

NE NAHRO NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011

APRIL

President's Update

Dear NE NAHRO Members,

Spring is here! I'm looking forward to seeing all of our members, partners, and colleagues at the Spring NCRC Conference in Omaha next week! Be sure to wear your baseball cap, jersey, etc. for the opening reception on Tuesday, enjoy the tour and be ready for a great conference learning more to be successful in our housing industry. Thank you so much to Deanna Wagner, George Achola and their awesome planning committee for bringing together what will be a great NCRC conference. Thank you also to Heather for handling the registrations and income from our sponsors and vendors! **Together, we will be "Hitting a Home Run for Affordable Housing!"** It took many hands to make this conference a success – my hats off to everyone. Be sure to thank our Hall of Fame Sponsors: ARHMA, Johnson Controls, and NIFA (Nebraska Investment Finance Authority) for their \$5,000 commitments to our conference!

Rising to the challenge, we will learn how to deal with funding challenges, HUD regulations both new and old, as well as ways to improve our sustainability during these interesting times.

A small, but determined group of Nebraska Housing Agencies marched to Capitol Hill during the recent Legislative Conference. Chris Lamberty, Sheila Miller, Rick Ruzicka, Deanna Wagner and myself visited with Congressional representatives and/or staff sharing support for SERVA, SMALL HOUSING AGENCY REFORM PROGRAM (SHARP), and FULL FUNDING FOR PHA OPERATING SUBSIDY AND

CAPITOL FUND. We were met with resolve by all to "forge" a new day – with possible negotiations between the isles and perhaps continued government operations. Everyone seemed willing to blame the other for not making decisions, but all were willing to listen, but not necessarily agree with our agenda.

On the NE NAHRO front, we want to welcome New Executive Directors and encourage them to participate in the NE NAHRO trainings that will be offered throughout the year by our Professional Development Co-Chairs – Anita Thoene and Tracy Weickhorst. Watch your newsletter for upcoming training opportunities.

I want to personally thank the following persons whom I appointed to fill open positions on the NE NAHRO Board: **Rene Williams**, David City Housing Agency – filling Rebecca Dutcher's board position; **Rick Lehl**, Scotts Bluff County Housing Agency – filling Anita Thoene's board position; **Carolyn Pospisil**, Bellevue Housing Agency – filling Tracy Weickhorst's board position. As our board members assumed different responsibilities, their board positions opened for additional members. These board positions are up for re-election in September, 2011 at our Fall Training conference.

The Maintenance Conference is geared up for a great conference in Bellevue this May – be sure to send in your registrations to Heather and

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

OMAHA HUD	2
Orville Stanton	3
Professional Deve.	4
Maintenance	5
Member Services	5
Legislative	6

Maintenance Conference and NE NAHRO Fall Conference/ Training Registrations are attached to the Newsletter email!!! You can also find them on the web page.

Presidents report continued

join those who “Make a Difference Everyday” in our Housing Agency operations and program success! Let’s support our Maintenance Conference with a great turnout!

Now is not too soon to let your senators and congressman know that we are disappointed in their deep cuts to Section 8 Administrative Funds, public housing operating fund and public housing Capitol fund and that we want their support for a full funding for 2012!

National NAHRO is offering state chapters the opportunity for licensure to present HQS training within their state. Be sure to give Board members your thoughts on this opportunity. With NE licensure, we can offer the National Training within our State at a greatly reduced travel and time cost as well as registration fee reductions. This licensure would be similar to the Commissioners Training NE NAHRO is now licensed to present.

We encourage everyone who would like to be more active in NE NAHRO to contact one of the election committee members by June 1, 2011 so their names can be presented on the nomination ballot in September. The nomination committee consists of: Sue Kleider, Fremont; Becky Dutcher, McCook; Jeanne Janssen, Grand Island; Rick Lehl, Scottsbluff; or myself.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Bentley,
NE NAHRO President

A message from The Omaha HUD Office

PIH Notice 2011-7 titled “Guidance on IMS/PIC Development Sub-Module Reporting and Validation” was issued on January 28, 2011. This notice provides guidance to PHAs on the current unit tenant statuses in the IMS-PIC system as of the September 2010 software release. There are four categories and three of these categories contain sub categories. The four categories are Occupied, Vacant, Vacant HUD Approved, and Non Dwelling. Per this notice PHAs are responsible for ensuring that all units are marked with the correct unit tenant status category (and sub category if applicable) in the PIC system. PHAs should refer to the table on page 3 of the notice for information on what is required for a unit to be included in a category. The rest of the notice goes into additional detail about each category and sub category. For the Occupied sub categories of Non-Assisted Tenant Over-Income, Employee, and Police Officer PHAs should contact their Public Housing Revitalization Specialist (PHRS) in the Omaha Field Office prior to changing units to these statuses in PIC. For any of the unit tenant status categories and sub categories PHAs should be prepared to provide whatever documentation the field office requests.

If a unit has one of the Occupied or Vacant HUD Approved Unit Tenant Statuses but that status is no longer applicable the PHA must change the Unit Tenant Status to Vacant. A Form-50058 New Admission or Other Change of Unit is the only way to change the Unit Tenant Status to Occupied—Assisted Tenant. However, if a PHA submits either of these actions to occupy a unit and the current status is Occupied or Vacant HUD Approved the 50058 will generate a fatal error and will not be accepted by the system.

Notice 2011-16 reiterates what Notice 2011-7 states, which is that the data in PIC will be used for CY 2012 Operating Fund calculations so it is imperative that PHAs start maintaining their data now. If a PHA is unsure about how to verify their PIC data is correct or how to modify the unit tenant status they should contact Wendalyn Hovendick, PIC Coach, in the Omaha Field Office.



Dear NE NAHRO Members:

I am honored to chair the committee for the annual Orville Stanton Award For Distinguished Service.

This award will be presented at the Nebraska NAHRO Fall Conference/training to be held in North Platte. As you may know, the Orville Stanton Award for Distinguished Service is the most prestigious award given by the NE Chapter of NAHRO because it honors an individual who has worked tirelessly for the Chapter and for the promotion of decent, safe and sanitary housing in our state. It is the time of year to begin accepting nominations for that award. If you would like to nominate an individual, please submit a letter naming the person and stating why you think this person should be considered for the award. It would also help if you could tell us a little bit about the person you are nominating.

Don't wait - take the time right now and nominate who you would like to see receive this award. There are lots of leaders around our state – from very small to large housing agencies. The only requirement is that the recipient be a member of our NE NAHRO Chapter Family. Send your nomination in writing as soon as possible to:

Sheila Miller

Norfolk Housing Agency

110 N. 4th St.

Norfolk, Nebraska 68701

smiller@ci.norfolk.ne.us

Nomination deadline is July 31, 2011. This year's committee is made up of recent recipients of the award, Rick Ruzicka, Chris Lamberty and myself. Please make the committee's job tough by having to select from lots of qualified people!!!

Hope to be hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Sheila Miller

Professional Development

April 2011

Tracy and I are happy to announce NE NAHRO will be having two National NAHRO trainings at the North Platte Fall Conference this year... Property Management Essentials and HCV Occupancy. We chose these two trainings based upon the input people had given on what they wanted to see offered, coupled with the time frame we had to offer the classes. You will be able to register for only the class or the class and the test. The classes will both be offered in two days and then the tests will be offered on the third day for those wanting to stay and take advantage of them.

Property Management Essentials is one of the classes needed in the NAHRO certifications process. The course deals with a very broad range of topics which can be utilized by every branch of your agency. Some of the topics covered are financial management, budgets, office procedures, marketing, management metrics, lease enforcement, maintenance plans, safety

and security, procurement, capital program, personnel, and tracking residents. It sounds like this course offers information that is important for all branches to understand.

HCV Occupancy offers a helpful understanding of the vast regulatory guidelines that surround the voucher program. This course is essential for staff that deals with occupancy and procedures with Section 8. Some of the topics covered within this course are HCV legislative updates, marketing, wait list management, screening, eligibility, income and rent determination, voucher issuance, inspections, grievances, annual renewals, move outs and portability, and rent reasonableness.

We would encourage everyone to take a look at what other states are charging for these classes. We think you will see that this is a great opportunity to gain education. Watch for the registration forms!

We hope to get the opportu-

nity to see everyone at the Regional NAHRO conference in Omaha. What a wonderful opportunity to interact with staff from other states and hear what challenges and successes they have had concerning housing within their states. And as always, if you ever have suggestions for trainings, please let us know.

Thank you

Tracy Wieckhorst and Anita Thoene
Professional Development
Co-Chairs

Maintenance Report

Our 2011 Maintenance Conference will be held in Bellevue NE on May 24th-26th at Bellevue University. The conference hosts have been working hard to get things ready to go. We will have classes in lighting, pest control, HVAC, roof basics, heat extermination, fire safety, basement and foundation repair, cleaning and restoration, and painting essentials. Jim Zabriskie and Ashley Carey from the Bellevue Housing Authority have been handling all aspects of the conference.

Make sure to send your maintenance staff because our conferences are not only great learning opportunities, but it is also a great place to bounce our ideas and concerns off each other while forming bonds with other maintenance personnel. It is a chance to talk about our frustrations and boast about our successes with other people going through the same things on a daily basis.

Also, I would like to point out how important this year's REAC inspections are going to be. Every housing authority is to be inspected this year despite when they usually fall and HUD will take this year's score to determine whether housing authorities move to three year HUD inspections, maintain two year inspections, or are demoted to yearly inspections. HUD has also stated that the maintenance score will have a bigger impact on the over-all score of the housing authority. It is imperative your maintenance personnel is well trained and have the necessary connections they need when questions arise.

I hope to see all the same maintenance personnel I have gotten to know and have an opportunity to meet some fresh faces at this year's Maintenance Conference in Bellevue!

Tom Grim

Burwell Housing Authority

MEMBER SERVICES

CONGRATULATIONS, to the two recipients of the 2011 NE NAHRO Scholarship Award!!! There were two winners again this year due to a \$1,000 scholarship being awarded to a past recipient re-applying, and a \$1,000 scholarship being awarded to a new applicant. Terri Brown of Falls City Housing Authority, (winner in 2008 and awarded a \$1,000 in 2010) re-applied and was awarded an additional \$1,000 scholarship for 2011. Ms. Brown is now living in Lincoln, doing an excellent job of continuing her education at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. The new applicant receiving a \$1,000 scholarship was Esperanza Bernal from Housing Authority of the County of Scottsbluff, NE. The 2011 winners will be publicly recognized on Wednesday, April 27, 2011 during the banquet at the NAHRO NCRC 2011 Annual Conference held at the Hilton Omaha, Omaha, NE.

Best of luck to both girls in furthering their education!!

Peggy Christoffersen

Member Services Committee

NE NAHRO Newsletter Housing Report, April 19, 2011

–by **Chris Lamberty**

Several Nebraska representatives attended NAHRO's Legislative Conference and met with our Nebraska Congressional Representatives to advocate for our programs. The next several years are going to present many tough challenges and likely reduced federal funding. The Public Housing and Voucher programs have not expanded significantly in the last 25 years; rather we have fought to maintain the status quo while our waiting lists have grown. We need to continue to advocate for funding for low income housing and reducing regulatory and reporting burdens, while pushing Congress to look at the real cost drivers in the federal budget – the tax code, entitlement spending, and defense spending. Unfortunately our programs are easier to cut and will likely be an ongoing target.

Public Housing Operating Reserve Offsets.

HUD's signature proposal for their 2012 budget was a \$1 billion cut to Public Housing Operating Subsidy. They are proposing to "offset" Operating Fund to any PHA who has more than 4 to 6 months of reserves. In essence HUD proposes to provide less funding to agencies that have reserves, thereby requiring them to spend them down. It's a one-time trick to reduce spending by forcing agencies with a solid financial position to spend reserves, while protecting agencies with minimal reserves from cuts. HUD has initiated similar "offsets" in the Voucher program with problematic results. HUD also put out guidance recently stating that operating reserves shouldn't be used for capital improvement projects.

NAHRO opposes the proposed offsets and will advocate for full funding of operating subsidy. Further NAHRO will vigorously advocate for continued flexibility in the use of operating funds and reserves for extraordinary maintenance, improvements and capital needs.

PHAS Changes

HUD issued an Interim Rule substantially changing the PHAS scoring system effective immediately with the March 31, 2011 fiscal year end. Information on the rule is available at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/reac/products/prodphasintrule.cfm>. NAHRO staff is preparing comments on the rule, and the National Housing Committee provided input for the comments. The comments include complements and critiques. The new rule does represent an attempt by HUD to simplify the system and reduce reporting requirements by eliminating the Management Certification. NAHRO's critique will include a request to remove occupancy as a measurement for Capital Fund. The new PHAS counts occupancy twice as both a management measure and a capital fund measure.

Rural Development Programs

In response to an initiative by the Minnesota Chapter, NAHRO has resolved to take a more active interest in Rural Development housing programs and include them in NAHRO's Legislative Agenda.

HUD Initiatives

HUD has launched some internal initiatives designed to find ways to reduce PHA administrative burdens and HUD reporting systems. They have established two teams to report to the Secretary. NAHRO and other industry groups are meeting with them on April 19, 2011. HUD has been seeking information from Moving To Work agencies about initiatives such as reducing the frequency of inspections and annual reviews.

Nebraska News

LB 388 has advanced to final reading as of this writing with two amendments. LB 388 would take money from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to fund two new funds – an "Industrial Site and Building Fund" and an "Industrial Recovery Fund." As a result of the efforts of a coalition of low income housing developers, including NE NAHRO, the bill was amended from its original form to reduce the amount of funds taken from affordable housing activities. However, the loss is still quite significant - \$6.5 million in the next two years. We want to continue to work with other organizations in the next year and consider advocating for an increase to the Document Stamp Tax, the funding mechanism for this fund, to make up for the loss of Housing Trust Fund dollars.

If have any questions, please contact me at chris@1-housing.com or 402-434-5551.

We're on the web!
Nenahro.org

Thank you to everyone for all the kind expressions of sympathy, prayers, and beautiful cards at the time of my Mother's passing. I will miss her dearly, but find comfort in knowing she is now with God and no longer suffering. Hearing from all my good friends helped me through such a difficult time.

Peggy Christoffersen

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Calendar Of Events

April 26-29, 2011 — NCRC Conference, Omaha, Nebraska, Hilton Hotel

May 25 & 26 — Maintenance Conference, Bellevue , NE

July 28-30 — National Summer Conference, Louisville, KY

September 21-23 — NE NAHRO Fall Conference/Training , North Platte, NE

October 23-25 — National Conference, St Louis, MO