of need wanting to heal and take proper safety measures. I had to call and get a friend to take me to get my call schedule an appointment to get my sticker at 3pm on May 8, 2021. Once I get to the leasing office, I realize I am early. I called the office and asked if there was a payment that needs to be made. I was told

no I was just picking up my parking sticker. Mr. Marcos greets me at the door. I informed him that I was highly upset, and the unprofessional conduct was unacceptable. He stated that he would give me the parking sticker however, I would need to contact the resident care on Monday May 10, 2021, to schedule yet another appointment to fill out paper another inconvenience to me after paying \$218.50 to get my car back that was in the far south suburbs. After the scheduled appointment was verified, nothing was ready to assure that unpleasant experience wouldn't continue. This is not right others placed in this position less fortunate than I really struggling to make it. I was blessed to have extra savings to get my car and I have someone take me to get my car which should have never happened and could have been avoided if the property manager would have followed up with me. As I told Mr. Marcos it appears that Pangea doesn't care, and once money is received the care title of resident care goes out the windows and requests fall on deaf ears. Please advise what can be done or who do I complain to get heard this and worse is happening all over the city and in buildings that the City is helping with funding only to take advantage of the tenants. **Rochelle L.**