



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Alderman Pat Dowell Announce Success of Chicago's Vacant Properties Ordinance in Ensuring Banks Do Their Part to Protect Chicago's Neighborhoods
Greater Enforcement Since Ordinance Passed Allows City to Hire Additional Inspectors to Identify Vacant Properties and Amplify Pressure on Owners to Maintain the Safety of These Buildings

CHICAGO – Mayor Emanuel and Alderman Pat Dowell today announced that due to the success of Chicago's new vacant properties ordinance in making sure banks take responsibility for their vacant properties, the City will be able to hire additional inspectors to investigate 6,500 outstanding 311 complaints about vacant properties across Chicago by the end of October and continue to ensure that banks and financial institutions to do their part in helping to protect the city's neighborhoods.

"Chicago's updated vacant properties ordinance is a national example of how cities can protect residents from the devastating impact vacant properties have on the economy and public safety of our communities," said Mayor Emanuel. "The results are clear: we are able to further ensure that banks do their part by securing these properties and working towards stability in our neighborhoods."

This week, Mayor Emanuel provided Alderman Dowell with a six-month review of the success of the vacant properties ordinance in better tackling the threat vacant buildings pose to the safety and economic security of communities. In the first quarter of 2012 alone, over 2,500 vacant properties ordinance violations were issued to more than 150 financial institutions. Total fines in the first quarter of 2012 were \$619,000 – a 123 percent increase from the \$277,200 in fines in the first quarter of 2011. Additionally, the ordinance's passage resulted in a 56 percent increase in the number of vacant property registrations issued overall: 4,436 in the 6-month period from October 2011 to April 2012, compared with 2,883 in the six-month period from October 2010 to April 2011.



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“I’m proud to have led the charge to revise Chicago’s vacant properties ordinance and these results are promising,” said Alderman Pat Dowell, who spearheaded the effort to update Chicago’s vacant properties ordinance last year. “There is still more to be done, and we must increase the pressure on banks to come into compliance and work to combat the negative impact foreclosures and vacant properties have in our neighborhoods.”

Although the City has made strides in bringing banks into compliance since the new ordinance passed, there are still over 6,500 complaints from Chicago residents about possible vacant properties, out of a total of over 18,000 from 2011, that need to be inspected. The increased compliance since the new ordinance passed will allow the Chicago Department of Buildings to hire additional inspectors to respond to these complaints and close the gap by the end of October 2012, identify vacant properties and further enforce compliance – continuing to work towards maintaining the safety and security of these locations.

“It takes an entire city to deal with a vacant property,” said Department of Buildings Commissioner Michael Merchant. “The ordinance has allowed the Department to ensure banks are doing their part and paying their fair share to work towards increasing the safety of our neighborhoods.”

Additionally, as part of the Emanuel Administration’s commitment to hold banks and financial institutions accountable for the condition of vacant properties they own throughout the city, the Mayor today posted data providing information on over 2,500 vacant properties ordinance violations for over 150 financial institutions. The data is available on the City’s Data Portal at data.cityofchicago.org.

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