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Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund Appoints Jodi Baiyat as Executive Director, Urges City to Restore \$13M in Critical Funding

Chicago, IL — May 18, 2026 — The [Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund](#) (CLIHTF) today announced the appointment of Jodi Gingiss Baiyat as its new Executive Director, ushering in new leadership at a critical juncture for one of Chicago’s most vital affordable housing resources. As part of her initial priorities, Baiyat is calling on the City of Chicago to restore \$13 million in funding lost due to recent tax policy changes.

“The Trust Fund is one of the only tools designed to reach Chicagoans with the lowest incomes, and this affordable housing is increasingly at risk,” said Baiyat. *“Restoring \$13 million is essential to stabilizing housing for thousands of Chicagoans and strengthening our homelessness prevention and housing systems.”*

CLIHTF provides rental assistance to households earning between 0–30% of [Area Median Income](#) (AMI), making it a cornerstone of the city’s response to an affordable housing shortage estimated at 119,000 units. With more than half of Chicagoans considered rent-burdened, the need for deeply affordable housing solutions remains urgent.

Funding at a Crossroads

Baiyat assumes leadership as CLIHTF faces significant financial strain. Conceived in 1989 by the City of Chicago to reinvest developer fees in lieu of reserving new housing units for low-income families, CLIHTF historically invested developer fees paid in lieu of on-site affordability into project-based rental subsidies allowing households below 30% AMI to afford a rental unit.

Although a positive impact on overall affordable housing supply, the 2021 Affordable Housing Special Assessment Program slowed developer fees in lieu to a trickle, creating a citywide need to replace annual funding for over 2,500 subsidized rental units. Without corrective action, CLIHTF’s projections indicate reserves could be exhausted within three years.

Elected officials continue to pursue policy-driven solutions such as the [Affordable Housing Special Assessment Program](#) (AHSAP) and the [Affordable Requirements Ordinance](#) (ARO). While these initiatives provide important incentives and mandates to expand housing supply, they are not designed to serve households at the lowest income levels.

“CLIHTF plays a vital role in the fabric of affordable housing in Chicago, serving as a key resource in preserving and expanding housing opportunities for low-income Chicagoans,” said

Fatmah Farraj, CLIHTF board president and vice president of operations at [Mercy Housing Lakefront](#). *“Without restoring this funding, we risk leaving our most vulnerable residents behind.”*

“In total, 2,578 families are currently supported by the Trust Fund,” said Sam Paler-Ponce, CLIHTF board vice president and associate director of city policy at [Chicago Coalition to End Homelessness](#). *“This is the primary rental assistance program supporting Chicago’s working poor, and \$13 million would preserve affordability for an estimated 1,378 families.”*

About Jodi Gingiss Baiyat

Baiyat brings extensive financial and housing expertise to the role, holding an MBA from Kellogg and a CFA designation. She has managed more than \$169 million in HUD funding across multiple communities and administered \$70 million in federal grants for Lake County, consistently ensuring compliance and strong financial performance.

“Chicago’s housing crisis requires more than one solution,” Baiyat added. *“We need coordinated strategies—and real investment—to ensure that every resident, regardless of income, has access to safe and stable housing.”*

A longtime leader in Chicago’s community development sector, Baiyat has held roles with Mercy Portfolio Services, Deloitte, LaSalle Bank, and The Resurrection Project. Her work has consistently centered on aligning public, private, and community stakeholders to deliver impactful housing solutions.

About the Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund

The Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund (CLIHTF) provides rental assistance to ensure that Chicago’s lowest-income residents have access to safe, stable housing. By leveraging flexible funding and public-private partnerships, CLIHTF plays a central role in advancing housing equity across the city.

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