

Bio for nominations for NCRC NAHRO

E. Renée Smith

NCRC Position you are running for on the ballot: VP of Commissioners

Agency and job title: Ypsilanti Housing Commission, Board Chairperson



Years with current agency: 9

Years in housing industry: 9

What are some of your responsibilities at your agency?

Why are you running for a position on the NCRC Board?

I am a lifelong resident of Washtenaw County. I was born, raised and resided in Ann Arbor, Michigan for most of my adult life, living a few years in South Lyon and Augusta Township, Michigan, before purchasing my home in Ypsilanti. I have been a resident of the City of Ypsilanti since 2005. When I moved to Ypsilanti, I wanted to get involved in the community and was approached to serve on the Ypsilanti Housing Commission (YHC) Board in 2010. I became the Board Chair in 2011 and remain in that position.

Unbeknownst to me, YHC would become a troubled housing authority shortly after I was sworn in as a commissioner. There was need for better governance and a change in leadership. I took on the challenge, working with the Mayor to recruit quality board members and leading a nationwide search for a new Executive Director. In 2013, the YHC hired a talented visionary Executive Director, Zachary Fosler. Together, we reestablished the reputation of the YHC; renovating or replacing our entire housing stock. My reputation, community connections, ability to collaborate, negotiate and remove barriers, assisted in this reinvention of the YHC.

I have been a regular attendee of NAHRO conferences and trainings for years and believe that professional development is a key component of board leadership. I would like to help support my fellow commissioners and other practitioners in this industry by getting even more involved in service to NAHRO.

I am also the Board Chairman of the Washtenaw County Executive Continuum of Care Board. I have been on this executive board since 2015 and Board Chair for the last two years. Our CoC is one of highest performing CoC's in the State of Michigan and in the country. We have made significant impact in providing housing and services in Washtenaw County by securing necessary resources and services for the homeless and other disadvantaged populations. Through our hard work and advocacy, we have not only assisted families in need of affordable housing but have assisted Veterans and youth aging out of foster care obtain housing and much needed supportive services.

I am graduate Eastern Michigan University where I studied Criminal Justice and Public Administration. I recently returned to Eastern to complete a Graduate Certificate in Public Personnel Administration. I worked for University of Michigan throughout my undergraduate studies and was fortunate to gain employment with the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services upon graduation. I have been employed by the State of Michigan for more than 28 years. I spent the first 15 years of my career with DHHS, working in the field in various Children Services Programs. I moved to second line management before taking a position as an administrator for DHHS Central Administration, in Lansing, Michigan.

My passion is speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves. I am a dynamic and visionary leader who will advocate for those in need. I have done so in my day job at DHHS, through my board governance for the YHC and CoC and on numerous international mission trips through my church. As Vice Chairman of Commissioners for NCRC NAHRO, you would get a seasoned commissioner, who has managed in the public sector, has a very strong business acumen, negotiating skills and will meet the needs of constituents in the region that I represent.