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**EMBARGOED UNTIL
12:01 AM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2004**

PRESS RELEASE

**CHICAGO REHAB NETWORK RELEASES
ILLINOIS DICENNIAL HOUSING FACT BOOK
*Less Affluent 'Feeling The Squeeze' Of Paying For Housing***

SPRINGFIELD – A new report finds that nearly a million Illinois families—including both renters and owners—feel some form of housing stress. These families pay more than 35 percent of their income for rent or for mortgage, taxes, and insurance, or they live in overcrowded housing units.

"Chicago Rehab Network's *Affordable Housing Fact Book* will be an indispensable tool for the Governor's Task Force on Affordable Housing and the General Assembly," says state Rep. Julie Hamos, chair of the Illinois House's Housing and Urban Development Committee. "It reinforces what we heard across the state on housing affordability: the housing crisis affects us all."

The Chicago Rehab Network's Affordable Housing Fact was released today at the Housing and Urban Development Committee's Hearing on Urban Revitalization chaired by State Representative Julie Hamos in Room D-1 of the Stratton Building.

Statewide, more than 420,000 families pay more than 35 percent of their income for rent, including 258,000 who are paying more than 50 percent. That's 28 percent of all renter households. Almost 370,000 owner occupants are paying more than 35 percent of their income for housing. Another measure of affordability is the number of overcrowded households, including families that have doubled up to save on rent. Statewide, 222,000 households are living in overcrowded housing units.

Compiled from U.S. Census data and other sources over 18 months, the *Fact Book* offers both a snapshot of the state of affordable housing and, by comparing current numbers with those from the influential book's prior edition released in 1993, a look at change over time. The book analyzes four key areas: changes in population and housing stock; income; housing costs; and housing stress, a measure of how many renters and owners pay more than 35 percent of income for housing.

Affordability' is an umbrella term that doesn't just refer to month rent or mortgage

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payments – it encompasses a host of housing-related variables that help us understand the needs of a community, and the people who live there,” says Professor Janet Smith, advisor to the Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement, a UIC institute that helped compile the data for the *Fact Book*. “What’s important to note about this study of affordability in Illinois is the way that positive developments, such as poverty rates declining, tended almost to mask out some more troubling changes, like the growth in cost-burdened households.”

“With this Fact Book, we have an excellent measure of where we’ve been and where we are,” says Kelly King Dibble, Executive Director of the Illinois Housing Development Authority and the State’s highest level housing official. Dibble is also chair for the Statewide Affordable Housing Task Force that was created in September 2003 by the Governor to better leverage and coordinate resources for affordable housing across the state and to create the state’s very first comprehensive affordable housing plan. “The Fact Book will be a very valuable resource for the Task Force as it works to create the state’s affordable housing plan. ”

Dibble notes that the Task Force and other recent legislation signed by the Governor indicate a strong recognition of the importance of affordable housing to the people of Illinois and the state’s economy, and dedicated leadership from the Governor to address the issue. . Similarly, local initiatives are gaining momentum as well. These initiatives include creating housing set asides, requiring a proportion of all new housing to be ‘set aside’ for affordable housing, property tax relief, and support for a National Housing Trust Fund, modeled on state and local programs that provide developers tax credits for building affordable units.

The Chicago Rehab Network intends to use the data from the new *Fact Book* as part of its ongoing Valuing Affordability campaign. “In Illinois, where 40 percent of renters don’t make enough money to afford a two-bedroom apartment, affordable housing needs a higher profile on our policy agenda,” says Kevin Jackson, Executive Director of the Chicago Rehab Network.

Valuing Affordability is the organization’s campaign begun in 2001 to address the state’s affordable housing needs. Research by a professional firm in 2002 found that six in ten residents in the Chicago metropolitan region think there is too little housing affordable for people of moderate or low incomes in their communities. Two in three say they support building affordable housing in the areas where they live.

The Chicago Rehab Network is a 25-year-old non-profit coalition of community-based developers and advocates who work to increase resources and equitable policies for affordable housing. Further information is available at 312.663.3936 or www.chicagorehab.org.