

# UNITED POWER ACTION REPORT AND NEXT STEPS



On Sunday, April 21 under a beautiful sky, 326 United Power leaders held an action in Roseland on Chicago's Southside to announce breakthroughs with new Mayor Brandon Johnson to scale up its Reclaiming Chicago/Nehemiah homeownership plan to build 2,000 homes in 4 neighborhoods. [Here is a link to photos from the action.](#)

After a 12 month campaign, United Power got the new Mayor to act: 1) appoint the Chicago Chief Operating Officer, John Roberson, as the Reclaiming point person, 2) introduce legislation to move on 500 lots through a land development agreement enabling Unite Power to build at a pace & scale (at least 125 per year) required to transform blighted communities into thriving neighborhoods in the Mayor's first term, and 3) implement an "end red tape" initiative to accelerate city permits, inspections, & end exorbitant fees—all of which suffocate neighborhood development.

Another good reaction from yesterday in Chicago: newly confirmed Buildings Commissioner Marlene Hopkins attended the action. Commissioner Hopkins is a United Power ally. Ms. Hopkins was helpful to United Power when she was 1st Deputy. Ms. Hopkins is also a member of Salem Baptist Church.

There were also great testimonies from new homeowners, Gerald and Valerie Warren, and aspiring homeowners. New leaders led the action including veterans and put tension on John Roberson to restate the mayor's and his action commitments point by point. Reflecting the spirit of the action, 60+ leaders attended the action evaluation.

Big congratulations to United Power leaders for a strong action and these breakthroughs, grounded in their exercising power consistently and persistently through action in the last 12 months and refusing to bow to the status quo.

## NEXT ACTIONS

On Sunday Rev. Meeks walked us through the urgent homework for United Power members and leaders to act on ASAP. If you are unsure who your elected officials are, [click here](#).

- 1) **Contact your state legislator and ask them to support United Power's Reclaiming Chicago campaign. (To find contact information for your state senator, [click here](#). To find contact information for your State Representative, [click here](#)).**

Thank you Senator/Rep \_\_\_\_\_ for your support for the Reclaiming Communities work of United Power – to build or rehab 1000 homes on the south side of Chicago and 1000 homes on the west side of Chicago -- to replace vacant lots and buildings with affordable homes and with new homeowners building wealth and equity through homeownership.

Reclaiming Communities is an effort to rebuild our communities for working people, to address the wealth gap, and to replace vacancy and violence with homes, jobs, homeowners, and neighbors.

Last year's state budget had a line item for \$10 million to IDHS to provide United Power with grant funds to be used for homebuyer subsidies for this effort.

**Please include this line item in the state budget again and please increase it to \$15 million to allow more progress to be made in 2024/25.**

We have over 70 homes under development across four communities – on public and private lots. And the City of Chicago is preparing to commit 500 more city-owned vacant lots to this initiative – which will create more opportunities to build homes at scale and create many more new homeowners in 2024/25.

- 2) **City council, contact your alder person and let them know:**

I ask that you support passage of an ordinance to commit 500 vacant, city-owned lots to United Power's Reclaiming Chicago effort for the purpose of creating affordable single-family homes.

United Power's campaign will rebuild communities, create jobs, homes and safer streets, to put vacant lots and properties back on the tax rolls, to re-populate West and South Side neighborhoods, and to help families build wealth and equity through homeownership.

Reference info: The ordinance is currently assigned to the Committee on Housing and Real Estate. It's title is: Sale of various City-owned properties to United Power for Action and Justice under City Lots for Working Families Program (O2024-0008969)