



Texas NAHRO

June 25, 2004

The purpose of the Texas Chapter of NAHRO is to serve its membership engaged in providing persons of low and moderate income with the opportunity to live in adequate and safe housing and improving the quality of life for all within a community through development, redevelopment, conservation and rehabilitation activities.

Texas NAHRO Annual Conference Covers Critical Industry Topics

Texas NAHRO experienced a record attendance—473 individuals—at its 2004 convention in Austin this year. Members spent three days discussing critical issues for Texas housing authorities.

Jonathan Zimmerman, policy analyst for NAHRO, flew in to discuss the administration's Flexible Voucher Program. Texas NAHRO added a special session so Zimmerman could update members on the proposed changes to the Section 8 Voucher program, which at the time was breaking news.

The conference included 40 breakout sessions in seven tracks: Human Resource/Professional Development, Commissioners, Resident Issues, Financial Issues, Public Policy, Regulatory Issues and Maintenance.

As Texas NAHRO President Jim Hargrove noted in the opening general session, "These are definitely challenging times for housing authorities. Key to our survival in these times of decreasing revenues and increasing regulations will be our ability to educate each other and work toward a common goal to protect this industry."

"We must work to build relationships with our public officials. Texas NAHRO intends to step up its efforts to work with Congressional and Legislative representatives. We must continue to establish workable, solid relationships with the state and federal agencies that regulate our industry."

Conference speakers included A. Cynthia Leon, HUD Southwest regional director; Edwina Carrington, Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs executive

director; and Saul Ramirez, NAHRO executive director.

Handout copies of some of the breakout sessions are still available. Call the Texas NAHRO office if you would like a copy of handouts from the following sessions.

Future Directions for Small Housing Authorities

In light of decreasing subsidies, HUD has been recommending that some small housing agencies consider partnering with other agencies. Soila Nethery of the San Antonio HUD staff provided an update on HUD's position and presented samples of problems being found in small agency reviews and recommendations for the future.

Grants 101: The Fundamentals of Winning (and Keeping) Grants

Speaker Melissa Quackenbush discussed how to develop the key elements of a grant proposal, including how to write clear goals and objectives

How to Combat Negative News and What to Say (or Not Say) to the Media

Since housing authorities often find themselves the target of negative media attention, award-winning reporter, Jeff Crilley explained how authorities can present themselves in a positive light and tell the news media the contributions they are making to their cities and communities.

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Additional Conference Stories...

Award Winners, pg. 2 and 3
Sponsor Thanks, pg. 3
Scholarship Recipients, pg. 4
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Operating Fund Negotiated Rulemaking Committee Achieves Consensus

As noted in a June 10th Texas NAHRO email, the operating fund negotiated rulemaking committee settled several disputes before ending work on June 9. The committee reached the following decisions:

- Funding will now be based on eligible unit months, rather than available unit months.
- An agency will be allowed up to three percent vacancies.
- Units under modernization or used for resident services will be eligible for funding.
- Other categories, such as litigation, disasters, casualty losses and market conditions will require HUD approval to receive funding.
- For federal fiscal year 2006, eligible units will be calculated on an authority

wide basis; in subsequent years, they will be calculated project by project.

Although there will be no utility adjustment at the end of each fiscal year, utility funding will be based on a rate which uses a 12-month historical average and is then adjusted for inflation, as has been done traditionally with the AEL.

Agencies with approved demolition plans for properties will receive asset repositioning funding starting six months after the first unit is vacated based on its relocation plan. For the first 12 months, funding will be 75 percent of the agency's project expense level, and then it will decline to 50 percent for the second 12 months and 25 percent for the third 12 months.

The rule indicates that HUD intends to base funding on each project's actual costs by the

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Texas NAHRO

Congratulations to Our 2004 Award Winners

Best Annual Report

Large Housing Authority:
Corpus Christi
Medium Housing Authority:
Texarkana
Small Housing Authority:
Sherman

Best Newsletter

Large Housing Authority:
Corpus Christi
Medium Housing Authority:
Texarkana
Small Housing Authority:
Sherman

Other Publications

Large Housing Authority:
Fort Worth and Austin
Medium Housing Authority:
Beaumont
Small Housing Authority:
Sherman

Media Recognition

Large Housing Authority:
Austin
Medium Housing Authority:
Beaumont
Small Housing Authority:
Taylor

Member of the Year

San Antonio Housing Authority:
Mr. Melvin Braziel

Maintenance Person of the Year

Harlingen Housing Authority:
Mr. Julian Alcocer

Resident of the Year

Harlingen Housing Authority:
Ms. Maria Ines Borjas

Commissioner of the Year

Corpus Christi Housing Authority:
Mr. William Bonilla

Member of the Year

Melvin L. Braziel

San Antonio Housing Authority

Melvin Braziel has consistently proven himself as an exceptional administrator and sought after resource in the public housing industry throughout his 39 years with the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA). He is a member of NAHRO, TXNAHRO and former member of the board of Governors of NAHRO. He has served as chairperson of the Texas NAHRO Scholarship Committee, president of Southwest NAHRO, and on the Board of Directors of the Housing Authority Insurance Company. He has been instrumental in implementing a successful three-year community service plan for SAHA, and he has also instituted some major organizational changes that have improved SAHA's ability to more efficiently serve the needs of its residents. Throughout his tenure with SAHA, Mr. Braziel has conscientiously, compassionately and effectively addressed the needs of the agency's residents.



Maintenance Person of the Year

Julian Alcocer

Housing Authority of the City of Harlingen

Julian Alcocer has worked for the Housing Authority of the city of Harlingen for 25 years and through determination has advanced from being a maintenance aide, to lead mechanic and now director of maintenance. Through his experience he has shown his coworkers how to work as a team and to improve their work ethic. Mr. Alcocer has provided his staff with proper training and workshops to improve their skills and knowledge. He has demonstrated his dedication and loyalty not only to the housing authority but also to his coworkers. He has often said, "you have to give the Housing Authority your all, since it provides the means of caring not only for your family, but also for the families of others."



Commissioner of the Year

William Bonilla

Corpus Christi Housing Authority

Mr. William Bonilla has served on the Board of Commissioners for the Corpus Christi Housing Authority since April 1999. He served as chairperson from March 2000 – March 2002. During his tenure, he has contributed an unlimited amount of time to overseeing and guiding the staff to the ultimate goal of building and maintaining affordable housing for the community's low income residents. Mr. Bonilla was instrumental in the development of first onsite Educational Enrichment Center, Section 8 Homeownership Program and Family Resource Center, dedicated to the at-risk youth of public housing. Commissioner Bonilla is a remarkable citizen and concerned for the well-being of the residents of public housing. Mayor, Samuel L. Neal adds, "Mr. Bonilla has devoted countless hours of his personal time providing leadership to this board and in implementing policies and procedures creating public housing that we can all be proud of."



Resident of the Year

Maria I. Borjas

Housing Authority of the City of Harlingen

Maria Borjas moved to Heritage Manor in 1998. Since moving in, she has devoted an incredible amount of hours to volunteer. She currently serves as a commissioner for the Harlingen Housing Authority. She also was elected treasurer for the Heritage Manor Tenant Association where she resides. The association raises money to help improve their apartments. Ms. Borjas is also a volunteer for the Amigos del Valle organization, which serves meals to the elderly on a daily basis. In addition, she is also a volunteer at the Valley Baptist Center (Hospital) and visits the residents at the Bayview Detention Center. Her passion for helping others is extraordinary. According to Blas Cantu, "She personifies the values and ethics embodied by TXNAHRO."



...and to our 2004 Hall of Fame Inductee

Hall of Fame Inductee

Abraham Rodriguez

Abraham Rodriguez has served as the executive director for the Laredo Housing Authority since September 9, 1980. His commitment towards housing opportunities for low to moderate-income families is documented in his years of service in this capacity. He is very active in various organizations that address issues such as affordable housing, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, youth education, gang violence, and elderly services, which all relate toward the goal of providing a safe and decent home environment. Beyond his housing achievements, his extensive service to his community is geared toward children, elderly services, and self-sufficiency in growing families.

Mr. Rodriguez administers an organization that provides housing and community development services for thousands of Laredo's low to moderate-income families through combined resources including tax credits, state, and local funds, grants, and private sector support. The LHA owns and manages the *Low-Rent Housing Program* with 961 units in 10 developments and operates a *Section 8 Housing Assistance Program*, which assists more than 1,200 families alone.

Grants, such as the *Drug Elimination Program* (DEP Program), provide education for the residents, GED & ESL courses, youth activities, an on-site police sub-station, and several other activities and events. Other grants such as the *Kids Café Program*, *Project Safe Neighborhood*, and the *Wildlife Education and Outdoor Exploration Program*, all assist in providing a decent and safe place to live for the residents. These programs provide education, safety awareness, food nutrition development, and outdoor skills to empower these residents and lead them into self-sufficiency in owning their own home.

Families who become self-sufficient are taken through a homebuyer process, in which Mr. Rodriguez's efforts through Metro Affordable Housing Corp. (Metro) provides a homeownership education program. Between 2001 and 2003, Metro constructed twenty (20) new homes and were sold on a lease purchase agreement for families living in public housing. In 2003, Mr. Rodriguez oversaw the completion of the 160 multifamily housing for low-income families known as *Clark's Crossing's Apartments*. This apartment complex was built with a community center, swimming pool, recreation center, day-care, and a security gate to ensure services and quality assurance. Metro also owns the *Gallagher Apartments* for low-income families, which has 56 units and a community center to provide support services and opportunity presentations from local service providers.

Mr. Rodriguez has taken Laredo's communities to a new level of living. From the low-rent public housing program, to the Metro low-income apartment complexes, Mr. Rodriguez's strategy for supporting the families in need has proven highly effective.

Texas NAHRO would like to thank this year's sponsors for their generous contributions to support the conference:

Super Nova
Chase Bank

Superstars
Bank of America

Southwest Housing Compliance Corp.

Platinum
Bank One

TML - Intergovernmental Risk Pool

Gold
Ewbank & Byrom, PC
Jim Faulk Architect and Associates

Silver
Fox Service Company

Bronze
Law Offices of Gregory Hitt
LTZ Architects, Inc.
United Contractors



Texas NAHRO

Texas NAHRO Awards \$25,000 in Scholarships to Graduating Seniors

In fulfilling its mission to help improve the quality of life within Texas communities, the Texas NAHRO presented \$25,000 in scholarship funds to 25 graduating seniors of residents who live in state public and assisted housing during its annual conference on April 20th.

"The theme for this year's conference was "Laying the Foundation for the Future," which also aptly applies to our efforts regarding the children of our public housing residents. We hope our scholarship program helps these students lay a foundation for a successful future," said Jim Hargrove, Texas NAHRO president and Austin Housing Authority Executive Director.

"The scholarship committee was extremely impressed by the hard work and dedication of these students, some of whom have had to overcome many hardships," said Blas Cantu, TXNAHRO scholarship committee chairman and Harlingen Housing Authority Executive Director.

Winners, who were chosen from more than 100 applications, are listed in the box to the right.

Abilene Housing Authority

Keysia Van Allen

Austin Housing Authority

Christina Thomas

Noel Warren

Taneeka Ingram

Brownsville Housing Authority

Melissa Covarrubias

Corpus Christi Housing Authority

Daniel Reyna

Stacie Cantu

Del Rio Housing Authority

Reina Salgado

Sergio Barksdale

Edinburg Housing Authority

Jorge Garcia

Melissa Leal

El Paso Housing Authority

Jose Ibarra

Ruby Campa

Viridiana Vidana

Fort Worth Housing Authority

Ashley Rhines

Shativeya Carter

Harlingen Housing Authority

Rebecca Orellana

Selina Gonzalez

Houston Housing Authority

Brandon Sterling

Danielle Lewis

Thanh Nguyen

Kirbyville Housing Authority

Kristina Wilson

Roma Housing Authority

Jesus Barrera

San Antonio Housing Authority

Miguel Charon

Wadeliah Jones

Operating Fund Negotiated Rulemaking Committee...(Cont. from page 1)

year 2011. It also states that HUD will pursue utility benchmarking. In each case, though, the Department agreed to convene a panel based on the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) to examine the ramifications of these changes before proceeding to rulemaking. These meetings will be held in 2009.

The agreement clarified that agencies which have funding decreased under the Harvard formula will be able to stop their losses at 5 percent of the difference between their old and new subsidy levels if they complete the transition to project based accounting and management by October 5, 2005.

The roots of the new system are in the 2003 Harvard Cost Study, which concluded that while it was impossible to effectively determine how much it cost to run public housing, it was possible to compare public housing to FHA-assisted properties. Public housing costs were benchmarked to FHA operating budgets based on 10 components using statistical techniques,

which resulted in a complete redistribution of operating funding.

In the negotiations public housing representatives won significant changes from HUD's original proposals for the calculation of utilities and vacancies, along with the mitigation of losses for agencies whose subsidies will decrease. In a surprising move, the Department deleted an entire section of sanctions from the rule, without prompting from the industry.

In a considerable setback for the industry, HUD would not agree to provide one-time conversion funding to support agencies' efforts to make necessary systemic changes. Housing industry officials sought \$100 to \$150 million for information technology, staffing changes, training, and assistance with the major overhaul of the accounting system that will be necessary to comply with asset management as envisioned by HUD. Successful conversion to an asset management system is crucial for agencies that will experience decreased operating subsidy

under the new funding system: they will have the opportunity to limit their losses to five percent by demonstrating compliance with asset management requirements by Oct. 1, 2005. Conversion funding would have helped considerably.

Earlier estimates indicated that some agencies may lose more than 40 percent of their current subsidy under the new funding system. Agencies that gain subsidy would have their increase phased in over a two-year period. The Harvard Cost Study predicted project expense levels (the replacement for allowable expense levels) for each agency and property in the public housing inventory. However, under the agreement just reached, those project expense levels are affected by changes to the calculation of total operating subsidy, most notably in add-ons and vacancies. HUD pays add-ons over and above the PEL calculation.



Texas NAHRO

Special Thanks to the Texas NAHRO Board for Their Hard Work This Year

2003-05 Texas NAHRO Officers

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Austin Housing Authority

Senior Vice President

Richard Franco

Corpus Christi Housing Authority

VP Housing

Hazel Camp

Grayson County Housing Authority

VP Member Services

Mary Ann Cuellar

Weatherford Housing Authority

VP Professing Development

Wenceslao Santiago

Austin Housing Authority

VP CR&D

Roma Lewis

Garland Housing Authority

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Steve Shorts

Taylor Housing Authority

Secretary

Judy Paciocco

Austin Housing Authority

Immediate Past President

David Zappasodi

Houston Housing Authority

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Richard Harrington, Texarkana Housing Authority

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Hal Rose, Temple Housing Authority

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Nono Flores

C.W. "Buzz" McKethan, McKethan and Associates, Inc.

Tom Oliver, Southwest NAHRO

Abraham Rodriguez, Laredo Housing Authority

Dan Strange, Housing Solution Alliance

David Zappasodi, Houston Housing Authority



Texas NAHRO

Annual Conference...(Cont. from page 1)

Conference Evaluation Comments

Just a few of the comments on the conference from attendee evaluations.

The best thing about the conference:

- Very informative on key issues.
- The way it was organized.
- Being able to meet other managers from different housing authorities.
- Austin Housing Authority did a great job making us feel welcomed.
- Section 8 sessions.
- Professionalism/level of expertise of speakers/planning.
- The hotel and the Oasis.
- Over the whole course, the vendors were there to provide information.
- Very good speakers at the breakout sessions.
- As always the networking.

Other comments:

- Great experience. 1st time attendee in Austin. It was amazing!
- Extremely well put together conference – I was more than pleased.
- Really enjoyed the view at the Oasis. Great planning. Overall, I enjoyed the conference. Great hospitality.
- This was my first experience with a NAHRO conference and it was great!!!
- Good training sessions, that is what sells the conference.
- This was the first conference I have attended since 2000. It has greatly improved. I was able to bring some new stuff that I learned back to the office and apply it.
- Well planned and organized.
- Wonderful to attend such educational workshops. Left conference feeling informed not bewildered.
- Wonderful conference, great hospitality.

Participants received a complimentary copy of Crilley's book, *Free Publicity*.

Community Service Requirement: Helping Yourself While Helping Others

Barbara Cassel of the Dallas Housing Authority explained how public housing residents can use the community service requirement to help themselves while serving others.

Saving Money Through Purchasing Coops/ TBPC Cooperative Program and Benefits

Created by legislation in 1979, the Texas Building and Procurement Commission Cooperative Purchasing Program (TBPC Co-Op) offers members a unique opportunity to purchase goods and services from state term contracts and the CISV Catalog Purchasing Program. Maya Ingram explained how TBPC services can help housing authorities meet competitive bidding requirements and save funds.

A Creative Approach in Battling Criminal and Drug Activity

The Austin Housing Authority explained how it combats criminal activity at its housing units through lighting, fencing and cleaning efforts.

Housing Tax Credits: The Texas HTC Program

Brooke Boston from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs provided information on how housing tax credits work, Texas' different allocations and set-asides, eligibility and site criteria, the timeline for the Texas application cycle and application submission details. She also discussed housing tax credits associated with mortgage revenue bonds.

Tenant Fraud - An Action Plan

Lester Davis, Special Agent in Charge, HUD OIG; Mark Wohl, Special Agent, HUD OIG; and Kedric McKnight, Special Agent, HUD OIG covered how to identify tenant fraud and steps housing authorities can take when confronted with tenant fraud.

UPCS, Part 1-3

This special three-part session focused on helping housing authorities with Uniform Physical Condition Standards Inspections. Part 1 included an overview of HUD's Uniform Physical Condition Standards. Participants learned how to identify and classify defects, determine how defects impact inspection scores and prioritize maintenance repairs. During Part 2, participants learned how to motivate both employees and residents to improve UPCS inspection results. In Part 3, participants were shown demonstrations illustrating unit problems that would cost points during inspections as well as suggestions on how to fix problem areas.

Preparing for RIM Reviews

Becky Kruse of HUD covered the verification hierarchy that HUD requires to be documented in tenant files; how policies and procedures impact a RIM review; how HUD uses the PHA's 50058 data as a part of the verification process while on-site; common mistakes HUD is finding during the RIM review process; and suggestions to improve the efficiency of a PHA's verification program.

Preparing for RIM Reviews from An Authority's Perspective

Since Austin just recently completed its RIM review the staff discussed how they prepared for the review and suggestions they have to make your RIM review easier.

Mark Your Calendars
for the 2005 Conference
April 16-20 . . . Laredo



News From Across the Lone Star State

PHA's Fight Cuts in Media

Several Texas housing agencies are using the media to help fight the HUD budget cuts and voucher changes. For example, articles have appeared in the Houston, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Big Spring and Garland papers. Please send any copies of articles your papers carry to the Texas NAHRO office.

Some PHAs are also enlisting the support of their cities and mayors in the fight.

For copies of articles, go to the Texas NAHRO web site: www.txnahro.org

Project Support Questioned

According to a story in the *Houston Chronicle*, allegations that letters were forged in support of a low-income apartment complex proposed near Pearland could be subject to a criminal investigation. Brazoria County District Attorney Jeri Yenne asked state officials to hold a new public hearing on the controversial Tranquility Bay housing project by Houston developer Chris Richardson, president of Blazer Residential Inc.

The 246-unit apartment complex is proposed on a 16-acre site at 4800 Fite Road, just east of Silverlake subdivision and about 50 yards west of Pearland's city limits.

Governor Recognizes June as Homeownership Month

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) this month joins Governor Rick Perry in recognizing June as "Homeownership Month" in Texas. Homeownership is a cornerstone of TDHCA's mission to help Texans achieve an improved quality of life through the development of better communities.

Governor Perry issued a proclamation in support of the national designation of "National Homeownership Month" by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Throughout June, HUD, TDHCA, local housing finance agencies, and public housing authorities will

promote the benefits of homeownership in Texas and across the country.

"Homeownership is one of the most prominent symbols of the American dream," Governor Perry noted in his proclamation. "It is a major milestone indicative of a sense of security and achievement. Beyond personal achievement, homeownership positively impacts our economy and promotes community stability."

Houston Representative Bailey Testifies on Need for Water/Sewer

State Representative Kevin Bailey was invited to testify before the County Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. The committee is involved in an interim study of substandard housing and the need to extend opportunities for grant money to areas beyond the border.

"We have a serious public health crisis in the unincorporated areas of Harris County. There are over 55,000 homes in Harris County that operate with private water wells and septic tanks," Bailey told the committee. "Not all are polluted, especially in the rural areas the water wells are fine and the septic systems can work. But, we have had over development and congested subdivisions in some areas where there are so many septic tanks that the sewerage is literally flowing into the water wells. The Harris County Public Health Department has said that some of these people are literally drinking their own sewerage."

HUD Recognizes Day

Luz Elena Solis Day, the field office director for San Antonio's office of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, recently received HUD's highest national award for career achievement in Washington.

Day, a 35-year veteran with the local HUD office, is responsible for an office that covers all of South Texas and Austin. She is a native of Crystal City and a St. Mary's graduate.

Special Thanks to our 2004 Exhibitors

Texas NAHRO would like to thank this year's exhibitors for participating in our conference. Links to these companies' web sites can be found on the Texas NAHRO web site: www.txnahro.org

AAA Fire & Safety Equipment Co., Inc.

Andy Howard's Pest Control, Inc.

ARCO IRIS Painting

Austin Community College

Austin Elevator Consultants

Bank of America

Best Access Systems

Brown Stove Works Inc.

Century Maintenance Supply

Chase Bank

Citizens Conservation Services Inc.

Custom Computer Systems

Emphasys Computer Solutions

First Plus Service Inc.

Grasshopper Company

Housing - Renewal & Local Agency

Retirement Plan

Housing Authority Insurance Group

Insurors of Texas

Housing Solutions Alliance

Kraftsman Playground & Park Equipment

Lindsey Software

Longhorn Office Products Inc.

MARCOR Environmental Inc.

MLCP Systems

Olney Door & Screen Co.

Peak Pure Air

Power Lift Foundation Repair Inc.

Quadel Consulting Corporation

Scott Accounting & Computer Services

Sonitrol Security

Southwest Housing Compliance
Corporation

Texas Building & Procurement
Commission

Texas Municipal League IRP

The Home Depot Supply

VMSoft Products

Washington Benefit Systems, Inc.

Water & Energy Savings Corporation

Xerox Corporation

National News...National News...National News

June 30 Deadline for Correcting Form 52681-B Data

HUD has given all agencies until close of business on Wednesday, June 30, 2004 to review and update their HUD Form 52681-B submissions. The form, "Voucher for Payment of Annual Contributions and Operating Statement," is used to report administrative fee income, housing assistance payment (HAP) expenses and utilization rates by agencies administering the Housing Choice Voucher program.

Problems with HUD's PIC system software led to the deletion of many housing agencies' 52681-B submissions, affecting data for unit months leased and HAP. Under HUD's FY 2004 Section 8 renewal policy, missing or inaccurate data can result in loss of funding for agencies.

Corrections to Form 52681-B for missing or inaccurate data should be sent to the applicable Financial Management Center (FMC), with supporting documentation of the number of authorized voucher-assisted households served and the legitimate HAP expenses associated with those households. HUD may use validated data to adjust funding for HAP costs. Questions about the format for supporting documentation should be directed to the FMC.

If an LHA did not report for the period of May 2003 through July 2003, HUD will use the latest year-end settlement prior to August 1, 2003. This time period is critical, because HUD has stated that the May, June, and July 2003 information reported on Form 52681B in August 2003 would be used for determine average per-unit cost (HAP) and average number of units leased. The average per-unit HAP cost will be inflated by the full FY 2004 annual adjustment factor (AAF). However, correcting 52681-B data for all reported months before and after August 1, 2003 is also advised.

HUD Provides PHAS Information

Damaged doors and walls lead the top-20 list of deficiencies, according to the Real Estate Assessment Center. The Center compiled a list of the most frequently cited deficiencies found during Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) physical inspections of properties to help agencies focus on getting better scores. The document also includes a list of 30 simple maintenance items that, if repaired prior to inspection, could make a significant difference in your physical inspection score. Find the list on the Texas NAHRO web site.

TCAH, Fannie Mae Launch New Education Initiative

The Campaign for Affordable Housing (TCAH) announced a new alliance with the Fannie Mae Foundation to launch a major public education initiative to inform the American public — specifically local, state and federal policy makers — about the need for affordable housing and to correct misperceptions about its impact upon communities. The alliance's mission is to build widespread support by demonstrating that the word "affordable" is not synonymous with shoddy, high-rise or crime-ridden. TCAH says the alliance's next steps will be to undertake additional public opinion research, raise funds and build a broad coalition from the private and public sectors. TCAH also announced the release of "What We Know About Public Attitudes on Affordable Housing," a compendium of opinion poll research, which can be downloaded at www.taxcredithousing.com.

Grant to Serve Individuals with Disability and Seniors

The application package for the "Integrating Long Term Supports with Affordable Housing" grant opportunity under the Dept. of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and

Medicaid Services (CMS) Real Choice Systems Change Grant is available on HUD's web site at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pihcc/hscmsnofa.cfm>

Deadline for Grant Submission: July 19, 2004
Maximum Award: \$1 million
Anticipated Average Award: \$750,000
Maximum Project Period: 36 months
Grant Funds Allowable for Direct Services: 10%
Estimated Number of Awards: 4-7

This solicitation is open to any State Agency that provides supportive services to individuals with disabilities, including seniors who require support. Partnerships among the State Medicaid agency, State service organizations and housing agencies is a required component of this grant and coordination with the State Medicaid Agency is essential. Housing organizations include state housing agencies, public housing authorities, and/or other Federal, state or local housing entities.

Contact Mary Guy, CMS Project Officer (410) 786-2772 OR Contact Cathy Cope, CMS Project Officer (410) 786-8287

Resident Conference Set

The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) and Tenant Support Services, Inc. (TSSI) are partnering to host the 3rd Annual National Resident Empowerment Conference on August 19-22, 2004 in Philadelphia.

The event is designed to introduce innovative employment and homeownership strategies to housing agencies and residents, corporations and nonprofits. The conference has confirmed participants from San Antonio, TX; Lansing, MI; Pittsburgh, PA; Lawrence, KS; Atlanta, GA; Keene, NH; Washington, DC; Richmond, VA; Swampscott, MA. The conference schedule is available online at: <http://www.phillytssi.org/nrec2004>

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