

COMMUNITY FREEDOM PARTY

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Housing Availability and Affordability in Chicago

The **Community Freedom Party (CFP)**, a political party dedicated to representing, safeguarding, and advancing the social, economic, and political interests of the African-American community, do hereby call for and support the following ordinances, regulations and laws related to housing availability and affordability in Chicago, proposals which we believe are necessary to ensure the comfort and well-being of Chicago's African-American families and reflect our party's values of love for the black community, empathy and concern for all people, honesty and integrity, humility, intellectual curiosity, and teamwork/unity:

1. **Rent Increase Caps:** CFP calls for the Illinois state government to repeal the Rent Control Preemption Act and for Chicago to pass an ordinance capping annual increases in rent, allowing residents to benefit from investment in their communities without being displaced. CFP calls for the caps to be placed at an appropriate level of 150% of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 3%, whichever is lower, ensuring that residents are protected from displacement while still allowing small landlords to meet their expenses.
2. **Property Assessment Freezes:** CFP calls for a Chicago ordinance instituting a property assessment freeze in Chicago neighborhood areas designated as either gentrifying (e.g., Woodlawn, South Shore) or at risk of gentrification to prevent displacement in improving neighborhoods. Under the ordinance, current residents of identified gentrifying community areas would have their property's assessed value frozen at the current value for as long as said current resident remains an occupant of said property.

Furthermore, for all other properties in Chicago, CFP supports property assessment limits capping how much the assessed value of properties can be increased from one period to the next and a rate limit capping the rate at which Chicago can tax properties.

3. **Stronger Regulations on Institutional Investors in Low- and Middle-Income Areas:** CFP calls for an ordinance in Chicago prohibiting institutional investors from purchasing residential or commercial properties and then sitting on or holding such properties for extended periods without good-faith efforts taken to rent or lease said properties, a practice which can increase rents and limit the supply of housing in African-American communities.
4. **Changes to Existing Chicago Laws and Practices That Limit the Development of Affordable Housing:** CFP calls for changes to Chicago zoning laws, growth caps, and density restrictions - including allowing more multifamily developments in Chicago neighborhoods restricted to single-family homes - to spur the development of more affordable housing options throughout the city of Chicago.
5. **Amend Chicago's Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO):** CFP calls for the following amendments to Chicago's ARO for developers seeking municipal funding, city-owned land, or zoning changes for a project with ten or more units:
 - ARO prices would be set based on a new "Fair Area Median Income (FAMI)" that ties housing affordability to incomes in the specific Chicago community area (e.g., Englewood, Woodlawn, Pilsen, Logan Square) where the development project will occur rather than across the entire Chicago metropolitan area, a practice which excludes many African-American families from new housing units.
 - At least 60 percent of apartment units must be family-sized with two or more bedrooms.
 - Increase the total number of units developers are required to set aside as affordable housing (housing for those earning up to 80% FAMI) to 40 percent and stipulate that developers must also reserve 30 percent of units for workforce housing (housing for those earning up to 80% - 120% FAMI) and that they may not opt-out of such requirements by paying in-lieu fees.

- Require that all affordable units and workforce units be built on-site rather than allowing developers to use offsite units.
 - In leasing the affordable housing units, 40 percent of housing units shall be reserved for those earning up to 30% FAMI, 30 percent for those earning 30% - 50% FAMI, and 30 percent for those making 50% - 80% FAMI.
6. **All Chicago Housing Authority Land Shall Be Reserved for Affordable Housing:** CFP calls for a municipal ordinance requiring that all land owned, sold, or leased by the Chicago Housing Authority be used strictly for the construction or maintenance of affordable housing.
7. **Limits on the Demolition of Affordable Housing:** CFP calls for municipal laws banning the demolition of affordable and workforce housing unless the following conditions are met:
- The city and developers must replace such housing with at least a similar quantity of affordable and workforce housing units.
 - Displaced renters must be offered first right of return at similar rents and provided with adequate resources to ensure they find affordable and safe temporary housing.
 - Before any impacted residents are given notice to move, the city and developers must have a specific plan in place and the funding in place to ensure that construction of the replacement affordable and workforce housing units is completed within 24 months and such plan and funding must be inspected and approved by a qualified independent auditor.
8. **Homeowner Repair Fund:** CFP calls for the following adjustments to Chicago's Home Repair Program:
- The city shall contribute an additional \$500 million to the program over the next five years with this additional funding dedicated exclusively to funding home repairs in disinvested low- and moderate-income communities in the South and West Sides of Chicago.

- Rather than the program being used solely for roof and porch repairs, money disbursed as part of the program can be used for any major home improvement necessary to ensure the safety and security of inhabitants, including energy-efficient furnace/boiler repairs, plumbing and electrical work, structural damage repair, flooding prevention modifications, tuckpointing, and roof and porch repair.

Moreover, as far as practical, CFP supports Chicago taking steps to ensure greater participation of African-American Business Enterprise Program (BEP) contractors in Chicago's Home Repair Program.

9. **Support Policies to Increase Black Homeownership:** CFP calls for legislation at the municipal, state, and federal levels to increase black homeownership in Chicago, including increasing funding for and access to down payment assistance programs, increasing building permits, pre-purchase and post-purchase homeownership counseling, expanding government grants that finance affordable home construction, and restructuring the mortgage interest deduction as a tax credit to make it more accessible to low- and moderate-income homeowners.
10. **\$850 Million in Increased Funding for Chicago's Troubled Buildings Initiative (TBI):** CFP calls for \$850 million in increased funding for Chicago's Troubled Buildings Initiative with the stipulation that the increased funding be dedicated exclusively to repairing and rehabilitating vacant and abandoned residential and commercial buildings in disinvested communities on Chicago's South and West sides.
11. **Waiver of TODI Fee** - CFP calls for an ordinance specifying that the TODI fee be waived for those residents 65 years old and over. Furthermore, the TODI application/form should be included on the tax bill with a notification informing homeowners that there is a TODI fee waiver for residents who are at least 65 years old.

12. **Just-Cause Eviction Ordinances:** CFP supports an ordinance in Chicago stipulating that a landlord cannot evict any type of renter - including those on month-to-month rental agreements - unless there has been a specific violation of the lease. Furthermore, under the ordinance, landlords shall be prohibited from engaging in unreasonably slow repair times or initiating eviction proceedings which are not supported by specific lease violations.
13. **Tenants Healthy Homes Ordinance:** CFP calls for a Chicago Tenants Health Homes Ordinance applying to landlords owning 5 or more rental units and stipulating the following:
- Every apartment building must be inspected at least every 18 months for safety problems, such as mold, missing smoke detectors, lead paint and pest infestations.
 - Landlords shall be given a reasonable period of time to address any safety issues identified. If the safety problems are not adequately addressed, the landlord would face repercussions ranging from fines to forfeiture of the property, depending on whether the violation is deemed minor, serious or life-threatening.
 - The inspections would be conducted by a team of building inspectors housed under the Chicago Department of Public Health, and tenants would be notified of the inspection 30 days beforehand and given an opportunity to speak directly with the inspector(s) or submit comments.
 - For life-threatening violations that require tenants to temporarily relocate, the landlord shall be required to temporarily suspend rent payments for affected residents so that they can use the money to obtain temporary housing.
14. **Application Fee, Move-in Fee, and Security Deposit Fee Caps:** CFP calls for an ordinance capping the amount that landlords may legally charge to prospective tenants submitting an application.

15. Increased Funding for the Chicago Housing Trust: CFP calls for \$250 million in increased funding for the Chicago Housing Trust's AHHP Acquisition and Rehab Program to be utilized to assist non-for-profit development corporations, community-based organizations, or community land trusts in acquiring properties for resale to low-income families in Chicago neighborhood areas designated as at risk of gentrification.

CFP also calls for local nonprofit organizations having a greater influence in the selection of the Chicago Housing Trust's board of directors and in the operation of its programs.

The Community Freedom Party and its members support and will work for passage of the policy proposals delineated above in order to help ensure the well-being of the city of Chicago and its African-American community.

THIS POLICY PROPOSAL HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND RATIFIED ON

January 26, 2024

WITH THE AFFIRMATIVE VOTE OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF

THE COMMUNITY FREEDOM PARTY
CHICAGO EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kirby Birgans

Sonya Dorsey

Daliah Goree

Branden Kelly

Howard Ray

Laron Taylor

Heather Wills