



Resident leaders of Stamford gathered together on May 10 for the first of several meetings that will kick off a new citywide resident council. The one-day training included workshops on voter registration education, HUD's 964 regulations, training on running a meeting and record keeping.

The meeting was also a chance for all the resident council officers of most of the developments in Stamford to meet each other and continue talks of forming a citywide resident council.

"The training was very helpful. I've been exposed to training in the past, but there was some new stuff for me," said Patricia Johnson, president of the Scattered-Sites Resident Council. Since the training, residents in Stamford have continued to meet to discuss making the citywide resident council official.

"We had talked about doing a citywide resident council when I was president of the

Southfield Village Resident Council, but it never got off the ground," continued Johnson. "But now we have a crisis going on. And it's always a crisis that brings us together." (Johnson was referring to the announcement

that deputy director Cynthia Newton was retiring from the housing authority. Many Stamford residents admire Newton, who they felt advocated for their needs as residents.)

"Now that all these changes are starting up, we as residents have to learn how to stand on our own two feet.

Now is the time for us to come together," Johnson said.



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The latest from Washington, DC indicates tough times ahead for federal public housing programs. In the face of a looming federal deficit, the cost of the war in Iraq and proposed tax cuts, it seems there will be less money to go around in the next round of budget negotiations. The federal budget for 2004, which must be approved by October 1, 2003, is not looking good for public housing.

Housing authorities are expecting that they will have to make less money stretch farther. HUD money for operating costs, capital improvements, resident programs and more is shrinking. In addition, there is a proposal in Congress to completely change the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. The proposal is to give all the Section 8 money in one big block grant to the states, rather than the local housing authorities. The program would be more centralized, as well as receive less money overall.

There is also a debate going on regarding the future of the HOPE VI program. The President's Administration has proposed eliminating the program. Some vocal members of Congress want to preserve HOPE VI. However, with dwindling federal money for public housing, there is a fear that preserving HOPE VI may take more money out of other public housing programs.

Resident organizations, housing authorities and public housing advocates are coming together to fight for adequate resources for public housing. Please contact Lynne Ide at PHRN if you would like to know more about federal action on issues important to public housing residents.

PHRN WEBSITE COMING SOON

The Connecticut Housing Coalition is pleased to announce the launch of its website: www.ct-housing.org. Please visit our site to learn more about the organization, the programs we provide and legislative issues about affordable housing. Check it out today!

The Public Housing Resident Network is pleased to announce that it will soon launch its very own website. PHRN will be working with the computer website design company "The Kente," based in Hartford, for this site. On the site, you'll be able to download important information like regulations, learn about important things happening in public housing and more.

PHRN will offer our newsletters on this site AND they are already available on our www.ct-housing.org website under "Public Housing Resident Network."

Please give us a call if you prefer to read our newsletters online instead of in the mail in the future. You may contact us at 860-563-2943 (Hartford area) or toll free at 1-888-415-2564.

Who We Are & What We Do

The Public Housing Resident Network provides a variety of assistance to residents of public housing in Connecticut. The Network informs residents of new and important state and federal policy information and is a source of mutual support for residents.

Founded in the fall of 1996, the Network is an informal organization open to participation from any public housing resident - whether elected leadership or interested resident. We welcome requests for services from residents and public housing authorities. The services we provide are free of charge to the residents and we encourage you to attend our Network meetings.

This newsletter is published regularly. Contact us to be put on our mailing list. All we ask in return is your participation and interest!

◆Have you filled out a PHRN membership card? If not, call us to get one! Our toll free number is: 1-888-415-2564.

PHRN will host its next "Let's Talk" Statewide meeting on June 21 in New Haven. "Let's Talk" are PHRN's meetings that allow residents throughout Connecticut to come together to learn valuable public housing information. "Let's Talk" also serves as an opportunity for residents statewide to do just that...talk! Come share thoughts, ideas and experiences with each other.

June's "Let's Talk" will feature a segment on Voter Registration Education. And as promised in our last newsletter, we will conduct a workshop during this session on the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act's community service requirement. As you may recall, this requirement (which was approved by HUD for fiscal year 2003) mandates that certain nonexempt adult members of public housing households participate for at least eight hours a month in community service or economic self-sufficiency training or be subject to eviction.

This training is open and free to all public housing residents. A light lunch will be provided. The training will be held from 11 am. until 1 pm. However, an RSVP is required to secure a seat and to obtain location information for "Let's Talk."

Please contact PHRN Coordinator Courtney Anderson at (860) 563-2943 (Hartford area) or if you live outside of the Hartford area at 1-888-415-2564 to RSVP and obtain location information.

As has been reported in previous PHRN newsletters, the future of the state's family public housing developments is at-risk. Connecticut has more than 4,000 thousand apartments in its State Moderate Rental stock. Most of these public housing developments are concentrated in five cities: Hartford, East Hartford, New Britain, New London and Stamford. There has been a lot of discussion at the local and state level regarding the fate of these developments.

The housing authorities that manage these developments do not receive enough money from residents' rents to properly maintain these properties. Unlike the money they get from HUD for maintenance and programs in federal public housing, the housing authorities get no money from the state for Moderate Rental developments. Particularly in the current tough state budget climate, housing authorities are not likely to see state resources pumped their way.

State lawmakers in Hartford are working on legislation to allow for flexibility in the "redevelopment" of these Moderate Rental developments. Options being discussed would allow local communities to: bring in new sources of funding for redevelopment; mix first-time homeownership and other types of housing in with the rental units; decrease the number of public housing units; and more.

PHRN is monitoring the situation and advocating for protections for the affected residents. PHRN is especially concerned about guaranteeing that residents are involved in a meaningful way in developing the plans to rebuild their public housing communities, and that residents truly benefit from the redevelopment.

Please contact Lynne Ide at PHRN for more info.

The Public Housing Resident Network (PHRN) is seeking proposals from qualified individuals and firms to provide free-lance Spanish interpretation services. The Network has a very limited budget for this project. We are seeking someone to assist PHRN in interpreting at its meetings and trainings for public housing residents statewide. This person would also be responsible for answering on a weekly basis a voice mail set up to accept calls from residents who only speak Spanish. Most meetings are held in the evenings and on weekends. We are seeking a person who is knowledgeable about affordable housing issues. Experience with public housing is a plus. We will accept proposals with hourly rates, blocks of time, monthly or other packaged time proposals.

PHRN is a project of the Connecticut Housing Coalition (CHC) that provides technical support, capacity building assistance and training to public housing residents throughout Connecticut. We are funded largely by a grant from the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Submit proposals with full cost analysis along with three references of persons, companies or organizations you have provided interpretation services for. Send proposals to: Connecticut Housing Coalition, Attn: Courtney Anderson, 30 Jordan Lane, Wethersfield, CT 06109.

PHRN encourages minorities, individuals and public housing residents with Spanish interpretation experience to apply. For additional information, you may call Courtney Anderson, PHRN Coordinator at 860-563-2943 (in the Hartford area) or toll free at 1-888-415-2564 or email him at: Courtney@ct-housing.org.

**Connecticut Housing Coalition
Public Housing Resident Network**

30 Jordan Lane
Wethersfield, CT. 06109
phone: 860.563.2943
fax: 860.529.5176
email: PHRN@ct-housing.org
website: Http://www.ct-housing.org