

### Interagency Council Celebrates 10 Years and 6,200 Affordable Units Preserved

The Preservation Compact, launched in 2007 by the MacArthur Foundation, has been a trailblazer in coordinating the work of public agencies to identify and preserve government-assisted properties through a coordinated group of key stakeholders known as the [Interagency Council](#). Over the past ten years, Interagency Council partners working together have successfully preserved 6,200 affordable unit in Cook County, Illinois. To commemorate a decade of work, members toasted preservation and awarded Gwen Thomas, Account Executive Branch Chief in the Chicago Multifamily Center, the Interagency Council Founders Award for her decade of commitment.

The Interagency Council includes different levels of government - and tenant advocates - to develop creative strategies to preserve government assisted rental housing at risk of being lost due to conversion to market rate housing or through poor living conditions. The Interagency Council includes leaders from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Illinois Housing Development Authority, Cook County, the City of Chicago, and the Chicago Housing Authority.

Government agencies often work in isolation, and may not have an early warning system to identify vulnerable properties. Even if agencies do identify problems in advance, they may not have the lines of communication in place to coordinate preservation strategies with other government agencies before the crisis hits.

Properties threatened by deterioration, market conversion, or other forces are more likely to be saved when agencies communicate regularly, and the Interagency serves as an effective vehicle for collaboration.

### The Interagency Council At Work

The Preservation Compact Interagency Council recently preserved 110 affordable units in a strong suburban market. When the owner declined to renew the project-based Section 8 contract, low-income families faced displacement out of a thriving suburb of Chicago, with 110 project-based units at risk of permanent loss.

Chicago's HUD office had already pioneered use of HUD's 8bb program, which allows the transfer of project-based funding to new locations. The trick is in coordinating the match: finding a new site that offers similar opportunities, and persuading the current owner to participate in the transfer process.

Enter The Preservation Compact and the Interagency Council. The Compact identified and approached an owner interested in an 8bb transfer in a neighboring suburb. Once both owners were on board, government partners supported the effort, and tenant advocacy partners effectively pressed all sides to ensure tenants benefitted from a smooth transfer process.

Advocates, HUD, the Housing Authority of Cook County, and both owners worked hand-in-hand to move the 8bb transfer forward, preserving this valuable contract in one of the strongest regions in the Chicago metropolitan area.

*The Preservation Compact is a collaboration of for-profit and non-profit developers, advocacy groups, civic groups, lenders, and federal, state, and local government agencies working together to develop policy and programmatic strategies to preserve affordable rental housing. The Compact is housed at Community Investment Corporation, which provides financing to preserve multifamily affordable rental housing throughout the Chicago area.*

