

Housing is a Queer Issue

For low-income lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (lgbt) people being displaced by gentrification and cutbacks in public housing, housing is an issue.

For lgbt youth tormented by their parents and neighbors, with nowhere to go, housing is an issue.

For lgbt youth on the streets, with nowhere to go, housing is an issue.



For people living with AIDS living on a fixed income watching rental units disappear and prices rising as Chicago neighborhoods gentrify, housing is an issue.

For people living with AIDS and other disabilities who have special needs that neither the market nor public housing address, housing is an issue.



For lgbt victims of domestic abuse needing a safe space, housing is an issue.

For lesbian or bisexual woman trapped in a heterosexual relationship because they cannot afford to leave and live on their own, housing is an issue.

For lgbt seniors living on fixed incomes in neighborhoods where they have built community for themselves over many years now facing skyrocketing taxes and rents as Chicago neighborhoods gentrify, housing is an issue.



For lgbt people of color who face racial discrimination from landlords, neighbors, lenders, and real estate agents, housing is an issue.

For transgendered people facing transphobic discrimination from landlords, neighbors, lenders, and real estate agents, housing is an issue.

For lgbt people who face homophobic discrimination from landlords, neighbors, lenders, and real estate agents, housing is an issue.

For lgbt people who believe that the struggle for sexual freedom requires building coalitions with others fighting for social justice, housing is an issue.



Queer to the Left
Getting over the Rainbow for 5 Years

There is no place like home (If you can afford one)



In the last decade the population of metropolitan Chicago grew by more than half a million people, but the number of rental units actually decreased by 52,000. Rents are rising by more than twice the overall rate of inflation. Nearly 40% of all renters now pay more than a third of their income on rent, with nearly 200,000 people paying more than 50% of their income on rent. Many people would be surprised to know that only about one in five people living in poverty receives any type of housing subsidies, and that at the same time, nationwide, homeowners, who are overwhelmingly middle- or upper-class, are subsidized to the tune of \$100 billion a year through Federal income tax deductions for their mortgage payments. Here in Chicago, the number of Section 8 rental units is shrinking because landlords are choosing to take advantage of the overall housing shortage in the city to rent their units on the open market to higher-income people. Over the next five years, about 10,000 Section 8 units in Chicago are set to convert to private market rates. In this context, landlords have been given an incentive to discriminate against people of color, poor people and people with large families. How many more units will be lost to "condo conversions?" Already over the last five years, the North Side of Chicago has lost nearly 8,000 rental units to "condo conversions." This gentrification process also includes large national retail chains coming into neighborhoods and threatening small independent lgbt-owned businesses. Meanwhile, the needs of low-income people with disabilities who have special housing needs go completely unaddressed. One-half of Chicago's PWAs live below the federal government's poverty level. One-third have been homeless at some point. (Statistics come from a recent study carried out by the AIDS Foundation of Chicago). Queer to the Left recently has been working in coalition with other organizations to address housing issues in Uptown, and there is more work to be done in various other Chicago neighborhoods.



Lgbt folks live in various Chicago neighborhoods. We find ourselves in widely varying housing situations, based on our income, household size, race, nationality, gender, age, physical and mental abilities, and our health. Historically, many of us have tried to build "community" within particular urban neighborhoods. Some lgbt people have lived in a specific community for a long time (e.g. Lakeview, South Shore, Uptown, Ravenswood, Logan's Square). Others are relatively new, some pushed out of, or excluded from, more established "gay neighborhoods" because of rampant gentrification there. Vibrant "gay residential neighborhoods" cannot survive gentrification—Lakeview is proof of that. Most lgbt folk cannot afford to live within walking distance of the Pride Parade route



We all have a stake in maintaining the economic, racial and ethnic diversity of our neighborhoods, whether we simply need affordable and accessible apartments, or if we want a vibrant queer culture we all have access to.

Queer to the Left

Queer to the Left (Q2L) is a multi-racial group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people who fight for racial, economic, gender and sexual justice.

We are committed to forming coalitions with others to stop gentrification, police brutality, the death penalty, and the racism and growing conservatism of the mainstream lesbian and gay movement.

Q2L meets the first Sunday of every month at 5 p.m. at the COURAJ Office, 4554 N. Broadway #236. queertotheleft-owner@yahoo.com.