



**National
Public Housing
Museum**

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NATIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING MUSEUM OPENS IN CHICAGO

Founded By Public Housing Residents, First Institution in U.S. to Interpret History and Policies of Public Housing Opens Today

Chicago, Illinois (April 4, 2025) – The **National Public Housing Museum** opened its doors to the public today, marking the culmination of an 18-year journey to complete an expansive adaptive reuse project of the last remaining building of the Jane Addams Homes at 919 S. Ada Street on Chicago's near west side. Founded by public housing residents, the Museum is a vibrant new cultural destination in Chicago, and a place to experience stories of hope and personal achievement amid struggle, resistance, and resilience.

"This museum was built by hundreds of dedicated people who have made it a reality," said **Sunny Fischer**, Co-Founder and Board Chair for the National Public Housing Museum. "They shared their stories, and they patiently provided their labor and love and support over the last 18 years. As a Site of Conscience, we join museums around the world committed to telling complicated and difficult stories, preserving history, and imagining a more just future."

"Growing up in public housing, I saw the strength, pride, and resilience of our communities, which are too often erased," said **Francine Washington**, Chairperson of the Central Advisory Committee for the Chicago Housing Authority and board member of the National Public Housing Museum. "This Museum is personal. It's the first in the country to tell *our* stories—not just the bricks and buildings but the people who made public housing, home. We've always had a voice. Now we have a place that listens."

“The National Public Housing Museum is dedicated to the belief that housing is a human right,” said Executive Director **Dr. Lisa Yun Lee**. “The dazzling stories, precious keepsakes, compelling cultural production of public housing, and activism of public housing residents have much to teach us. And because housing insecurity and injustice is such a critical issue facing so many people across our nation, the National Public Housing Museum will be an important civic anchor that brings people together to imagine innovative solutions and envision a more equitable future.”

Following a ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring remarks from Chicago Mayor **Brandon Johnson**, Museum board members, public housing residents, city officials, and artists, the Museum welcomed visitors to participate in a weekend-long Opening Weekend celebration, including meet-and-greets with artists, hands-on art-making sessions, and even a dance party emceed by **DJ Spinderella**. Opening weekend events are free and open to the public; it is recommended that visitors register in advance at www.nphm.org.

Highlights of Museum exhibitions include:

Restored Apartments

Three historic apartments from different generations of public housing residents that engage and teach visitors about the cultural, social, and economic history of housing.

Everyday Objects

Artifacts, objects and stories from public housing across the country that encourage empathy and connection. By foregrounding storytelling, the National Public Housing Museum encourages innovative and creative public policy that responds to people's lived experiences.

Art and Exhibition Spaces

Enthralling art that expands people's imaginations and their horizons of learning. Highlights include a public art commission by internationally renowned artists Amanda Williams and Olalekan Jeyifous and the Alphawood Foundation Sculpture Garden with restored WPA-era *Animal Court* sculptures by Edgar Miller.

Oral History Archive and Oral History Collective

The Museum is home to the nation's largest archive of the stories of public housing residents. These stories are featured in podcasts, exhibits, research, and scholarship. The new building includes the Dr. Timuel Black Recording Studio.

Empowerment Hub

Good Chaos Empowerment Hub

The National Public Housing Museum has a space dedicated to programs that address the racial wealth gap, build solidarity economies and cooperatives, and create a cultural workforce that contributes to diversifying the museum profession.

Corner Store Co-op

Alvin H. Baum Family Foundation Museum Store

In place of traditional museum retail, the National Public Housing Museum's official shop is co-owned and operated by public housing residents.

Demand the Impossible

Doris Conant Advocacy Space

Here, visitors participate in discussions of social justice issues to encourage action and meaningful civic dialogue. The Museum enables people to understand principles of urban planning and systemic racism to find new ways of addressing segregation. Through the Doris Conant Advocacy Space, visitors learn to challenge perceptions of what public housing was in order to re-imagine the future of housing for all.

The REC Room

An interactive exhibit curated by DJ Spinderella that showcases the music that has emerged from public housing projects, encompassing a range of popular sounds that have expanded our idea of American culture and American identity.

The National Public Housing Museum is now open at 919 S. Ada Street in Chicago. General admission is free and open to all. Historic Apartment Tours can only be experienced through a guided tour led by a Museum educator, with a limited number of tickets available each day (\$25 adults, \$15 seniors, students, and children; free for Members). The Museum is open Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., with extended hours on Thursdays until 8 p.m. For more information and to plan your visit: www.nphm.org.

Support

The National Public Housing Museum receives major program and general operating support from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events CityArts Program, Illinois Arts Council Agency, The Kresge Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Polk Bros. Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Good Chaos, the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the Terra Foundation for American Art, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, and many other generous donors.

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Images Available at National Public Housing Museum [Media Center](#)

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING MUSEUM

Our story starts with a simple truth: that all people have the right to a home. Founded by public housing residents, the National Public Housing Museum is the first cultural institution dedicated to interpreting the American experience in public housing. Filled with history, memories, music, and art, the Museum is a welcoming community gathering place that honors the stories and experiences of public housing residents. Through partnerships and programs, the Museum also

serves as a civic incubator that inspires visitors to take informed action to advance housing justice.

Mission

To preserve, promote, and propel the right of all people to a place where they can live and prosper—a place to call home.

Location

919 S Ada Street
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