

CLARETIAN ASSOCIATES' HISTORY

Claretian Associates (CA) was established in 1991 as an independent 501c3. CA has deep roots in the South Chicago community, having started as a program for the oldest Chicago Mexican-American immigrant Catholic parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe. With over nine steel mills in the area employing over 100,000 residents within the neighborhood, the industry's decline hit hard. Still committed to our early focus of affordable housing for the most vulnerable populations within the neighborhood, predominantly minority, the demographic of families over the years has shifted, with South Chicago now claiming a population of 70% African American and 20% Latino. Today, the community has a population of 27,000 with a median family income of \$40,000, and 30% of the population has a high school diploma. In addition, CA still owns almost 200 rental units, with 75% being senior-focused and resident services being provided. Over the last few months, we strategically transitioned our property management over to a third-party vendor to better right-size the organization's capacity, efficiency, and overall impact.

Claretian's long history/upstanding reputation has allowed us to be selected as the lead agency with both the largest local intermediaries (LISC & United Way) as well as land yearly increasing government contracts to work on violence reduction programming. Working diligently to position ourselves as a leverager of resources, we partnered with a national nonprofit developer to purchase a 101-unit senior building with 40,000 square feet from the YMCA and focused on repurposing this space into a community center. Shortly after, we found ourselves in the midst of construction when COVID arrived in 2020 and again was sought by government and philanthropy partners to be a conduit for critical care provided to residents surrounding housing and food stability and violence reduction. For FY2023, we anticipate having a \$5MM+ budget with almost 100 employees, with approximately \$3MM of that budget NOT being related to housing or real estate development.

Having paused its home-building activities over 15 years ago with the 2007 economic crash, Claretian Associates' plan began focusing more on its programs and multi-family rental developments. A 2017 Crain's article detailed how, after ten years, the 60617 zip code had not even resumed 50% of its original home values compared to a 60610 (Chicago downtown area) zip code that had regained its original value plus a significant increase. As vacant buildings and lots are beginning to see increased interest from outside investors, it is the perfect time for CA to return to developing homes and two flats as a means to continue to increase revenue and strengthen the community with less transient stakeholders. Being directly adjacent to the last 600 acres of developable lakefront property in the City (South Works), this is the time to leverage increasing opportunities. Housing eventually planned for the South Works site may be less than affordable for current residents, who continue to express concerns over the ability to remain stably housed in South Chicago and achieve their personal goals and increase economic mobility. CA can be the impetus to merging these competing yet complementary interests.