

Cook County Residential Tenant Landlord Ordinance

(Commissioners Scott Britton-Kevin Morrison)

Forty-three percent of suburban Cook County households are renters, and **more than 245,000 renter households live in Cook County communities that lack comprehensive landlord-tenant laws**. They lack protections to prevent:

- Taking away basic rights, such as the right to termination notices and jury trials
- Unreasonable fees, such as fees of \$100 per month for late rent payments
- Illegal lock-outs
- Retaliation

For thirty years, renters living in Chicago, Evanston, and Mount Prospect have benefited from municipal ordinances defining basic landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities, and the rental markets in these communities have thrived.

The proposed Cook County Landlord Tenant Ordinance:

- **Prohibits** lease terms that waive notices, require renters to “confess judgment” without a trial, or allow landlords to charge exorbitant interest rates on late payment of rent
- **Improves on** procedures for renters to withhold rent to pay for minor repairs, encourage landlords to make repairs, or terminate leases when landlords fail to make repairs
- **Establishes** a uniform standard of structural integrity for housing throughout the country
- **Creates** a cause of action to enforce renters’ rights not to be locked out of their homes and provides guidance when entry is permitted
- **Requires** all landlords to maintain security deposits separately and return them; prohibits excessive security deposits; prevents renaming “security deposits” as “move in fees” so that landlords can keep them; and sets up penalties when security deposits are not returned
- **Restricts** retaliatory conduct

The proposed Cook County Ordinance also:

- **Describes** landlord rights and renter responsibilities, such as payment of rent and lease compliance
- **Provides** guidance for landlords to adopt reasonable rules and regulations
- **Exempts** owner-occupied buildings that have 6 or fewer units

Overall, the proposed ordinance clarifies the roles and responsibilities for both renters and landlords—making the rental landscape easier and fairer to navigate for everyone.

See endorsing organizations on next page.

For more information, please contact:

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Lawyers' Committee
for Better Housing

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ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS

- Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago
- Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County
- Arise Chicago
- BEDS Plus Care Inc.
- Beyond Legal Aid
- Center for Changing Lives
- Center for Disability & Elder Law
- Centro de Trabajadores Unidos
- Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance (CAFHA)
- Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
- Chicago Volunteer Legal Services
- Christian Community Health Center
- Connections for the Homeless
- Connections of Illinois, Inc
- Enterprise Community Partners
- Greater Chicago Legal Clinic
- Housing Action Illinois
- Housing Choice Partners
- Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Jane Addams Senior Caucus
- Joining Forces for Affordable Housing, Connections for the Homeless
- La Casa Norte
- Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing
- Legal Aid Society of Metropolitan Family Services
- Legal Council for Health Justice
- Manufactured Home Owners Association of Illinois
- Metropolitan Planning Council
- Metropolitan Tenants Organization
- Moran Center for Youth Advocacy
- Neighbors for Affordable Housing
- North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic
- Northwest Side CDC
- Northwest Side Housing Center
- Open Communities
- PASO – West Suburban Action Project (Proyecto de Acción de los Suburbios del Oeste)
- Progress Center for Independent Living
- Shriver Center on Poverty Law
- South Suburban Housing Center
- The ARK
- UNETE La Villita
- Uptown People's Law Center

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