HOME Success Stories

Illinois

The HOME Coalition
2015
HOME SUCCESS STORY

Illinois

Community Partners for Affordable Housing

Community Partners for Affordable Housing (CPAH) provides safe, decent, and affordable housing by creating rental and homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income households. Today, CPAH manages more than 75 units of affordable housing throughout Highland Park, Evanston, and Lake Forest, Illinois.

The HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program helps CPAH make a meaningful impact in the communities it serves. HOME is used to not only help families secure affordable housing, but also to clean up blighted properties in the neighborhood.

Because CPAH is a land trust, all CPAH homes remain affordable in perpetuity. This means the HOME funds used for each CPAH home will permanently impact the community for generations to come.

Homeownership in Highland Park

Jose came to Highland Park, Illinois when he was 16 years old and has made the community his home ever since. However, in recent years, rising housing costs have made it more difficult for Jose and other residents to find safe, decent, and affordable homes in the area.

Although Jose, his wife, Dahlia, and their two daughters struggled to find an affordable place to rent in Highland Park, his dream was to provide a safe, permanent home for his family in the community. Luckily, Lake County has made it a priority to encourage affordable housing in high-opportunity areas like Highland Park, where the shortage of affordable housing is most severe.

With the help of $64,000 in HOME funds, CPAH was able to purchase a modest, $224,000 home in Highland Park. After rehabilitating the property, CPAH sold the home to Jose and his family. CPAH also referred Jose to a partnering bank that is dedicated to helping low-income homebuyer obtain an affordable, $145,000 mortgage. The family moved into their home in December 2012.

Jose says working with CPAH has been a dream come true. “We feel like we have everything now. We don’t have fancy things or go out to eat very often or take expensive vacations, but we’re providing a good, quality life for our kids and it all started with housing. We are so thankful and appreciative of what we have.”
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Cook County Department of Planning and Development

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) of Cook County, Illinois is committed to developing sustainable communities by fostering economic opportunities and business development, preserving and expanding the supply of safe, decent, and affordable housing, facilitating infrastructure improvements, promoting fair housing, and supporting social services and programs that address the problems of homelessness.

DPD’s coordinates housing, community development, and economic development efforts in pursuit of stronger, more viable communities. It also leverages the County’s resources to support the retention and creation of businesses and jobs in order to expand the County’s tax base. One of the primary tools DPD uses is the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program.

Freedom’s Path

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, about 1.4 million veterans are at risk of homelessness due to poverty, a lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded and substandard housing. Recently, Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle’s administration has made the challenges of homeless veterans a greater priority.

In 2015, the first phase of Freedom’s Path, a 72-unit, permanent, supportive housing development serving low-income, homeless and disabled veterans and at-risk individuals, opened its doors at the Edward J. Hines Veterans Administration Hospital Grounds. The $18.6 million development was built by Communities for Veterans, LLC and is managed by Beneficial Communities, based in Sarasota, Florida. All of the units are targeted to households earning less than 60 percent of the area median income.

To complete the project, DPD provided $2.2 million in HOME funds and $1.6 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits. The Housing Authority of Cook County also provided 56 Housing Choice Vouchers to assure that those without an income can still reside there.

Phase Two, which will provide an additional 52 units of affordable housing for local veterans, is currently in the application process for with the Illinois Housing Development Authority.

Freedom’s Path addresses the severe shortage of permanent supportive housing in suburban Cook County and provides a secure place for veterans to become re-acquainted to society, while receiving much-needed services. It will provide them a community and home with the dignity they deserve.
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**Madison County Community Development**

Madison County Community Development’s mission is to provide a progressive, responsive, and timely development process that focuses on the public interest and results in a balanced, sustainable county. Madison County Community Development receives and administers federal grants and other funds to facilitate the development and preservation of affordable housing, to aid in providing public services and facilities for low- and moderate-income citizens, and to assist in the creation of employment and economic opportunities in Madison County, Illinois.

By partnering with federal, state, and local governments and the private sector, including lending institutions, the Madison County Community Development leverages HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) funds to facilitate the construction and redevelopment of single- and multi-family housing. HOME empowers low- and moderate-income residents in Madison County by providing suitable and safe housing.

**Emerald Ridge**

During the early years of World War II, the federal government constructed a number of barracks-style units to house individuals working in support of the war effort at the Olin-Winchester munitions plants in East Alton, Illinois. After the war ended, the housing units were taken over by local property owners and turned into affordable rental housing for low-income residents. However, more than 60 years after they were constructed, the units had fallen into a state of disrepair and were blighted and deteriorated to the point where occupancy was unacceptable. Despite being located next to a playground and the East Alton Recreational Center, the buildings negatively impacted surrounding property values.

The Village of East Alton partnered with Madison County Community Development and RISE to develop a plan to renovate the properties. This included razing some of the buildings and constructing new homes. Madison County Community Development was involved in the planning process and provided financial assistance. With the help of $1.7 million in HOME funds—including $600,000 from Madison County Community Development and $1.1 million from the Illinois Housing Development Agency—and nearly $11 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits, the organizations were able to renovate 46 units as part of the Emerald Ridge development. Today, all of the units are exclusively targeted to low-income residents.

Thanks to this effort, the Emerald Ridge development has had a positive impact. It helped remove slum and blight in the neighborhood, increase the values of surrounding homes, add to the available rental housing stock, and make the area attractive to new and first-time homebuyers.