



Published online, September 5, 2007

<http://www.windycitytimes.com/gay/lesbian/news/ARTICLE.php?AID=15941>

AFC to Host Town Hall Meeting

AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) will host a town hall meeting on the looming HIV/AIDS housing crisis if new funding isn't received.

According to local HIV/AIDS organizations, if Chicago's 2008 budget doesn't include \$1.5 million dollars in new funding for housing assistance for people living with HIV/AIDS, 211 low-income, disabled individuals may lose all assistance come

January 2008. The upcoming housing meeting, to be held on Sept. 11, is a teach-in for those who want to learn more and help out. Those attending will learn the details of the problem, why housing assistance is important and how they can take action.

Alderman Tom Tunney (44th) is leading the effort in City Council to get more funding for HIV housing, and in mid-July, 35 alderman had signed a petition supporting this additional funding.

The rental assistance 211 disabled people living with HIV may lose is minimal support, but can make a difference between being able to pay rent and putting food on the table.

The lack of housing assistance money doesn't just impact the individual who won't receive help, but backs up the entire housing system, according AFC's John Peller. For example, community residences through organizations such as Chicago House and Bonaventure House have long waiting lists to get in. One of the reasons is that fewer Housing Assistance Program (HAP) dollars makes transitioning from community residences to living on one's own with the help of housing assistance close to impossible for many. Another is that there are only enough units to house a small fraction of Chicagoans in need.

At one point, HAP enabled Chicago organizations to assist roughly 1,000 people in a one-year period. AFC and others are projecting that without new funding, only 450 people will get the help they need in 2008. Those that are not helped, Peller said, are at serious risk for homelessness.

The Sept. 11 AIDS housing town hall will take place at the Chicago Bar Association, fifth floor, at 321 S. Plymouth. For more information, call Peller at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago at 312-334-0921 or e-mail at jpeller@aidschicago.org .

—Amy Wooten