

WI-CARH's 27th Annual Conference

Navigating Affordable Housing

Wednesday, November 4, 2026

Schedule at a Glance

- 7:30 – 8:30 **Registration and Breakfast with the Sponsors and Exhibitors – Sponsored by FHLBank Chicago**
- 8:30 – 8:45 **Welcome and Opening Remarks with Russell Kaney, President, WI-CARH and Andrew Iverson, US Department of Agriculture Rural Development State Director**, Andrew C. Iverson will provide an overview of USDA RD Housing programs for Wisconsin.
- 8:45 – 10:15 **AI in Affordable Housing: Smart Tool or Compliance Risk? – Keynote with Gary Kirkman, US Housing Consultants – Sponsored by 21st Century Communities, LLC** - Artificial intelligence is changing how we work, but should we trust it with affordable housing compliance? Join Gary Kirkman, VP of Compliance Training with US Housing Consultants, for a thought-provoking keynote exploring the opportunities AI may bring to monitoring, eligibility, and decision-making, along with the risks that come with relying on rapidly evolving technology. AI may be powerful, but in affordable housing, getting it wrong can have real consequences.
- 10:15 – 10:45 **Break with Exhibitors – Introductions of exhibitors and time to visit exhibitor booths.**
- 10:45 – 11:15 **View from Washington DC – Colleen Fisher, Executive Director, CARH** - Hear the latest on leadership and budget negotiations, Rural Development budget prospects, and the state of rural housing moving forward with a Washington insider.
- 11:15 – noon **Understanding Key Elements of the 21st Century Road to Housing Legislation – Russell D. Kaney, Principal, 21st Century Communities, LLC** - This session will highlight the major pieces of this landmark legislation as it pertains to rural housing, including a comprehensive look at the preservation incentives for multifamily housing.
- Noon – 1:30 **Lunch - Sponsored by Wisconsin Management Company - Brief Luncheon Program for WI-CARH's Awards and General Membership Meeting.**

- 1:30 – 2:00 **The Lease Will Cover that Issue – Kevin Martin, Partner, Michael Best & Friedrich** - Kevin will walk through the WI-CARH lease, recent changes, additions, typical hot topics of leasing, and recent updates in case law that may be important to you.
- 2:00 – 2:20 **WHEDA Housing Resources – Rebecca Giroux, Community and Economic Development Officer at WHEDA** and a WI-CARH Board member, will review WHEDA's new funding opportunities for affordable housing.
- 2:20 – 2:40 **Break with Exhibitors**
- 2:40 – 3:00 **Preservation vs. Prepayment: Why Not Both? – Jeff Eckland, President & Partner, Eckland & Blando** - Former House Financial Services Chairman Barney Frank called the court-administered Franconia settlement program “the best preservation program that the Government has ever had” – and this session explains why. Jeff explains how settlements paid from the Judgment Fund compensate Section 515 owners for their lost prepayment rights. Attendees will also learn about the three documents needed to obtain a free estimate of their property's potential recovery.
- 3:00 – 3:40 **AI in Affordable Housing: Creating More Time for What Matters Most – McKenzie Burton, Keisha Gregerson, Jamsie Magee, and Jim Zallar, Wisconsin Management Company** - This session explores how Wisconsin Management Company uses EliseAI to enhance prospect engagement, resident communication, and operational efficiency across both our market-rate and affordable housing portfolios. The presentation will demonstrate how artificial intelligence can support property management teams by handling routine tasks such as answering common questions, scheduling tours, sending follow-up communications, and assisting with delinquency outreach. The core message is simple: **AI does not replace people; AI gives people more time to focus on people.**
- 3:40 – 4:05 **High Energy Costs and Solar Opportunities – Rob Dicke, Senior Manager, BakerTilly** - Rising energy prices, global climate change, and shrinking operating income have all put pressure on affordable housing providers. To adapt to the new normal, owners and managers must find solutions that reduce their expenses, explain the need for change, describe options for multifamily housing, and chart the path for funding and financing that will make these projects a reality.
- 4:05 – 4:15 **Closing Comments and Final Raffle Drawing**
- 4:15 – 6:30 **Reception**