

The background of the cover is a photograph of a desert landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, orange and yellow clouds, transitioning to a clear blue at the top. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several saguaro cacti are visible against the bright horizon. The overall mood is serene and iconic of the Arizona desert.

Arizona Housing and Community Development

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Presented by:

**Arizona Chapter of the
National Association of Housing
& Redevelopment Officials and**

**The Arizona Housing Authority
Director's Association**

NAHRO

A sustained investment in affordable housing and community development programs – Investing with Integrity

MISSION STATEMENT

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) is a professional membership organization comprised of nearly 23,000 housing and community development agencies and professionals throughout the United States. This national network of housing and community development practitioners and officials is well positioned to confront many of today's most pressing challenges. In today's budgetary climate, accountability to taxpayers is more important than ever, and NAHRO members can be trusted to bring federal resources to bear to address the challenges facing our nation in a cost-effective manner, and to deliver meaningful results for the families and communities they serve.

NAHRO's mission is to create affordable housing and safe, viable communities that enhance the quality of life for all Americans, especially those of low- and moderate-income. To advance this mission, NAHRO will work to:

- Ensure that housing and community development professionals have the leadership skills, education, information and tools to serve communities in a rapidly changing environment.
- Advocate for appropriate laws and policies that are sensitive to the needs of people served, are financial and programmatically viable for our industry, are flexible, promote deregulation and local decision making; and
- Foster the highest standards of ethical behavior, service and accountability.

Our members manage a wide range of federal programs, and they use the programs to serve a broad cross-section of their communities. NAHRO members own, operate, develop, and provide affordable housing through the Public Housing program, the Housing Choice Voucher program, the Home Investment Partnerships program and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. They combat homelessness, including among families and veterans, through their stewardship of McKinney-Vento funding. NAHRO members create jobs, revitalize local economies, and build stronger neighborhoods by leveraging HUD's core community and economic development programs, including Community Development Block Grants, Section 108 loan guarantees, and the Brownfield's Economic Development Initiative. Our members also play important roles in responding to natural disasters, apply innovative green building practices to reduce energy consumption, and collaborate with local social service providers to enhance the lives of the elderly and the disabled.

NAHRO enhances the professional development and effectiveness of its members through its comprehensive professional development curriculum, conferences, and publications. Through these efforts we are working to equip NAHRO and our membership with the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to survive and prosper in changing environment, and make our organization more efficient and effective.



ARIZONA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Collaboratively, the Arizona Chapter of National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) and the Arizona Housing Director's Association (AHADA) have identified those legislative priorities that are needed to serve the citizens and communities of Arizona.

Our state faces serious challenges. High unemployment persists, public infrastructure is decaying, foreclosed and abandoned homes continue to plague neighborhoods, one-time homeowners and would-be first-time homebuyers find themselves renters in a market already severely undersupplied with affordable rental housing, and homelessness among families is on the rise. These conditions, in addition to a backlog of billions in deferred modernization funding, have placed the nation's public housing assets at risk.

Our state's federal policymakers face difficult choices. As an era of divided government begins, the Administration and Congress seem poised to freeze or even reduce discretionary spending. At the same time, leaders from both ends of the political spectrum face enormous pressure to develop and implement creative, cost-effective strategies to create jobs and accelerate economic recovery. Arizona NAHRO and AHADA are keenly aware that any individual, organization, or industry advocating federal investment in a program must demonstrate not only that those charged with administering that program will be responsible stewards of taxpayers' dollars, but that their stewardship of these resources will provide a return on investment that contributes to a more economically vibrant America.

As decision makers at the federal level work to restore economic stability and contemplate funding levels for discretionary programs for Fiscal Year 2012 and beyond, housing and community development professionals are prepared to make the case for targeted investments in the critically important programs they administer. These professionals are ready to demonstrate that they will continue to administer these programs with integrity and a commitment to achieving real and lasting results for the communities and families they serve each and every day.

To that end, Arizona's 2011 Legislative and Regulatory Agenda outlines the steps we believe responsible policymakers should take to best meet the needs of vulnerable populations while harnessing the potential of housing and community development programs to fuel economic growth.



SUMMARY AGENDA

From coast to coast, affordable housing options have become increasingly scarce, and the need for assistance is growing. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, there is not a single county in America where an individual earning minimum wage can afford the market rent on a two-bedroom apartment. Meanwhile, the demand for federal rental assistance for low-income households continues to far outpace the supply - only around one quarter of eligible low-income families receive federal rental assistance. According to the Census Bureau, in 2009 5.6 million households with incomes below the poverty line — or about 60 percent of all poor renter households — paid at least half of their income toward rent and basic utilities. That represents a 17 percent increase since the last survey in 2007 and a 45 percent increase compared to 2003. And according to HUD's "Worst Case Housing Needs 2009: A Report to Congress," released on February 1, 2011, "worst case housing needs" grew by nearly 1.2 million households, or more than 20 percent, from 2007 to 2009 and by 42 percent since 2001. "Worst case housing needs" are defined as very low-income households who paid more than half their monthly income for rent, lived in severely substandard housing, or both.

The following summary highlights actions that Arizona NAHRO and Arizona Housing Director's Association (AHADA) believe are necessary during this difficult time in our nation's history:

Protect Arizona's Investment in Public Housing

- Enact NAHRO's proposal to allow public housing agencies (PHAs) to voluntarily convert public housing units to Section 8 project-based rental assistance in order to preserve this vital component of the national infrastructure.
- Support the revitalization of severely distressed public housing units.
- Address safety and security concerns connected to drug-related crime

Preserve Vital Community and Economic Development Programs

- Fully fund the Community Development Block Grant Program in order to create jobs and revitalize local economies.
- Maintain funding for HUD's cost-effective economic development tools.

Strengthen and Simplify the Section 8 Rental Assistance Programs

- Provide adequate funding for Housing Assistance Payment contract renewals and ongoing administrative fees.
- Enact the Section Eight Voucher Reform Act (SEVRA).
- Implement overdue regulatory and administrative revisions that ensure the efficient use of program funds.

Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities and Combat Homelessness

- Fully fund the Home Investment Partnerships Program and HUD's homeless assistance programs.
- Capitalize the Housing Trust Fund through a revenue-neutral approach.
- Preserve the viability of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program.

Address the Unique Needs of Rural Communities and Smaller Agencies

- Enact the Small Housing Agency Reform Proposal developed by NAHRO and its industry partner.
- Improve smaller agencies' and rural localities' access to federal housing and community development programs.
- Improve the performance of housing programs administered by federal agencies other than HUD.

Foster Innovation, Increase Efficiency, and Streamline the Regulatory Environment

- Promote Reasonable and Flexible Federal Oversight
- Incentivize Green Building and Increased Energy Efficiency
- Support HUD's ongoing transformation efforts.
- Ensure that HUD releases and distributes federal funding in a timely manner.
- Eliminate statutory and regulatory barriers that prevent PHAs and redevelopment authorities from accessing federal programs they are qualified to administer.

PUBLIC HOUSING

Protect the State's Investment in Public Housing

Arizona Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) own and operate approximately 6,800 units of federally subsidized public housing. Public housing serves families, as well as elderly and disabled persons who are among the nation's poorest. HUD administers operating subsidy provided under the Public Housing Operating Fund, which is supposed to bridge the gap between public housing rents, which are limited by law, and operating expenses. Additionally, HUD supplies funding for the capital needs of public housing projects under the Public Housing Capital Fund. Until last year, the difference between HUD's requested funding and the actual allocation has been alarmingly insufficient. For FY 2011, the administration requests a total of 4.83 billion for the Public Housing operating Fund. The administration portrays its request as "100 percent of public housing Authorities estimated eligibility for operating subsidies under the Operating Fund formula." Arizona NAHRO and Arizona Housing Directors Association (AHADA) applaud the requested funding level but recommend \$5.08 billion for the operating Fund for FY 2011, with this recommendation based on a methodology the housing industry believes better reflects the 2004 negotiated rule.

Arizona NAHRO and the Arizona Housing Directors Association (AHADA) shall:

- Support the enactment of federal legislation to preserve the existing public housing stock by addressing the unfunded capital needs of public housing through the use of federal income tax credits, tax credit supported bonds and other means. This includes supporting the President initiative for transforming rental assistance in the form of project based voucher funding as an option to create a vehicle to leverage the redevelopment of Public Housing.
- Encourage the utilization of public housing assets by fully enabling PHAs to finance the rehabilitation and preservation of public housing by encumbering public housing properties as contemplated by the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA).
- Continue to participate in the development of legislation to reauthorize the HOPE VI program that is both workable and generally accessible to PHAs of varying sizes.

While infusions of capital funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act have allowed some Arizona PHAs to address a portion of their long overdue capital needs, Arizona NAHRO strongly believes that funding received through the Recovery Act and any other supplemental funding should not be offset by cuts in the annual Capital Fund appropriation. The President's budget includes \$2.04 billion for the Public Housing Capital fund for FY 2011, down \$456 million from the FY 2010 level and well below the annual accrual (2.6 billion) of capital needs.

Federal Oversight

Excessive federal regulation of PHAs diminishes the return on existing appropriated resources. It also undermines PHAs' ability to leverage new resources. In short, PHAs are charged with the responsibility for providing housing for the nation's poorest renters, yet they are denied the flexibility that is necessary to embrace this vital mission in the most effective manner.

Accordingly, Arizona NAHRO and AHADA shall:

- Support reform of the contractual relationship between PHAs and the federal government so that federal administrative and regulatory demands fairly reflect resources provided, and federal subsidies for public housing are predictable, adequate and stable;
- Continue to advocate for a reasonable transition to asset management of public housing with a permanent optional exemption for agencies operating fewer than 500 public housing units;
- Continue the Administrative Reform Initiative (ARI) process begun at HUD in 2007 for regulatory and administrative reform and seek meaningful, practicable reform of federal oversight activities pertaining to PHAs and the federal programs they administer;
- Explore with HUD and Congress enactment of a program to achieve substantial deregulation of small PHAs (Small Housing Authority Reform Proposal); and
- Work to develop alternatives to existing methods of evaluating the performance of PHAs and their programs and properties that are fair and equitable with the housing providers.



Beyond enacting our public housing preservation proposal, Arizona NAHRO and AHADA call upon policymakers to:

- Promote other policies that move all PHAs toward a sustainable operating environment, regardless of whether they choose to convert to Section 8 project-based assistance.
- Support \$5.08 billion for the Public Housing Operating Fund and supports \$2.5 billion for the Public Housing Capital Fund for FY 2011.
- Provide additional options to PHAs seeking to address the capital needs of their properties.



HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS Strengthen & Simplify the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program provides rental assistance to over 20,600 low-income families in Arizona and to nearly 2.2 million low-income families nationwide. The flexibility of the HCV program's design has helped make it the optimal tool for meeting a wide variety of critical affordable housing needs. Administered by city, county, multi-county and state public housing agencies, the program helps families, seniors and persons with disabilities live stable and independent lives; helps the working poor to become self-sufficient; and enables families to live in neighborhoods where poverty is not concentrated.

The Section 8 HCV program has a demonstrated track record of success. Nonetheless, the program can be further improved to provide PHAs with additional tools to help maximize the number of families served in their communities. Through a combination of adequate funding for Housing Assistance Payments (HAP), administrative fees that are rationally distributed, and the adoption of legislative and regulatory reforms, the Housing Choice Voucher program can be better positioned to provide affordable, decent housing opportunities for low-income households. In order to continue this much needed program NAHRO and AHADA urge the Administration and Congress to:

- Support Legislative, Regulatory and Administrative Reforms;
- Support the Enactment of Legislation to improve the Section Housing Choice Voucher Program;
- Work to Ensure Stable Voucher HAP and Administrative Fee Funding;
- Maintain Full Funding for the Project-Based Section 8 program;
- Maintain Open, Competitive Process for HUD Selection of Section 8 Performance Based Contract Administrators;
- Support the Enactment of Responsible "Housing Preservation and Tenant Protection Act".

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Preserve Vital Community and Economic Development Programs

HUD is the most important federal partner related to state and local community revitalization initiatives. In these difficult times, a full-scale recovery will require a focused, coordinated, and ongoing effort at all levels of government. Now more than ever, state and local agencies need HUD to remain a strong and supportive partner committed to the successful, results-driven implementation of local community revitalization strategies.

In 2011 NAHRO will encourage the Administration and Congress to maintain HUD's role as the leader in federal community and economic development policy. NAHRO will also continue its efforts to educate policymakers about the importance of providing full funding for vital community and economic development programs. State and local community revitalization initiatives are a needed resource throughout Arizona. In a time when communities are being hardest hit by daunting economic circumstance, these programs are a key solution in stabilizing communities and neighborhoods. The following actions must be taken:

- Maintain funding for the CDBG program to ensure the success of state and local efforts to spur job creation, provide vital public services, and expand affordable housing opportunities;
- Preserve HUD's Economic Development Tools;
- Discontinue Burdensome Restrictions on the Use of Eminent Domain for Community Revitalization;
- Support Incremental Funding to Encourage Transit-Oriented Development and Enhance the Livability of Communities Should Be Incremental to Existing Programs

EXPAND AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND COMBAT HOMELESSNESS

To expand affordable housing Arizona NAHRO urges the Administration to fully fund the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) program. As our nation continues to endure an affordable housing

crisis, restoring HOME program formula funding is critically important. The proven and effective HOME program empowers states and localities to design and implement affordable housing strategies to respond to locally determined needs. Arizona NAHRO supports working toward the development of a federal housing policy that strikes a more appropriate balance between promoting responsible homeownership and addressing the nation's acute shortage of affordable rental housing units. To this end, NAHRO and AHADA recommend that the Administration and Congress:

- Capitalize the Housing Trust Fund
- Preserve the Viability of the Low Income Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) Maintain Funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.

For more than 30 years, the CDBG program has empowered states, local governments, and their partners to rebuild local economies, strengthen public infrastructure, and improve the quality of life for millions of low- and moderate-income Americans. This flexible program emphasizes local decision-making and prioritization of needs and ensures accountability through citizen participation and performance measurement.

Given the importance of job creation and public service provision during a severe and persistent economic downturn, the need for CDBG funding in states and localities across the nation is as great as it has ever been. In spite of the program's proven track record, CDBG formula funding declined by 17 percent from FY 2004 to FY 2009, even before adjusting for inflation.

Fortunately, Congress provided additional CDBG resources through ARRA, and, at the Administration's request, increased CDBG formula funding for FY 2010. Despite this welcome progress, the program's funding level is still insufficient to meet the significant community development needs of states and local governments. In 2010 NAHRO will continue its efforts to restore full funding for the CDBG formula program to ensure the success of state and local efforts to spur job creation and retention, provide vital public services, and expand affordable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families and individuals.

The Curley School Redevelopment Project

Located in Ajo, the formerly abandoned Curley School has become a magnet for artists, a social and economic hub of the town, and an award-winning example of economic development through adaptive reuse. The main building (at right), was constructed in 1919, and is the centerpiece of a seven-acre campus, which includes seven additional buildings. The school is a fine example of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The campus boasts 114,000 square feet of space which includes classrooms, auditoriums, an indoor/outdoor stage, computer centers, community workshops, a gymnasium, as well as 30 affordable apartments available to income-eligible artists.

Units vary in size from studios to three bedrooms, though all boast high ceilings and tall windows that provide exceptional lighting. Restoration of the building began in the spring of 2006 with a grand opening on May 29, 2007.

The first residents moved in the following day. Funding for the project comes from numerous and diverse sources, including: Enterprise Community Investment; U.S. Department Housing and Urban Development (HUD); National Park Service; Tohono O'odham Nation; as well as fifteen additional organizations and numerous individual donations. In all \$7.9 million was spent during this phase of renovation, and additional preservation activities will occur at other buildings on the campus.



HOME PROGRAM.

Fully Fund the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program

As our nation continues to endure an affordable housing crisis, increasing HOME program formula funding is critically important. The proven and effective HOME program empowers states and localities to design and implement affordable housing strategies to respond to locally determined needs. Since 1990, HOME has made possible the construction, acquisition, or rehabilitation of more than 184,000 homeowner units, 376,000 homebuyer units, and 388,000 rental units, and the program is expected to assist its one-millionth unit in 2010. HOME has also provided help to over 200,000 households through local tenant-based rental assistance Programs. Despite this track record of success, the administration's FY 2011 budget proposal calls for a 10 percent reduction in HOME program funding. Given HOME's proven success and the increasing and on-going need for affordable housing in Arizona and throughout the nation, AZ NAHRO and AHADA support full funding for the HOME program.

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM (NSP)

Ensure the Success of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) will fortify neighborhoods hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis while also providing new affordable housing opportunities. Because 25 percent of NSP funding must be used to support activities that result in the provision of affordable housing for individuals or families at or below 50 percent of area median income, it is realistic to expect that a substantial amount of NSP funding will be used to support the expansion of the affordable rental housing inventory. Arizona NAHRO PHAs are uniquely qualified to understand and respond to the affordable housing needs of the low-income residents of the communities in which they operate.

Arizona NAHRO and AHADA:

- Continue to encourage policymakers to take steps to promote the involvement of PHAs in state and local NSP implementation; and
- Urge the Administration and Congress to work closely with stakeholders, including NAHRO and Arizona NAHRO, in an effort to identify and act upon any challenges that arise as NSP2 grantees commit and expend funding.



Before and after photos of a single-family reconstruction project in Yuma.

Completed with NSP funding through the City of Yuma's Neighborhood Services Division, the house on the left was demolished and replaced with the new structure to the right. The original house had no foundation and was termite-infested, causing severe structural problems. A leaking roof, electrical and plumbing system failures, no HVAC and shoddily constructed additions also contributed to the house's poor condition. The project is part of the City's on-going Carver Park Revitalization Program.

HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Fully Fund HUD's Homeless Assistance Programs

Congress enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009 resulting in the availability of Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) funds to prevent and alleviate homelessness for many individuals and families. NAHRO and Arizona NAHRO strongly supported the activities conducted with HPRP funds. As the economic crisis continued into 2010, the safety net that adequate program funding provides has become increasingly important to maintain.

Homelessness is a very complex social and economic issue that can affect anyone. Structural issues such as poverty, disability, and lack of safe and affordable housing increase the prevalence of homelessness within our nation and state. Loss of a job, a health crisis, domestic violence, the loss of family support and myriad other events can trigger a downward spiral resulting in homelessness. Homelessness affects people of all ages and ethnic groups.

On an annual basis, Arizona communities conduct a point-in-time survey of those persons experiencing homelessness, including those persons who experience homelessness on the streets and those in emergency shelter. In 2010, the Arizona point-in-time survey identified 6,354 persons who are unsheltered, experiencing homelessness on the streets of our communities. Of this total, 30% of individuals experiencing homelessness meet the HUD definition of chronic homelessness. In 2010, the point-in-time survey reflected 4,251 persons experiencing homelessness. Families experiencing homelessness represent the fastest growing group of homeless people in the U.S.

The Urban Institute has identified the lack of affordable housing as the primary cause of homelessness among families. Data generated each year by the Arizona Department of Housing show that housing is unaffordable due to the inadequate supply of affordable housing and because low incomes cause families to be unable to pay for the housing that is available. In many communities, the task of finding affordable is virtually impossible for families who have lost their housing.

In 2011 NAHRO and AHADA will:

Seek full funding for HUD's homeless assistance programs while recognizing the need for program funding to keep pace with the rising cost of renewing expiring contracts. Offer input through the rulemaking process as HUD implements programmatic reforms that offer grantees' greater flexibility, including an expanded definition of homelessness that will allow agencies to better respond to locally-determined needs.

ADDRESS THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF SMALLER AGENCIES AND COMMUNITIES

Arizona NAHRO's diverse membership includes agencies representing communities of all sizes. As a National and State Organization, we are mindful of the importance of Federal Housing and Community Development Programs that are designed to meet the unique needs of smaller agencies and communities. At the same time, new and existing programs intended to serve the full spectrum of agency types should be accessible to smaller agencies as much as possible. To this end, AZ NAHRO and AHADA support the following actions:

- Enact the Small Housing Agency Reform Proposal
- Ensure New Programs Are Available to Smaller Agencies and Rural Communities
- Advocate Improvements to Programs to Better Serve Smaller Agencies and Rural Communities

In 2011 Arizona NAHRO and NAHRO will:

- Continue to encourage the Administration to refine its proposal, in concert with Congressional authorizers, in order to ensure that rural communities and agencies have a meaningful opportunity to seek and secure Choice Neighborhoods funding. Similarly, NAHRO believes that smaller communities should be able to access new federal programs – including the Sustainable

Communities Initiative – that are intended to provide resources to support the integration of transit planning with affordable housing development and community revitalization efforts.

- Will work with its members to formulate and communicate recommendations for improvements to existing programs in order to better meet the unique needs of rural communities and smaller agencies. This effort will include increased monitoring of federal programs administered by agencies other than HUD, including the Department of Agriculture's Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Program, Section 538 Rental Housing Guaranteed Loans, Rental Preservation Revolving Loans, and Rental Assistance Contracts. NAHRO will also seek to restore dedicated, stand-alone funding for HUD's rural housing and economic development program (as opposed to set-aside funding under the CDBG program). And as mentioned elsewhere in this document, NAHRO is working to provide small PHAs with significant regulatory relief, including the ability to elect to be exempt from asset management requirements. NAHRO will also work to provide smaller PHAs with access to a streamlined

Foster Innovation, Increase Efficiency, and Streamline the Regulatory Environment

- Promote Reasonable and Flexible Federal Oversight
- Incentivize Green Building & Increased Energy Efficiency – NAHRO and Arizona NAHRO support the application of green building, sustainable design, and energy efficiency principles within federal housing and community development programs. Public policies in this area should incentivize rather than mandate the adoption of these principles by local agencies that administer federal housing and community development programs.
- Support HUD's Ongoing Transformation Efforts
- Eliminate Barriers to PHA Eligibility

ARIZONA HOUSING AGENCY UNIT AUTHORIZATIONS

Agency	Public Housing Units	Section 8 Units	Combined Waiting Lists
Arizona Behavioral Health Corp.	0	125	518
State of Arizona (Yavapai County)	0	89 & 35 VASH	55
Chandler	303	480	988
Cochise County	0	390	690
Douglas	0	338	721
Eloy	50	159	201
Flagstaff	265	330	632
Gila County	0	53	200+
Glendale	155	1,054	1,565
Maricopa County	771	1,479	2,592
Mesa	0	1,525	2,936
Mohave County	0	322	580
Nogales	227	192	352
Peoria	70	82	498
Phoenix	2,557	5,992	28,456
Pinal County	169	584	900
Scottsdale	0	726	426
South Tucson	172	132	547
Tempe	0	1,082	2,505
Tucson/Pima County	1,505	4,801	9,600
Williams	30	47	300
Winslow	55	128	728
Yuma	235	1,122	3,909
Yuma County	159	401	1,653
TOTALS	6,723	21,668	61,552

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