

**ULI Chicago's "Front Stoop Series"**  
**Housing Policy in a Pandemic**  
**July 23, 2020**

A Conversation With:

Esther Sorrell, *Assistant Commissioner*, City of Chicago, Department of Housing  
Daniel Kay Hertz, *Policy Director*, City of Chicago, Department of Housing  
Paul Williams, *Policy Analyst*, City of Chicago, Department of Housing

On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, ULI Chicago members convened for the Front Stoop Series to discuss "Housing Policy in a Pandemic." The discussion was led by Esther Sorrell, *Assistant Commissioner*, City of Chicago, Department of Housing; Daniel Kay Hertz, *Policy Director*, City of Chicago, Department of Housing; and Paul Williams, *Policy Analyst*, City of Chicago, Department of Housing.

The hour-long conversation covered lots of ground, with the following three key takeaways below.

- **Chicago acted quickly** - Illinois and Chicago reacted quicker than other areas of country, shutting down and even passing an eviction moratorium. The Department of Housing was worried about a "cliff" when the moratorium ended and wanted to get assistance out ASAP. At the same time, no other cities were doing much so they had to rely on past program experience. Therefore, two programs were set up. First, the COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grant that provided direct monetary assistance for 60% AMI and change in employment status. Second, Emergency Relief for Affordable Multifamily Properties Program (ERAMP). ERAMP provided \$3 million emergency relief package to stabilize affordable housing developments including support for operations, eviction protections, and more
- **Couldn't have done it without support of community** - The Department of Housing relied on generous support of several community groups, whether in the form of unpaid time and effort, or the infrastructure to administer the programs.
- **Future outlook is both good and bad** – There is general concern about when the unemployment assistance ends or is reduced, and the effects it will have on housing. However, the infrastructure created helped when receiving CARES Act funding, essentially laying the groundwork to be able to continue to provide assistance. Additionally, in-lieu fees from development projects are drying up. They fund several assistance programs, including these programs created in response. The City is passing other measures, including the recently passed Fair Notice Ordinance, which will have some effects on potential future evictions.

Summary written by Kurtiz Pozsgay, *Senior Planner*, Village of Bensenville