



National Association of
Housing & Redevelopment Officials

Housing Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 8, 2024 – 10:30 a.m.
via Zoom

Representing MassNAHRO Housing Committee: Chair Colleen Doherty, Alex Corrales, Caileen Foley, David Houlden, Jeffrey Driscoll, Cathy Hoog, Gina Govoni, Tom Thibeault, Candace Avery, Andrew Bailey, David Hedison, Paul Nowicki, Diane Cohen, Kelley Cronin, Jack Nagle. **MassNAHRO staff:** Donna Brown-Rego, Cylas Martell-Crawford.

Representing EOHLC: Ben Stone, Fatima Razzaq, Chris Devore, Andrew Clinton, Wayde Porrovecchio, Jason Wright, Carrie Souza, Cody Diehl, Sarah O’Leary.

Budget Guidelines: Guidelines are due out on Monday. Highlights include: 12% ANUEL increase, 9% increase to admin salary line, 4% increase to Executive Director salaries, reserve augmentation, increase of \$50 for air source heat pump exemption. MassNAHRO will coordinate with HLC on forming a small LHA working group to discuss reporting relief for small agencies among other items.

Capacity of Maintenance Staff of Small LHAs: Being short-staffed in the maintenance is an issue especially for smaller agencies. Budget Guidelines dictate the allowable cap on maintenance salaries; if LHA can afford more maintenance staff within its budget than the suggested #/unit standard it can hire more. If short-staffed temporarily due to injury or vacations, HLC will review on a case-by-case basis to allow budget exemption.

PHN 2024-11 Fossil Fuel Replacement Policy: Members expressed concern over how this would affect capital plans. HLC confirmed that this is proactive planning. Staff will look at expired systems and target those agencies that might benefit from targeted awards for electrification from sustainability funding. HLC will consider situations where it is not feasible to electrify (i.e. emergency situations, difficulty working with or lack of response from utility company). HLC is also targeting properties with recently upgraded Federal Pacific fire panels. RCATs all received funding to hire an additional project manager with sustainability background to assist LHAs in “greening” their capital projects. HLC has also initiated a pilot program with Boston H.A. using procurement flexibility in MGL c. 25A.

HLC Legal Services Program: HLC is working on procuring additional attorneys to have onboard by the fall. The cost of the current program is the same as the prior Regional Attorney program. Budget Guidelines will provide an average increase of around 28% to legal fees - \$100 per unit for family, \$50 per unit for elderly. Sarah O’Leary has a series of legal webinars scheduled for the fall including employment, cybersecurity, and slip and fall.

AHVP Applications: Many applicants that have more than one family member are applying for AHVP and finding they can’t lease up with the one-bedroom voucher. HLC confirmed that legally applicants can’t be excluded from applying for the program. Enhancements to CHAMP’s applicant-facing side will provide additional messaging.

HLC Sanctions for Noncompliant LHAs in MBTA Communities: Some communities are debating the issue as the 12/31 deadline approaches and are asking their housing authority what effect noncompliance will have. Ben said there is nothing in the Budget Guidelines or anywhere else in writing at this time.

Centralized Screening: HLC is currently in the process of renewing ASG's contract. Based on the feedback it received from housing authorities, they are not expanding the scope and are adding service level agreements specifically to address response times. ASG is updating some of its technology, including phone systems.

LHA Websites: HLC has noticed many LHA websites have outdated information or are not up to the standard of what is required. HLC acknowledged that MassNAHRO has a package it offers for basic website and hosting; will discuss offering technical assistance and guidance.

Affordable Homes Act Implementation: Gov. Healey signed the bill on Tuesday. In addition to the funding, there are several policy initiatives contained in the final bill.

Biennial AUPs – HLC wants to align these with the biennial PMRs. Only those LHAs with 10 exceptions or that didn't submit the AUP (i.e. eligible for a 'strike') will have the AUP annually.

MAAB replacement value fix – HLC updated the value to between \$400-\$500 per sf. Language included in Budget Guidelines.

RCAT flexibilities – Only one advisory board, down from three. RCATs can offer services to larger agencies. HLC will publish new guidance.

Borrowing against formula funding – HLC must revise regulations (760 CMR 11) and is looking for suggestions on what to include.

Apprenticeships – Language requiring bidders to have apprenticeship programs was not included in the final bill, but suggestion for MassNAHRO to work with LWD and unions on how to market and expand programs. HLC and unions agreed upon guidance that would include providing a checklist of certifications for contractors, not applicable to public housing capital funds.

Tech Updates:

- HLC using Docusign for 689 contracts. Same process just automating it. HLC 8/21 monthly LHA call will include a demo.
- CapHub – will incorporate a modernized HAFIS.
- Annual Plan – new tool will be added to PMR tool.
- CHAMP – 8/22 rollout of new applicant-facing features. Andy Clinton gave a demonstration of new dashboard, screening home page with status messages, improved digital communication.
- CIMS replacement – software developer held 21 discovery sessions with LHAs, RCATs, and HLC staff.
- Proposed PMR Changes for FY2025 – starting with FYE6/30/25, changing weight of maintenance criteria to 50% from 40%. More emphasis on physical inspections, increasing number of units to be inspected. HLC will share draft of changes to Housing Committee.

Facilities Conditions Assessment (FCA): RFP will go out in the fall. HLC forming a working group of RCATs and LHAs to assist with what the assessment should focus on.

Additional House Doctors: HLC issued RFP for more House Doctors to help with backlog of capital projects. 25 new ones will be onboard in September.

Next meeting: Thursday, September 26.