

PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Law Mandates Communities Submit Affordable Housing Plans by June 2

12 of 16 north suburban communities have affordable housing shortages; must address with plan to increase amount of housing available to low-moderate income families to at least 10 percent; Open Communities urges all suburbs to comply with both letter and spirit of law

Winnetka, IL, May 28, 2015 – The State of Illinois mandates that all communities deemed to have a shortage of affordable housing submit plans to rectify this deficit by June 2, 2015. Sixty-eight communities, all in the Chicago suburbs and 12 in the northern suburbs, must comply. Under the [Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act \(AHPAA\)](#), non-exempt communities are those in which less than ten percent of the total housing stock is affordable to low- and moderate-income families based on the Chicago area median income. The Act encompasses all local governments in Illinois, regardless of home rule status.

The twelve suburbs with insufficient affordable housing are Deerfield, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Kenilworth, Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Northbrook, Northfield, Park Ridge, Wilmette, and Winnetka. Their responses to calls for a plan have been mixed:

- The following have stated they will not comply with the AHPAA on the grounds that they are home rule communities: Deerfield, Lincolnwood, and Northfield.
- The following were not available to comment, despite repeated attempts to contact them for status updates: Morton Grove, Northbrook, Park Ridge, and Wilmette.
- The following have either passed and submitted a plan, or have stated they intend to do so by the June 2 deadline:
 - The [Village of Kenilworth](#) (passed on March 16)
 - The [City of Highland Park](#) (passed on May 11)
 - The [Village of Glencoe](#) (passed on May 21)
 - The [Village of Glenview](#) (in process)
 - The [Village of Winnetka](#) (in process)

Open Communities urges all municipalities to not only submit their plans by June 2, but to follow the spirit of the Act and ensure affordable units will be available in all new multi-family developments.

“The law, when approached in the right spirit, is a great way for communities to become more inclusive, stable and prosperous,” said Gail Schechter, Executive Director of Open Communities and a member of the State Housing Appeals Board (SHAB). “When the housing stock in our towns and villages is diverse and accessible, it’s easier for our older residents to downsize, for young couples to gain a foothold, for families going through separation to maintain residences closer together, and for employees to live where they work. Affordable housing is good for families, for neighborhoods, and for business.”

Today's north suburban residents are more [burdened by housing costs](#) than ever. In 1990, 12% of homeowners in the 12 suburbs with less than 10% affordable housing were spending more than 35% of their incomes for housing, rising to 18% in 2000, and **skyrocketing to 28%** by 2010. For renters, **nearly half** (47%) are burdened by housing costs, compared with 28% in 1990 and 29% in 2000.

Evanston, Highwood, Niles and Skokie are the four communities in Open Communities' service area that are exempt from AHPAA; however, as [the amount of affordable housing in their communities has either dropped or plateaued](#), we encourage them to partner with Open Communities to maintain and expand their affordable housing stock.

The Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act was enacted in 2004 to address the "shortage of affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing in the State." The Act states, "It is imperative that action be taken to assure the availability of workforce and retirement housing," adding that "local governments in the State that do not have sufficient affordable housing are encouraged to assist in providing affordable housing opportunities to assure the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens of the State"

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About Open Communities

Open Communities, formerly Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs, is a nonprofit organization that advocates for fair and affordable housing in 16 northern suburbs of Chicago. Our mission is to educate, advocate and organize to promote just and inclusive communities in north suburban Chicago. We are a leading voice for housing, economic and social justice in north suburban Chicago, working to promote inclusive communities that are welcoming to all. We work with current and prospective residents and local groups to promote economically and culturally diverse communities in north suburban Chicago. We provide fair and affordable housing counseling services, community education, advocacy, and organizing for welcoming communities.

Open Communities is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements, and the interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois Housing Development Authority or the State Housing Appeals Board.