



President's Corner

George Guy, President

from 9:00am-10:00am ET beginning in November. These calls are a great place to share ideas throughout the region. We anticipate using this platform to build on and discuss all of the challenges facing our industry and we navigate through this pandemic. Again, these calls are to support engagement and collaboration.

Over the past two months I've been honored to participate and represent our region in virtual conferences and events nationwide on issues that deal with housing, equity, and community.

- At the beginning of September, I presented alongside NAHRO Vice President, Patricia Wells, NAHRO DEI Advisory Committee Chair, Elizabeth Scott-Glenn, and PRNC NAHRO President, Cupid Alexander. This discussion focused on Diversity, Inclusion,

Greetings,

We had a very successful 2020 NCRC NAHRO Virtual Conference, which took place in August. We are thankful to those sponsors, speakers, and attendees who participated. The sessions were informative and relevant to the issues we are facing today. While the virtual platform was necessary this year, we look forward to the time when we can be back together in person.

NCRC will begin hosting monthly COVID-19 Best Practices Calls on the first Wednesday of each month

2021 Calendar

January 7-8, 2021
NCRC Virtual Board
Retreat and Training

May 23-27, 2021
NCRC Conference
hosted by MN NAHRO
Intercontinental Hotel
St. Paul, MN
(tentative)

October 7-9, 2021
National Conference Y
Exhibition
Phoenix Convention
Center
Phoenix, AZ

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and Equality.

- I also presented a session on How to be Bigger and Better Than the Moment with Alison Bloodhart of Bloodhart Consulting and the MN NAHRO Virtual Conference.
- Last week I was honored to serve as a panelist at the New Jersey Black Issues Convention discussing Building Wealth in African-American Communities. During this session, we discussed tools and strategies to build wealth through homeownership, entrepreneurship and understanding financial vehicles designed for wealth and legacy creation and explore strategies to develop wealth for future generations.

I continue to meet regularly with the NCRC

Vice Presidents, as well as the State Presidents, to discuss how we can better serve the NCRC Membership. We strongly believe that now, more than ever, is the time to prove how valuable NCRC is to our members and the value of our organization as a whole. We are looking to begin virtual lunch-and-learn trainings by the end of the year.

As always, it remains my belief that with our well-timed and efficient response during this pandemic, we have shown our communities and stakeholders across the country how effective and essential our business is. Please continue to remain steadfast during this time and we will be stronger and better when this passes. Remember, we are in this together.



Senior Vice President Report

Alan Zais, SVP

Senior Vice President
Report

NAHRO CEO Adrienne Todman and I (as Chair of the International Research and Global Exchange

Committee) were asked to present to the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) on the role of U.S. housing during the national U.S. election cycle.

The CHRA can be very much seen as the Canadian equivalent of NAHRO—which is all the more interesting as it was established in 1968 as the Canadian Association of (sv)Housing and Renewal Officials (CAHRO) by members of the Upper New York State Chapter of NAHRO. Adrienne joked that they may owe NAHRO membership dues! They remain very true to their NAHRO ancestry as CHRA is a national nonprofit to support and strengthen the social hous-

ing sector, their direct mission is to ensure that all Canadians have an affordable, secure and decent place to call home. They are composed of affordable and social housing providers, owners, managers, indigenous housing providers, municipalities, provincial and territorial housing departments, individuals and emerging leaders. Like NAHRO, they serve a wide range of organizations and persons across the industry. They are also strong partners of NAHRO and IRGE, and we are working with them on the next International Housing Forum, scheduled for 2021 in Quebec.

We joined their board meeting on Canada's Treaty Day which recognizes the rights of the indigenous population, and the board took a moment to remember this. And then the conversation turned to us. We spoke about what effected our programs, such as undocumented immigrants, the Public Charge Rule, the pandemic and social unrest. We were pleased to share that housing and even some of NAHRO's advo-



cacy rules had been picked up in some of the early discussions of candidates and how it let us prepare the advocacy of our programs for either potential administration. Despite some of the recent national news of public housing, much had not affected our members from the national level. In my instance, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit programs that I am working on are driven mainly by the state level, and other housing programs are tied closely at the local level—both of which look to rehab existing homes and still create new homes in areas next to jobs, schools, services and integrated within the urban and suburban communities. Generally, I think we can agree that HUD has been a strong and caring partner, especially during the pandemic in their outreach and support of our agencies--something that many other housing providers throughout NCRC have shared with me in discussions over the past several weeks. We were able to discuss NAHRO's work through the Diversity, Equality and Inequity Committee formed three years ago (and led by IRGE member Liz Glenn) which has helped position us to be prepared and proactive, and helped create pockets of conversation that reached into the regional and state chapters, helping

us move forward in pragmatic ways.

Like CHRA, NAHRO and our housing industry find common challenges that translate across international borders, and we continue to learn from each other and share the best practices and solutions that can reach far into our membership. We look forward to sharing more with you as we move forward with our international partners.

I met Bill Pluta almost 15 years ago at a housing conference in Springfield, Illinois. I didn't really know anyone at the conference (who all seemed to have known each other for years!) and was quietly eating dinner at the hotel lounge. Bill was at the next table, introduced himself, asked if I was following the Cubs baseball game on the television. I didn't know a whole lot about baseball. So Bill spent the rest of the game happily explaining how baseball worked and if only the Cub's team would know how it worked then they would be doing much better. By the end of the game I had made a great friend.

Bill served on the Illinois Chapter of NAHRO and the NCRC NAHRO Boards, and he was Director of Strategic Planning and Reporting for the Illinois Housing Development Authority. Bill presented housing and community development programs at the state, regional and national level and was a great and brilliant resource for all of us. Bill devoted his career to helping families afford homes and for communities to invest in families. He was such a kind and friendly soul.

Bill passed away around midnight on September 30, 2020, and we lost such a caring person. You had no choice but to like Bill, and we have no choice but to miss him. Thank you for all your great work, Bill.



Housing Committee

Lee Talmage Vice President of Housing

CDC Extends COVID Eviction Moratoriums to Dec 30, 2020

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and

the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have issued an order stopping most residential evictions for non-payment of rent through the end of 2020. The Order is an “Emergency Action” that states the moratorium is temporary, applies only to those areas where COVID cases exist, and applies only to non-payment evictions. Residents who believe they are covered by the Moratorium must declare their eligibility and meet particular requirements. Residents protected under the Moratorium are required to pay rent, fees, interest and may be evicted for other non-rent related lease violations. This action follows and was referred to in the August 8, 2020 Executive Order - “**Executive Order on Fighting the Spread of COVID-19 by Providing Assistance to Renters and Homeowners.**”

New Guidance on RAD Program and CARES Act

On September 19, 2020 HUD published **PIH 2020-26**, titled “**Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) – Supplemental COVID-19 Guidance.**” This notice obligates operating funds for a RAD conversion in the first calendar year in which a housing assistance payment (HAP) contract is effective, this notice states that the project is eligible to receive the provided CARES Act operating funds (prorated by the number of ACC units converted and removed from PIC). It also provides flexibility for PHAs in conducting required resident meetings prior to conversion until Dec. 31, 2020 due to the COVID-19 emergency.

HUD CARES Act HCV Extension

On September 14, HUD issued **Notice PIH-2020-24** titled “**Extension of Period of Availability for CARES Act Supplemental Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Funds, Guidance on CARES Act Financial Reporting Requirements (FDS and Quarterly Reporting), and Other CARES Act Provisions.**” The notice provides information on funding extensions, annual reporting, & quarterly reporting for PHAs that have received supplemental funding via the CARES Act. The notice applies to supplement Operating Fund, supplemental Admin Fees, and supplement HAP dollars and should be used by PHAs to report the expenditures of those funds.

HUD Releases 2021 Fair Market Rents

The new FMRs came out mid-March. Comments or requests to re-evaluate particular areas were due September 30, 2020.

HCV Rent Reasonableness Update

HUD has published a notice **PIH 2020-19** titled “**Rent Reasonableness – Defining Assisted Units for the Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Voucher Programs**”). This notice updates guidance on which HCV contracted units may be considered “assisted” for the purpose of rent reasonableness requirements. This notice broadens the assisted unit standard to “all projects undergoing any conversion action that triggers eligibility for an award of tenant protection vouchers (TPVs).” It also clarifies “units with restricted rents” are still “excluded from rent reasonableness determinations until the PHA is notified by the owner, or otherwise determines that the rent restriction has expired.” In addition, the language defining “unassisted units” has been refined, but remains essentially the same.

MTW Final Notice - Expansion

On August 27, HUD pre-published its final Operations Notice for the MTW Expansion. The Operations Notice establishes the requirements for the implementation and continued operations of the MTW demonstration program pursuant to the 2016 MTW Expansion Statute. The expansion authorized HUD to expand the MTW demonstration program by adding an additional 100 high-performing PHAs over a period of seven years. The Act requires agencies to be added to the MTW demonstration by cohort and that HUD direct one specific policy change to be implemented per cohort to facilitate the evaluation of that policy. HUD released previous drafts of the MTW Operations Notice in January 2017 and October 2018. The final Operations Notice includes changes that incorporate feedback from the previous drafts. The Operations Notice will go into effect 60 days after publication in the *Federal Register*.

HUD Secretary Announces Safe Resumption of REAC Inspections

Secretary Ben Carson has announced REAC, using stringent safety protocols, will resume inspections at HUD funded Multifamily and PHA properties. Inspections will be prioritized in states and localities determined by COVID-19 data gathered by Johns Hopkins and Harvard. REAC has developed a heat map of the country categorized into four risk categories with a by State and County Excel spread sheet that gives a visual display of those areas considered at less risk and thereby safer for inspection.

NEW FSS Proposed Rule

On September 18, HUD pre-published the ***“Streamlining and Implementation of Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act Changes to Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program”*** proposed rule. The Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act amended HUD’s FSS program including changes to the size calculation for the FSS program, expanding the definition of eligible family to include tenants of certain privately owned multifamily projects subsidized with Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA), updating the FSS Contract of Participation (CoP), reducing burdens on Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) and multifamily assisted housing owners, clarifying escrow account requirements, and updating the program coordinator and action plan requirements. Comments are due 60 days from publication in the *Federal Register*.

RAD Choice Mobility Guidance

The Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) has published a document titled ***“Guidance for Successful Implementation of Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Choice-Mobility.”*** The document provides suggestions for a PHA to best implement its choice mobility requirement. The choice mobility requirement states that tenants who live in a RAD unit have the option of using a tenant-based voucher after either a year (in PBV units) or two-years (in PBRA units).

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Senior VP of Housing.

Professional Development Committee

Steven Rackis, Vice President of Professional Development

The sub-committees of the Professional Development (PD) Committee had numerous between April 2020 to July 2020 establishing the work plans necessary to meet our selected objectives. On July 20, 2020, the PD Committee met and approved the full work plan. This work plan is a “live document” and can be accessed via the following link:

<https://nahro.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/ProfessionalDevelopment/ESj-YK8zNZMpDz696eICMQBORxbUz74YtL9FBY8Dg4bg?e=3j1lvb>

Jackie Rhodes, National Director of Professional Development, NAHRO, updated the PD committee on the status of the profit-sharing agreement that would allow for NAHRO to market directly to Regional Council members by providing a code to use upon registration. Each Region would then receive a portion of the profits based upon how many people use that code. Updates on the Regions:

- MARC – signed agreement
- MPRC – Jackie and Greg participated in meeting. The Region is discussing with board.
- NCRC – have not heard back
- NERC – have not heard back
- PNRC – have not heard back
- PSWRC – sent agreement for signature, have not receive back yet
- SERC – opted out
- SWRC – have not heard back

On behalf of NCRC President, George Guy, Cheryl Anne Farmer, Regional Service Officer, NCRC, sent out this agreement and a doodle poll to the NCRC membership on July 9, 2020. George has requested we Are asking the NCRC review the form and respond with an email vote of YES (to participate) or NO (to decline the agreement) or click on the following doodle poll. The Revenue Sharing Agreement is attached:

<https://doodle.com/poll/p5mvnuraumbtcu4g>.

Regarding ongoing training, e-learning session available from NAHRO may be reviewed at the following:

<https://www.nahro.org/certification-training/trainings-services/all-trainings/online-trainings/>



Commissioners Committee

Renee Smith, Vice President of Commissioners



Commissioner Training and Professional Development:

Goal: Commissioners will obtain NAHRO Certification and other professional development, to enhance leadership and oversight skills.

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) continues to impact in-person training opportunities; however, NAHRO has begun to offer Commissioners Fundamentals and Ethics trainings in-person and online. An in-person training session was offered in Michigan in August. Additional training sessions on advocacy, providing board oversight and the benefits of Commissioners Handbook were held at the NCRC's virtual conference; also held in August. While Commissioner Fundamentals and Ethics were not offered at this conference; the message of the importance of new Commissioners becoming certified and veteran Commissioners being re-certified were reinforced.

Status: Ongoing

Measurable Outcome: Compare how many Commissioners obtained Certification in 2019 to those certified in 2020

2020 Goal: 20% increase **2021 Goal:** 25% increase

Commissioner Engagement/ Retention:

Goal: Encourage all Commissioners to become involved in NAHRO activities by serving as a Mentor to Commissioners at NCRC and National Conferences. This will be an ongoing goal which includes increasing communication with Commissioners throughout the year and requesting personal email addresses from Commissioners when they become Associate members of NARHO.

Status: Ongoing. Use of the Mentor's Booth at the 2020 & 2021 National Conferences was the primary way to address this goal. **Alternative solutions are being vetted to address this goal, given the cancelation of National Conferences and loss of traditional networking that occurs at these conferences. At the October 2nd national commissioners meeting, board members (and thier agencies) will be encouraged to submit material**

for the #HousersAtWork Campaign to showcase the agency, commissioner and community work done during COVID-19 pandemic. We are hoping to have at least 25 submissions by years end, which should get us close to our projected outreach goal of 70; for 2020.

Measurable outcome: Compare collected inquiries received from Commissioner Information Booth to gauge outreach efforts. Substitute articles/submissions to **the #HousersAtWork Campaign**, as a form of engagement to measure outreach efforts.

2019 National Conference Data: 44 2020

Goal: 70 2021 Goal: 100

Community and Legislative Advocacy:

Goal #1: Urge participation in advocacy efforts and other topics relevant to Commissioners by contacting Chapter Commissioners and Vice Presidents to distribute messaging from the Advocacy Action Center alerts from National NAHRO. Commissioners have been actively involved in advocacy letter writing campaigns; reaching out to legislators, other Commissioners, constituents, service providers and other housing advocates to assure that important funding for housing is maintained. Outstanding work has been done in this area... **Drum roll please... August – goal of 8501 letters to congress during August Advocacy Campaign. Met and exceeded goal -approximately 13,000 letters sent.**

Commissioners throughout the Region will work at the Commissioners Mentor's booth at national conferences; advising new and veteran commissioners how to access/navigate the Advocacy Action Center online and via the app - NAHRO Advocacy, conference app – YAPP.

There has not been any conference due to Covid 19, but we are exploring ways to reach out, provide support and mentoring to Commissioners virtually.

Status: Ongoing

Measurable Outcome: Compare the number of Commissioners reached through Chapters/ State and Regions, in 2020 and 2021.

2020 Goal: 25 2021 Goal: 50

Goal #2: Work with Legislative Network Advisory Committee (LNAC) to actively engage in all letter

writing campaigns.

Status: Ongoing Yearly event - goal set by LNAC

Measurable outcome: 2020 Goal*:12,501 2020

August recess: 8,501 **2021 Goal:** Number to be set at later date:

(*number determined by LNAC)

We have met and exceeded this goal.

Enhanced Collaboration at Regional and National Levels

Goal: Create a Regional Commissioner Committee

Status: Ongoing

Collaborative work has begun in this area, with

Commissioners communicating with other Commissioners within their region and on the national level. I am optimistic that a Regional Commissioner committee will come to fruition during my term.

Other important work -Advance diversity, equity, and inclusion as crucial to healthy communities.

Ongoing discussion and efforts to focus attention on empowerment efforts i.e. encouraging our residents and community to complete census forms, learn how government works; the importance of the voting, the electoral college, local activism; both the fiscal impacts and desired impact for needed reform criminal justice/ law enforcement.

Member Services Committee

Keon Jackson, Vice President of Member Services



On the previous member services conference call discussed the goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes for each. Most recent call provided an overview of the most recent virtual conferences and meeting experiences different thoughts and opinions.

Then, we discussed the Emerging Leaders Objective to create a networking program between housing authorities. We also discussed that NAHRO is looking for a new Association Management System and will be reaching out to the IT subcommittee. Finally, discussion on the NAHRO Roll of Achievers program to change the name and the criteria associated but will require more discussion and working with the communications department.

SCHOLARSHIPS: Earnest J. Bohn Education scholarship applications were awarded, Congratulations to those individuals listed below on being selected as this year's scholarship recipients.

Ariana Ferguson from Minnesota was selected as the \$1,000 scholarship award recipient.

Patience Kannah from Iowa was selected as the \$500 scholarship award recipient

NCRC AWARDS Congratulations to those individuals and agencies listed below on being selected by their

peers as this year's awards NAHRO Award recipients.

Renee Smith (Commissioner of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission) was selected as the recipient for the **2020 Alvira Long Memorial Award for Commissioners**

Jessica Matuska (Special Assistant to CEO Fort Wayne Housing Authority) was selected as the recipient for the **2020 Rising Star Award** Recognized Emerging leader in Affordable Housing & Community Development

Jackie Newman (Executive Director- Springfield Housing Authority/Peoria Housing Authority, President Illinois NAHRO) was selected as the recipient for the **2020 Presidential Award**

Barbara Dacy (Interim Executive Director Otter Tail County Housing & Redevelopment Authority) was selected as the recipient for the **Charles A. Thompson Award for Distinguished Service**

Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority was selected as the recipient for the **2020 Community Development Award of Excellence** for the Angelina Jolie Visits Cleveland and Urban Farm

Fort Wayne Housing Authority was selected as the

recipient for the **2020 Housing Award of Excellence** for the Posterity Scholar House

Member Services Committee 2019-2021 and the NAHRO goals and other items remain as follows:

CONTINUING ITEMS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Dues- Review the dues structure every two years

Awards: Continue to evaluate, promote, and fine tune the award program. Consider ways to increase the number of entries and to better market the program such as recognizing the size of each agency in the awards catalog.

Fellows- Continue the collaboration with the Emerging Leaders. Work with regions and chapters to increase the number of applications and create more opportunities for the Fellows to be engaged with the membership.

Emerging Leaders- Continue to submit session ideas for conferences and plan events for Emerging Leaders. Look into the possibility of holding a sponsored hospi-

tality suite or reception for Emerging Leaders, adding an Emerging Leader representative to the Regional Presidents meeting to bring more awareness of the group, including articles written by and about the Emerging Leaders in the Monitor or Journal.

IT- continue to meet with NAHRO staff on technology updates and provide feedback.

Marketing and Relationship/Partnerships

Subcommittees- Continue to have the two subcommittees meet and review and create future survey questions.

Conference- continue to participate in the site selection process and work with the Site Selection Task Force to revamp it. Continue with the First-Time attendee's overview and with other committees' functions such as Emerging Leaders, and representation on the National Conference Planning Committee.

Strategic Plan- Continue to work on Strategic planning and new tasks as needed.



Small Agency Task Force

Marty Ryan, SATF Chair

Greetings NCRC Board Members,

I honestly can say so much has happened since my last

report and I don't even know where to begin and everything seems to change so rapidly that I'm sure that my report is going to seem like rambling! So I apologize in advance :-).

Life at a Small Housing Authority is challenging in itself, but add COVID-19 to the equation and



.....

My agencies have tried to keep normal operations for the sake of our Residents & Staff. We have been able to provide our public housing residents with a "Covid Essential Care Package" containing, hand sanitizer, reusable mask, \$10 grocery gift card, toilet paper, crossword book & reusable bag.

Wash you hand, Wear a mask, are just a few things you can do.

We've given you this care package because we care for you.

So ride the wave and carry on, remember this too shall pass.

And when things return to "normal" it's sure to be a blast!

Stay Healthy*Stay Safe*Stay Strong

My boards approved a COVID Differential Compensation Pay for all staff prorated on number of hours worked. This definitely helped with staff moral as I have not experienced any issues with absences due to COVID and felt that this warranted a “bonus”.

My agencies have went to a virtual platform for HQS inspections. Fortunately, our agencies were equipped to handle this platform. It's been a learning curve for the landlords, but we just make it work!

THIS & THAT:

SECRETARY CARSON ANNOUNCES HUD WILL SAFELY RESUME PHYSICAL INSPECTIONS



Inspections previously paused during COVID-19 outbreak due to health concerns

https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_20_119

Cares Act – Round 1 <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/PIH2020-08.pdf>

Cares Act – Round 2 <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/pih2020-18.pdf>

NAHRO Advocacy: <https://www.nahro.org/advocacy/advocacy-and-congressional-resources/action-alert-center/>

If you have any questions or recommendations, please contact me at albiahousing@iowatelecom.net or 641-777-6203.

This sums it up!

KNOWN KNOWNS	KNOWN UNKNOWNNS
I know...	I know I don't know...
UNKNOWN KNOWNS	UNKNOWN UNKNOWNNS
I don't know, but somebody does... and they ain't tellin'	Who would have thunk?



Legislative Report

Jim Dewey, NCRC Legislative Chair

WOW! What an awesome job NCRC members did with the August Advocacy Campaign! We

led the nation with the most letters sent from our region with 3,864 letters sent to the President and congressional members. You all should be

very proud of our regions work! Overall, nationally we helped crush the set goal of 8,501 letters by sending in a total of 12,901 letters over the 5-week campaign! Congress should be listening to us now. Thanks to all that sent in letters and for those who did not, there will be more opportunities for you to jump on the Advocacy Train in the near future!

For our local NCRC state by state challenge the numbers shook out as:

Michigan: 1620

(yes my great state held the Heavy weight letter sending title!)

Minnesota: 860

Indiana: 396

Iowa: 352

Illinois: 308

Nebraska: 232

Ohio: 68

Wisconsin: 28

There is still work to do to help congress see the importance of passing yet another COVID stimulus bill that would continue to support our programs and the families we serve. Keep an eye out for future news blasts and letters to be sent on this very important issue.

The National Legislative team is looking to strengthen

the Congressional District Contacts (CDC's) this coming year, so if you are interested in joining this group of advocates, please let me know and I will pass along to Tess as she is looking for interest and a new way to promote the current CDC platform.

If you would like to be included in all National Legislative calls, please feel free to reach out to Tess Hembree at THembree@nahro.org she would love to add your email to the list and send out an invite for you.

Every NAHRO member is considered a member of Leg Net, so if you would like to receive weekly e-blasts and participate on monthly calls, contact Tess Hembree at thembree@nahro.org and she will include you in those opportunities as well.

Advocate- If we are not heard, others will be!

NCRC WAS HEARD IN AUGUST!

Housing America Task Force Report

Anna Judge, Housing America Poster Contest Chair



Ah, October! Welcome back cooler weather, colorful falling leaves and, for those of us in the housing world, *Housing America Month*.

The *Housing America Task Force* wants to give you the opportunity and platform to showcase your properties and the residents we all serve every day. You can do so by utilizing the numerous social media platforms at your disposal (i.e. Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook) to share your ideas with NAHRO members around your region and the country.

If your agency is opening a new development, debuting Little Free Libraries or community gardens, hosting resident activities or signing proclamations we want to hear about it! Please share these special and important occasions with your colleagues by posting on social media platforms along with sharing them with NCRC leadership so that we too can congratulate you on your accomplishments! We want to help spread the word! No occasion is too small to promote the continued need for decent, safe, affordable housing.



IRGE Committee

Ann McKenzie, Vice President of IRGE

How do we keep a global perspective while quarantined? How can we think beyond ourselves when we are hardly leaving our homes?

Alan Zais, Chair of the

International Research and Global Exchange (IRGE) committee, pulled us from our isolation by hosting a Canadian professional for our May meeting. We all spoke with Jeff Morrison, Canadian Housing & Renewal Association (CHRA) Executive Director from our homes about what was going on in Canada.

Jeff reported that the Canadian National Housing Strategy is still moving forward with some delays due to the pandemic. Our discussion turned personal as Jeff shared how empty Ottawa, Ontario felt and I could sympathize with similar empty streets in Chicago. As housers, we were all working to keep our residents safe and well. These types of conversations reinforce that we have more in common than differences.

In June, the IRGE committee, again, hosted a guest. This time from the Vera Institute of Justice. Our guests, Margaret diZerega, Erica Crew and Jacqueline Altamirano Marin shared about their experience working with housing authorities (including Winnebago) to house family members recently released from prison, jail, or a juvenile facility. Vera shared a number of stunning statistics as well as the fol-

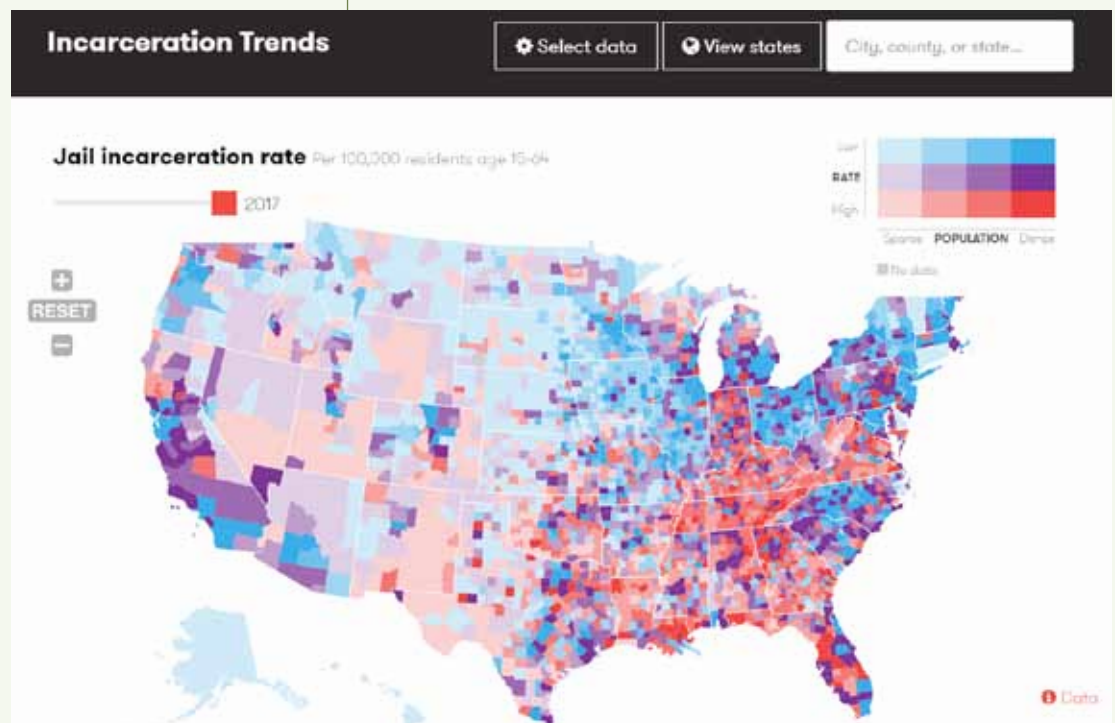
lowing map that demonstrates the inconsistency in incarceration rates across the country:

Find out more about what Vera is doing at their website: vera.org

Our colleague from CHRA, Jeff Morrison, confirmed that the rate of incarceration in the United States is recognized in other countries as a uniquely American thing.

IRGE will hold two formal committee meetings in October, October 23rd and 30th. If you have anything to share with the committee, please reach out to me.

Continue to think globally and live very locally. Take care of yourself and those around you through this difficult time.



Regional Service Officer Report

Cheryl Anne Farmer, RSO



NEWSLETTER – We are looking for advertisers for our quarterly newsletters. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please pass along the advertising rate sheet located at the end of this newsletter. The next deadline for newsletter submissions is January 15, 2021. Please send us any interesting news that is happening at your agency, we would love to share it with the rest of the region.

WEBSITE – If you have any job postings that you would like to post on our website please send them to me in Word format. This is a free service to our members. Don't forget to check out our member discussion forums on the website. We need our members to use these forums in order to maximize the benefits to you.

AWARDS – Be on the lookout for upcoming scholarship information. The updated forms will be sent soon.

Poster Contest – Be on the lookout for upcoming poster contest submission deadline information. The updated forms will be sent soon.

Advocacy Action – Visit either the NCRC or National NAHRO websites to access the [Advocacy Action Center](#) to make sure your state is submitting letters to Congress!

Upcoming Election - Make sure you have your SIX agency members up to date with me so that we can ensure that all our members receive their voting key in the upcoming election.



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CMHA to reopen housing voucher lottery soon. This time, no deadline to apply: Leila Atassi



Typically, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority accepts applications for its housing voucher lottery during one week every few years. But soon, CMHA will begin accepting applications on a rolling basis. (Illustration by Garrett Weider)

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Like a comet or solar eclipse, it happens once every few years and is all too easy to miss – the announcement that the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority will open its lottery for a chance to win a spot on the waiting list for a federal housing voucher.

When that rare and potentially life-altering lottery takes place, applicants have only one week to apply.

One. Week.

During that time, CMHA is flooded with thousands of applications. From that pool, a computer randomly selects 10,000 for a waiting list, and the housing authority spends the next few years working its way to the bottom, handing out vouchers as they become available.

Those who aren't chosen for the list or miss the window to apply wait years for their next shot, while they do their best in a rental market that has become known for its high eviction rate and

lack of affordable options.

To all who have experienced this depressing cycle, I have good news. In November or December, CMHA again will begin accepting applications for the housing voucher lottery – but this time, there is no deadline to apply.

Under the new system, CMHA will accept applications on a rolling basis, meaning applicants will remain on the list for 18 months, at which point they must reapply. CMHA also will periodically hold “mini lotteries,” during which vouchers will be awarded to applicants who are randomly selected from the pool, said Dori Nolan, CMHA's director of policy, planning and housing mobility. Exactly when the lotteries will take place and how many applicants will be chosen will be determined by voucher turnover and funding availability, Nolan said. She assured me that those currently on CMHA's waiting list will receive their vouchers before the new system takes effect.

But the bottom line is this: Families can apply at any time for a chance at one of the coveted vouchers.

In another important innovation, applicants will have access to a web-based system, where they can update their contact information, so CMHA knows exactly how to reach them if they're chosen to receive a voucher. In the past, families languishing on the waiting list for years often would move or change phone numbers and, for lack of updated contact information, miss their shot at the subsidy, CMHA Chief of Staff Jeffrey Wade told me.

These changes are the results of what Wade described as a moment of soul-searching for

CMHA during the pandemic – a chance for the organization to consider feedback from tenants and landlords and reevaluate its systems from top to bottom.

In another example, beginning in early 2021, CMHA plans to install self-service kiosks in the public spaces of its administrative building on Kinsman Road. Wade likened the technology to an “ATM for housing,” that would allow customers to submit applications and other documents that once required clunky paperwork and waiting in line for the help of a CMHA employee.

“This has been a period that has given us an opportunity for introspection and a chance to look at everything we do,” Wade said. “Truly, we want to be a program that is responsive and effective for the community we serve, and we’re striving for that daily.”

These improvements are welcome and should be applauded, but let’s keep them in perspective. Indeed, technology carries the dual benefits of increased efficiency and promoting social distancing. And accepting voucher applications year-round -- instead of limiting them to just one week, every few years -- makes the hope of receiving the subsidy real for potentially thousands more families. But the fact remains that the overall number of available vouchers meets a mere fraction of the need in Cuyahoga County.

CMHA has only 15,000 vouchers to issue. During the last voucher lottery in 2018, about 33,000 families applied for the waiting list.

At a time when American society has adopted the slogan “We’re all in this together” as its rallying cry, we should feel pretty heartsick at the notion that more than half of the families in our community who need these housing subsidies are going without.

While much work remains to be done to make the housing voucher system better serve tenants and landlords alike, the most important step would be toward a universal voucher program

built on the premise that housing is a human right, not a privilege.

Under such a program, the financial hardship this pandemic has imposed would not threaten to displace low-income families from their homes when they’re unable to make rent, and landlords subsequently wouldn’t default on their mortgages. The federal eviction moratorium currently in place until Dec. 31 would be all but unnecessary. And keeping families from crowded homeless shelters or from doubling up with friends and relatives would help stop the spread of COVID-19.

In the absence of that kind of forward thought or compassion in our federal government, however, we must do what we can on the local level to ensure those lucky enough to have vouchers are able to find housing in communities where their families can thrive. That means passing laws that ban discrimination against voucher recipients, continuing to streamline the bureaucracy at CMHA and developing programs that encourage and support social mobility. All are ideas you’ll hear more about in my upcoming columns.

In the meantime, Wade says, CMHA has spent much of the past two years trying to figure out how to convince landlords of the value of participating in the voucher program.

“There is a great deal of economic benefit to having vouchers in one’s rental portfolio,” Wade said. “But there are the more gracious, community values, too. You want families to be able to seek opportunities for economic improvement. You want children to have a chance at an education that would allow them to advance. Why wouldn’t society want that?”

That’s a great question.

Only when we agree that we do, in fact, want that, can we say in good faith that “we’re all in this together.”

You can reach columnist Leila Atassi at latassi@cleveland.com.

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STATE CHAPTER REPORTS

ILLINOIS CHAPTER

Jackie L. Newman, President



the field! Each of us have our own special memories that we can share of our time with Bill and if you ever served on a planning committee with him – well.you really have some stories to share!! Even during his illness, Bill was busy assisting ILNAHRO and NCRC plan its 2020 Virtual Conference, which was an absolute success!! Bill was committed until the end. Certainly, as a result of his commitment in planning, the CR&D track for our NCRC 2020 Virtual Conference was well received and simply awesome!!

Bill has served on the Board of Illinois NAHRO since 1993, as a past Chapter President (1999-2001), and was a current Board member serving as our VP for C R & D. Bill twice served as national Vice-President of Community Revitalization & Development. On behalf of the entire ILNAHRO Board our thoughts, prayers and support are with Bill's family during this most difficult time and we express our sincere appreciation to them for sharing Bill with us.

ILNAHRO submits its report this reporting period to NCRC in honor and memory of our dear friend and colleague, Mr. William A. "Bill" Pluta".

In Loving Memory of our friend "Bill Pluta"

Indescribable is the word that comes to my mind when I think about Bill Pluta. Throughout the course of my 35-year Affordable Housing career – the name "Bill Pluta"

has been synonymous with the letters **C R & D**!! Bill's heart beat Community Revitalization and Development --- it certainly was the essence of who he was as a consummate professional in



INDIANA CHAPTER
George Guy, President

The Indiana Chapter of NAHRO is pleased to provide its report.

- The 2020 IN NAHRO Virtual Conference took place on September 22nd-23rd. This conference featured relevant sessions as we continue to navigate through this challenging

time. Thank you to all of those sponsors, speakers, and attendees who made this conference a success!

- There will be an election held on October 28th
- The IN NAHRO best practice calls are now being held every other week. On average, 50+ attendees from PHAs across Indiana have been participating. These calls originally started as COVID-19 related but have quickly turned into a time of general resource sharing. We have discussed issues ranging from CARES Act funding to the mobility demonstration to Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiatives. We've also reviewed state specific issues, like

IHCDA's Rental Assistance Program. We've appreciated representatives from IHCDA and the HUD Indianapolis field office joining our weekly calls.

- We are excited to come together as a state

and make some much-needed updates to our logo, website, and marketing materials. We are working on some increased membership benefits and also benefits for the residents and participants we serve.



IOWA CHAPTER
Steve Rackis, President

The Iowa NAHRO Board met virtually on June 25, 2020. The 2020 Iowa NAHRO Conference will remain cancelled. We decided we did not have the manpower to host a virtual conference. Instead the Board decided to only focus on our regularly scheduled Fall one-day training session. The Board decided

to pick one of the Spring Conference's topics and determine if the presenters are willing and able to do a virtual session. Adam Sutton, our Professional Development Chair, identified the top 3 sessions that members registered for and will reach out to these presenters. The top 3 session were:

1. Leadership and Effective Communication.
2. Sex & Labor Trafficking/Domestic Violence.
3. Healthy Neighborhoods/Healthy Communities.



MINNESOTA CHAPTER
Bryan Hartman, President

The Minnesota NAHRO chapter held its annual conference virtually in September over two and one-half days. This well attended event included sessions focusing on COVID-related topics, racial equity and also offered a two-day financial training by a recognized national trainer.

The continuation of state and federal eviction mora-

toriums was a hot topic for agencies as we work with our participants to navigate income losses related to the pandemic. Peer learning was also a feature of the conference, with members sharing their initiatives and best practices that they have put in place in response to COVID workplace restrictions and with the CARES Act funding that has become available.

Inclusivity and racial equity were topics of several sessions, including homeownership and how to build positive environments in our workplaces and communities. The sessions featured speakers from a variety of backgrounds and encouraged discussion among participants.

MN NAHRO continues to provide timely and relevant information to our members on the COVID-19 pandemic and how to operate their agencies

in this time of crisis. This essential information is being provided through weekly email updates to members and free conference calls featuring guest speakers as well as members sharing their experiences.

The staff of MN NAHRO continues to maintain a COVID-19 information page, linked from our home page: www.mnnahro.org with essential information and links on topics including: state and federal health information on COVID-19; sample agency policies and forms for responding and adapting to the crisis; program administration

notices from HUD and state of Minnesota; and also community/resident information for managing multi-family properties.

The State of Minnesota's legislative session ended this spring without action on a variety of bills supported by MN NAHRO. Special sessions of the legislature are continuing to be held, almost on a monthly basis, to address the peacetime emergency related to the pandemic. Our legislative committee continues to meet and is working to ensure that our priorities are heard and addressed.



MICHIGAN CHAPTER, Zachary Fosler, President

Greetings Friends and Colleagues,

The challenges of this year have even further emphasized the importance of having a place to call home. As housing practitioners, we strive to create housing stability in underserved areas where affordable housing is in short supply. Many of us reach beyond the duties of "landlord," looking for every possible way to improve our residents' quality of life and level of self-reliance. We provide our residents opportunities to access supportive services such as healthcare, education, job training, childcare, and mental health services. We pride ourselves in providing our residents with the

space to thrive and in our ability to bring equity to the communities that we serve.

Too often, this is an untold story. It is easy to get so busy doing the work that we forget to share our stories with the "outside world." But October is Housing America Month. What better time to let our stakeholders know about the important work that we do? Legislators, local elected officials, and community members need to hear from us, especially in areas of the state where affordable housing is not seen as a priority.

So please, take a moment to post, tweet, email... whatever method you choose... about the #HousingAmerica campaign and why affordable housing matters. If you need some inspiration, NAHRO has resources available at: <https://www.nahro.org/about/housing-america-campaign/housing-america-month/>



NEBRASKA CHAPTER

Trine McBride, President



In the last newsletter, I was happy to report that Nebraska had not seen an upswing in COVID-19 cases and housing authorities in Nebraska were reopening their doors to the public and resuming regular business and maintenance activities. At the beginning of September, Governor Pete Ricketts allowed all but two counties to move into Phase IV. While Nebraska's COVID-19 case numbers are lower than many states,

there has been an increase in cases due to students returning to school.

NE NAHRO postponed the annual Fall Conference that was to be held in September. The Fall

Conference is the Chapter's largest source of revenue. To make up for the loss of income from the annual Fall Conference, the Chapter provided a two-day webinar NAHRO training for Executive Directors. The Chapter also has scheduled an online Fair Housing Training in October.

Nebraska Chapter members have registered and are looking forward to the virtual NAHRO Conference in November.

OHIO CHAPTER

Ralph Chamberlain,
President



OHAC continues its efforts (even virtually) to support its mission of fostering and promoting affordable housing in the state of Ohio through: Education and

training of its membership and the public; Exchange of information and concerns; Mutual support; and, Collaborative efforts.

Recent activity on the virtual front included presentation to the OHAC Directors on Recovery Housing efforts in Ohio by Jennifer White of the Fletcher Group and COVID-19 HR Best Practices by Drew Esposito of Clemans-Nelson each on August 6, 2020.

The NCRC Virtual Conference was greatly appreciated by OHAC members. Additional virtual trainings from OHAC were held as fol-

lows:

- 08/20/2020 – HCV Tools Training: Forecasting, Payment Standards, HCV Analysis & Drill Down Tool with Mike LaRiccia
- 08/25/2020 – Landlord Best Practices with Bill Willis
- 08/26/2020 – Sunshine Laws Training with Ohio Attorney General (also re-scheduled on 11/09/2020)

Future virtual trainings are also being planned including:

- 10/01/2020 – Raising Awareness about Human Trafficking with Tracy Goss McGinley, Associate Teaching Professor & Program Advisor, Criminal Justice Program at Bowling Green State University
- 11/12/2020 – Social Media Engagement with Alisa Agozzino, Associate Professor of Public Relations at Ohio Northern University
- TBA – Racial Equity

As previously noted, due to COVID-19, OHAC canceled the 2020 Spring Conference and 2020 Fall Conference. The 2020 Directors' Retreat is

the latest OHAC function to befall the COVID-19 axe; though, the group is hoping to hold a virtual social event during the time that the event would have taken place. It has also been determined that the OHAC Person of the Year Award will be postponed until such time as in-person conferences resume.

The 2020 OHAC Scholarship Award winners have been announced and include:

- Marilyn Laster – Akron MHA
- Romario Hill – Lake MHA
- Carmose Bensman – Miami MHA
- Jason Flood II – Morgan MHA
- Angela Johnson – Pickaway MHA
- Justin Robinson – Stark MHA

I would like to take a moment to recognize and honor Kathy Sims to this group upon her retirement from Chillicothe MHA effective July 31, 2020, after an amazing 50 years, 7 months, and 9 days of dedicated service!

Stay safe, healthy, apart, and masked!



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