**POLICY MVM NOTES**

**SEPTEMBER 17, 2020**

**Welcome/Overview** – Lisa Alberghini

**Objective of the Meeting:** Update each other on what is happening with pandemic relief efforts at the Federal level, share updates from resident engagement and voter registration efforts, and have a round robin discussion on major policy issues on the state and local level.

**Washington Update (CDC Moratorium and Update on Congressional Negotiations)**

* CDC Eviction Moratorium started in September on all rental eviction for nonpayment of rent through the end of the year. Looking for feedback from members on how this may be affecting their organizations. The rule has been up to legal interpretation locally and by states.
  + CDC Eviction Moratorium Guidance from [HUD](https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus/renters) and [CDC Declaration Form](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/declaration-form.pdf)
* COVID-19 Relief Negotiations:
  + HPN is continuing to advocate for rental assistance. If you are seeing real world implications of the pandemic and lack of financial assistance for renters and owners, please reach out to [Shannon](mailto:ross@housingpartnership.net).
  + John O’Callaghan (ANDP): Clearly a hardship on residents, but having a good methodology to get assistance funds to residents quickly has been difficult. County Commissioner’s office does not have a means to get rental assistance out and funds will be expiring at the end of the year. If there are existing resources that are not getting out, the argument for more funding at the federal level is weakened.
* Recent Assistance Efforts, Local/State:
  + Lisa: Are members seeing processes in place at their local level that would facilitate the flow of rental assistance? Or other money that is not getting spent quickly?
  + Warren: In Minnesota, there was $100M appropriated from CARES. The demand was high for the first couple of weeks. Two models developed: 1) Funding to direct service providers that normally provide rental assistance to increase their capacity to service residents in need – which the state chose to operationalize. 2) Working through large portfolio owners to reach more residents and units. The state of Minnesota has not considered using the latter alternative model. HPN’s proposal for federal HOME funds follows the latter model of funding to and through owners to assist residents in their properties.
  + Shannon: It may be worth it to revisit local rental assistance efforts where our members have been involved and see how quickly those funds have been used. We’ve also heard that some residents have not responded to offers of rental assistance. Does anyone have any advice to colleagues who are also struggling with residents who continue not to pay rent?
  + Lauren Legocki (POAH): Service Coordinators have been persistent in reaching out to residents via phone, text, and dropping off a friendly note. In Massachusetts, POAH has been talking to RAFT administering agencies about applying for RA on behalf of residents; agencies have overwhelmed with the volume of application. Community Action Agencies have been a little bit quicker to deploy small amounts of funding. RAFT is running out of funding now.
  + Joan Carty (HDF): Connecticut’s Department of Housing and local housing finance agency contracted with a payment vendor to pay property owners and set up intake system with HUD approved counseling agencies in the state. They set up a call center to do initial screening and routed individuals to counseling agency to complete the assessment and income verification. The eligible/ineligible status is communicated back to the joint partnership, and if the individual is eligible, payment is routed directly to the landlord and the tenant is notified. HDF is one of the approved agencies in CT. Program discussion started in June, implemented in the 3rd week of July, and applications are coming in bulk. The process has been onerous for HDF staff, and they will likely hire temps to help with intake paperwork.
  + Shannon: Senator McSally’s (R-AZ) concern about rental assistance was to make it more targeted and providing relief for residents who need it.
* Continuing Resolution (CR):
  + The government will likely stay open past September, but there are no details on how long the CR will go until (December vs. February) or what is in it. If nothing is moving in December, it may mean that COVID relief will have to wait until February.
* Community Reinvestment Act (CRA):
  + The Federal Reserve Board release an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) seeking feedback on CRA, and will vote on it on Monday. Sounds like a longer comment period.
* Other Federal Updates:
  + Ellen Lurie Hoffman (NHT): Checked in with HUD and Appropriations staff about PBRA contract funding. The concern is that these funds are being used quickly due to more residents’ income recertifying, and whether there needs to be an anomaly to support more HUD funding in FY 2021. Funding is fine for the moment and no emergency action needs to take place.

**Member Efforts on Voter Engagement**

* Recap of August Peer Exchange with Alliance for Justice and member voter registration and mobilization efforts.
* Aaron Gornstein (POAH): A year ago, POAH put in place an infrastructure for residents’ engagement with Community Impact Coordinators (CICs) and property management sites. Will soon be pivoting to voter mobilization efforts.
* Lauren (POAH): Working with NLIHC Housing Providers Council to get voter registration data and send the information out to CICs to identify who is not register to vote. Have not endorsed a method of voting. CICs are being equipped to answer questions on the different methods of voting. If the property is near a polling location, CICs may want to organize walking groups to go vote. Also participating in state by state working groups because of differing voting procedures and laws.
* Tiphaine Abarca (LINC Housing): Currently in the voter registration and education phase. Sending out voter registration kits this week to property managers and resident service coordinators. Also have not endorsed a method of voting, but ensuring that staff has as much information as possible. LINC emphasizes making a plan to vote so that residents are more likely to vote without challenges. They are also holding open computer lab hours so residents can register to vote or check their registration status.
* Joan Carty: The USPS sent out postcard mailers on how to register to vote which has incorrect information. Anyone involved in direct voter registration activities should double check and maybe bring the issue up to your Congressperson.
* Lisa: How do you help prepare your residents for voting day’s challenges?
* Chris: For CDFIs, syndicators and lenders, engagement looks different than property owners and managers. If there are other ways to do voter outreach, Cinnaire would love to hear about it.
  + Abi: Consider volunteering time with your local League of Women Voters Chapter. They have a series of activities you can do at home like a postcard writing campaign to your neighbors. There is also sample leave policy for employers during election season on our [HPN Voter Resource page.](https://housingpartnership.net/voter-resources)
  + Lena (ACTION Housing): Partnering with LWV in Pittsburgh. Currently stuffing voter registration information packets for about 1,000 people. Also joined the Housing Provider Council, and ACTION Housing received voter information for each of their properties. It’s been a great resource for smaller organization with limited staff capacity. They are also holding a socially distance DJ dance party to help with youth engagement. They have about 200 youth in the program with alums who are organizing these voter registration initiatives.

**Round Robin on Major Policy Issues on Local Level**

* Continuing the conversation around state and local policies. We’ve been focused on rental and mortgage assistance due to the pandemic, but we are also interested in other ideas.
* Poll Question: What is your top policy for the next year at the state or local level?
  + 62% - Capital for development and/or preservation
  + 29% - Money for rental and/or mortgage assistance for residents
  + 10% - Reduce impediments to development such as zoning changes or deregulation
  + 0% - Other
* How do we messaged the dual need of capital for development *and* rental assistance?
* Capital for development and/or preservation
  + John: In Atlanta, a vote was teed up in March for $200M bond for affordable housing (“Housing Opportunity Bonds”). The size of the bond was reassessed and put forward for $100M due to the falling municipal bond market. Purpose: 60% multifamily and 40% single family uses, some can be used for homeowner rehab.
  + Warren: “Housing Infrastructure Bonds” helped advance the notion that housing is infrastructure and has improved bipartisan messaging as housing as a bipartisan priority. Did not get passed this session. HIBs are limited obligation tax-exempt bonds and authorized by appropriations from the general fund of the Minnesota Legislature. Used as 100% subsidy, 0% totally deferred loan which results in $100,000 per unit subsidy in most deals.
* Rental and mortgage assistance
  + Shannon: We will revisit after consulting with our HPN members on what’s working and what’s not working for the next MVM.
* Zoning
  + Shannon: In austere times, local governments may opt to use zoning as a way to reduce the cost for developing affordable housing and not spend money. By-right zoning in Minneapolis may be something we look into.
  + Warren: There is a new inclusionary zoning regulation that passed in Minneapolis that enables any lot to accommodate a triplex. This was met with a lot of resistance, but it was part of Minneapolis’ 2040 Plan. There was a huge grassroots campaign called “Neighbors for More Neighbors” which consisted of a 2 year campaign leading up to a new comprehensive plan update.
* Other Local Polices:
  + Katelyn Siegel (EAH Housing): How are other CA housing organizations responding to CA’s AB 3088? The recent legislation grants tenants relief by extending the eviction moratorium, but also allowing renters to pay 25% of rent with the remaining portion converting to credit debt.
  + Shannon: This might be an example of legislation to avoid or learn from. We will keep looking out for outcomes from this policy on members.

**Looking Ahead – Topics and Areas of Focus**Our next Member Virtual Meeting (MVM) will be held on October 20th from 1pm to 2pm. [Register here.](http://click.comm.housingpartnership.net/?qs=b58d2bbf70f5ce5503e81d77290ce52813dabef40aeec4b749cb680808a2c23d5647b1875543c2e0601876d40c8b23582a3e6f5fc56d13a9)