



For Immediate Release
July 31st, 2024

Contact: Nida Hasan, Communications Manager
(312) 759-8253, nhasan@impactforequity.org

CHICAGO —Today, Impact for Equity (formerly BPI) calls for renewed vigilance and commitment to Chicago’s public housing as one of the longest-running civil rights cases in the country, *Gautreaux v. Chicago Housing Authority*, will go through one of its most important evolutions since it was filed in 1966. More information about the *Gautreaux* case is available in a recent brief from Impact for Equity, [The Fight for Fair Housing](#).

After decades of shaping national and local housing policies, the CHA and the *Gautreaux* plaintiffs entered a five-year settlement agreement in 2019, hoping to resolve the case by July 31, 2024. However, critical aspects covered by the Settlement Agreement remain incomplete, and the parties have [asked the federal court](#) to continue the *Gautreaux* Settlement until the CHA has made further progress in redeveloping demolished public housing sites.

Beginning on August 1, the parties have asked for *Gautreaux* to continue under a new [Settlement Agreement](#) extension, which transitions away from certain foundational remedies that have been in place for over fifty years, while retaining enforcement over important public housing redevelopment promises that have yet to be fulfilled. The *Gautreaux* case, filed in 1966 as a class action on behalf of CHA residents and applicants, reached a landmark victory in 1969 when a federal judge agreed with the plaintiffs that Chicago’s public housing authority had unconstitutionally segregated its developments by race, both by locating new developments nearly exclusively in segregated Black communities, as well as maintaining racially segregated waitlists.

Since that time, *Gautreaux* has focused on remedies, or policies meant to address the harm caused by this segregation.

Particularly significant remedies since 1969 have included:

- A requirement that the CHA build in areas outside segregated Black neighborhoods, where it had previously concentrated its housing, while ensuring the new developments would be more community-scaled than the massive, isolated campuses it had built in the years after World War Two.

- A nationally groundbreaking program to assist holders of Housing Choice Vouchers to find housing anywhere in the metropolitan area. Over 7,000 families—more than 25,000 individuals—moved to new housing as a result of this program.
- A requirement that new CHA mixed-income housing is genuinely mixed, including public housing residents in the same way as all other renters and build new community amenities in existing CHA developments, such as renovations at Carver Park at Altgeld Gardens.

Effective August 1, some of the remedies provided for under the original court orders and the 2019 Settlement Agreement will expire, while others will continue under the Amended Settlement Agreement. These changes:

- Sunset a foundational remedy under *Gautreaux*, specifically that CHA build housing in “General Areas” (communities where 30% or fewer of residents are Black) until its housing portfolio provides adequate housing opportunities for CHA families throughout Chicago. This requirement was crucial in significantly expanding the footprint of CHA housing since 1969, with CHA tenants now living in all 77 Community Areas.
- Continue other requirements, especially with respect to the redevelopment of vacant land as a result of demolitions under the Plan for Transformation. Some of these requirements include:
 - Binding written agreements to redevelop mixed income housing, including public housing, at Lake Park Crescent (former Lakefront Homes); Oakwood Shores (former Madden, Wells, and Darrow Homes); Jackson Square (former Rockwell Gardens); Park Boulevard (former Stateway Gardens); and Legends South (former Robert Taylor Homes).
 - A detailed plan for revitalization of Carver Park at Altgeld Gardens, along with other infrastructure improvements called for in an existing Development Plan.

Under the 2019 Settlement Agreement, during the last five years, significant progress has been made. For example, CHA has completed a new family resource center at Altgeld Gardens and has completed or begun construction on new mixed income housing at nine of the developments listed in the Development Plan. CHA has also implemented the Wait List court order specified in the Settlement Agreement, adopted several changes to improve participation in its Housing Choice Voucher and mobility programs, and committed to begin or continue several Early Learning initiatives throughout CHA family housing.

However, the new Settlement Agreement Amendment represents a crucial moment as Chicago continues to face a historic need for affordable housing.

“The sunseting of public housing guardrails that have been in place for over half a century against the re-segregation of CHA housing calls for renewed commitment from CHA leadership, and renewed vigilance and oversight from the City of Chicago, HUD, and all Chicagoans to

ensure that public housing represents opportunity,” said Cara Hendrickson, Executive Director of Impact for Equity.

Meanwhile, the continued need for oversight through *Gautreaux* of mixed-income housing redevelopment on the Plan for Transformation sites is a reminder of how slowly progress has been made in rebuilding public housing, even as tens of thousands of households are on CHA waiting lists that are at a 30-year backlog. Impact for Equity will continue to advocate and work with the CHA, City of Chicago, and HUD to promote the urgency of redeveloping this housing, including through its recent report, *[Building on Opportunity](#)*.

About Impact for Equity:

Impact for Equity, formerly known as BPI, is a public interest law and policy center that has worked at the front lines of racial, economic, and social justice in the Chicago region and Illinois for over 50 years. Learn more about us as <https://www.impactforequity.org/>.

###

Follow us on social media:

