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NPHM invites Chicago mayoral candidates to participate in conversation on public housing

Friday, December 17, 2010— The National Public Housing Museum has invited all 2011 mayoral candidates to participate in a conversation on public housing in Chicago. The discussion will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. January 11 at the Chicago Cultural Center.

The goal of the conversation is for public housing residents and the city of Chicago to learn how each mayoral candidate will ensure public housing to be a significant part of their agenda.

Chicago has been home to some of the first urban public housing efforts in the nation, including some of the largest and most significant developments. It is home to immigrants, migrants and thousands of families who have been and are in need of affordable, public, and subsidized housing.

As the infamous high rises fade from the city's skyline, public housing in Chicago is still a vibrant, and necessary, topic. While the Plan for Transformation has promised an ambitious rehabilitation effort "with the goal of rehabilitating or redeveloping the entire stock of public housing in Chicago," the Plan has left some residents wondering what will happen to their homes and communities.

A diverse panel, including public housing residents, academics and members of the media will pose important questions to each candidate about how they will balance the Plan for Transformation with the needs of the residents and communities they serve. The candidates will also have time to discuss their overall plan for housing in the city.

"The Plan for Transformation began in 2000 under the leadership of Mayor Daley, and will continue under the leadership of his successor," said NPHM Executive Director Keith L. Magee. "It is essential for the residents of Chicago to know exactly how the incoming Mayor will handle this delicate and important topic."

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The National Public Housing Museum is the first cultural institution dedicated to interpreting the American experience in public housing and illuminating the resilience of poor and working class families of every race and ethnicity. The Museum is slated to open in 2012 and will be located in the last remaining building of the Jane Addams Homes, a 1937 WPA building that was home to hundreds of public housing families until 2002.