

Courtney Wong

From: Courtney Wong
Sent: Thursday, May 2, 2024 5:44 PM
To: Courtney Wong
Subject: Race+Housing Series: Ways you can take action post-panel



Last Thursday, we explored the importance of homeownership in Black and Latine communities, its role in closing the racial wealth gap and the complicated realities that come along with it, and opportunities for us to learn about and pursue homeownership in the city.

To recap, our panelists recommended to take the following actions after the evening's panel discussion:

1. Read [The Color of Law](#) by Richard Rothstein

Without knowing the harmful, racist history that intentionally barred so many Black Americans and other people of color from homeownership, we are less equipped to solve for the current racial housing gap.

[Use our The Color of Law reading guide](#) to deepen your learning and reflection.

2. Tell your state legislator and alderperson to support United Power's Reclaiming Chicago campaign.

[Find your state senator and state representative](#), locate their email address, and then copy and paste the email template below into an email to tell them to increase the Illinois Department of Housing Services (IDHS) state budget from \$10 to \$15 million.

This will help support United Power's Reclaiming Chicago campaign to build or rehab 1,000 homes on the South Side and 1,000 homes on the West Side of Chicago.

Thank you, Senator/Rep _____, for your support for the Reclaiming Communities work of United Power to build or rehab 1,000 homes on the South Side of Chicago and 1,000 homes on the West Side of Chicago, and to replace vacant lots and buildings with affordable homes, allowing new homeowners to build wealth and equity through homeownership.

Reclaiming Communities is an effort to rebuild our communities for working people, to address the wealth gap, and to replace vacancy and violence with homes, jobs, homeowners, and neighbors.

Last year's state budget had a line item for \$10 million to IDHS to provide United Power with grant funds to be used for homebuyer subsidies.

Please include this line item in the state budget again, and please increase it to \$15 million to allow more progress to be made in 2024/25.

We have over 70 homes under development across four communities on public and private lots, and the City of Chicago is preparing to commit 500 more city-owned vacant lots to this initiative, which will create more opportunities to build homes at scale and create many more new homeowners in 2024/25.

In addition, [find your alderperson](#), locate their email address, and then copy and paste the email template below into an email to tell your alderperson to support the ordinance to commit 500 vacant, city-owned lots to United Power's Reclaiming Chicago effort for the purpose of creating affordable, single-family homes.

Dear Alderperson _____,

I ask that you support passage of an ordinance to commit 500 vacant, city-owned lots to United Power's Reclaiming Chicago effort for the purpose of creating affordable single-family homes.

United Power's campaign will rebuild communities, create jobs, homes and safer streets, to put vacant lots and properties back on the tax rolls, to re-populate West and South Side neighborhoods, and to help families build wealth and equity through homeownership.

3. Engage with different community-based homeownership organizations

Donate to, volunteer with, and advocate for your local housing organizations, especially those on the South and West Sides of Chicago.

In addition, familiarize yourself with the [Housing Counseling Centers](#) in the city.

4. Visit Chicago's [Department of Housing website](#)

[Register for Green Homes Chicago](#) on May 6th and receive free home energy upgrades and energy-efficient retrofits. Also, keep an eye out for new down payment assistance resources coming soon.

5. Post about this event

Share your experience on your social media platforms and tag us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#). An album of photos from the event is [here](#).

Couldn't make it? We'll be posting the full recording of the panel soon. Once it's up, we encourage you to share it with your network.

Want more?

View our [Race + Housing Resource Page](#) to read more about our panelists, their work, and a curated list of media to explore the intersection of race and housing.

[Visit resource page](#)

[View our photo album](#)

Thank you.

We are deeply grateful to the Gary Comer Youth Center for hosting this panel and to their Culinary Arts Program for catering the delicious food.

Thank you to our amazing moderator, Amber S. Hendley, and panelists, Commissioner Lissette Castañeda, Shenita Muse, Jennifer Parks, and LaToya Spann-Martin, for encouraging us to think outside the box about affordable housing.

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Lastly, thank you to everyone who took the time to attend our panel and learn alongside with us.



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