



Newsletter

BUILDING MOMENTUM, CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Connecticut Housing Coalition's Annual Conference

Thursday, October 27, 2005

8:45 am – 5:00 pm

Connecticut Convention Center • Hartford, Connecticut

It's time again for the Connecticut Housing Coalition's Annual Conference. Each year we keep growing and because we service the entire state of Connecticut, we're on the move again, this time to Hartford! This conference will feature 29 workshops, more than we've ever done before. And we've also expanded the public housing track to provide a cross-section of workshops that will not only appeal to residents, but public housing staff as well.

The largest housing conference in the state of Connecticut, this is definitely one conference you don't want to miss! Our 2004 conference drew a crowd of nearly 700 attendees. And of those attending, nearly 150 were public housing residents and staff. Join us in Hartford on October 27th and help us to top those numbers!

HUD Budget for 2006 Poses Challenge for Public Housing

The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate has been setting the federal budget for 2006. The President proposed his budget earlier this year. The House and Senate must take the President's budget proposals into consideration, pass their own budget and send it to the President for his signature. All this should be done by October 1, 2005.

The budget that passes will include the funding for all federal public housing programs through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It looks like it may be a tough year for public housing. Here are some of the highlights:

Capital Funds – The money used for improvements in public housing: The President's budget proposed a \$252 million decrease in public housing capital funds in its 2006 budget request. This money is used for the rehabilitation and modernization needs of the nation's aging public housing stock. This cut comes on the heels of a \$600 million decrease in funding for public housing capital needs since 2000. It is estimated that there is a current \$20 billion backlog in public housing capital needs. The House Appropriations Committee voted to restore the cuts and increase the program by \$13 million. The Senate Appropriations Committee then voted on a HUD budget that preserves the President's proposed cut of \$252 million.

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Need Help Finding Funds to Attend Our Workshops/Training?

Are you a public housing resident and want to attend our conference so that you can learn more and empower yourself through our various workshops? Need money to pay for this conference but can't afford it? Then ask your housing authority to sponsor residents for this training!

HUD regulations state under 24 CFR 964.140 that it supports residents attending conferences like the Connecticut Housing Coalition's Annual Conference. 24 CFR 964 states:

"(a) Resident training opportunities. HUD encourages a partnership between the residents, the HA and HUD, as well as with the public and nonprofit sectors to provide training opportunities for public housing residents. The categories in which training could occur include, but are not limited to: (1) Community organization and leadership training; (2) Organizational development training for Resident Management Corporations and duly elected Resident Councils; (3) Public housing policies, programs, rights and responsibilities training; and (4) Business entrepreneurial training, planning and job skills. (b) Local training resources. HUD encourages the use of local training resources to ensure the ongoing accessibility and availability of persons to provide training and technical assistance. Possible training resources may include: (1) Resident organizations; (2) Housing authorities; (3) Local community colleges, vocational schools; and (4) HUD and other Federal agencies and other local public, private and nonprofit organizations."

PIH 2001-3 instructs PHAs to use funds received for resident participation activities for trainings such as this one. If your housing authority won't pay for this training, then give us or HUD a call today!

Conference Contacts

If you are a public housing resident or staff member attending our 2005 Conference and are from the following towns, please contact the person listed below at your agency to register for the conference:

NEW HAVEN: Edith Rawls, 203-498-8800 ext. 1102

STAMFORD: Max Thaxton, 203-977-1400 ext. 3327

NEW BRITAIN: Dion Greer, 860-225-5838

E. HTFD: Nilsa Marquez-Deleon, 860-290-8306

MERIDEN: Dave Sunshine, 203-235-0157, ext. 238

NORWALK: Carla Conway, 203-838-8471 ext. 176

BRIDGEPORT: Emma Jefferson, 203-337-8935

HARTFORD: Monifa Holeman, 860-723-8557

Residents/Staff from all other housing authorities should contact COURTNEY ANDERSON, PHRN COORDINATOR, 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 mailed to those who are on our mailing list. Contact us to be added to our mailing list. All we ask in return is your participation and interest!

◆For more information on our conference, please email us at: PHRN@ct-housing.org or call us toll free at: 1-888-415-2564.

HUD Budget for 2006 Poses Challenge for Public Housing

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Operating Funds – The money used for the day-to-day running of public housing: The President's budget proposed cutting the public housing operating fund by \$25 million in 2006. This money is used for operating overhead – such as utilities, maintenance and housing authority employee salaries. The proposed cut would leave enough money to only cover 89% of housing authorities' actual operating costs. Inadequate operating funds will erode the quality of public housing as well as resident services. The House Appropriations Committee voted to increase this funding \$193 million over the President's request. The Senate version of the HUD budget increases funding for operating funds by \$150 million over the President's request, but still \$43 million less than the House's version.

ROSS – Funding for resident services and programs: Both the President and the House Appropriations Committee propose cutting funding for Resident Opportunities & Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) to \$24 million, a decrease of more than 50%. This cut will severely curtail local programs that promote resident training, empowerment, supportive services and other skills aimed at promoting the successful transition out of public housing. The Senate version of the HUD budget proposes cutting the ROSS program funding by only \$7.5 million.

HOPE VI – Funding for the redevelopment of “distressed” public housing: The President again proposed to eliminate the HOPE VI program in the 2006 budget. HOPE VI was created to revitalize distressed public housing and has remained a controversial program. It was funded at \$575 million in 2000 and was decreased to \$143 million by 2005. Considering the huge backlog in capital needs for public housing, the complete loss of this program would create yet another hole in public housing funding. The House voted on June 29, to restore \$60 million in funding for the program. The Senate then voted to fund the program at \$150 million – an actual increase over the 2005 funding.

The next step is for the House and Senate to negotiate a compromise with each other. Once the House and Senate work out their differences, they will send a final budget to the President. (More details and a budget chart can be found at <http://www.nlihc.org>).

Connecticut has an aging housing stock and faces increasing demands for apartments affordable to families and individuals with low and moderate income levels. Any decrease in the HUD budget will put more public housing at-risk and potentially increase homelessness.

Proposed State and Local Housing Flexibility Act Raises Controversy

The State and Local Housing Flexibility Act of 2005 has been proposed by the President's Administration and HUD and introduced in the House (HR 1999) and Senate (S 711). If passed, the legislation would completely change the operation of public housing. In addition to all the changes proposed to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, this legislation would give housing authorities broad flexibility to change rent structures, loosen or remove tenant protections and severely weaken resident participation requirements.

The legislation would allow “high performing” housing authorities, those operating at least 500 units, or those administering at least 500 vouchers to participate in the Moving to Work program. Moving to Work status would enable HUD to grant waivers exempting these housing authorities from federal regulations. This local flexibility, combined with decreasing federal financial support for public housing, would likely result in public housing serving fewer low-income people or the imposition of higher rents and restrictive tenancy requirements. Local public housing policy could also be decided without the input of residents in a regulated planning process or through an organized resident advisory board.

Across the country, residents and affordable housing advocates oppose the passage of the State and Local Housing Flexibility Act of 2005.

Speak Out to Your House or Senate Representatives

Now is the time to weigh in with your two federal Senators (Chris Dodd and Joe Lieberman), as well as your member of Congress (John Larson, Rob Simmons, Rosa DeLauro, Chris Shays or Nancy Johnson - depending on which district you live in). Please contact them and let them know why protecting and investing in public housing is important to you. Contact Lynne Ide at the Connecticut Housing Coalition at 860-563-2943 (in the Hartford area) or toll free at 1-888-415-2564 (outside of Hartford) if you have any questions or need help speaking up for public housing.

Special Housing Authority Resident/Staff Registration Form

Attendee Name and Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Name of Housing Authority or Resident Group: _____

We are offering a special discounted rate to Housing Authorities sponsoring 10 or more residents and staff members. Please submit one form per person!

FEE (PER PERSON):

_____ \$80 (1 to 9 people) _____ \$70 (10 to 19 people) _____ \$60 (20 or more people).

FOOD SELECTION:

_____ Chicken Piccata _____ Pork Rib Chop _____ Mushroom Ravioli

Make checks payable to: "Connecticut Housing Coalition" and fax this form to us at: (860) 529-5176 and mail payment to: Connecticut Housing Coalition, 30 Jordan Lane, Wethersfield, CT 06109

Other workshops for the day include:

Section 8 - Fighting for Survival; What's New at DECD; Neighborhood Revitalization Case Studies; Ending the Referral Cycle - Who to Call for Help; Eminent Domain - Controversy and Clarity; Prisoner Re-Entry; What's New at CHFA; Eviction - Myths and Realities; Housing News from Capitol Hill; and many more workshops!

Agenda:

- 8:15 am Registration and Coffee • 9:00 am Welcome and Speaker • 10:50 am Session 1 Workshops
- 12:30 pm Luncheon • 2:20 pm Session 2 Workshops • 4 pm Reception and Networking • 5 pm Adjournment

Directions:

The Connecticut Convention Center is located at 100 Columbus Boulevard in Hartford. Parking is free in the Convention Center Garage. •**Traveling I-91 North:** Take the Capital Area Exit (#29A) on left; merge onto Whitehead Highway; take Columbus Blvd. exit, make right onto Columbus Blvd.; Convention Center Garage will be on your right. •**Traveling I-91 South:** Take the Capital Area Exit (#29A) on right; merge onto Whitehead Highway; take Columbus Blvd. exit, make right onto Columbus Blvd.; Convention Center Garage will be on your right. •**Traveling I-84 East:** Follow I-84 East to I-91 South; follow I-91 South directions above. •**Traveling I-84 West:** Follow I-84 West and take the Downtown Hartford Exit (left lane exit); this will take you onto the Founders Bridge; at the end of the bridge, turn left onto Columbus Boulevard. ; Convention Center Garage will be on your left. •**Traveling Route 2:** Approaching Hartford, Route 2 will take you onto the Founders Bridge; at the end of the bridge, turn left onto Columbus Boulevard; Convention Center Garage will be on your left.

◆Does your housing authority have a citywide resident council? If not, consider working with residents to start one. Call PHRN if you need help.

Morning Workshops for Public Housing Residents & Staff:

Make No Decisions About Us Without Us - Part I

Are you a public housing resident and want to know what your rights are? Do you want to know how to be at the table when the decision-making is taking place in your housing authority? Then this double-session workshop is for you. Come and learn how to access the resources you need and voice what you want to say.

The State of State Public Housing

What does the future hold for the preservation and revitalization of state-financed public housing? Come hear what the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) has to say about the inventory of state housing and more.

Programs for Self-Sufficiency

There are a lot of programs that assist public housing and Section 8 residents on becoming more independent and self-sufficient. Hear about national programs that are out there and how you or your housing authority can take advantage of them.

Being an Effective Resident Commissioner

Every housing authority board has a resident commission, but most only have one. Being outnumbered, what do you do? This is a roundtable discussion with housing authority resident commissioners on how to make the most of your seat on the board.

Afternoon Workshops for Public Housing Residents & Staff:

Make No Decisions About Us Without Us - Part II

Are you a public housing resident and want to know what your rights are? Do you want to know how to be at the table when the decision-making is taking place in your housing authority? Then this double-session workshop is for you. Come and learn how to access the resources you need and voice what you want to say.

What's "HUD" Got To Do With It?

So you've picked up a flyer under your public housing door and its a notice of a new policy that "HUD" has mandated. Ever wonder, "Well who is 'HUD' anyway?" Don't understand how HUD decides new policies that impact you? Do you want to know how you can have a say so BEFORE the change is made? This workshop will help you understanding HUD's role in regulating public housing and how residents can talk to HUD.

Resident Service Coordinators - Making the Connection

Resident Service Coordinators often have the most difficult job at housing authorities. You work for the authority but you care about the residents and want to advocate for their needs. This workshop is a roundtable discussion of the demanding role of resident service staff and ways to better connect to residents.

An insightful analyst, inspiring speaker and Washington powerhouse, Donna Brazile describes the political and social forces that shape our country's domestic agenda, including its housing policies. She is a weekly commentator on CNN, a columnist for Roll Call newspaper, and chair of the Voting Rights Institute. Ms. Brazile was National Coordinator for the historic Housing Now! march on Washington. Her book, *Cooking with Grease: Stirring the Pots in American Politics*, traces her rise from humble roots to become the first African American to lead a major presidential campaign.

DONNA BRAZILE

Featured Speaker for October 27th Conference:

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Sept. '05

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•PLEASE CHECK OUT THE INSIDE OF THIS EDITION FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 27, 2005!!