

# Cook County Residential Tenant Landlord Ordinance

(Commissioners Britton-K. Morrison, Anaya, Deer, Johnson, Lowry, Sims, Suffredin)

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 Tenant Landlord Ordinance:

- **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
- **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
- **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 and some single family 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.**

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For more information, please contact:

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## ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS

- A Safe Haven Foundation
- Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago
- Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County
- Arise Chicago
- Autonomous Tenants Union
- BEDS Plus Care Inc.
- Beyond Legal Aid
- BPI
- Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
- Center for Changing Lives
- Center for Disability & Elder Law
- Centro de Trabajadores Unidos
- Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance (CAFHA)
- Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
- Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
- Chicago Urban League
- Chicago Volunteer Legal Services
- Christian Community Health Center
- Citizens in Action Serving All (CASA) Blue Island
- Connections for the Homeless
- Connections of Illinois, Inc
- Dina & Eli Field Ezra Multi-Service Center
- Enlace Chicago
- Enterprise Community Partners
- First Lutheran Church of the Trinity
- Greater Chicago Legal Clinic
- Habitat for Humanity Chicago
- Health & Medicine Policy Research Group
- Housing Action Illinois
- Housing Choice Partners
- Housing Forward
- Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Impact Behavioral Health Partners
- Jane Addams Senior Caucus
- Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
- Joining Forces for Affordable Housing, Connections for the Homeless
- Kenwood Oakland Community Organization
- La Casa Norte
- Latino Policy Forum
- 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
- Northside Action for Justice
- Northwest Side CDC
- Northwest Side Housing Center
- ONE Northside
- Open Communities
- Palos/Orland Progressives
- PASO – West Suburban Action Project
- Pilsen Alliance
- Progress Center for Independent Living
- Shriver Center on Poverty Law
- South Siders for Peace
- South Suburban Housing Center
- South Suburban PADS
- St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Logan Square
- Supportive Housing Providers Association
- The ARK
- UNETE La Villita
- Uptown People's Law Center
- Woodstock Institute
- Working Family Solidarity

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Lawyers' Committee  
for Better Housing