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As Described in New Issue Brief, Changes to Illinois Law Create Additional Tools to Address Illinois’s Urgent Housing Crisis

Cook County, IL –A [newly released list of 44 Illinois cities and towns](#) reveals which communities in Illinois have the smallest percentage of homes or rentals available for low-income and working-class families. All but one is in Cook County or the collar counties.

The release of this list by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) pursuant to the state’s recently amended Affordable Housing Planning & Appeal Act (AHPAA) kicks off a timeline for each of these municipalities to make a plan to address the local shortage of affordable housing using a wide variety of proven policy initiatives. Plans are due to IHDA in June 2025.

This week, Impact for Equity has released [an issue brief](#) detailing the shortage of affordable housing in communities across Illinois, the recent amendments made to AHPAA, and the opportunity for effective use of AHPAA tools to create affordable housing in Illinois. That issue brief can be found at impactforequity.org.

AHPAA requires communities in which less than 10% of the housing stock is affordable for low-income and working-class families to create and implement plans to address the affordable housing shortage. If those communities unfairly deny or restrict proposals to create affordable housing, developers can challenge that decision with the State Housing Appeals Board. However, limitations in both the planning and appeals processes have blunted the law’s effectiveness since it was originally passed in 2003.

Under changes to AHPAA that went into effect on January 1, 2024, communities subject to AHPAA must take meaningful steps to implement these plans and actually create new affordable housing within their borders. These changes strengthen AHPAA’s effectiveness by requiring more detailed and comprehensive plans, progress reports, and updates, and by expanding who can challenge a municipality’s denial of an affordable housing proposal with the State Housing Appeals Board, among other things.

“Meaningful tools to address Illinois’ severe shortage of affordable housing are sorely needed,” said Martin Cozzola, Staff Counsel at Impact for Equity. “The changes to this state law will provide additional requirements and more accountability for communities across Illinois to create

an opportunity for low-income and working families to find an affordable home in the same communities where they work.”

Illinois faces a severe shortage of housing targeted towards low-income and working-class families, with one estimate suggesting the Chicago region needs more than 227,000 additional units of affordable housing to meet the needs of renters alone.

“The reforms to AHPAA make significant improvements that will improve its effectiveness for the small number of communities with less than 10% affordable housing, as defined in the law,” said Bob Palmer, Policy Director for Housing Action Illinois. “However, we need to keep working on developing additional public policy solutions at all levels of government that will create more affordable housing in all communities, not just those covered by AHPAA.”

“Every community in Illinois has a shared responsibility to address the affordable housing crisis; and to encourage a diversity of housing options that promotes fair housing choice,” said Patricia Fron, Co-Executive Director of the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance (CAFHA). “We believe that the recent amendments to AHPAA get us one step closer to this goal and we will continue advocating for additional policy changes that increase access to healthy and affordable homes.”

The amendments to AHPAA going into effect in 2024 were made in Senate Bill 1476, legislation championed by a coalition of organizations that was led by Housing Action Illinois, and included the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, Connections for the Homeless, Housing Opportunities & Maintenance for the Elderly, and Impact for Equity. The bill was sponsored by State Senator Ann Gillespie (27th District) and State Representative Abdelnasser Rashid (21st District).

About Impact for Equity:

Impact for Equity, formerly known as BPI, is a public interest law and policy center that has worked at the front lines of racial, economic, and social justice in the Chicago region and Illinois for over 50 years. Learn more about us as <https://www.impactforequity.org/>

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