



National Association of
Housing & Redevelopment Officials

Housing Committee Meeting
Thursday, June 13, 2024 – 10:30 a.m.
via Zoom

Representing MassNAHRO Housing Committee: Chair Colleen Doherty, President Mike Lara, David Connor, Alex Corrales, Caileen Foley, David Houlden, Jeffrey Driscoll, Cathy Hoog, Gina Govoni, Margaret Moran, Tom Thibeault, Candace Avery, Andrew Bailey, David Hedison, Paul Nowicki, Jackie Sullivan.
MassNAHRO staff: Donna Brown-Rego, Cylas Martell-Crawford.

Representing EOHLC: Ben Stone, Fatima Razzaq, Chris Devore, Andrew Clinton, Rob Garrett, Wayde Porrovecchio, Jason Wright, Ayo Yakubu-Owolewa, Courtney Curran, Matthew Martin, Carrie Souza, Avalon McLaren.

Vacancy Initiative Updates: There has been an uptick of agencies accessing capital money for vacancies, especially for c. 705s. HLC has seen a reduction in waivers and lower percentages of vacancies. Overall, most agencies are under 5% vacancy rate. HLC has also seen improved communication between LHA and HLC staff. HLC is considering issuing an RFP for a permanent regional entity for vacancy assistance, starting as a pilot program.

Quarterly LHA Board Meetings: Members asked if HLC would support an agency holding only quarterly board meetings. There is nothing statutory or in regulation that requires monthly board meetings; the frequency of meetings is dictated in LHA bylaws, which could be amended. This would be helpful to smaller agencies who have trouble getting quorum as well as LHAs managing multiple agencies. Obviously, LHA would hold a special board meeting if the need to conduct business arises (i.e. approving CFA amendments). HLC encourages LHAs to involve tenants if changing their bylaws.

LTO Funding: Since new regulations allow for an increase in funding, suggestion to clarify what funds can be used for. LTO funds cannot be spent on social activities, however, if residents have an event that encourages resident engagement or capacity building, then funds should be allowed for providing refreshments at the events. EOHLC is drafting a PHN on LHA/LTO relationships and will include this clarification and encourage holding such events. PHN will be sent to MassNAHRO and Mass. Union for review before publishing.

Potential Changes to PMR: 6/30/24 Changes: PHN due out next week. CFA submissions and CHAMP criteria 3B and 3C will be published. Update to AUP – amending guidance to issue a ‘strike’ if an agency does not complete the AUP within 120 days. 06/30/25 changes in discussion include changes to adjusted net income and looking at maintenance criteria.

Affordable Homes Act: House passed its bill on June 5 with higher authorizations than in Gov. bill and with most of the public housing outside sections intact. Gov. Healey will announce her 2025-2029 capital investment plan today, which includes \$35M more for public housing.

Capital Planning Process Interviews: HLC is in the process of replacing CIMS. Seeking LHAs interested in being interviewed by software developer. Contact Fatima.

CHAMP Update: Since the central screening entity started, 45,000 applicant priority requests have been processed; 1333 claims approved. UMass Donahue Institute study is underway. Survey sent to LHAs and listening sessions with applicants held. Final report due out in August. FY25 software development plan is focused on improving the applicant-facing features and electronic (text messaging) communications to improve responsiveness. Members like and appreciate the weekly CHAMP bulletins. HLC is working on the scope for the ASG contract renewal. Originally discussed investing resources for a central call center, but instead will focus on further improving the centralized screening process and ASG responsiveness to LHAs and applicants.

Potential Budget Guidelines Provisions: HLC provided a preview of provisions being discussed; FY25 Budget Guidelines due out by end of July. These include: one-time reserves augmentation to 40-45%; increase in air source heat pump maintenance cost; more flexibility/less oversight in setting maintenance staff salaries; incentives for replacing vehicles with electronic vehicles; increase to E.D. salaries; increase incentive for employees waiving health insurance; budget exemption for cybersecurity/websites; small expansion to self-sufficiency program. Members expressed appreciation for the thoughtfulness of these provisions and for sharing with committee in advance for feedback.