Public Housing and Rental Assistance Committee Meeting
January 31, 2018
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Increase Funding for Public Housing and Affordable housing programs

Notes

I. Welcome & Introductions

II. Discussion on public housing operating subsidy in the state budget and strategies for increasing funding for the line-item.

   a. **Advocacy efforts** to increase support for public housing, *Donna Brown-Rego, MassNAHRO*

      i. Public Housing is the most cost-effective way to house extremely low income households. Public housing subsidies are more cost effective than housing a family in shelter.

   b. **Housing Solutions Campaign** to grow the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), *Libby Hayes, Homes for Families.* Click here for the presentation.

      i. The Housing Solutions Campaign started in 2006 when MRVP was funded at roughly $25 million and helped increase funding to $96 million in FY2018.

      ii. What made the campaign successful?

         • The campaign got all the stakeholders together for a unified voice.

         • Use of visual data with legislators to exhibit the increase in shelter numbers in relation to decrease in MRVP vouchers helped drive forward the need for MRVP.

- Working with the administration and state agencies for distribution of vouchers along with budget advocacy with legislators led to efficient implementation of MRVP.
- Advocacy to legislatures with focus on the perception about incentives, success of MRVP and Lobby day with cookies was effective.

III. Discussion

a. Although $600 million capital funds are allocated for Public Housing in the Housing Bond Bill, the operating amount for public Housing has remained level funded for many years.

b. Local Housing Authorities are working on their optimum capacity with limited resources.

c. Family engagement leaders who can engage the public housing residents and mobilize them to advocate for public housing could help advocate for increased funding for Public Housing.

d. Need further data on:

   i. Number of people who moved out of the shelter and moved into public housing. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is required to ask where the family is coming from and might have data on the same.

   ii. Outcome of Mass. Law Reform Institute (MLRI)'s study on number of vacant public housing units

   iii. Net new households that can be served with investments in Public Housing

   iv. What percentage of the 135,000 new units should be affordable units or public housing units?

e. Subcommittee on Public Housing Provisions

   i. CHAPA will facilitate a subcommittee that will explore the Public Housing related provisions that were initially included in the Governor's proposal of Housing Bond Bill but were not included in the language reported out by the Joint Committee on Housing.

   ii. The Subcommittee on Public Housing Provisions is set to meet on Wednesday, March 7th, 9.30 – 11 am at CHAPA.

f. The Governor's Housing Choice Initiative gives preferences for the Capital Grant Program for the communities that qualify for Housing Choice Designation or high producing municipality.

      i.   The accompanying legislation reduces the 2/3rd majority to simple majority for certain zoning changes at the local level.

   ii.   It also sets a tangible goal of producing 135,000 new units by 2025 in MA.

  iii.   Percentage of affordable units or public housing units in the new goal is not clear.

IV. Legislative Updates

    a. Housing Bond Bill

        i.   This bill authorizes $1.7 billion in investments for affordable housing through the capital budget over the next five years. Click here for Fact Sheet.

      ii.   The bill passed the house vote, Senate Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets conducted a hearing on Feb 13th. CHAPA and other organizations testified in support.

     iii.   Please advocate to the Senate for permeant extension and expansion of the Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) expansion to $25 million and to pass a clean bill free of earmarks.