



# Just Housing Amendment Evaluation & Report

2022

**Cook County Commission on  
Human Rights**

human.rights@cookcountyil.gov  
(312) 603-1100

# **Cook County Commission on Human Rights (CCCHR) 2022 Evaluation and Report Just Housing Amendment**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- I. Background
- II. Enforcement Data
- III. Just Housing Amendment Survey
- IV. Outreach and Trainings
- V. Evaluation and Recommendations
- VI. Appendix

*Acknowledgments: Thank you to CCCHR's Investigators and support staff for working tirelessly to amicably resolve housing complaints and encourage fair housing practices in Cook County. Thank you to the many community groups, associations, non-profit organizations, and individuals who contributed feedback regarding survey questions and distribution, distributed the survey to others, and took the time to complete the survey and provide feedback regarding the Just Housing Amendment.*

## I. Background:

In most cities, people with any justice involvement can be unfairly denied housing. The Just Housing Amendment (JHA) to the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance (Ord. No. [19-2394](#) § 42-38) was passed to ensure individuals with prior justice involvement can access safe, stable, and affordable housing.

The JHA passed on April 25, 2019, with enforcement beginning on February 1, 2020. The JHA applies to real estate transactions, including the sale, rental, lease, and sublease renewal of residential properties. The JHA:

1. Prohibits housing discrimination based on an individual's **covered criminal history**; and
2. Requires housing providers considering an individual's covered criminal history to perform an **individualized assessment** of an otherwise qualified individual's criminal conviction history prior to denying them any application for housing.

### a. Definitions

What is an **individualized assessment**?

"Individualized Assessment," as referenced in the JHA, means a process by which a person considers all factors relevant to an individual's conviction history from the previous three (3) years. An individualized assessment is not required for convictions that are more than three (3) years old.

Factors that may be considered in performing the Individualized Assessment include, but are not limited to:

- (1) The nature and severity of the criminal offense and how recently it occurred;
- (2) The nature of the sentencing;
- (3) The number of the applicant's criminal convictions;
- (4) The length of time that has passed since the applicant's most recent conviction;
- (5) The age of the individual at the time the criminal offense occurred;
- (6) Evidence of rehabilitation;
- (7) The individual's history as a tenant before and/or after the conviction;
- (8) Whether the criminal conviction(s) was related to or a product of the applicant's disability; and
- (9) If the applicant is a person with a disability, whether any reasonable accommodation could be provided to ameliorate any purported demonstrable risk.

What is **covered criminal history**?

Any information regarding an individual's arrest, charge, or citation for an offense; participation in a diversion or deferral of judgment program; record of an offense that has been sealed, expunged, or pardoned in accordance with applicable law; juvenile record; and conviction.

## **b. Procedures**

Housing providers **can no longer include a question on housing applications** that asks whether an applicant has a criminal background.

### **Disclosures:**

Before accepting an application fee, the housing provider must disclose the following:

- Tenant Selection Criteria, which describes how an applicant will be evaluated.
- Notice of the applicant's right to dispute inaccuracies relevant to criminal history and to provide evidence of rehabilitation or other mitigating factors related to their criminal background.
- A copy of Part 700 of the CCCHR's procedural rules or a link to the CCCHR website, with the address, email address, and phone number of the CCCHR.

### **Two-Step Evaluation Process:**

#### ***Step One: Prequalification***

- During this step, a housing provider may screen a tenant to determine whether the applicant satisfies all the application criteria such as income, rental history, credit score, pets, etc. **Criminal background checks cannot be performed during Step One.**
- When this first step is completed, the housing provider must either 1) pre-qualify the applicant based on all criteria except those related to criminal history; or 2) deny the application based on failure to satisfy the prequalification criteria.

#### ***Step Two: Criminal Background Check & Individualized Assessment, if necessary***

- Only after the housing provider prequalifies an applicant may a housing provider conduct a criminal background check.
- If the criminal background check reveals a criminal history, the housing provider may only consider criminal conviction(s) within the last three (3) years.  
EXCEPT: Applicant is a current sex offender required to register under the **Sex Offender Registration Act** (or similar law in another jurisdiction) or a **current child sex offender** under residency restriction; *OR*  
An individualized assessment affirms that a **criminal conviction within the last three (3) years** causes a **demonstrable risk to personal safety or property of others.**

Does an applicant who is denied housing have the right to dispute the information contained in the criminal background check?

Yes. The JHA Conviction Dispute Procedures are as follows:

- Within five (5) business days of receiving a criminal background check, the housing provider must deliver a copy to the applicant. A copy of the background check can be delivered in person, by certified mail, or by text or email.
- Once the applicant receives the results of the background check, the applicant has five (5) business days to provide evidence that disputes the accuracy or relevance of information related to the criminal background check.
- The housing provider then has three (3) business days from receipt of the dispute information to accept or deny the application.

## II. Enforcement Data

### a. Data

Since the inception of the enforcement, CCCHR has received thirty-eight (38) complaints alleging JHA violations.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>Nature of Complaint</b>	<b>Resolution</b>
8/28/2020	2020JHA001	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
7/20/2020	2020H003	Improper denial and housing discrimination based on race	Alleged Conduct occurred before JHA effective date/ No jurisdiction over racial discrimination claim
8/28/2020	2020JHA002	Discriminatory advertisement	Settlement
9/8/2020	2020JHA003	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Withdrawal
9/30/2020	2020JHA004	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
3/19/2021	2021JHA001	Discriminatory Advertisement	Settlement
4/29/2021	2021JHA002	Discriminatory Advertisement	Withdrawal
4/29/2021	2021JHA003	Discriminatory Advertisement	Settlement
04/29/2021	2021JHA004	Discriminatory Advertisement	Settlement
4/29/2021	2021JHA005	Discriminatory Advertisement	Settlement
4/29/2021	2021JHA006	Discriminatory advertisement	Withdrawal/Duplicate Complaint
6/2/2021	2021JHA007	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
7/2/2021	2021JHA008	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Withdrawal

7/16/2021	2021JHA009	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
9/29/2021	2021JHA010	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
9/15/2021	2021JHA011	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
9/21/2021	2021JHA012	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
10/29/2021	2021JHA013	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	N/A Matter Ongoing
11/4/2021	2021JHA014	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Dismissed for lack of jurisdiction
11/12/2021	2021JHA015	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
11/19/2021	2021JHA016	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
12/10/2021; 1/13/2022	2022JHA001	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Withdrawal
1/12/2022	2022JHA002	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
2/16/2022	2022JHA003	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
2/16/2022	2022JHA004	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Withdrawal
3/1/2022	2022JHA005	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
4/25/2022	2022JHA006	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Withdrawal

5/20/2022	2022JHA007	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	N/A Matter Ongoing
6/29/2022	2022JHA008	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	N/A Matter Ongoing
7/20/2022	2022JHA009	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	Settlement
8/10/2022	2022JHA010	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	N/A Matter Ongoing
7/28/2022	2022JHA011	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	N/A Matter Ongoing
7/28/2022	2022JHA012	Discriminatory Advertisement	N/A Matter Ongoing
7/28/2022	2022JHA013	Discriminatory Advertisement	N/A Matter Ongoing
7/28/2022	2022JHA014	Discriminatory Advertisement	N/A Matter Ongoing
7/28/2022	2022JHA015	Discriminatory Advertisement	N/A Matter Ongoing
7/28/2022	2022JHA016	Discriminatory Advertisement	N/A Matter Ongoing
9/15/2022	2022JHA017	Improper denial based on criminal conviction history	N/A Matter Ongoing

**b. Complaint Summary**

**i. Cumulative (since the beginning of enforcement)**

- Twenty-six (26) complaints were made for improper denials based upon criminal history.
- Twelve (12) complaints were made for discriminatory advertisements.
- Estimated total settlement amount reported is \$31,031.
- Twenty-seven (27) of the thirty-eight (38) JHA complaints have been closed.
  - Of the twenty-seven (27) closed cases, eighteen (18) resulted in settlement, which included monetary awards; and at least five (5) housing providers received training from housing community groups on compliance with JHA.

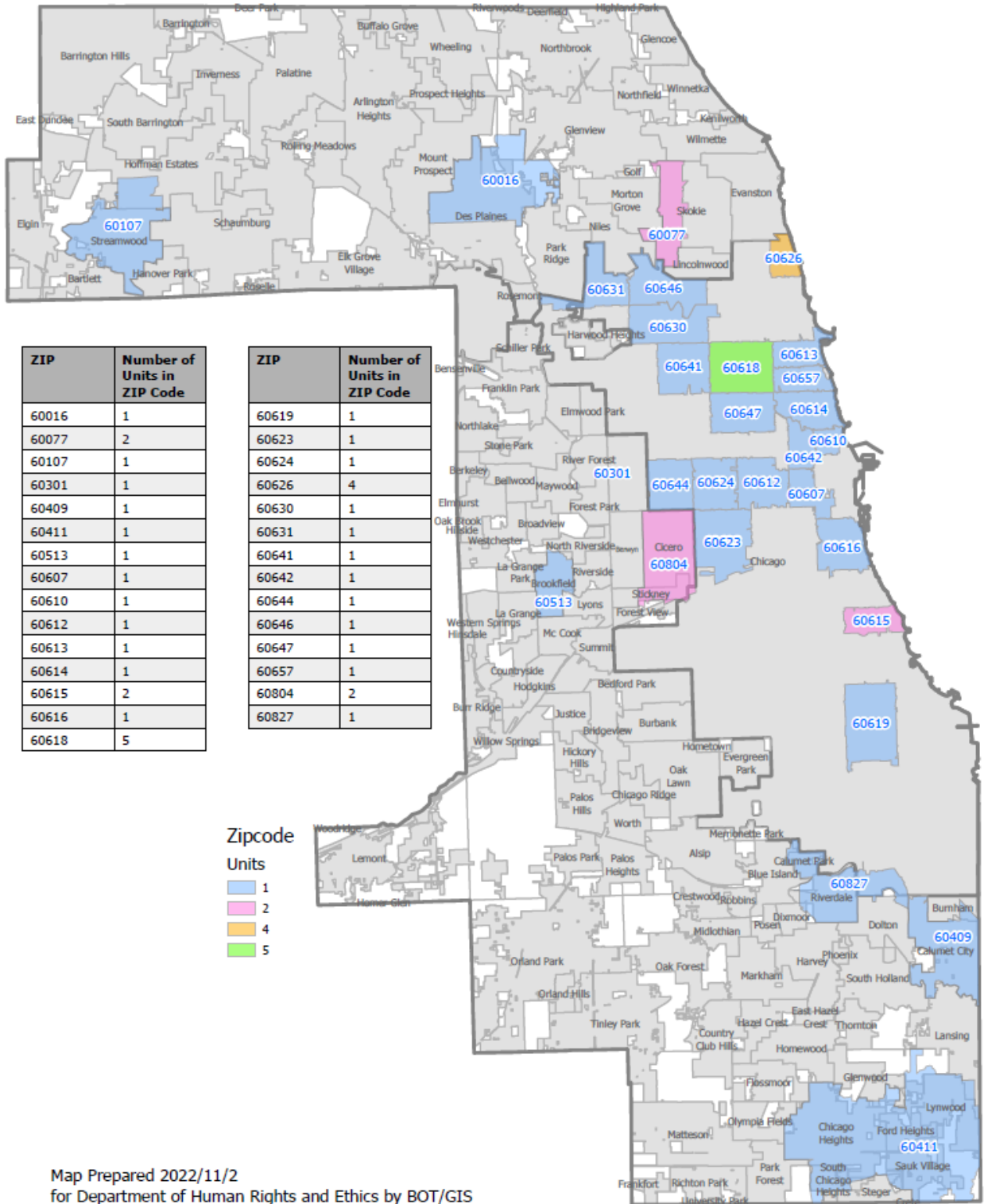
- Of the twenty-seven (27) closed cases, seven (7) complainants voluntarily withdrew their complaints.
  - Two (2) JHA complaints resulted in the complainant being placed in a housing unit or retaining housing in the property at issue.
- Fourteen (14) complaints were filed in the name of a housing community group.

**ii. FY2022 Complaints Only**

- Seventeen (17) JHA complaints have been filed thus far in FY2022 (December 1, 2021 to October 31, 2022). Of these, seven (7) complaints have been resolved.
- Estimated settlement amount for cases settled in FY2022 is \$29,781, which includes some cases that were filed in FY2021 but settled in FY2022.
- As of October 31, 2022, CCCHR has eleven (11) open cases, one (1) of which is currently at administrative hearing.
- The complaints included no instance where an individualized assessment was conducted, or demonstrable risk found.



### iii. Complaint Occurrence by ZIP Code



Map: Complaint Occurrence by ZIP Code

Note: Total number of units is greater than the number of cases because one complaint alleged that two (2) residential buildings violated the JHA.

### III. Just Housing Amendment Survey

In order to assess the impact of the JHA outside of the limited number of cases, CCCHR issued the 2022 Just Housing Amendment Survey (see Appendix A), which was open from September 6, 2022 to October 30, 2022.

Following data analytics standards to obtain accurate information, a number of survey bots/automatically generated responses were removed from the survey responses using the following rules:

- Any responses that occurred in less than 5 minutes were removed, with rare exceptions based on easily identifiable email addresses.
- Any responses that included ZIP Codes that were not located in Cook County were removed, with rare exceptions based on time of completion.
- Any open-ended responses that included unusual or duplicative sentences were removed.
- Any emails that contained a random combination of letters and numbers longer than 30 values were removed.

After applying these rules, the survey yielded 142 responses with the following respondent identifications:

<i>Respondent identification</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	13
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant.	55
Housing provider, landlord, realtor.	25
Staff or member of a social service or non-profit organization.	29
Staff of member of a community group.	4
Staff or fair housing agency or legal service provider.	15
Government employee.	1

Survey respondents identified that they live or work in 78 of Cook County's 231 ZIP Codes. The most common ZIP Codes include:

<i>What ZIP Code do you live or work in?</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>
60525	6
60601	6
60605	6
60606	6
60631	5

**a. Summary of Response Results**

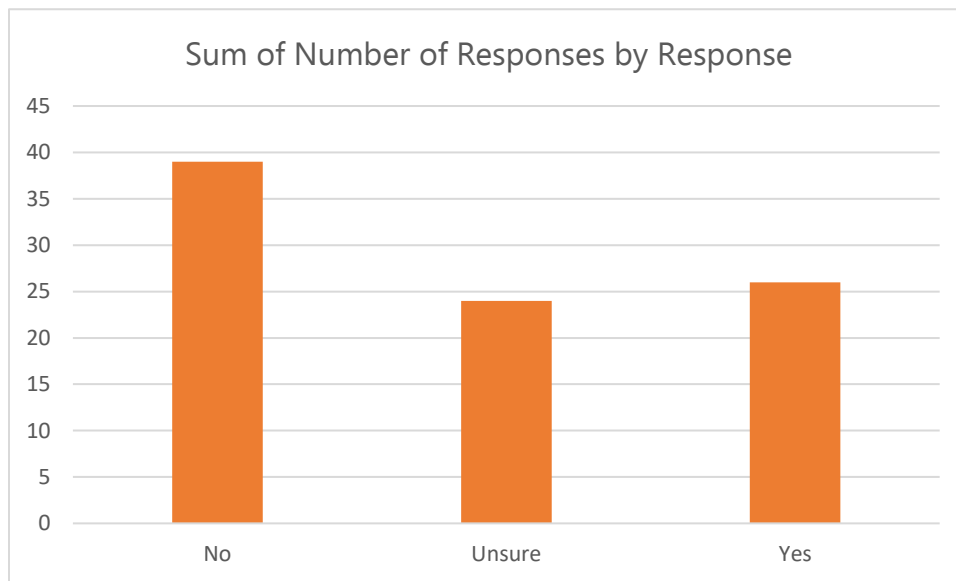
Have you heard of the Just Housing Amendment?

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>11</b>
	No	2
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>51</b>
	No	4
Housing provider, landlord, realtor.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>21</b>
	No	3
	Unsure	1
Staff or member of a social service or non-profit organization.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>19</b>
	No	6
	Unsure	4
Staff or member of a community group.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>4</b>
Staff or fair housing agency or legal service provider.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>14</b>
	No	1
Government employee.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1</b>

Have you seen any advertisements for housing with exclusionary language like “no felonies,” “no arrests,” or “no convicted drug dealers”?

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>2</b>
	No	8
	Unsure	3
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>7</b>
	No	13
	Unsure	7
Staff or member of a social service or non-profit organization.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>9</b>
	No	14
	Unsure	6
Staff or member of a community group.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1</b>

	No	2
	Unsure	1
Staff or fair housing agency or legal service provider.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>7</b>
	No	2
	Unsure	6
Government employee.	Unsure	1



If yes, where have you seen advertisements with exclusionary language?

<i>Summary of responses</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Internet	15
Specific websites listing available housing units	9
Social media	3
Physical advertisements (postings outside apartments or homes)	2

*Note:* Total responses for this question is greater than the number of "yes" responses on the previous question because some responses were classed twice (for example: Internet & at an apartment building).

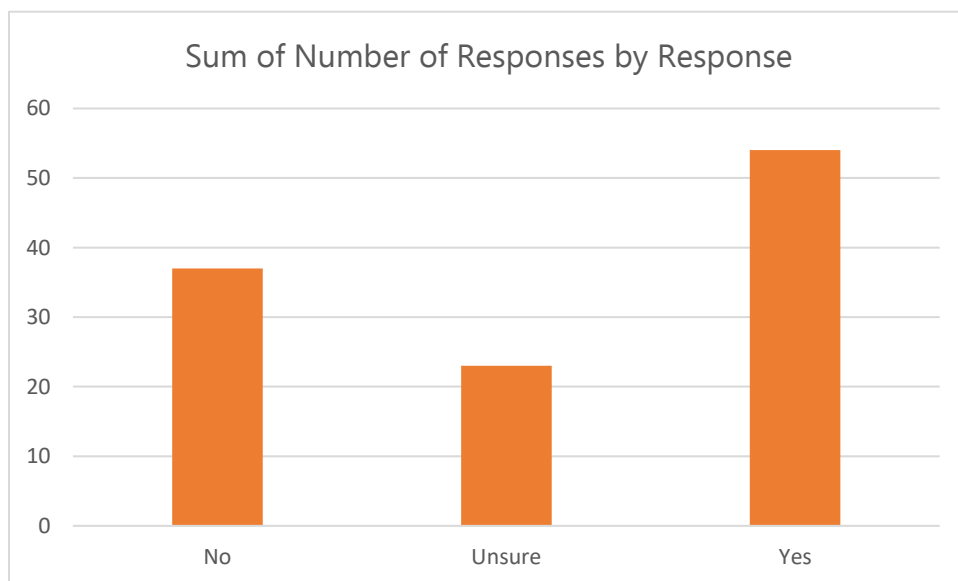
On housing applications that you have recently seen or completed, have you seen a question(s) regarding arrest and/or conviction background? Questions like “Do you or a member of your household have any prior felonies in Illinois or any other state?” or “Have you ever been charged or arrested?”

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>7</b>
	No	6
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>9</b>
	No	15
	Unsure	3
Housing provider, landlord, realtor.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>10</b>
	No	13
	Unsure	2
Staff or member of a social service or non-profit organization.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>12</b>
	No	13
	Unsure	4
Staff or member of a community group.	<b>No</b>	<b>3</b>
	Unsure	1
Staff or fair housing agency or legal service provider.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>6</b>
	No	6
	Unsure	3
Government employee.	Unsure	1

As part of recent housing application procedures, were disclosures distributed regarding rights related to Cook County's Just Housing Amendment?

For example, a copy of the Cook County Commission on Human Rights Just Housing Rules (Part 700 of the Procedural Rules): <https://bit.ly/JHARules>

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>9</b>
	No	4
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>20</b>
	No	5
	Unsure	2
Housing provider, landlord, realtor.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>11</b>
	No	12
	Unsure	2
Staff or member of a social service or non-profit organization.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>9</b>
	No	7
	Unsure	13
Staff or member of a community group.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>3</b>
	No	1
Staff or fair housing agency or legal service provider.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>2</b>
	No	8
	Unsure	5
Government employee.	Unsure	1



If a disclosure regarding Cook County's Just Housing Amendment was distributed during housing applications, at what point during the housing application process was it distributed?

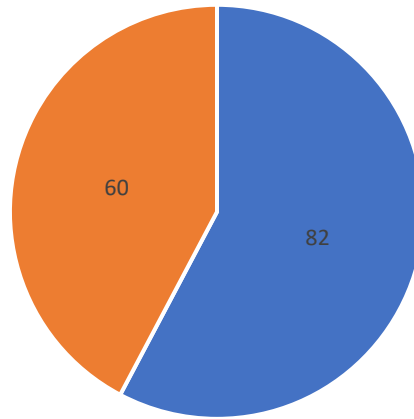
<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	Before an application fee	3
	After an application fee	2
	During another portion of the application	4
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant.	Before an application fee	10
	After an application fee	7
	During another portion of the application	2
	No response	1
Housing provider, landlord, realtor.	Before an application fee	7
	After an application fee	2
	During another portion of the application	1
	Unsure	1
Staff or member of a social service or non-profit organization.	Before an application fee	4
	After an application fee	1
	During another portion of the application	2
	Unsure	2
Staff or member of a community group.	After an application fee	1
	During another portion of the application	1
	Unsure	1
Staff or fair housing agency or legal service provider.	During another portion of the application	2

If a background check was run as part of recent housing application procedures, at what point in the application procedures was it typically run?

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	Right after initial application	5
	Right after application fee	5
	Background check was not run	2
	Unsure	1
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant.	Right after initial application	15
	Right after application fee	16
	Right after confirmation of passing prequalification	10
	Background check was not run	13
	Unsure	1
Housing provider, landlord, realtor.	Right after initial application	8
	Right after application fee	4
	Right after confirmation of passing prequalification	7
	Background check was not run	5
	Other (Later point in process)	1
Staff or member of a social service or non-profit organization.	Right after initial application	9
	Right after application fee	9
	Right after confirmation of passing prequalification	5
	Background check was not run	2
	Unsure	2
	Not applicable to organization	2
Staff or member of a community group.	Right after initial application	2
	Right after confirmation of passing prequalification	2
Staff or fair housing agency or legal service provider.	Right after initial application	2
	Right after application fee	6
	Right after confirmation of passing prequalification	2
	Background check was not run	2
	Unsure	2
Government employee.	Right after initial application	1



### Background Check Timing in Application Process



- Background check was run too early, according to JHA
- Background check was run after confirmation of prequalification, was not run, or respondent was unsure

If a background check was run as part of recent housing application procedures, how long was the lookback period (how many years of personal history did it pull/check)?

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	Entire record	3
	Last 10 years of record	2
	Last 3 years of record	3
	Unsure of length of time	3
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant.	Entire record	2
	Last 10 years of record	6
	Last 3 years of record	12
	Unsure of length of time	2
Housing provider, landlord, realtor.	Entire record	6
	Last 10 years of record	1
	Last 3 years of record	9
	Some other length of time	2
	Unsure of length of time	2
Staff or member of a social service or non-profit organization.	Entire record	5
	Last 10 years of record	3
	Last 3 years of record	7
	Some other length of time	1
	Unsure of length of time	9

Staff or member of a community group.	Last 3 years of record	2
	Some other length of time	1
	Unsure of length of time	1
Staff or fair housing agency or legal service provider.	Entire record	1
	Last 10 years of record	1
	Last 3 years of record	4
	Unsure of length of time	6
Government employee.	Last 3 years of record	1

Was a copy of the background check provided to the applicant?

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>9</b>
	No	2
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>17</b>
	No	3
	Unsure	2
Housing provider, landlord, realtor.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>15</b>
	No	5
Staff or member of a social service or non-profit organization.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>9</b>
	No	8
	Unsure	8
Staff or member of a community group.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>2</b>
	No	1
Staff or fair housing agency or legal service provider.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>6</b>
	No	3
	Unsure	4
Government employee.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1</b>

As part of recent housing application procedures, after a background check was run, did the housing provider ask questions that give context about the nature of your record and other aspects of your life?

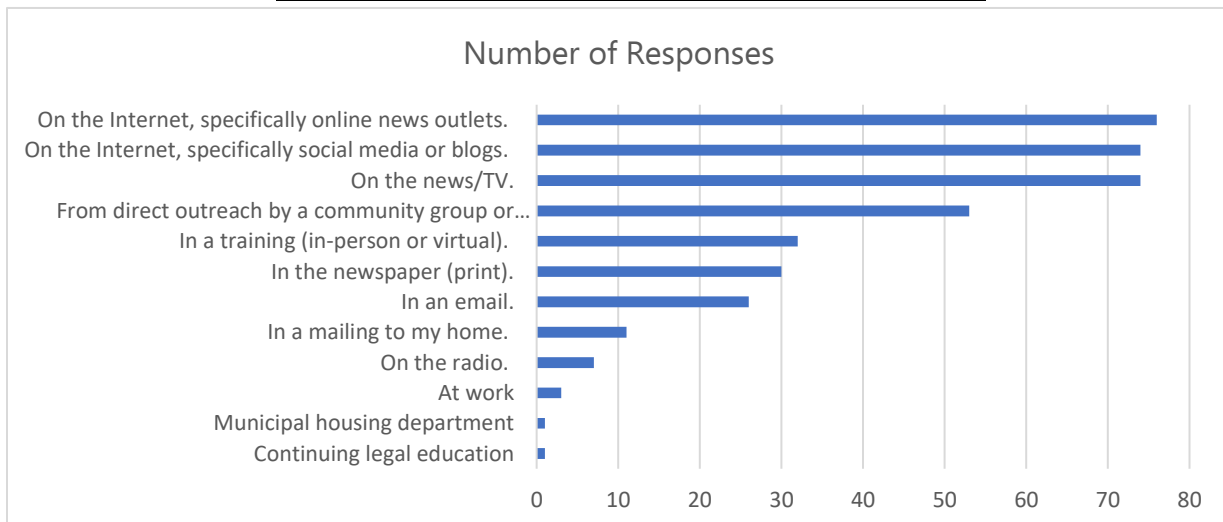
<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	Yes	8
	No	2
	Unsure	3

If yes, after the series of questions (individualized assessment), were you admitted into the unit you applied for?

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.	Yes	7
	No	1

How do you hear about new or changed laws in your area?

<i>Summary of responses</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
On the news/TV.	74
In the newspaper (print).	30
On the Internet, specifically online news outlets.	76
On the Internet, specifically social media or blogs.	74
From direct outreach by a community group or association.	53
In a training (in-person or virtual).	32
In a mailing to my home.	11
On the radio.	7
In an email.	26
At work	3
Continuing legal education	1
Municipal housing department	1



Is there anything about the Just Housing Amendment that needs to be clarified?

This question was asked to “Housing provider, landlord, realtor” respondents.

<i>Summary of responses</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
No / nothing	5
Increased outreach efforts / more education for realtors	2
Repeal it	2
Plenty / current misinformation	2

### **b. Survey Conclusions**

CCCHR developed the following conclusions regarding JHA enforcement and outreach through this survey.

First, there were three times more responses to the 2022 survey than to the 2021 survey. Of 142 survey respondents, 21 were unaware of or unsure if they were aware of the Just Housing Amendment. **There is more work to be done to increase broad knowledge of the existence of the Just Housing Amendment.**

Second, CCCHR has been [cited](#) as thinking “critically about what adhering to criminal justice reforms looks like in everyday interactions.” **Survey responses support a continuation and expansion of varied and innovative enforcement efforts.**

Third, survey responses identified new areas for targeted enforcement and outreach efforts. The CCCHR will expand outreach in areas where the survey suggests low awareness of the JHA or where JHA noncompliance is high. In addition, the CCCHR will review rental advertisements on the internet to ensure JHA compliance, as well as other proactive enforcement.

Overall, the results of the 2022 Just Housing Amendment Survey will continue to inform and guide CCCHR’s work in 2023.

#### **IV. Outreach & Training**

##### **a. Third-Party Screening Improvements**

Initiated, in part, because of a survey response submitted to the 2021 Just Housing Amendment Survey and affirmed in feedback given during a CCCHR training regarding the JHA, CCCHR worked with TransUnion® to improve County-wide enforcement through proactive improvements made to SmartMove®. SmartMove®, a popular screening tool used by Cook County small landlords, now includes the two-step screening process outlined by the JHA.

Updates to SmartMove® mean that more than 7,000 housing applications per month in Cook County are processed with a screening process that is compliant with JHA. Further, it means that dozens of contracted housing providers also affirmed that their procedures comport with JHA.

##### **b. Trainings**

During FY2022 (December 1, 2021 to November 30, 2022), CCCHR hosted eighteen (18) trainings regarding the JHA, to housing applicant and provider groups where 550 individuals received live and recorded trainings. In addition, staff distributed information regarding JHA at seven (7) community events or conferences, handing out flyers or talking about the JHA with approximately 1200 individuals throughout 2022.

##### **c. Coordination Meetings**

CCCHR hosted several internal meetings with the Housing Authority of Cook County, Cook County Office of the President, Cook County Board of Commissioners, Cook County Justice Advisory Council, Cook County Public Defender's Office, Cook County Department of Public Health, and Cook County Assessor's Office. The general purposes of these meetings were to answer questions regarding the JHA, distribute outreach materials, and plan future trainings. Notably, CCCHR has worked with the Cook County President's Office on its [Equity Fund Task Recommendation No. 2.2](#) to increase fair housing, with an emphasis on prioritizing JHA enforcement.

Additionally, CCCHR hosted meetings that centered or included discussion of the JHA with nineteen (19) community groups, including non-profit and advocacy organizations and housing providers.

As part of the 2022 Just Housing Amendment Survey drafting process, CCCHR invited and incorporated edits and suggestions from eleven (11) community groups, including non-profit and advocacy organizations and housing providers.

##### **d. Outreach Materials**

Throughout the year, CCCHR distributed printed outreach materials regarding JHA in English and Spanish at community events.

In January, CCCHR began distributing a regular [newsletter](#) to share information about the JHA, Cook County human rights ordinances, and any pertinent trainings and updates. As of October 31, 2022, CCCHR's newsletter has more than 900 subscribers.

In February, CCCHR sent an email to a County-wide listserv reminding recipients of the JHA requirements. This email was opened by 8,772 recipients.

In March, CCCHR shared information regarding JHA in its Outreach newsletter. This email was opened by 352 recipients.

In April, CCCHR released the [Fair Housing Video Library](#), a series of free, online trainings covering a variety of JHA topics and frequent questions. These trainings and other previously recorded trainings were consolidated into the [Human Rights Training Videos & Resources](#) page.

In April and July, CCCHR increased complaint form accessibility through edits to the form fields, language translations, and the addition of a Representative field.

In August, CCCHR released a press release and associated newsletter article, "Cook County Commission on Human Rights improves Just Housing Amendment enforcement with support of TransUnion®."

In September, CCCHR published updated charts that describe where to file housing discrimination and harassment complaints for different jurisdictions and protections.

In November, CCCHR collaborated with several County agencies to send a targeted mailing regarding the JHA and its requirements to housing providers at 22,450 Property Class 2-11 properties throughout Cook County.

CCCHR offered the 2022 Just Housing Amendment Survey in English, Spanish, and Polish. CCCHR also offered a print version of the survey, by request. CCCHR conducted specific outreach related to the 2022 Just Housing Amendment Survey, via email, phone, and social media.

## V. Evaluation & Recommendation

Pursuant to Subsection 770 of the [Substantive and Procedural Rules Governing the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance](#) (“Procedural Rules”), CCCHR must evaluate the rules implementing the JHA to determine whether the Procedural Rules should be amended to effectuate the purpose of the JHA. The evaluation shall include an analysis of whether applicants who receive a positive individualized assessment from housing providers are ultimately admitted into the unit they applied for and data about the complaints made under the Just Housing Amendment.

**Purpose:** In most cities, people with any kind of criminal record, even just an arrest, can be unfairly denied housing. The JHA was passed to help these individuals access safe, stable, and affordable housing.

**Conclusions:** Enforcement data and results from the 2022 Just Housing Amendment Survey do not currently provide enough information to support substantive amendments to the Procedural Rules. Select rule amendments were made in 2021 in conjunction with the Report to clarify language and procedure. CCCHR intends to continue pursuing outreach and training opportunities related to the JHA.

After more than two years of enforcement of the JHA, it is appropriate to continue broad strategies for outreach (trainings, newsletters, e-blasts, mailings, community events), but also to use more targeted strategies. Targeted strategies may include outreach in areas with the highest complaint rates, ZIP Codes with less JHA knowledge as identified in the survey, and outreach based on known or anecdotal knowledge gaps.

## APPENDIX

### **Appendix A: Just Housing Amendment Survey - 2022**

**Upon completion of the survey (including providing an email), you will be entered into a raffle for 3 \$25 Target gift cards (electronic delivery).**

This survey will ask questions about the Just Housing Amendment to Cook County's Human Rights Ordinance. The survey will close on October 30, 2022. The survey is intended for Cook County residents and housing providers, please do not complete the survey if you are not a Cook County resident or housing provider.

This survey is conducted in compliance with Section 770.100 of the Just Housing Amendment to the Human Rights Ordinance. This requires the Commission on Human Rights to evaluate "the rules implementing the Just Housing Amendment to the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance to determine whether the rules should be amended to better effectuate the Amendment's purpose." To learn more about the Just Housing Amendment, visit: <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/content/just-housing-amendment-human-rights-ordinance>

The survey results are confidential and will only be used in aggregate to publicly share the results of the evaluation. The results of this survey are non-binding -- recorded responses will not necessarily result in policy changes.

Please contact the Cook County Commission on Human Rights ([human.rights@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:human.rights@cookcountyil.gov) | 312-603-1100) with questions or concerns.

#### Getting started

These two questions will ask background information about you.

1. What ZIP Code do you live or work in? \*

Enter your answer

2. Which of the following best describes you? \*

- Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant, who has prior justice involvement.
- Individual sharing your personal experience as a renter or housing applicant.
- Housing provider, landlord, realtor.
- Staff or member of a social service or non-profit organization.
- Staff or member of a fair housing agency or legal service provider.
- Staff or member of a community group.
- Government employee.
- Other



3. In what municipality do you primarily provide housing?

Enter your answer

## Pre-Application & Application

These questions will ask about your awareness of the Just Housing Amendment and associated housing applications.

4. Have you heard of Just Housing Amendment? \*

- Yes.
- No.
- Not sure.

5. Do you know that in Cook County there are legal protections related to applying for and being accepted into housing related to personal conviction history (known formally as the Just Housing Amendment to the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance)? \*

- Yes.
- No.
- Not sure.

6. Have you seen any advertisements for housing with exclusionary language like “no felonies,” “no arrests,” or “no convicted drug dealers”? \*

- Yes, I have seen ads that include phrases like that.
- No, I haven't seen ads that include phrases like that.
- I am unsure if I have seen ads with phrases like that.

7. If yes, where have you seen advertisements with exclusionary language?

Examples: on the Internet, a specific rental or listing website, an online marketplace, etc.

Enter your answer

8. If you would like to provide additional information regarding where you have seen advertisements for housing that include phrases like "no felonies," "no arrests," or "no convicted drug dealers," please do so in the text box below.

Enter your answer

### Pre-Qualification (Pre-Individualized Assessment)

These questions will ask about your recent (since February 2020) experiences completing the first portion of housing applications.

9. On housing applications that you have recently seen or completed, have you seen a question(s) regarding arrest and/or conviction background? Questions like "Do you or a member of your household have any prior felonies in Illinois or any other state?" or "Have you ever been charged or arrested?" \*

- Yes, I have seen questions like this on housing applications that I have recently seen or completed.
- No, I have not seen questions like this on housing applications that I have recently seen or completed.
- I am not sure if I have seen questions like this on housing applications that I have recently seen or completed.

10. If you would like to provide additional information regarding where you saw question(s) regarding arrest and/or conviction background on housing applications, please do so in the textbox below.

Enter your answer

11. As part of recent housing application procedures, were you given a disclosure regarding your rights related to Cook County's Just Housing Amendment?

For example, you should be given a copy of the Cook County Commission on Human Rights Just Housing Rules (Part 700 of the Procedural Rules): <https://bit.ly/JHARules> \*

- Yes, I was given at least one disclosure regarding my rights related to the Just Housing Amendment.
- No, I was not given at least one disclosure regarding my rights related to the Just Housing Amendment.
- I am unsure if I was given a disclosure regarding my rights related to the Just Housing Amendment.

12. If you were given a disclosure regarding your rights related to Cook County's Just Housing Amendment during your recent housing applications, at what point during the housing applications were you typically given it?

- Before an application fee was accepted.
- After an application fee was accepted.
- During another portion of the housing application procedures.
- I am unsure when I was given these materials during the housing application procedures.

13. If a background check was run as part of recent housing application procedures, at what point in the application procedures was it typically run? \*

- Right after I submitted my initial application.
- Right after I submitted my application fee.
- Right after I received confirmation that I passed prequalification checks (meaning my application was approved based on income, credit, etc.).
- Background checks were not run as part of recent housing application procedures.
- Other

14. If a background check was run as part of recent housing application procedures, how long was the lookback period (meaning how many years of your personal history did it pull/check)?

- It pulled my entire record.
- It pulled the last ten years of my record.
- It pulled the last three years of my record.
- It pulled some other length of time of my record.
- I am unsure what length of time it pulled.

15. Was a copy of the background check provided to you?

- Yes.
- No.
- I'm not sure.

16. Were you given an opportunity to dispute information present in your background check?

- Yes.
- No.
- I'm not sure.

17. If you would like to provide additional information regarding any recent housing application processes, please do so in the textbox below.

Enter your answer

## Individualized Assessment

These questions will ask about your recent (since February 2020) experiences completing additional portions of housing applications.

18. As part of recent housing application procedures, after a background check was run, did the housing provider ask questions that give context about the nature of your record and other aspects of your life? Meaning, did the housing provider ask you a series of questions about your recent (last 3 years) conviction history and use those questions to decide if you were approved for tenancy?

According to the Just Housing Amendment, this is called an "individualized assessment." If you need to reference the definition of "individualized assessment," please see

<https://bit.ly/JHADefinitions> \*

- Yes.
- No.
- Not sure.

19. If yes, after the series of questions (individualized assessment), were you admitted into the unit you applied for?

- Yes.
- No.
- Not sure.

20. If you would like to provide additional information regarding any recent individualized assessment processes, please do so in the textbox below.

Enter your answer

## Learning about New and Amended Legislation

This section is optional and will ask questions about how you learn about your rights and responsibilities.

53. How do you hear about new or changed laws in your area? (Select all that may apply.)

- On the news/TV.
- In the newspaper (print).
- On the Internet, specifically online news outlets.
- On the Internet, specifically social media or blogs.
- From direct outreach by a community group or association.
- In a training (in-person or virtual).
- In a mailing to my home.
- On the radio.
- In an email.
- Other

54. If you previously knew about the Just Housing Amendment, how were you made aware of it? (Select all that may apply.)

- On the news/TV.
- In the newspaper (print).
- On the Internet, specifically online news outlets.
- On the Internet, specifically social media or blogs.
- From direct outreach by a community group or association.
- In a training (in-person or virtual).
- In a mailing to my home.
- On the radio.
- In an email.
- Other

55. If Cook County Commission on Human Rights can contact you further about your responses, please include a contact name and email or phone number where you can be reached.

Enter your answer

56. **If you would like to be entered into the raffle to win a \$25 Target gift card, please enter your email.**

Enter your answer

**Appendix B:** Email for Distribution

Good morning,

I hope this email finds you well. Cook County Commission on Human Rights is writing to distribute this survey regarding knowledge and efficacy of the Just Housing Amendment to the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance: <https://bit.ly/JHASurvey2022>

New this year: upon completion of the survey (including providing an email), survey respondents will be entered into a raffle for 3 \$25 Target gift cards (electronic delivery).

This survey is conducted in compliance with Section 770.100 of the Just Housing Amendment to the Human Rights Ordinance. This requires the Commission on Human Rights to evaluate "the rules implementing the Just Housing Amendment to the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance to determine whether the rules should be amended to better effectuate the Amendment's purpose."

**Please distribute this survey to your network.** Two social media graphics are attached for your use and sample copy is included below. **To request print/paper copies of this survey, please contact Julia Epplin-Zapf, Outreach and Training Coordinator via email ([Julia.epplin-zapf@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:Julia.epplin-zapf@cookcountyil.gov)).**

**The survey will close on Sunday, October 30, 2022.** Please contact the Cook County Commission on Human Rights with questions or concerns.

Thank you!

Sample copy:

Cook County Commission on Human Rights invites you to complete its 2022 survey regarding the efficacy of the Just Housing Amendment to the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance: <https://bit.ly/JHASurvey2022>

**New this year: upon completion of the survey (including providing an email), survey respondents will be entered into a raffle for 3 \$25 Target gift cards (electronic delivery).**

The survey will close on Sunday, October 30, 2022. Please contact the Cook County Commission on Human Rights with questions or concerns.



**Appendix C:** Social Media Graphics

Cook County Commission on Human Rights

**Please complete our survey about the Just Housing Amendment.**



Access the survey by scanning the QR or following this link: <https://bit.ly/JHASurvey2022>



**Complete this survey...**

**Get entered to win 1 of 3 \$25 Target gift cards!**

Survey is regarding Cook County's Just Housing Amendment. Access the survey by scanning the QR or following this link: <https://bit.ly/JHASurvey2022>



Cook County Commission on Human Rights