



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR**

# NEWS

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**CONTACTS:**

Cheryle Jackson 312/814.3158  
Abby Ottenhoff 312/814.3158  
Rebecca Rausch 217/782.7355  
Gerardo Cardenas 312/636.5989 (cell)  
Bryan Zises (IHDA) 312/836.5361

## **Governor Blagojevich releases comprehensive housing plan to help working families, seniors and persons with disabilities afford quality homes**

*Plan identifies \$690 million in state spending for affordable housing, continues sweeping reform and coordination of state housing policies*

SPRINGFIELD— Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today released a comprehensive housing plan to help over 130,000 working families across the state, as well as senior citizens and people with disabilities have access to quality, affordable homes. The plan, *On the Road to Success: Illinois' Comprehensive Housing Plan 2006*, identifies \$690 million of current spending earmarked for affordable housing at six different state agencies, and outlines several strategies for coordination among these agencies to yield affordable housing opportunities.

“For thousands of hard working Illinois families, seniors and people with disabilities, living in an affordable home means also being able to help their children in school, get involved in their community, improve their job skills and maintain their independence,” said Gov. Blagojevich. “With the federal government continually turning its back on the country’s housing needs, it’s crucial that the State be able to leverage its housing resources to help thousands of Illinoisans. This plan ensures that we help residents find affordable housing,” said Gov. Blagojevich.

*On the Road to Success* builds upon the achievements of the 2005 *Building for Success: Illinois Comprehensive Housing Plan*. Governor Blagojevich is the first Illinois governor in history to require the comprehensive coordination of the state’s housing programs.

The priority populations in the Plan include: very low income households and families; low income senior citizens; low income people with disabilities; homeless people and families and those at risk of becoming homeless; low and moderate income families and people unable to find

affordable housing near jobs or transportation; and low income families and people living in existing affordable housing that is in danger of becoming unaffordable.

While the Plan focuses on housing the state's neediest residents, it also recognizes housing as an important economic engine. The Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) are included in the Plan to ensure that housing is incorporated into the infrastructure development of the state. Coordinating job growth and improvements in roads and highways with affordable housing helps Illinois businesses stay competitive because employers need workers who can afford housing and commute easily to work.

"The Mayors of the Chicago region have been working to address housing issues at the local, regional and state level," said Mayor Rita L. Mullins of Palatine, co-chair of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' Housing Task Force. "We applaud the Governor's new affordable housing plan, particularly its emphasis on interagency cooperation and dialogue. It will help local leaders to identify sources of support as they embark on affordable housing initiatives in their communities."

*On the Road to Success: Illinois' Comprehensive Housing Plan 2006* was developed by the Housing Task Force, created by Governor Blagojevich in 2003. The 35 members of the Task Force include advocates, developers, lenders, and state agency representatives, including eight Illinois state agency directors. State Representative Julie Hamos (D-Evanston), is the ranking legislator on the Task Force.

Copies of *On the Road to Success: Illinois' Comprehensive Housing Plan 2006* and *Building for Success: Illinois' 2005 Comprehensive Housing Plan* can both be accessed on IHDA's Website: [www.ihda.org](http://www.ihda.org).

Robin Benson, executive director of the Coalition for Homeownership for People with Disabilities, said that the Task Force and the Comprehensive Plan have helped bring community organizations together. "Without these different groups coming together, the Coalition wouldn't be able to do our work at all. The Governor's leadership in launching state programs, such as the I-Loan, IHDA Trust Fund and ADDI, along with all the local and regional partnerships, makes it possible for disabled people to afford a quality home."

In addition to requiring the creation of the state's first comprehensive housing plan, Gov. Blagojevich has made several important commitments to affordable housing in the last few years.

Last year Gov. Blagojevich created the largest state-sponsored rental assistance program in the nation when he signed the Rental Housing Support Program into law. More than 5,000 very low-income families, seniors and people with disabilities will have affordable rental housing every year as a result of this new program.

Gov. Blagojevich also signed a five-year extension of the Affordable Housing Tax Credit into law, a valuable finance tool that has leveraged more than \$640 million in total development costs to build or preserve more than 5,300 homes for families as well elderly, homeless and disabled

populations. In 2004, Gov. Blagojevich signed the Federally Subsidized Housing Preservation Act into law to ensure that properties that are affordable have the best chance of being preserved.

In addition to these new laws, the Governor lifted the moratorium on Supportive Living Facilities to allow more seniors to live in dignity in their community, and he launched the new Opportunity I-Loan program to provide safe affordable homeownership for families that do not have credit histories, bank accounts or social security numbers.

“These initiatives have made Illinois a pioneer in meeting the affordable housing needs of our families, seniors and people with disabilities,” said Kelly King Dibble, executive director of the Illinois Housing Development Authority and Chair of the Housing Task Force. “Governor Blagojevich is a leader who allows good ideas to become important state programs that help people across Illinois afford safe and decent homes.”