



## President's Corner

George Guy, President

Greetings!

We had a great time hosting the 2021 NCRC NAHRO Virtual Conference: Housing Matters, on April 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to all of the sponsors, speakers, and attendees that helped to make this conference a success!

The region continues to work with Jackie Rhodes and Greg Shpak on ways to increase regional professional development sessions. I'd like to encourage every member to take advantage the NAHRO Professional Development trainings and revenue sharing opportunities

NCRC continues to host monthly COVID-19 Best Practices Calls on the first Wednesday of each month from 9:00am-10:00am ET. These calls are a great place to share ideas throughout the region. We are using this platform to discuss all the challenges facing our industry as we continue to navigate through the pandemic. Again, these calls are to support engagement and collaboration.

Last month, President Biden outlined his proposal for a \$2 trillion infrastructure package that he is asking Congress to approve. The proposal includes \$40 billion to address the

Public Housing Capital Fund backlog and billions in other housing investments. In addition, the President's budget may be released this week, though no official timeline was given. Housing has been highlighted as one of the core aspects and it has taken years to get to this point, but that work is paying off when it is most critical. We must be vigilant and continue to reach out to congress. Please go to the Action Center and send letters Action Alert Center - The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO).

NAHRO officially launched the Congressional Contacts (CC). Having CCs in key districts helps us target members of Congress more strategically with our Action Alert letters. If you are interested in being a CC, sign up here: [www.NAHRO.org/contacts](http://www.NAHRO.org/contacts) If you have questions about being a CC, reach out to Jennifer Keogh national Leg Chair or Jim Dewey, Regional Leg Chair.

I want to congratulate and thank Brian Gage from Akron Housing Authority (OHIO) and Tamir Mohamud, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Resident Commissioner (MN) for their testimony at the House

Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development and Insurance in a hearing entitled "Preserving a Lifeline: Examining Public Housing in a Pandemic". You can see his testimony here Virtual Hearing - Preserving a Lifeline: Examining Public Housing in a Pandemic | Financial Services Committee ([house.gov](https://www.house.gov)) I couldn't be more proud of our members for being bold and helping tell our story!

Congratulations to all of the NCRC NAHRO Officer nominees for your leadership and commitment to our organization.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate NAHRO CEO, Adrienne Todman on her nomination for Deputy Secretary for Housing and Urban Development. After being approved by the committee, we look forward to her being approved by the Senate.

I hope and pray that everyone continues to be well and that we stay connected during this time.

## 2021 Calendar

**June 3, 2021**  
**NCRC Annual Meeting**  
**Zoom Call**

**October 7-9, 2021**  
**National Conference**  
**Phoenix, AZ**

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# Senior Vice President Report

## Alan Zais, SVP

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In 2016 our agency, NI ReACH (formerly Winnebago County Housing Authority) was approached by the New York University Marron

Urban Institute for a unique Ex-Offender Reentry program in partnership with the Illinois Department of Corrections, which was basically an early release into house arrest but with strong wraparound service. We reached out to HUD Headquarters which was very interested in the program, and we had a 24-month demonstration program using state funded vouchers and public housing. It did have a dramatic effect—80% recidivism with the demonstration program as opposed to an average 43% for the State of Illinois. Concurrent with this, the Governor had assembled a state task force and our agency was asked to join, and the Illinois General Assembly replicated the program with a statewide 100 voucher demonstration program—with a maximum 30 voucher program awarded to our agency for a regional program. We received the Opening Doors to Public Housing technical assistance program from the Vera Institute of Justice which had provided this same assistance to New York and New Orleans housing authorities and the State of Delaware, and it proved valuable to our agency as well. I was recently reappointed to the Illinois Reentry Task Force, I was invited to present the program to the City of Chicago Mayor's Office for their Welcome Home Program, I will be presenting later the week of 04/05/21 to the Federal Opening Doors panel, and presenting to the Federal Fair Housing and Civil Rights Panel later this month. As I write this, the HUD Policy and Development Research Department is looking at a research program that would involve what was learned from the NIREACH program

I give this background, because for the past couple of years our agency was the only public housing one on these task forces for the State of Illinois, and the only one on these federal panels, and this seems to all be through our involvement with the original NYU

program. Looking at reentry and how it may have been affected by inequities within the criminal justice system, and the subsequent demand it places on housing authorities as we look at how we can help, balanced with community safety, and ensuring strong programs that will be successful, is important and a care of all of us. Yet notice that for some time our agency seemed to be the only one at the table. And it appears to be the case elsewhere in our regions. The Ohio Ex-Offender Reentry Coalition adopted several reentry House Bills, which are forerunners to recent Illinois House Bills and the adoption of the Illinois General Assembly's Housing Committee, again, with very little public housing input.

As we see this example of how housing policies can be affected at the state and federal levels and within HUD, it is a reminder of the value of our legislative work in helping shape the best policies through our experience.

In April the State of Illinois passed a law against source of income discrimination, similar to what had existed in the Chicago area for several years and which would protect Housing Choice Voucher families from discrimination. I had submitted written support testimony, and this is consistent with my work with NAHRO's housing and equity, and part of national NAHRO's Housing and Small Agencies committee's work adopted by the NAHRO Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and the NAHRO Board of Governors. Although we were supportive, we learned of the impending legislation outside of the state Housing Committee, and it was this necessary to coordinate with NAHRO's Legislative Network to make sure we moved ahead correctly.

These two examples are again to bring focus on the valuable work our agencies bring to our communities, and how we must always advocate for the families we serve and make sure our voices are heard.

As part of my work on the International Research and Global Exchange Committee, I will be part of the Canadian Housing and Urban Agency's program (similar to the NAHRO legislative conference) which

will have a focus on diversity and equity as Canada examines the housing needs for the indigenous population. We hosted England's National Housing Federation to also discuss diversity, equity and inclusion, and later in the month I will serve (thanks to my

friend Liz Glenn from the MARC region!) to introduce the international perspectives forum for the Pan-African Symposium on Housing and Sustainable Development.



## Housing Committee

*Lee Talmage Vice President of Housing*

### **2021 American Rescue Plan**

Congress has approved over \$30 Billion in new housing and rent supports as a part of the \$1.9 Trillion American Rescue plan. \$21.55 Billion, administered by the Dept of

Treasury, provides an emergency assistance booster shot to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) created in the 2021 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. This funding assists families adversely impacted by loss of income due to COVID-19, have been unable to pay their rent, and are at risk of eviction due to nonpayment. In addition, \$5 Billion in *one time* use Emergency Housing Vouchers is designated for those who are homeless, in imminent threat of becoming homeless again, that may be fleeing domestic abuse/violence or sexual assault/trafficking, or experiencing high-risk housing instability. Allocation of these vouchers to PHAs along with HUD administrative guidance is forthcoming.

With this plan rolling out, interest now turns to the possibility of another Congressional Rescue Plan tied directly to national infrastructure and even to the possibility of a universal income based voucher program.

### **COVID-19 & CARES Act Reporting**

PHAs are utilizing their facilities for the distribution of COVID vaccines and the utilization percentage of the CARES Act funding has also improved significantly over 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr 2020 levels. Some of the delay was hesitation on proper reporting. HUD Office of Public Indian Housing updated its FAQs on CARES Act reporting in January 2021.

### **CDC Eviction Moratorium Extended**

As anticipated, on March 28 the CDC extended to June 30, 2021 an Eviction Moratorium that has safe guarded

families since passage of the CARES Act on March 27, 2020. That first moratorium was tied to the Act and was not ordered by the CDC. It prohibited eviction from certain federal subsidized rental housing due to nonpayment until July 24, 2020. When that moratorium expired owners of subsidized properties were again able to file court actions until the CDC issued an order in September imposing a moratorium until December 31, 2020 and then March 31, 2021 on all rental housing. The CDC requirements for families to qualify for eviction protection established in September 2020 remain the same. Families that have previously complied with those requirements under the previous moratoriums, are not required to renew their protected status.

Compounding these concerns particularly for Landlords, are the varieties of approach Local and State jurisdictions have taken to COVID-19 and the moratoriums. Many cases already in process before or in between the moratoriums or not based on nonpayment of rent, face backlogged court dockets. Uncertainties about rent revenue, without opportunity to take legal action, can put available rental properties affordable, subsidized, HCV friendly, or market rate at risk.

The Eviction Moratoriums have prevented immediate homelessness and have allowed government to provide emergency assistance to those tenants that are in arrears through the 2021 Omnibus Appropriations Bill and the American Rescue Plan. Hopefully before the moratoriums end, these new funding streams can be tapped into quickly to save families from eviction and relieve Landlords that have been trying to hold on.

### **HUD Issues Further Guidance on ERAP**

On February 22, 2021 the Treasury Dept released updated FAQs on the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) created by the December 27, 2020 omnibus appropriations act. The new guidance clarifies that ten-



ants assisted by Public Housing, Housing Choice Vouchers, and Project Based Rental Assistance are eligible for ERAP assistance for the tenant portion of rent and utilities not subsidized by these assistance programs. Tenants may document their COVID 19 related need by a written self-declaration. Examples of what qualifies as “other” housing related family expenses are given but are not limited by the guidance.

#### **2021 Capital Fund Awards - \$19 million increase over 2020**

On February 23, HUD released \$2.7 billion to public housing agencies through the Public Housing Capital Fund program. FY2021 Grant Awards include a \$19 million increase from FY2020. In late March 2021 HUD’s Office of Capital Improvements will be releasing an improved version of the EPIC system with instructions to PHAs on submitting their grant award Budget and Annual Statement. Once submitted, and approved by their Field Office, PHAs will be able to access the funds.

#### **Modernization Funds Available for Health & Safety**

The FY2020 Appropriations Act made \$20,000,000 available for competitive grants to public housing agencies to evaluate and reduce housing-related hazards including carbon monoxide and mold in public housing through the Housing-related Hazards Capital Fund Program. HUD released its Grants Notice for the program today.

Applications are due to HUD by May 25 and should be submitted here. Individual grant awards must be a minimum of \$10,000, not to exceed \$4,000,000.

#### **New Administration Takes Next Swing At AFFH Rule**

On January 26, President Biden issued a “Memorandum on Redressing Our Nation’s and Federal Government’s History of Discriminatory Housing Practices and Policies”. This Memorandum charges the HUD Secretary with examining the effects of the most recent August 2020 version of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing final rule. Since 1994 the AFFH initiative has gone through several iterations without being able to strike a balance between the need itself and making it workable in unique communities with different fair housing needs and challenges. By workable I mean reasonably obtainable, and not punishing PHAs for not being able to correct what may be beyond their control.

#### **Biden Administration Issues Executive Order Expanding Definition of Sex Discrimination**

On February 11, HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) released a Memorandum

that clarifies and implements President Biden’s Executive Order on preventing discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation. The Executive Order expands the definition of sex discrimination and directs federal agencies to assess their own actions that prohibit sex discrimination and fully enforce those statutes to include prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. FHEO will begin accepting all complaints of sex discrimination including sexual orientation and gender identity.

#### **Section 3 Update Guidance Published**

On March 25, HUD published an FAQ on the new Section 3 Final Rule: “Enhancing and Streamlining the Implementation of Section 3 Requirements for Creating Economic Opportunities for Low- and Very Low-Income Persons and Eligible Businesses”. The rule updates Section 3 regulations and reporting requirements and clarifies the obligations of entities that are covered by Section 3. PHAs have until July 1, 2021 to implement their Section 3 activities pursuant to the rule and comply with new reporting requirements. HUD will be hosting Roundtables for PHA’s to facilitate the implementation of the new Final Rule.

#### **2019 Public Charge Rule Goes Away**

The Dept of Homeland Security (DHS) is backing away from the previous administration’s 2019 Public Charge Rule, withdrawing their appeal of an Illinois court decision invalidating the Rule. DHS will no longer consider the governmental sources of assistance broadly defined and added by the previous administration as being grounds for automatically denying immigration status.

#### **The World Turned Upside Down**

The last Housing Committee Report was from January 8, 2021. The nation had not been able to shake the ongoing division over the November elections, and after nine full months of a world under the shared pain and absurdities of a global pandemic, we were still asking ourselves how long is this thing going to go on?

Yet through these challenging months, with additional funding, increased program flexibility, and the support of our NAHRO family we have been able to significantly minimize the impact the pandemic has had on the families we serve.

Looking forward to that day when this public health threat eventually ebbs away from our streets, homes and minds; when we can return to some familiar semblance of life and work. Hope to see you all soon, masked or otherwise.

# Professional Development Committee

*Steven Rackis, Vice President of Professional Development*

**Access to PD Committee NAHRO Webpage:** <https://www.nahro.org/about/nahro-leadership/national-standing-committees/professional-development-committee/pd-19-21-correspondence-and-meeting-summaries/>



**Access to PD committee workplan:** <https://nahro.sharepoint.com/:x:/s/ProfessionalDevelopment/EdSZ4NoEOVFHoNTLYWowvaoB36CcaGEzL4JvluC-bTkVAQ?e=ExV2yt>

**e-Learning Library:** <https://nahro.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/ProfessionalDevelopment/EgIMZPYNshZAq1HI5PBII30BIJlfvK-WuFDmPnlotwJ3ig?e=VFlxn8>



## 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 opportunities for training and professional development. The NCRC and NAHRO have offered virtual trainings for Commissioners at conferences held in the past 6 months. Commissioners Fundamentals and Ethics trainings continue to be offered on a limited basis as well as other trainings that Commissioners could benefit from. Commissioners Guide to Monitoring was a new training offered in December 2020 for experienced

Commissioners.

**Status:** Ongoing

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

**2020 Goal:** \*\*20% increase

**2021 Goal:** 25%

\*\*\*\*This goal was achieved!

**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 email addresses from Commissioners when they become Associate members of NAHRO.

**Status:** Ongoing event - Mentor's Booth- 2020 & 2021 National Conferences. Significantly impacted by COVID-19 and no in-person conferences; however, Commissioners have been involved in the planning and participating in virtual conferences to engage and retain Commissioners.

**Measurable outcome:** Compare collected inquiries received from Commissioner Information Booth to gauge outreach efforts. Due to the Corona virus and cancelation of in person conferences, this goal as not achieved in 2020. We are in the process of tracking attendance of Commissioner at virtual events.

**2019 National Conference Data: 44**

**2020 Goal:** 70(No in-person conferences held)

**2021 Goal:** 50 (goal adjusted and achievement dependent on in-person conference). Other virtual mentoring opportunities are being explored and pursued.

### **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. The letter writing campaigns have been successful within our region.

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 in person conferences due to COVID-19, but we are exploring ways to reach out, provide support and mentoring to Commissioners virtually.

Many Commissioners participated in Hill Day, stressing the importance of continued funding to housing authorities and other needs of our residents i.e., Internet connectivity and Food insecurities.

**Status:** Ongoing

**Measurable Outcome:** Compare the number of Commissioners reached through Chapters/ State and Regions, in 2020 and 2021. This goal is being re-evaluated due to Covid 19 and no in-person conferences. The National Commissioners Committee is looking at alternative ways to address this goal and will meet in January 2021 to finalize a way to reach and mentor Commissioners virtually.

**2020 Goal:** 25(impacted by COVID-19 and no in-person conferences)

**2021 Goal:** 25 (adjusted this goal due to Covid 19)

**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 TBD

(\*number determined by LNAC)

### **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.





## Member Services Committee

*Keon Jackson, Vice President of Member Services*

We are trying to encourage everyone to submit nominees for NCRC awards and scholarships, so we have extended the deadline one week until April 9, 2021 with the hopes of more submissions.

Nahro Staff reported although renewals had been down during the months of August thru October, things had started to pick up and numbers were almost back to normal. She felt the slight downturn was due to the current COVID situation. Staff asked committee members to share their renewals ideas or provide any membership leads they may have with her. Staff also reported they had narrowed down the search for a new Association Management System to three vendors.

**Scholarships:** There has been one Earnest J. Bohn Education scholarship applications received to date.

**NCRC Awards:** Please encourage your peers to send in nominations.

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.

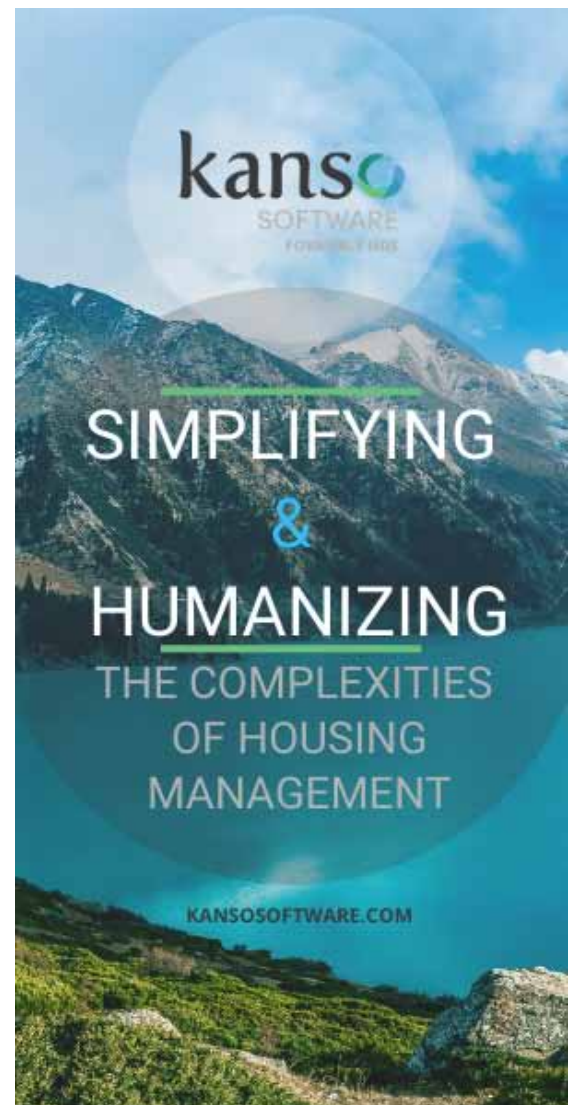
**Emerging Leaders-** Continue to submit session ideas for conferences and plan events for Emerging Leaders. Look into the possibility of holding a sponsored hospitality suite or reception for Emerging Leaders, adding an Emerging Leader representative to the Regional Presidents meeting to bring more 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.









## Legislative Report

### Jim Dewey, NCRC Legislative Chair

Have we turned the corner on stable funding for the next four years? With a new administration, the appointment of HUD

Secretary Fudge and now our very own Adrienne Todman serving as HUD Deputy Secretary, how can we lose! But this does not mean we can stop putting the pedal to the metal on advocacy for our programs. What it does mean is we have the pieces in place now to build our advocacy and to be heard for years to come!

National NAHRO has resurrected the Congressional District Contacts (CDC's) and as NCRC NAHRO Members, this is an exciting opportunity for you to become a Congressional District Contact within your State! Sign up today and you will be contacted in the near future with your role and responsibilities outlined along with upcoming contact opportunities. This is a great way to share what we do, tell your own story of your agency work and to advocate for all HUD

programs! To do so, you can complete the online form or contact Tess Hembree ([thembree@nahro.org](mailto:thembree@nahro.org)) or Jenna Hampton ([jhampton@nahro.org](mailto:jhampton@nahro.org)).

Thanks to all of you that participated in the Virtual National NAHRO Legislative Conference in March and particularly for those of you who took the time to meet with your senators and congressmen and congresswomen. I know for myself the virtual experience seemed to allow for more time with my elected officials and they seemed to be more engaged in the conversation.

If you would like to be included in all National Legislative monthly calls, please feel free to reach out to Tess Hembree or Jenna Hampton as they 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](mailto:thembree@nahro.org) or Jenna Hampton ([jhampton@nahro.org](mailto:jhampton@nahro.org)) and they will include you in those opportunities as well.

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

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# Housing Authority

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# Housing America Task Force Report

*Anna Judge, Housing America Poster Contest Chair*



A huge shout out to all of the housing authorities that submitted poster entries for the 2021 “What Home Means to Me” poster contest. The winners from our region were chosen and awarded at the NCRC virtual conference last month, with the top three entries submitted to NAHRO for the National contest.

Not only are these three wonderful entries moving onto to NAHRO for national judging, but they are also receiving a \$100 VISA gift card for winning our regions contest! I have to say that the entries this year were fantastic and it made it extremely difficult for the judges to pick just one from each category. Each, and every one of them had a great story to share and you should all be proud of the homes that you provide to these youth. These youth are our future and we should applaud all the entries received, as they were all winners in our books.

Remember that it is never too early to start next year’s contest. I encourage you to start holding your state contests early to ensure that your state winners are to me by April 1, 2022 for regional judging. Please remember that all entries must go through your State Chapter before moving on to the region for judging. I implore the housing authorities to reward their winners with something the youth can be proud to show off to the family and friends whether it is a monetary award, a certificate, or simply recognition from your agencies.

## **This year’s 1<sup>st</sup> place winners from our region were:**

<b>Elementary School Jeziel Paurerlet Mercado Ohio</b>	<b>Middle School Summer Thomas Illinois</b>	<b>High School TayShauna Keiler Indiana</b>
		

I am already looking forward to next years entries and I am confident that we will see one, two, or all three of these winning entries in NAHRO’s 2022 “What Home Means to Me” calendar.

# Regional Service Officer Report

Cheryl Anne Farmer, RSO



Don't forget to mark your calendar to attend our Annual Membership Meeting taking place via zoom on June 3rd!

Visit the NCRC NAHRO website at [www.ncrcnahro.org/events](http://www.ncrcnahro.org/events) to register for the meeting. We will announce our election results as well as the 2021 Merit Award Winners during this call. We hope to see you there!

## *2021 Charles A. Thompson Memorial Award for Distinguished Service*



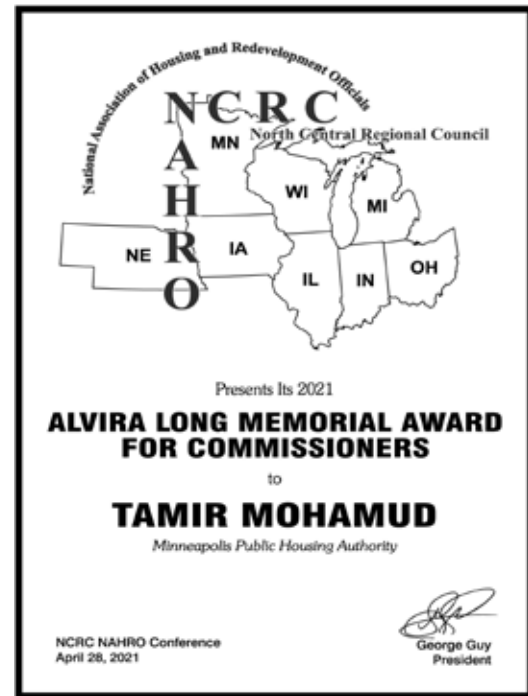
### **2021 CHARLES A. THOMPSON AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE**

Presented to  
**CRYSTAL PALMER**  
Assistant Director of Resident Engagement and Ombudsman  
Chicago Housing Authority

NCRC NAHRO Conference  
April 28, 2021

  
George Guy  
President

# *2021 Alvira B. Long Memorial Award*

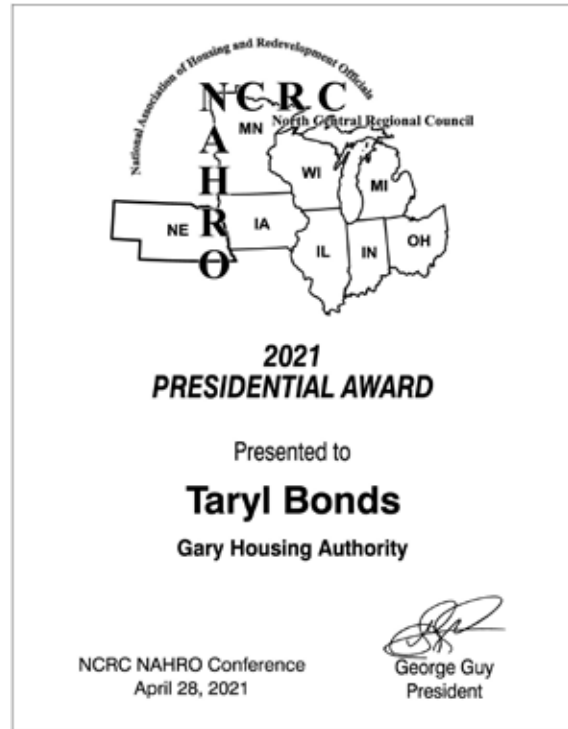


# *2021 Rising Star Award*





# 2021 Presidents Award



## 2021 Ernest J. Bohn Education Scholarship

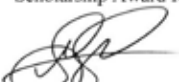


*North Central Regional Council  
of the National Association of  
Housing and Redevelopment Officials*

**2021  
Ernest J. Bohn Scholarship Award**

**Deschalyn Ann-Marie Riase**

This Certificate recognizes the Port Huron Housing Commission for sponsoring an Ernest J. Bohn Educational Scholarship Award Recipient of \$1000 who is a resident of publicly assisted housing.

  
George Guy, President

**Awarded on April 28, 2021**



# What to consider before accepting a property donation

Amy Smith, [HAI Group](#) senior account executive

Local municipalities and private owners may offer to donate property to your affordable housing organization. While there are clear

advantages to these donations, including the potential to increase housing stock in the area, you should consider several factors before accepting donated property.

Property donations aren't unusual in the affordable housing industry, said [Robert Silverman](#), professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Buffalo's School of Architecture and Planning.

"City-owned property is often transferred to a developer either at fair market value or as part of a land dedication so a project can move forward," Silverman said. Sometimes parcels are vacant, while "other times they may have a structure on them that either needs to be demolished or revitalized," he added.

Some municipalities create programs encouraging the [use of vacant public properties for affordable housing development](#), offering the property to nonprofit and mission-driven developers before opening up the bid process to for-profit developers.

According to Silverman, private donations occur as well, though a private owner's motivations for donating property tend to differ from those of a municipality.

"A property may need substantial renovation, and an owner may not want to revitalize it, so donating it could provide tax benefits to the donor," he said. "The donor may also want to donate a property to avoid tax debt if it is idle and not generating revenue."

In any donation, public or private, affordable housing developers "need to take the condition of the property into consideration," Silverman said.

## Popular property donations

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, it wasn't unusual for municipalities and private owners to donate vacant commercial spaces, said Keely Stater, director of research and industry intelligence for the nonprofit [Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation \(PAHRC\)](#).

The pandemic has sped up the trend, leaving commercial

properties like malls, office spaces, and motels empty or underutilized, she said.

Motels have become popular donation properties because many were already in need of renovation or close to shutting down before the pandemic, Silverman noted. Their residential design allows for a cost-effective conversion to apartments compared to other structures or new construction.

"When the pandemic hit, some [motel] owners might have looked into donating their less profitable properties to PHAs or nonprofits to lower their carrying costs," he said. "Any type of real estate that became less profitable during the pandemic may have become a candidate for this type of donation, such as older retail space or office spaces."

Some housing providers use motels to shelter homeless families temporarily, Stater said, so it makes sense to rehabilitate them into affordable housing units. Any unused or underutilized property has potential, including former schools and vacant land. Even retired military bases serve as affordable housing in some communities, according to Stater. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [administers a program](#) to make suitable federal properties available to nonprofit organizations to [assist local homeless populations](#).

## Questions to consider

- *Is the property the right fit?*

Consider whether the property addresses your community's needs today and in the future.

"Do people actually want to live here?" Stater said of property offered via donation. "Is the property close to schools and transit?"

A neighborhood assessment can help uncover valuable data, such as crime statistics. Contact your local police department to obtain neighborhood crime reports, and take advantage of online databases such as the FBI's [Uniform Crime Reporting \(UCR\) program](#). PAHRC offers a free [opportunity search tool](#) that maps out neighborhood-specific data on health, education, labor

market access, transit, and desirability.

You should also determine whether your organization has the resources to develop and maintain another property. Do you have the right [insurance coverage](#)? Your existing policy might not be able to cover the intended use of the donated property. If the property requires significant changes to accommodate housing units, is there adequate funding in place for redevelopment? Do employees have the capacity to take on additional responsibility?

- *Is the property in good condition?*

Your assessment process should include the extent of renovations needed for a particular property. For example, do motel rooms already have small kitchens? If you must add kitchens, what kind of plumbing and electrical upgrades are required? If residents can't occupy a property immediately due to renovations, the property can become a security liability (e.g., vandalism, theft, etc.).

Hire a qualified firm to conduct a building inspection. The inspection serves to uncover any adverse conditions such as aging HVAC and fire protection systems, structural damage, or mold. Make sure the inspection firm has the proper state and local licenses, which vary by state.

The firm you hire should consult with local building and health department officials to identify potential risks associated with the property.

*Are there any legal concerns?*

Be on the lookout for legal red flags that can potentially add unexpected costs and complications. Examples of these red flags include:

- contractual obligations;
- commitments to others (e.g., existing tenants);
- liens, including outstanding taxes;
- violations of federal, state, or local laws; and
- historical landmark designations.

Another consideration is whether the donor has a clear title to the property. Talk to the current building owner or contact the applicable department within your municipality. Use the findings to help determine whether the property will positively contribute to your housing portfolio—or be a detriment.

*What expenses might arise?*

While a donated property is free at face value, there are hidden costs to consider.

"There needs to be an assessment of how much money it will take to get the project where you want it," Stater said.

For example, a new property owner may be held liable for environmental cleanup, even if the owner was not involved in or did not know of environmental contamination on the property, according to the federal [Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act \(CERCLA\)](#).

Before taking a property title, establish a baseline of the property's environmental health by working with municipal officials and an environmental consultant, who can conduct site assessments based on [CERCLA standards](#).

Take the cost of maintaining the property (e.g., mowing, snow removal, security) into careful consideration. If the property isn't immediately available for housing, there's no income to offset these costs.

Utility fees are another potential unexpected cost. Determine if there are any open or past due utility payments associated with the property. Before accepting the property, confirm whether you'll be responsible for any remaining utility payments.

*Are there any stipulations?*

Consider whether the donation comes with any contingencies. For example, a municipality may ask to retain a portion of donated property for storage space for a certain amount of time. Would this affect your organization's development plans?

Local zoning laws may also restrict development plans. For example, residential uses may not be allowed in commercial zones. If your organization plans to refurbish a property, ensure the project scope doesn't conflict with zoning regulations.

When considering a property donation from a municipality, "it's a partnership," Stater said. The municipality should be part of the plan to avoid development hurdles.

"You don't want a fenced-in building that just declines until you can do anything with it," she added. "There needs to be a transition plan to get things done as soon as possible."

*Author's Note: Interested in learning more about this and other timely affordable housing topics? [Contact me](#) any time or visit the [HAI Group website](#) for information on our insurance programs, risk management services, online training, and more!*

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## Meet the Candidates for NAHRO President and SVP!



From left: Patricia Wells, George Guy, Marsha Parham-Green.

At #NAHRONavigates, the association's online national conference, Patricia Wells, CEO of the Oakland Housing Authority and the current NAHRO Senior Vice President, officially announced her candidacy for the office of NAHRO President.

George Guy, Executive Director of the Fort Wayne Housing Authority, and Marsha Parham-Green, Executive Director of the Baltimore County Office of Housing, both announced their candidacy for the office of NAHRO Senior Vice President.

[Ms. Wells' video](#)

[Mr. Guy's and Ms. Parham-Green's videos](#)

For more information about NAHRO's election, please contact Sylvia Bowen, Director of Board Relations and Special Projects.



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## Utilize our Member Forums

Have you visited our website, logged in and hopped onto one of our member discussion forums? This is a great way for you to network with colleagues from our 8 states. We currently have the following:

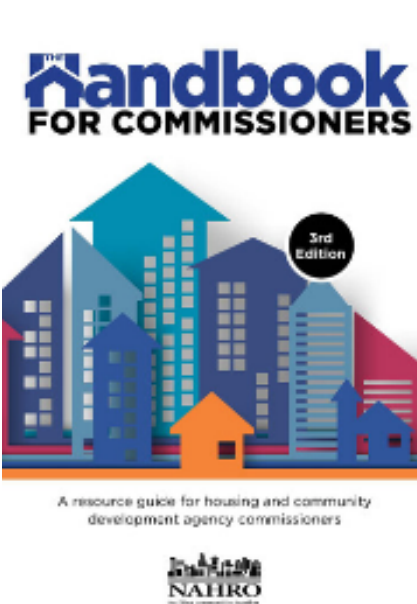
[General Forum](#)

[Small Agency Forum](#)

## NAHRO Professional Development **Training Calendar**

View and register for all NAHRO courses [HERE](#).

- Be sure to get your NCRC Discount and apply the promo code **NCRC2020** to all your national training registrations.



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# STATE CHAPTER REPORTS



**IOWA CHAPTER**  
Steve Rackis, President

As of this writing, it appears the 6 Iowa Housing Authorities will accept their full allocations:

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law No: 117-2) allowed the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to allocate additional vouchers to Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) through an allocation formula designed to direct emergency vouchers to the PHAs. Following are the Iowa Housing Authorities that were offered an allocation and the number of vouchers awarded.

IA	IA020	Des Moines Municipal Housing Agency	120
IA	IA131	Central Iowa Regional Housing Authority	76
IA	IA022	City of Iowa City Housing Authority	69
IA	IA024	Cedar Rapids Housing Services	44
IA	IA018	City of Sioux City Housing Authority	39
IA	IA050	Waterloo Housing Authority	15



**MINNESOTA CHAPTER**  
Bryan Hartman, President

The Minnesota NAHRO chapter continues to work hard 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 and hopefully returning to some type of

normal this year.

Our most recent COVID virtual meeting for members focused on the happenings at the state and federal levels of government and upcoming changes and policies. The discussion include information on Minnesota's eviction moratorium and how to step-down from it to limit impacts on renters across the state. The state moratorium is more robust than the federal rule and MN NAHRO has been advocating at the state Capital to ensure the needs of our residents are given consideration and that the impacts for all renters are limited.

Georgi Banna, National NAHRO's Policy Director, provided our members a Washington update during the virtual meeting. His presentation gave particular focus on recently passed legislation, including emergency vouchers, rental Assistance for Rural Development units and how HA's can access federal resources included in the American Rescue Plan.

MN NAHRO is also busy planning our virtual spring conference for two days in May. The sessions will focus on the new opportunities for vouchers and how HA's will be able to access and implement these important new resources included in the ARP. A second tract will feature sessions on unwinding from COVID, opening up and planning for a new normal.

Our legislative committee has been busy working on and advocating for new resources at the state level, among other policy and program initiatives. We also held our annual Day at the Capital for our members. This event provide opportunities to meet state legislative representatives and advocate for our residents during COVID and also to gain support for our legislative priorities.





## NEBRASKA CHAPTER

### Trine McBride, President



The NE NAHRO Chapter's Professional Development Committee has done a great job in keeping HA staff educated and informed this past year. Online trainings on Fair Housing and NAHRO's *Excellence in Customer Service* were offered to Chapter members and had good participation. Virtual presentations and roundtable discussions were also provided to maintenance staff. In addition, the HUD Omaha Field Office provided a couple of impromptu online trainings on EPIC. An NSPIRE online training will replace the annual Spring Workshop. Despite the restrictions on in-person trainings and conferences, NE NAHRO has been successful in generating revenue from online

these trainings.

There are number of bills NE NAHRO has been monitoring during the Nebraska 2021 Legislative session. LB 412 was a priority bill for Nebraska Housing Authorities. LB 412 would allow properties to be tax exempt that are partially owned (rather than wholly owned) by a PHA or its controlled affiliate. Unfortunately, LB 412 was killed by the Revenue Committee. Restrictions on meeting with Senators made it difficult to make our case. NE NAHRO members will meet with members of the Revenue Committee over the interim and reintroduce the bill next Legislative session. NENAHRO plans to hold an in-person board meeting in June and onsite Conference in September.

[www.nenahro.org](http://www.nenahro.org)



## MICHIGAN CHAPTER, Zachary Fosler, President

Hello, NCRC NAHRO! I want to thank all of you that gave up some of your valuable time to join MI NAHRO at our Spring Virtual Conference in May. I especially want to thank Cheryl Anne Farmer, our State Service Officer, and Sharon Maki, our Senior Vice President and Conference Committee Chairperson, for all of their hard work putting the conference together. We had an excellent slate of speakers that brought current and relevant information to our members and hopefully left everyone feeling a bit more connected to our work at a time when it's easy to feel a bit disconnected.

I know I'm not alone in uttering the phrase, "It's been a hard year." It's not really accurate anymore, as it's now been well over 400 days since the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 were discovered in Michigan. But who's counting? So, it's been a hard year.

We have experienced a collective trauma, yet we have all experienced it in our own way. Some have continued working in the office, doing all you can

to mitigate risk while continuing to serve your residents. Some have been working remotely, trying to lead in a new way, trying to get through the day without having the phrase "you're muted" uttered towards you. We all know those days where it felt like a win just to put on real pants. Many of us have experienced those pants fitting a bit more...snug... than they used to. Many of us have been burning the candle at both ends, serving our residents while simultaneously caring for family members, including children or grandchildren—corraling them into school via Zoom ("Aren't you supposed to be in class??" is a common phrase in my household) or just having them running amuck in the background during meetings. Some of you have felt isolated, shut off from the world and from real human connection. Some of you have had to helplessly watch, and sometimes grieve, from a distance as a loved one suffers from this terrible virus. We have all had our own struggles over these past 14 months—some visible, some hidden. I see you. It's been a hard year.

But one of the things I love about Midwesterners is our resiliency. We carry on. It may not always be pretty, but we carry on. I've seen NAHRO members step up during this crisis in really incredible ways. Starting or expanding food banks to ensure that struggling families and individuals have enough to eat. Subsidizing internet plans so the children we house don't fall behind in school due to a lack of access. Helping residents access emergency rental and utility assistance when they fall behind. Providing timely and relevant informa-

tion to residents about how to stay safe during the pandemic. Transporting residents with essential needs like grocery shopping and doctor's visits. Offering pop-up COVID testing sites at or near your properties. And now, offering vaccination clinics for your residents. You continue to lead, despite your personal struggles. You continue to care for others, and sometimes you even do it in real pants.

Finally, I would like to thank our sponsors for the MI

## 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 training front included presentations on COVID-19 Liability with Drew Esposito of Clemans Nelson on February 17, 2021; and a Financial Workshop with Jason Casterline of BDO on January 12-13, 2021.

The OHAC Spring 2021 conference will be conducted through a virtual platform on May 10-11, 2021. The opening session will be "Delivering KNOCK-OUT Customer Service" with Scott Warrick. Legislative Updates, NSPIRE, Section 3, Tax Credits: "Beyond the Beginner...Who's Confused?", Voucher Mobility, Connect Home, Reentry Housing, Fair Housing, Lead-Based Paint, HCV Updates, FSS Best Practices, and multiple program roundtables are also on the agenda. The one-day individual registration fee is \$100. The two-day individual fee is \$150, and an agency fee is just \$500. The registration deadline is Monday, May 3, 2021. Anyone who is interested can find the agenda and registration materials on the OHAC website at:

<http://ohac.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Conference-Agenda-Registration.pdf>

At this point, the OHAC Fall 2021 is scheduled to be held in-person, but the date has been pushed

NAHRO conference. These conferences do not happen without you and we appreciate your support. Tim O'Brien at Simplified Business Solutions—thank you. Mark Leblang with Allied Architects—thank you. And last, but certainly not least, our gold sponsor, AHRMA insurance.

Keep your heads up, folks! We're rounding the corner!

back later in the fall – November 8-10, 2021, at the Renaissance Westerville Hotel.

The OHAC Scholarship program is accepting applications from the Ohio membership at this time, so we hope to be able to again present up to six (6) \$1,000 scholarships to deserving program participants.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the losses that we have all endured over the last year due to the ongoing pandemic - the tragic losses of life and security, mostly, but also the loss of our traditional sense of community, togetherness, and camaraderie. It was about year ago on March 23, 2020, that I shared this:

***I believe Ohio's Health Director, Dr. Acton, said it best yesterday, "I'm not scared. I'm determined..." It is a scary time for many of the clients we serve and for us, as well; but with the resolve I have seen among each of you, I am overcome by that determination, not fear. There has been a lot said about the "new heroes" of doctors and nurses in dealing with this pandemic, rightfully so. Yet, you should each wear your own badge of honor and courage in continuing to provide what are some of the most basic needs for the most vulnerable in our community. I am proud of the work we do, and I am honored to be able to have my small role standing (6 feet away from but) next to each of you.***

The pride and awe that I expressed at that time remains with me now as I see you all keeping up the fight to help those we serve through these continuing difficult times. It is with great hope that we can continue the path to a majority of population vaccination and cautious lifting of restrictions so that we can see these efforts again in person.

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The following Virtual Classrooms are coming up between February-March:

June 9-10 - Excellence in Customer Service Virtual Classroom

June 15-18 - Commissioners' Fundamentals Virtual Classroom

June 21-23 - RAD Project Based Vouchers (PBV) Virtual Classroom

July 19-23 - Public Housing Manager (PHM) Virtual Classroom

July 27-30 - Commissioners Guide to Monitoring and Oversight Virtual Classroom

August 4-5 - 2021 High Priority NSPIRE Inspections Virtual Classroom

August 9-13 - Family Self-Sufficiency Virtual Classroom

August 17-20 - Procurement and Contract Management Virtual Classroom

September 14-17 - Section 3 and Labor Standards: Job Opportunities for Low-Income Persons Virtual Classroom

October 12-14 - Executive Management and Leadership Virtual Classroom

October 13-14 - 2021 High Priority NSPIRE Inspections Virtual Classroom

November 1-5 - Family Self-Sufficiency Virtual Classroom

November 15-19 - Rent Calculation Essentials for HCV and PH Staff Virtual Classroom

December 6-9 - RAD Project Based Vouchers (PBV) Virtual Classroom

[Click here to view information for all trainings!](#)

We hope you take advantage of this educational opportunity!

Thank you for supporting NCRC NAHRO.





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North Central Regional Council of NAHRO (NCRC NAHRO) is a professional membership association of housing and community development agencies and individuals. Total circulation of the newsletter averages approximately 4,000. All editions will be sent by e-mail link to the entire membership and posted on the website. NCRC NAHRO member agencies administer nearly all of the public housing and Section 8 existing housing in *an eight state region*, including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin. In addition, over 800 of our member agencies operate a wide variety of other federal, state and locally funded programs for housing and community development.

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