



## **Commissioner Marisa Novara**

Department of Housing, City of Chicago

Marisa Novara was appointed Commissioner of the Department of Housing (DOH) by Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot in June 2019.

As DOH commissioner, Novara directs the City's efforts to keep Chicago affordable for all income levels through projects and policies that address the needs of tenants, landlords, developers, homeowners and other community stakeholders.

DOH programs, under her direction, support affordable housing construction and rehabilitation projects, provide purchase assistance for first-time homebuyers, enable accessible repairs for seniors, provide grants for home improvement projects, and offer development incentives for the redevelopment of vacant and abandoned buildings. DOH also administers the City's affordability requirements for multi-family construction projects and monitors compliance for all City-assisted affordable housing projects and policies.

Before joining the department, Novara served as a policy director for Mayor Lightfoot's transition team and was formerly vice president of the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC). During her 8-year tenure at MPC, Novara designed and managed the Cost of Segregation project, a 2017 study that concluded how decades-old patterns of racial and economic segregation cost the Chicago region an estimated \$4.4 billion in additional income each year. She also led the subsequent creation of the region's first comprehensive guide to a more racially equitable future, among other reports, studies and articles.

Prior to MPC, Novara directed affordable rental and for-sale housing development for Lawndale Christian Development Corp. in the North Lawndale community.

Novara has a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan in sociology, master's degree from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, certificate in affordable housing finance, development and management from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and master's in urban planning from the Istituto Politecnico di Milano in Milan, Italy. She lives in the Little Italy neighborhood with her family.