



CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF CHICAGO
COUNCIL CHAMBER

SECOND FLOOR, CITY HALL
TELEPHONE: 312-744-6800

July 19, 2007

Mr. Bennett J. Johnson III, Acting Director
Office of Budget and Management
121 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago IL 60602

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Chicago's AIDS housing system is facing a funding crisis, which we ask you to address in the 2008 city budget. Without action, 211 low-income, disabled people living with HIV/AIDS will face severe housing instability or homelessness when funding for rental assistance runs out.

The City of Chicago's experience with the ten-year plan to end homelessness has demonstrated that housing is essential to maintaining health, particularly for individuals with chronic disabling diseases such as HIV/AIDS. People living with HIV must often take medication with food on a rigid schedule, which makes access to housing and a kitchen essential. And most importantly, they are often too sick to work—despite life-extending medications. Many people with HIV live on meager Supplemental Security Income (SSI) capped at \$623 per month, which leaves just over \$100 per month for other expenses after paying rent, even for a studio.

Despite the City's commitment to end homelessness, Chicago is experiencing an alarming decline in available rental assistance for low-income residents disabled by HIV/AIDS. In fact, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) is scheduled to discontinue rental assistance through the federal Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program for as many as 211 low-income and disabled Chicagoans with HIV/AIDS in 2008.

Without the assistance, these individuals and families will face severe housing insecurity and even homelessness. They rely on nominal but essential rental payments, capped at \$2,250 per year. As you will see from the attached chart, HOPWA rental assistance funding has declined by more than \$1.5 million over the past 4 years. The total number of households who receive assistance has declined from a 2005 high of over 1,000 households to an estimated 450 households by the end of 2007.

Funding for rental assistance has declined in part because CDPH has used HOPWA funding to secured additional community residential slots. These placements address a growing population of severely ill and unstable individuals with HIV/AIDS who need intensive support services and cannot live independently. While we applaud the expansion of community residential AIDS housing, it should not come at the expense of rental assistance, which keeps individuals who need fewer supportive services in their own homes at a lower cost.

To avert this crisis, we ask you to increase 2008 AIDS rental assistance housing funding by \$1 million, either with City Corporate dollars or funds from another source. \$400,000 would be used to prevent 211 people at eminent danger of losing rental assistance from becoming homeless, and \$600,000 would be used to provide rental assistance to 300 additional low-income, disabled people with HIV/AIDS, reversing cuts that began in 2005.

We would be happy to meet with you to further discuss this request.

Sincerely,

<p><i>Jedann Thompson 16th ward</i></p> <p><i>John A. Pope 10th</i></p> <p><i>Tom Jennings 49</i> Ward:</p> <p><i>Richard B. [unclear] 21</i> Ward:</p> <p><i>[unclear] 30</i> Ward:</p> <p><i>Pat Howell 3</i> Ward:</p> <p><i>[unclear] 32</i></p> <p><i>[unclear] 40th</i></p>	<p><i>Robert W. [unclear] 2nd</i></p> <p><i>Thomson Smith 48</i> Ward:</p> <p><i>Michelle Harris 76</i> Ward:</p> <p><i>Bernie [unclear] 42</i> Ward:</p> <p><i>Ed H. [unclear] 28</i> Ward:</p> <p><i>[unclear] 50</i> Ward:</p> <p><i>Helen Skiller 46</i></p> <p><i>Jandi Jackson 7</i></p> <p><i>[unclear] 22nd</i></p>
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- cc: Dr. Terry Mason, Commissioner - Chicago Department of Public Health
- Ellen Sahli, Acting Commissioner - Department of Housing
- Lori Healy, Chief of Staff - Office of the Mayor
- Carrie Austin, Chair - Committee on Budget and Government Operations
- Ray Suarez - Committee on Housing, Real Estate

**Chicago Aldermen signing AIDS housing 2008 budget request to city
budget director Bennett J. Johnson III, July 19, 2007**

1. Manuel Flores – 1
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5. Leslie Hairston – 5
6. Freddrenna Lyle – 6
7. Sandi Jackson – 7
8. Michelle Harris – 8
9. Anthony Beale – 9
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12. Toni Foulkes – 15
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