

CHAPA Housing Briefs

September 12, 2016

Announcement



CHAPA is pleased to announce that our Board of Directors has appointed Rachel Heller as our new Executive Director.

Rachel has been CHAPA's Director of Public Policy for the past four years. During her tenure, CHAPA has successfully advocated for significant increases in housing programs, passed a \$1.4 billion housing bond bill and launched the On Solid Ground coalition, among many other accomplishments. Rachel began her career in Housing Policy in 2003, and among other roles, has served as the Chief of Staff/Housing Policy Director for former State Senator Susan Tucker and the Director of Public Policy for the Alliance for Business Leadership.

Rachel will begin her new role as of October 4. She can be reached at rheller@chapa.org. Congratulations Rachel!

Upcoming Events

September 19, 2016

CHAPA & On Solid Ground Coalition Breakfast Forum: Understanding the Cliff Effect & Proposed Solutions (WAITLIST)

September 27, 2016

Massachusetts Homeownership Collaborative Train the Trainer in Boston (For MA Homeownership Collaborative Educators)

October 17, 2016

Massachusetts Homeownership Collaborative Train the Trainer in Springfield (For MA Homeownership Collaborative Educators)

November 1, 2016

CHAPA's 49th Annual Dinner!



C H A P A

Citizens' Housing and Planning Association



State Updates

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Affordable Housing Development Awards

On August 15, the Baker-Polito Administration **announced** awards to fund the development, renovation, and preservation of affordable rental housing across the Commonwealth. The 26 projects awarded will create or preserve 1,420 rental units, including 1,334 affordable units in 16 communities across the Commonwealth. These projects will serve individuals and families transitioning out of homelessness, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

The projects are funded with \$31 million in state and federal low-income housing tax credits and over \$59 million in housing subsidy funds, including federal HOME funds and state capital funds.

DHCD Submits Draft National Housing Trust Fund Allocation Plan to HUD

In August, DHCD submitted its allocation plan for the **National Housing Trust Fund (HTF)** to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for approval. The plan proposes using all of the HTF allocation for supportive housing for extremely low income households, with at least half going to units reserved for families and individuals transitioning from homelessness. DHCD also plans to make \$5 million in additional state bond funds and 100 project-based MRVP vouchers available for applicants seeking HTF funds. HUD has 45 days to review the plan before HTF funding becomes available.

DHCD Proposes Changes to State Public Housing and Affirmative Action Regulations

DHCD scheduled public hearings on proposed changes to the regulations governing state-aided public housing, including modernization and public housing innovation, and Affirmative Action requirements. The hearings will be held on September 20 (Boston), September 21 (Shrewsbury), and September 28 (Taunton). Written comments will be accepted through October 5 at 5pm. The notice and proposed regulatory revisions can be found **here**.

DHCD to Hold Information Sessions on Proposed Changes in FY2017 CDBG Allocation Process

DHCD will hold information sessions on September 8 (Worcester), September 9 (Boston) and September 14 (West Springfield) on proposed major changes in the way it awards CDBG funds in FY2017. Written comments will be accepted through September 23. Details on the hearing and proposals are posted on DHCD's **website**. Proposed changes include establishing activity-specific funds, with projects competing against each other, limiting community applications to one fund, and using a revised Community Wide Needs (CWN) score.



Federal Updates

HUD Proposes Stricter Lead-Based Paint Standards for Federally Assisted Housing

On September 1, HUD published a **proposed rule** that would reduce the blood lead levels in children under six that trigger environmental assessment and interim control measures in federally-assisted units. It adopts the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reference range value of 5 micrograms (μ) per deciliter, down from the current HUD standard of 20μ /DL. (**Massachusetts** currently uses 25μ /DL to define lead paint poisoning, though it offers services in all cases where the blood level is at or above 10μ /DL.) The HUD rule applies to federal public housing, housing with project-based rental assistance from HUD or another federal agency, HUD-owned multifamily properties, and units with tenant-based rental assistance. NAHRO has posted a **summary** of the draft rule.

HUD Issues Proposed FY2017 FMRS for Comment: 8% Increase for Boston Area; 15% Drop for Cape

In an August 26 Federal Register **notice**, HUD published proposed Fair Market Rents (FMRs) for FY2017 for the Housing Choice Voucher program. As proposed, two-bedroom FMRs would increase in 10 of the 19 FMRs areas in Massachusetts (including by 8% in the Boston area, 11% in the Lawrence area and 14.7% in Eastern Worcester County) and fall by 14.9% in Barnstable County (see **table**). HUD will accept comments on the methodology used to set FY2017 FMRs/SAFMRs and requests for re-evaluation of the proposed FMRs for specific areas through September 26. HUD also asks for comments on ways to improve FMR estimation and when FMR changes should trigger public notice and comment.

Commenters Recommend Changes to HUD's Draft Small Area FMR Rule for Concentrated Voucher Areas

In August, over 100 national and state organizations and individuals submitted **comments** recommending changes to HUD's draft rule requiring the use of small area fair market rents (SAFMRs) in metro areas with more than 2,500 vouchers if housing choice voucher use is disproportionately concentrated in low income areas. Comments focused on avoiding disruption of the HCV program and targeting early SAFMR initiatives to housing markets where SAFMRs were most likely to increase choice. Many called for (1) longer hold harmless periods for tenants in areas where FMRs would likely decline and (2) exempting metro areas with low rental vacancy rates (<5%). The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) and others also **recommended** a revised definition of concentrated voucher use. CBPP found more than 40% of voucher holders were concentrated in low income tracts in six of the seven metro areas in Massachusetts with more than 2,500 vouchers. Under HUD's draft rule, none would be subject to the SAFMR requirement while two would using CBPP's proposed changes.

National Organizations to Provide Technical Assistance to Support Regional Housing Mobility Programs

In late August, the Poverty and Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) announced the launch of “**Mobility Works**”, a consortium of housing mobility practitioners, researchers, and policy experts that will assist housing agencies and non-profits seeking to develop comprehensive regional housing mobility programs. The consortium includes PRRAC, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and three leading housing mobility practitioners - the Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership, Housing Choice Partners (Chicago), and the Inclusive Communities Project (Dallas).

HUD, HHS, and DOJ Issue Reminder that Immigration Status Cannot be Used to Withhold Vital Services

In August, the U.S. Departments of Justice (DOJ), Health and Human Services (HHS), and HUD issued a detailed joint **letter** to recipients of federal financial assistance reminding them that vital services, including emergency shelter and short-term housing assistance, cannot be withheld based on a person’s immigration status.

Recent Research & Reports

TANF at 20

A new Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) report, **TANF at 20**, marks the 20th anniversary of federal welfare reform by assessing the changes that have occurred and their impact on poverty generally and state by state. Overall, the number of families assisted has fallen dramatically, the value of cash assistance has fallen in almost every state, and state spending on employment training and assistance has been low. Deep poverty rates are higher today than pre-TANF. CBPP reports that less than 30% of poor families with children in Massachusetts received TANF in 2013-2014. An October 2015 CBPP **report** found that the current monthly grant in Massachusetts provides an income equal to 37% of the federal poverty level.

Study Recommends that Chapter 40B as a Model for California to Expand Affordable Housing

The Turner Center for Housing Innovation has released a policy paper - ***Borrowing Innovation, Achieving Affordability: What We Can Learn from Massachusetts Chapter 40B*** - recommending that California consider the model of Chapter 40B, with adaptations to California’s permitting and planning landscape, to increase affordable housing production. The paper includes recent research on the impact of restrictive zoning on metropolitan economic growth and income segregation as well as a review of approaches taken by Illinois, Connecticut, and Rhode Island to promote affordable housing.

Urban Institute Working Paper Assesses Strategies to Create Mobility from Poverty

An August 2016 **working paper** from the U.S. Partnership on Mobility from Poverty assesses the promise of and challenges inherent in six strategies to helping families move from poverty to economic mobility. The six include “fundamental building block”, personal or family mobility pathways initiatives, place-conscious strategies, regional cross-sectoral partnerships, large-scale institutional changes and managerial/data innovations. The paper is supplemented by a longer report, **Building Blocks and Strategies for Helping American’s Move Out of Poverty**, that includes examples of well-regarded programs in each category.

New Paper Finds Poor in the U.S. Often Fare Less Well than Those in Poorer Nations

A new paper by Luke Shaefer, Pinghui Wu, and Kathryn Edin (*Can Poverty in America Be Compared to Conditions in the World's Poorest Countries?*) finds that many poor Americans have life expectancies, infant mortality, homicide, and incarceration rates comparable to people in much poorer countries. It notes that the U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world (716 prisoners per 100,000 people); white American males were incarcerated at a rate of 678 per 100,000 people in 2010 and African-American males at 4,347 per 100,000.



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