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Irwin W. Aronson, Esq
PAHRA Legal Counsel, Partner, Willig, Williams & Davidson
From a very young age, I have had a strong fascination with the Universe vis-à-vis the stars, planets, galaxies, etc. I can't explain it. Maybe it was the Star Wars movie (circa 1977) - thanks George Lucas; or maybe Star Trek (circa 1966 - before my birth); or maybe the picture that my father took of me in front of my parents’ black and white television set when Neil Armstrong took his step on the moon on July 20, 1969 (9 months after my birth and, as I write this, exactly 49 years to the day). Maybe it's all the above. Whatever the basis for my instilled fascination, I am awestruck by the enormity of the universe; the endless possibilities of what is unknown; the stark reality and reminder that no matter how much we think that we know, we are constantly (year after year) adjusting (and in some cases flat out drastically altering) our understanding and comprehension of the Universe (note: the image above shows three different possible shapes for the Universe).

Like the Universe, I find my comprehension of our respective industry (housing and community development) constantly in a state of adjustment and, on occasion, maybe even drastically altered. To be sure, there are boundaries or limits to what our organizations can and should do. However, within the presumed "shape" of our industry, I am finding through the work performed by other housing and redevelopment agencies, and also through the work performed by my staff, that there is so much more that we can do to improve our communities through quality affordable housing, smart community development and self-sufficiency-oriented programs.

Through my final “Message from the President”, I leave everyone with this request: Take your organizations as high as they can possibly go. Aim for the stars.

I want to thank the PAHRA Board of Directors for their support and encouragement as we continue to aim as high as we can. See you all in State College for PAHRA’s Annual Conference, including the Best Practices Showcase and presentation of the Bellamy Awards, our association’s highest recognition of excellence.

Senghor A. Manns,
PAHRA President
AGREEMENTS
When you enter into a car lease or residential lease, you are aware of when the agreement expires. You do not wait until the last day to renew or find a different vendor. The same approach should be taken for your natural gas and electric procurement needs. By being aware of your current agreement(s) end dates, and potential price adjustments, i.e. possible Capacity and Transmission Pass-throughs that were seen, and current market conditions, this will only help when the decision comes to renewing or looking at different product offerings.

BENEFITS
There are a multitude of benefits that stem from being aware of the details of any current agreement you may be in. Whether you are in a Fixed Price agreement, Capacity and Transmission Pass-through product, or Demand Response, you may be able to control costs by controlling your Capacity and Transmission tags, demand and/or consumption, resulting in additional savings. By looking at pricing for a future start date as far as 24 months out, you are able to set a benchmark figure and watch the ebbs and flows of a volatile market; making an educated decision on when to execute and which product may be best for your profile.

CONSULTANTS
With all that being said, we know not everyone wakes up each morning looking forward to dissecting and analyzing natural gas and electric bills. By working with a trusted COSTARS approved vendor with over 100 years of experience in the industry, we do all of this for you. The team of consultants at Chrislynn Energy are here to help, as we have with many of the Housing Authorities over the years. If you are not familiar with Chrislynn, or would like to learn more, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are hard to miss at each of the PAHRA Annual Conference. Look for us in the Atrium at the Nittany Lion Inn at the PAHRA Annual Conference.

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Previously PAHRA announced our collaboration with Infradapt, LLC to develop and host a platform to be used as a hub for direct communication and informational exchanges between PAHRA members.

The PAHRA Peer-to-Peer Platform, or P2P, is offered exclusively to PAHRA members. Through our p2p@mypahra.com mailing list our members will now be able to communicate directly with each other.

Currently, PAHRA communicates to members through one-way eblasts using our listserv. P2P will allow our members to communicate through two-way messaging. It will resemble a conference call – in writing. If you have a question or want to quickly inform a network of others regarding situations such as problems with HUD systems or PIC, post a staff vacancy, or share breaking news, one quick email to the list notifies everyone on the chain. Some examples:

**BEDBUGS**

Kathy writes: *We all know preparation prior to treatment of infestation is key to effectiveness, but we also know it is a time-consuming pain. What do you do if the residents are frail elderly and unable to do it, or if they are young families too busy or just don’t care enough to follow the prep instructions? Does your authority charge for treatment prep?*

Bill responds: *First time treatment is free. We stress this. It is their responsibility to prep properly. If they don’t follow instructions and the treatment is ineffective, we will charge them for any necessary follow-up treatments. Money talks.*

Amy says: *I hesitate to throw this out there, but we have found that it is best for our own staff to prep. In the long run, it saves us both money and time because it’s done right and treatment works the first time.*

And so the conversation begins...20 people participate and several end up exchanging policies.

**PROCUREMENT**

George inquires: *Our authority is in the market for good bi-fold doors that stand up to the abuse at family sites. We’re looking to replace hundreds. Can anyone 1) recommend a good, hardy product; or 2) let us piggyback on your purchase?*

Ed replies: *We’ve used Premiere Bi-fold Systems for years and we love them. I’ll send you a link to their product and pricing lists.*

Dean adds: *We just purchased a huge inventory of those Premiere doors. You’re more than welcome to piggyback. Call me at 123-456-7890 and we can discuss.*

The dialogue continues and evolves into an in-depth discussion about a number of other products and services for which authorities plan to share procurement through inter-agency agreements.
FROM THE DIRECTORS CHAIR (continued from page 8)

JOB POSTINGS

Renea asks: The Excela County Redevelopment Authority has a vacancy for a Fiscal Director. We haven’t had any luck finding someone locally. Can you post this job notice or share it with your network?

Sue responds: I have a friend in your area who would be perfect for the job! I’ll have her contact you.

Natalie says: Isn’t this P2P great?!!

We plan to “go live” with P2P in September. You will receive an introductory email with the subject: Welcome to the P2P Mailing List. This email will provide instructions as to how to post messages to p2p@mypahra.com. It will also include general information about the mailing list and how to set up or change your personal options regarding delivery, password, or subscription choices.

Let’s face it, we don’t want our emailboxes filled with even more “stuff”. You will have the opportunity to switch P2P to “digest” mode, which will allow you to set aside P2P messages for review at another time, such as at the end of the day. You might also choose to set up a separate emailbox for your P2P messages that you can check at your convenience.

Infradapt will be unveiling P2P at our PAHRA Annual Conference in State College, and their staff will also have an informational booth in the Atrium at the Nittany Lion Inn to talk more in depth and on a personal level about the platform and how it works, for those of us who are technologically challenged (like me).

As it evolves, our P2P platform has the potential to become a valuable problem-solving, productivity-boosting, team-building tool to facilitate the exchange of ideas and information among our membership. Eventually, we may expand the mailing list to include staff or establish specific groups such as property management, Section 8, or geographic regions.

Please be patient with us as we work out any bugs in the system. We encourage you to utilize this service made available to you through your PAHRA association. As always, we’re working for you…

Until next time. Take care,
Kelly

Kelly Hicks
Executive Director,
PAHRA

THE POWER OF EXPERIENCE

PEPPER HAMILTON IS PLEASED TO SUPPORT THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

Our Affordable Housing Group is founded upon a solid core of real estate, finance, tax and lending experience and has lawyers with concentrated experience in affordable housing and economic and community development activities using federal, state, local and private financial guarantees and assistance.
The Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) Program is an initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide rental assistance for people with disabilities who want to live in the community. As the HUD grant recipient for the commonwealth, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) has partnered with the state Department of Human Services (DHS) to achieve the goal of keeping people with disabilities out of institutional housing through supportive independent living.

The Self Determination Housing Project of Pennsylvania (SDHP) and the Regional Housing Coordinators (RHCs) play an important role in managing parts of the 811 Program. Not only do they maintain the 811 waiting list, but the RHCs continue to build referral networks, as well as seeking partnerships with agencies who work with priority groups the 811 Program serves.

**MAINTAINING A WAITING LIST**
The 811 waiting list was developed for people with disabilities, ages 18-61, who qualify as extremely low-income and meet one of the following criteria:
- Priority 1 – People who are institutionalized but able to live in the community with permanent supportive housing.
- Priority 2 – People who are at risk of being institutionalized and who don’t have permanent supportive housing.
- Priority 3 – People who are living in a congregate setting and are seeking housing within the community.

This waiting list serves referrals for property commitments as well as referrals for housing authorities committing vouchers and public housing units.

In Pennsylvania, HUD awarded two grants:
- For fiscal year 2012, funding rental assistance for 200 units; and
- For fiscal year 2013, again funding rental assistance for 200 units

PHFA and DHS are proud to report that the grant for fiscal year 2012 is completely allocated with 206 units under contract. Regarding the grant for 2013, 42 units are so far committed to the PRA program. Rental properties in 22 counties have confirmed their commitments to the program. As a result, today we have 67 households living in 811 units.

**PROGRESS THUS FAR**
In order to strengthen our application with HUD, we have included pledges from several housing authorities to support our commitment to the 811 Program by including leveraged housing choice vouchers and/or public housing units in each application to HUD.

These commitments provide the opportunity to house an additional 151 households for each award year for a total of 302 low-income households who qualify for the 811 Program. In addition, FY13 commitments provide a mental health preference.

Across the state, leveraged vouchers have now helped 99 referrals from the 811 Program to find permanent housing in the community of their choice. As we continue to send referrals to participating housing authorities, we look forward to reporting back to HUD numbers reflective of our goal of utilizing all of the 302 housing choice vouchers/public housing units committed to this program.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**
PHFA would like to notify housing authorities that if they have properties within their portfolio that are not 100 percent subsidized, or if they are considering the submission of a tax credit application, they could be eligible to participate in the 811 Program. To learn more, contact Kristen Nagel, PHFA’s Section 811 coordinator, at 717.780.3816 or knagel@phfa.org.
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FEDERAL
Advocacy in Action - PAHRA Goes to The Capitol

On April 24th, nearly two-dozen PAHRA members participated in Capitol Hill Advocacy Day in conjunction with the NAHRO Washington Conference in DC. As part of this event, PAHRA representatives met with senior staff of both Senator Toomey and Senator Casey, as well as 10 members of Pennsylvania’s congressional delegation or their staff to discuss our legislative priorities for 2018.

The event provided a direct opportunity to voice concerns about the federal budget, as well as key authorizing and regulatory issues related to public housing. Specifically, these conversations focused on the need for increased funding for Tenant Based Rental Assistance, Public Housing Operating and Capital Funds, CDBG and HOME Investment Partnership funds for FY 19 and beyond. In addition, members of PAHRA discussed possible rent increases and work requirements for public housing tenants with federal staff. PAHRA members expressed to the Pennsylvania delegation that increasing rents and work requirements should be left to the discretion of the housing authority and other local organizations. Another topic that was discussed in these meetings was President Trump’s proposed recessions to the federal budget. Many staff members of the PA Delegation did not see Trump’s recessions as an issue due to the lengthy legislative process and the effect of the upcoming Midterm Election.

Appropriations
Currently both the House and the Senate have released their draft HUD budgets for FY19. The House bill maintains the 10% increase in HUD funding that advocates and congressional champions secured in FY18, with modest additional increases for FY19. The Senate bill builds on the 10% increase in HUD funding by providing $1.8 billion in new resources in FY19. Overall, the bill provides HUD programs with more than $12 billion above the president’s FY19 request and more than $1 billion above the House bill. Both budgets clearly reject the calls to drastically cut housing investments proposed by the White House in the form of funding cuts, harmful rent increases, rigid work requirements, and de facto time limits.

The Trump Administration proposed several rescissions to funds that policymakers provided in prior fiscal years that haven’t yet been obligated. The package proposes killing $15 billion in unused funds with total proposed HUD rescissions equaling $38,934,515. Congress had 45 days to act on the rescission package. On June 7th, the proposed Recission package (HR 3) passed the House. On June 20th, this package was voted down in the Senate. Because of procedural rules, the Senate had to vote on the bill before June 22 to approve it by a simple majority. After that date, the bill will need 60 votes to pass in the Senate. Many advocates see this bill as dead since it did not obtain a simple majority in the Senate.

These proposed rescissions will not impact the 2018 omnibus bill but the administration plans to craft another rescissions package down the line addressing the omnibus. National housing advocates and PAHRA members have heard from federal staffers that they do not see Trump’s recessions as an issue due to the lengthy legislative process and the effect of the upcoming Midterm Election.

In April 2018, Secretary Ben Carson released his proposal to increase rents as well as impose rent requirements on current public housing tenants. Bill provisions include:
• Increase rent for tenants in subsidized housing to 35 percent of gross income (or 35 percent of their earnings working 15 hours a week at the federal minimum wage), up from the current standard of 30 percent of adjusted income.
• Establish a new minimum rent of $150 for families earning less than $435 each month. Elderly, disabled, or other exempted families have a minimum rent of $50.
• Allow public housing agencies and owners of project-based housing communities to impose minimum work requirements with few exceptions.

Housing advocates are concerned about the impact of these proposed changes on some public housing and federally-assisted housing residents and their ability to remain stably housed; they cite the potential for increased homelessness, and an increase in demand for federal resources such as through the Homeless Assistance Grant program.

In addition to HUD’s proposed increased rents and work requirements, Congressman Dennis Ross (R-FL) has proposed similar legislation that aims to increase rents and impose work requirements on public housing tenants. Rep. Ross’ bill proposes:
• Eliminating income deduction for medical and childcare expenses.
• Allowing for a tiered rent system with the average rent increase being more than $200 at the income cliff.
• Imposing a de facto time limit on affordable housing benefits with tenants seeing a decrease in benefits every two years.
• Allowing PHAs to change rent policies, without protections for residents. Rent change proposals would be accepted if HUD does not disapprove of them within 90 days.

National housing advocates are monitoring this bill and have come out against this bill and its intended policies. While there may not be support for reducing or eliminating funding, rent reform may find support and could significantly impact our resident communities. It is important to include these impacts in discussions with legislators and their staff.

Federal Tax Reform
Advocates from the ACTION Campaign believe that the upcoming Lame Duck in Congress offers an opportunity for S. 548 (Cantwell- Hatch) to be passed. The passage of this legislation will expand other elements of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit that were not included in the March 2018 funding Omnibus that was passed by Congress.

STATE
FY 2018 – 2019 State Budget
The Wolf Administration released its FY 2018-2019 Executive budget request for the Commonwealth in February. In June 2018, The Pennsylvania General Assembly approved an on-time budget that was supported by both chambers as well as Governor Wolf. This budget provides significant increases for education and maintains level funding for all other programs. This fiscal year, the General Fund finished $137.2 million less than projected, 0.4 percent. The state is using roughly $1 billion in one-time cash sources to balance the new budget package. In a year, budget makers will be tasked with finding cash again to pick up those recurring costs, as well as any new spending or increasing costs.

The 2018-2019 budget includes the following funding for housing and redevelopment programs:
• PHARE (State Housing Trust Fund) $29.9 million ($6.1 million increase)
• Homeless Assistance $18.5 million (level funded)
• Human Services Development Fund $13.5 million (level funded)
• Neighborhood Assistance Program $18 million (level funded)
• Mixed Use Tax Credit $2 million ($2 million increase)
• Keystone Communities Program $16.7 million (24% increase)

State Legislative Update
PAHRA continues to monitor state legislation relevant to its members. The following are bills that PAHRA’s Executive Committee recently voted to support.

SB 919 – Relocation Assistance for Domestic and Sexual Violence Victims in Public Housing (Haywood, D-Philadelphia) - This bill amends the Housing Authorities Law to provide protections to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and allow a victim of domestic or sexual violence to seek relocation assistance from public housing authorities (PHAs). The intent of the bill sponsors is to codify at the state level assistance to which victims of domestic and sexual violence are entitled under the federal Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA). Public Housing Authorities must already meet the requirements of federal VAWA as well as regulatory agreements with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

PAHRA’s Legislative Committee and Executive Leadership worked extensively with the sponsors of SB 919, providing detailed comments on the legislation when it was in the Senate Urban Affairs Committee, and developing an amendment that helps ensure Housing Authorities can
respond to requests for assistance with resources available - thereby reducing the likelihood of legal challenges based on the assistance provided. This bill passed out of the Senate Urban Affairs Committee as well as the full Senate with PAHRA approved and suggested amendments. PAHRA issued support letters to the House Urban Affairs committee in an effort to pass this legislation. This bill passed favorably out of the House Urban Affairs on June 19th, 2018 and is now awaiting a House floor vote.

SB 667 – Land Bank Powers Expansion (Stefano, R-Fayette) - This bill expands the powers of land banks expressed in PA Land Bank Law, Act 153 of 2012 to a municipality’s Redevelopment Authority.

Since originally being introduced in May 2017, PAHRA’s Board and Legislative Committee voted to support this legislation. In July 2017, this legislation passed the Senate and was referred to the House Urban Affairs committee. In May 2018, this bill was amended in the House to expand Land Bank Powers to RDA’s under the same rules that Land Banks currently operate. The amended bill was voted out of the House Urban Affairs committee and referred to the House Appropriations committee and voted out of committee. SB 667 passed the House and Senate as amended. Governor Wolf approved SB 667 on June 19, 2018.

HB 2010 – Uniform Definition for Blight (O’Brien, D-Philadelphia) - This bill provides a uniform definition of “blighted property” by amending Title 1 (General Provisions) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, rules of construction. The definition proposed in HB 2010 does not replace definitions of blighted property in existing statutes, such as the Urban Redevelopment Law (URL) or the Conservatorship Act. PAHRA issued a letter of support to House Urban Affairs Committee members in early March. This bill was amended and passed out of committee and is currently pending on the House floor.

HB 1629 - Optional Housing Authority Police Force in Third Class Cities (Freeman, D-Northampton) - This bill amends the Housing Authorities Law to give Housing Authorities in cities of the third class the option to establish a police force. The bill does not provide any funding for this purpose, nor does it require Housing Authorities to establish and fund a police force. Housing Authorities in cities of the first class and second class, as well as counties of the second class already have this option. PAHRA’s Legislative Committee recommended supporting this non-controversial bill in early February. PAHRA will issue a letter of support for this bill when it is being considered by the House Urban Affairs Committee.

SB 735 Optional County Demolition and Rehabilitation Fund (Brewster, D-Allegheny) – This bill allows counties to create a new local fund to address blighted property. It does so by assessing a fee (not to exceed 10%) on the assessed price of properties being sold for delinquent taxes. This new fund would be in addition to existing Optional County Demolition Funds of Act 152 of 2016. PAHRA’s Legislative Committee recommended supporting this bill in early February. PAHRA issued a letter of support in early March. In June 2018, this bill passed out of the Senate and was received in the House. This bill is currently awaiting consideration by the House Urban Affairs Committee.
By Leo A. Murray for HARIE

The usual quietness of a workplace or school setting is pierced by the unmistakable sound of gunfire, a scenario that has played out far too many times recently, claiming the lives of innocent men, women, and children.

Would you know what to do if an active shooter—bent on causing as much damage as possible—suddenly appeared and started randomly squeezing off multiple rounds of gunfire in a school, office or a public housing common area setting?

Most people wouldn't know how to react, according to HARIE's safety consultant Rocco DiPietro of Cocciardi and Associates. At the recent PAHRA Spring Conference in Hershey, Mr. DiPietro, as part of HARIE's proactive approach to these types of situations, presented a safety course on active shooters to educate people on what they should do if one of these events began unfolding around them.

"Most people have a tendency to freeze after the first shot is fired," DiPietro said. But the safety consultant stressed that's the wrong thing to do. In these situations, said Mr. DiPietro, there are three options: RUN → HIDE → or FIGHT.

First and foremost, said Mr. DiPietro, a call to Emergency 911 should be made immediately because time is of the essence. Once a connection to emergency service is made, he said, the line should be left open so dispatchers can listen in on the activities taking place enabling them to relay important information to emergency responders. He cautioned that, in some areas, it may take responders as long as 15 minutes to a half hour to arrive on scene.

Complete with a Power Point presentation and a video prepared by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Mr. DiPietro vividly described ways in which people caught in an active shooter environment can attempt to minimize the damage and, quite possibly, save lives.

One of the most important things people can do, Mr. DiPietro said, is to be aware of their surroundings. "Know where the exits are," he said. "If you decide to run, don't stop. Stay on a direct route to safety."

Of course, the "running" option may not be available, he said. Finding a place to hide is another option, noting that closets and other enclosed areas are a viable alternative to running. "Barricade yourself and any coworkers near you by shoving a heavy object in front of the door and remain quiet." Mr. DiPietro said. "Then wait until the scene is secured by arriving emergency personnel."

As a last resort, Mr. DiPietro said, confronting the active shooter should be done with great trepidation. Confront the shooter only if you feel as though your life is threatened. He noted that things like chairs, desks, heavy objects, and even scissors or staplers could be used as weapons to disable a shooter.

Overall, the safety consultant said, pre-planning through Safety Committees for an active shooter situation is an invaluable tool to prevent tragedy or at least minimize it. Following are some other tips Mr. DiPietro offered in the way of being proactive with regard to active shooters:

- Report oddities observed like individuals carrying long cases or wearing backpacks who look like they may not belong in the area. "If something seems out of the norm, report it," said Mr. DiPietro.
- See if your county communications center is equipped to send out text alerts warning people of an active shooter situation in the area.
- Given the culture of today, the consultant said, employee Safety Committees should continue to discuss the possibility of active shooter scenarios and plan appropriately, even to the point of conducting drills similar to the way in which fire drills are conducted.
- Immediately suspend the credentials of any terminated, disciplined or fired employees, including identification badges and key cards.

More helpful information on active shooter preparedness can be found on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Website: www.dhs.gov.

HARIE remains committed to being proactive in safety protocols to benefit our clients and prevent losses.
No Battery Removal:
New Smoke Alarms Save Lives

Worry-Free Alarms are Ideal for Multifamily Applications

- Sealed Lithium Battery:
  No stolen batteries or worry of non-functioning alarm.

- Maintenance-Free:
  Battery never needs replacing. No need for maintenance personnel to change batteries.

- Tamper Resistant:
  Ensures uninterrupted performance and reduces liability.

- Product Lifelong Warranty:
  Alarms are UL Listed, and last 10 years.

- Save time and money by investing in Worry-Free 10-Year Alarms!

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Available in battery only or hardwired with 10-year battery backup.

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Save up to $40 in batteries over the life of alarm.

IDEAL FOR MULTIFAMILY APPLICATIONS

Apartments/Condominiums
Universities/Dormitories
Hotels/Motels
Public Housing/Assisted Living Facilities
HUD recently posted guidance regarding the FFY 2018 Capital Fund (CFP) grant. In prior years, there have been several updates to the CFP grant administration than in prior years. The Annual Contribution Contract (ACC), budget line items (BLIs) accounting codes, BLI budget limits, and the full implementation of the Energy Performance Information Center (EPIC) for the submission of the Annual Statements and Five Year Action Plans.

PHAs that begin to draw on CFP 2018 will see that drawing down funds can act as a type of electronic signature for an FFY 2018 Capital Fund grant and will subject the PHA to the requirements of both the New ACC and the FFY 2018 Capital Fund ACC Amendment. This document will contain both the terms and conditions applicable to FFY 2018 CFP grants and an appendix listing the following information: PHA name, PHA code, Capital Fund grant number, grant amount, and ACC Amendment effective date/obligation start date.

All PHAs will be required to submit their CFP 5-Year Action Plans and Annual Statements in EPIC; the electronic CFP submission process will replace the current paper submission process. Field Offices will either review and approve or withhold approval, as appropriate, of 5-Year Action Plans in EPIC. PHAs with an approved 5-Year Action Plan in EPIC may revise work activity amounts to reflect actual awards and may “funge” or reschedule approved activities from one year to another without seeking additional Field Office approval. HUD has consolidated the BLIs that PHAs use most frequently into one broad-scope BLI, BLI 1480-General Capital Activity. HUD expects this change to reduce the need for budget revisions and to better align with PHA business practices.

**Rolling 5-Year Action Plans**

PHAs enter information into EPIC for a five-year period which begins one year after the starting year under the prior plan. For example, consider a PHA with a September 30th FYE that is currently operating under a rolling plan covering 2017 through 2022. The PHA would create a new 5-Year Action Plan in EPIC with a starting year of 2018, providing information on work activities for 2018 through 2022.

**Fixed 5-Year Action Plans with at Least 2 Years Remaining**

PHAs may retain the plan starting year and enter only work activities for the remaining years of the plan. For example, consider a PHA with September 30th FYE that is currently operating under a Fixed 5-Year Action Plan for 2015 through 2019. In this PHA’s 2018 submission in EPIC, two years will remain on the current plan (i.e., 2018 and 2019). Therefore, this PHA would create a 5-Year Action Plan in EPIC with a starting year of 2015 and enter work activities for 2018 and 2019.

**Fixed 5-Year Action Plans with Less than 2 Years Remaining**

PHAs with less than 2 years remaining on the Fixed 5-Year Action Plan must cover a new 5-year period in the plan submitted in EPIC and enter work activities for all 5 years. This must be completed immediately, prior to their initial 5-Year Action Plan submission in EPIC. For example, consider a PHA with a September 30th FYE that is currently operating under a Fixed 5-Year Action Plan for 2014 through 2018. For this PHA’s 2018 submission in EPIC, only 1 year will remain on the current plan. Therefore, this PHA would create a 5-Year Action Plan in EPIC with a starting year of 2018 and enter work activities for 2018 through 2022. The 2018 budget percentage for BLI 1408, Management Improvements, is 10% of the total CFP grant. BLI 1408 has decreased over the past 5 years from 20% of the total CFP grant to 10% of the CFP grant. It is expected to stay at 10% until there is a change in regulation[1].

For FFY 2015, FFY 2016, FFY 2017, and FFY 2018 CFP awards, the limitation on Capital Funds used for Operating Fund-eligible activities described in section 9(g)(1) of the Housing Authority Act of 1937 is increased from 20% to 25%, as identified in paragraph 2 of the 2018 CFP ACC Amendment. “The PHA must carry out all development, capital and management activities in accordance with the United States Housing Act of 1937 (the Act), 24 CFR Part 905 (the Capital Fund Final rule) as well as other applicable HUD requirements, except that the limita-
tion in section 9(g)(1) of the Act is increased such that of the amount of CFP assistance provided for under this CFP amendment only, the PHA may use no more than 25 percent for activities that are eligible under section 9(e) of the Act only if the PHA’s HUD-approved Five Year Action Plan provides for such use; however, if the PHA owns or operates less than 250 public housing dwelling units, such PHA may continue to use the full flexibility in section 9(g)(2) of the Act.”

Large PHAs may obtain a waiver to increase the use of 1406 funds beyond the 25% for anti-crime and anti-drug activities. Large PHAs seeking to transfer more than 25% of FFY 2018 Capital Funds to Operating Funds for anti-crime and anti-drug activities ONLY must request a waiver in writing addressed to the Director of the Office of Capital Improvements, 451 7th St. SW, Washington, DC 20410, and the local field office.

The Office of Capital Improvements will process these requests and provide a response within 14 days of the date of submission. Waiver requests will be granted at HUD’s discretion and for good cause. A good cause determination is made on a case-by-case basis and is dependent upon the adequacy of the documentation provided by the PHA seeking a waiver. The requirements that must be included can be found on page 6 of the guidance.

Small PHAs (those owning/operating less than 250 units) may continue to use the full flexibility provided for in section 9(g)(2) of the Housing Authority Act of 1937, if they have less than 250 public housing units and are not designated as troubled under PHAS. These PHAs may use up to 100% of their annual Capital Fund grant for activities that are eligible under the Operating Fund at 24 CFR Part 990. These PHAs must have determined that there are no debt service payments, significant Capital Fund needs, or emergency needs that must be met prior to transferring 100% of their Capital Funds to Operating Fund purposes. They also must have disclosed the use of Capital Funds for Operating Fund-eligible activities in the 5-Year Action Plan that is approved by the PHA Board and HUD.

As soon as HUD releases each PHA’s ACC, BDO PHA Finance will keep the PHAs updated, so the PHA may start the EPIC process of submitting the Annual Plan and Five-Year Action Plan. Once these documents are submitted and approved, the PHA will be allowed to draw the funds from EPIC.
Submitted by Mullin & Lonergan Associates, Inc.

This article is the second of a two-part series highlighting the benefits and current status of Opportunity Zones resulting from the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA) in 2017.

On June 14, 2018, the U.S. Treasury Department announced the final round of qualified opportunity zones (OZs) which included the designation of three hundred OZs in Pennsylvania, with Allegheny and Philadelphia Counties being awarded the highest number of OZ’s. According to DCED, “A total of 734 eligible low-income census tracts were recommended to the state for designation, which is 61% of the entire eligible pool.” The complete list of IRS approved Pennsylvania OZs may be viewed on DCED’s Qualified Opportunity Zone website at (https://dced.pa.gov/programs-funding/federal-funding-opportunities/qualified-opportunity-zones/ ), which also includes an interactive map and other useful resources.

Although the designation of OZs was a necessary first step for identifying potential OZ projects, industry professionals continue to press the IRS for further guidance on implementation of the program. According to the Novogradac & Company website (www.novoco.com), the Opportunity Zones Coalition, comprised of 46 organizations, sent a letter to IRS in early June seeking guidance from the IRS and Treasury Department on such things as technical definitions of a qualified opportunity fund, qualified opportunity zones business and qualified opportunity zones property, as well as guidance on partnerships and the use of the OZ incentive with various tax credit programs.

Since designated OZs remain in effect for 10 years following designation, it is critical that the IRS and U.S. Treasury respond to industry requests for guidance, therefore allowing sufficient time for projects and investors to assemble and complete critical projects. Treasury notice 2018-48 (https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-18-48.pdf ) provides the official list of population tracts that have been designated as qualified OZs across the United States. Investors seeking to invest in a qualified OZ can defer tax on prior gains no later than December 31, 2026. The timing of project identification and implementation, related to investor benefits in an OZ (refer to Part I of article for highlight of OZ benefits) is paramount to success. It is anticipated that further guidance will be issued by the IRS and Treasury late summer/early fall of this year.

Mullin & Lonergan Associates, Inc. (M&L) is closely monitoring the status of OZ guidance and is seeking to work with developers and investors to advance critically needed developments within designated OZs. For more information or to discuss a potential project within a designated OZ, please call Mike Kearney at 717-731-1161 or e-mail at mikek@manl.net.
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PHADA RAISES CONCERNS WITH THE NEW ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS CONTRACT

Submitted by Timothy G. Kaiser, Executive Director, PHADA

Late in May, HUD emailed HAs an undated memorandum concerning 2018 Capital Fund Program funding availability. In that memorandum, the department announced that HAs would obligate themselves to a new Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) by drawing 2018 CFP funds for the first time. There would be no signatures on the new ACC.

PHADA members expressed concern with the process for implementing the new ACC and with several new or modified provisions. As a result, on June 20, PHADA wrote a letter to HUD’s General Counsel, Paul Compton, raising several procedural concerns and several concerns with the content of the new ACC. Following is the text of that letter.

PHADA is discussing the new ACC and its implications with other industry associations and with attorneys with expertise in the public housing program, mixed finance housing development, public housing conversion, and RAD. As suggested in its letter, PHADA hopes that HUD will hold a discussion or series of discussions concerning the issues raised by the new ACC and particularly by potentially illegitimate changes HUD has included in that contract.

The Honorable Paul Compton, General Counsel
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Room 10110, 451 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

Re: The New Public Housing Annual Contributions Contract and Addenda

Dear General Counsel Compton:

Late in May, housing authority (HA) senior executives began receiving an unsigned, undated letter via email from HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) that announced the availability of Capital Fund Program (CFP) formula funding for federal fiscal year 2018. That letter included an announcement that the department would begin to use an amended Annual Contributions Contract (ACC). Members of our association began to raise concerns over several provisions of the new ACC and the process HUD intended to use to implement the new contract. PHADA has begun analyzing the new ACC and wishes to raise our concerns with you, hoping that there may be straightforward steps the department may take to resolve concerns of agency senior executives as simply and quickly as possible.

Procedural Concerns

1. Contract Execution

HUD’s electronic letter informs HAs that they need not execute the new ACC and that new and modified contract terms will become effective when HAs make their first withdrawal of 2018 CFP funding through HUD’s Electronic Line of Credit Control System (eLOCCS). This procedure has raised concerns among HA chief executives and some attorneys familiar with the public housing program.

The new ACC form does not include signature lines and so the process described in HUD’s letter was clearly planned from March 2016 when the department published its first 60-day notice of this new information collection and request for public comments. The procedure HUD has described may put agencies in very awkward positions related to local and state contracting requirements. Those requirements, possibly described in state law or in HA Board of Commissioners bylaws, may require certain procedures and approvals before an agency obligates itself to contract terms. At the very least, most agencies may wish to review new ACC terms first, may wish to consult with the HA’s counsel, may need to describe the new ACC to Boards of Commissioners, and may require board approval before taking on new or modified ACC terms. At many agencies, senior managers do not routinely make CFP or other funding withdrawals from eLOCCS, a task that could be assigned to an accounting clerk or bookkeeper. It seems unreasonable that HAs may become obligated to new ACC terms by the action of operating personnel without completing other processes described above. We question whether HUD can unilaterally impose this kind of procedure on HAs. Since the prior ACC remains in force until the new ACC is implemented, we question whether the ACC in force permits HUD to impose this process for contract “execution,” unilaterally.
PHADA RAISES CONCERNS WITH NEW ACC (continued from page 22)

2. Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) Notices
PHADA reviewed the department’s PRA notices and found that they failed to notify the public of several substantive changes to ACC terms accurately. In HUD’s March 2016 notice, HUD announced that a new ACC would do two things:

1. First, it adds submission requirements for when a PHA may choose to voluntarily apply to HUD to retain non-dwelling public housing real property free from public housing use restrictions under the ACC and Declaration of Trust, and
2. Second, it adds new submission requirements to collect information from any PHA that intends to remove all of its public housing dwelling units from its inventory and will alert HUD to its future plans for either termination of the public housing ACC or development of new dwelling units.

The notice failed to mention any of the issues described below.

In its September 2017 30-day PRA notice, the department announced that the new ACC was, “adding requirements applicable to mixed-finance public housing development, making minor clarifications and updates to the grant agreement, based on applicable statutes and regulations …” HUD repeated this description in its May 2018 email letter to HAs. This notice and HUD’s emailed letter made no mention of the issues described below.

PHADA does not believe that HUD’s PRA notices adequately alerted the public to substantive ACC changes the department was considering. In addition, the notices provided insufficient time for stakeholders to review the contract language (the form was available for only 30 days), the PRA process fails to make comments easily available to the public, and it fails to require the department or the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to respond to any public comments they received.

Content Concerns
PHADA has found 5 changes to the ACC so far that are of concern, that were not discussed in HUD’s notices, but that represent substantive changes to the agreement, and that may be inconsistent with regulations and statutes.

- **Section 1. Definitions. Program Receipts.**
The new contract includes a new definition of Program Receipts that restricts the use of, "Operating Receipts and any other funds received by the HA for the development, modernization, sale or transfer of public housing projects,” solely for public housing expenditures, “unless otherwise allowed by HUD Requirements.” An attorney who handles public housing dispositions and mixed finance developments is concerned that this new definition might adversely limit uses of disposition proceeds. Although the final catchall phrase quoted may allay this concern, the lack of clarity in this definition presents problems. At least, this concern highlights the inadequacy of the PRA process for making substantive changes to the ACC. HUD’s notices failed to describe what, exactly, the department may have been concerned with or was trying to remedy. PHADA questions HUD’s authority to add murky definitions to the ACC unilaterally through the PRA process.

- **Section 3. HUD Requirements. d.**
HUD has included a provision that requires HAs to, “comply with … d. HUD-issued notices, and HUD-required forms, and agreements.” For years, HUD has endeavored to require HAs to comply with all provisions of its notices and other forms of guidance when those requirements are not included in law or regulations. To date, HUD has not had much success. In general, notices and guidance only represent requirements for HUD staff, unless they reiterate legitimate requirements in regulation or statutes. This provision seems to permit HUD to forgo rulemaking in imposing new requirements on HAs that operate public housing. The department would simply need to use the PRA procedure with its shorter comment periods, and without requirements to publish or respond to comments it receives through those 60-day and 30-day notices.

Language in the ACC does not eliminate Administrative Procedures Act (APA) requirements, but it is not clear how HAs could address instances where HUD imposes new requirements without creating or amending regulations through the APA’s notice and comment process. As the provision is contrary to regulation and statute, it should be deleted from the ACC.
• **Section 8. Employer Requirements.**
The new ACC enshrines appropriations act provisions concerning the limits on HA executive compensation in the contract. While it may not be more burdensome or restrictive than the current statutory standard, if Congress chooses to change or eliminate that standard, the ACC would be inconsistent with any new standard. It appears that PHADA does not believe that HUD is neither authorized to impose the salary restriction absent the current appropriations act provisions, nor to continue the restriction in the absence of statutory authorization to do so. The provision should be deleted from the ACC.

• **Section 9. Government Access to Accounts and Records.**
The new ACC adds the following: “The HA must not release, without prior HUD approval, any and all information contained in such records.” Effectively, HUD would have to approve the release of any information contained in HUD’s system of records (and presumably any local records supporting HUD’s system of records data). The provision is probably inconsistent with federal Freedom of Information Act requirements and requirements contained in many comparable state open records or sunshine acts. It is not clear whether the provision requires HUD approval of an HA’s release of information that HUD already makes public, such as aggregate information concerning public housing residents available in HUD’s Resident Characteristics Reports. In any event, as a HA would be the entity receiving FOIA requests based on either state or federal law, the HA must be the entity to respond to those requests. HUD has no role to play in HAs’ responses to information requests, including denial of access to certain kinds of information. HUD should delete the term from the ACC.

• **Section 10. Grant Funding.**
This new section is a transparent effort to forestall any future suits against the government similar to the successful operating reserve offset suit. In addition to citing appropriations act limitations, changes or recapture of funding and those authorities delegated by Congress to HUD, the provision concludes, “Grant funding may also be terminated, recaptured, withheld, suspended, reduced or such other actions taken in accordance with HUD Requirements.” Since new language in Section 3. D. would include all “HUD-issued notices, and HUD-required forms, and agreements,” as requirements, the department is granting itself a free hand to unilaterally change, eliminate, or recapture an HA’s public housing funding. The term seems arbitrary and capricious, and PHADA does not believe HUD has authority to grant itself such sweeping capabilities. The concerns PHADA has expressed above may not be comprehensive. All public housing industry stakeholders are continuing to review the new ACC to evaluate any additional problematic provisions in the form and any problematic implementation procedures HUD has undertaken.

**Unintended Impacts of the New ACC**
PHADA presumes it was not HUD’s intention to produce adverse impacts with the new ACC. However, there has been at least one HA whose mixed finance closing has been delayed because HUD has insisted that the new ACC be part of that closing, and those delays have jeopardized the project’s financing. In addition, the CFP includes restrictive obligation and expenditure requirements, and a review of the new ACC will reduce the actual time available for grantees to obligate and expend 2018 CFP resources. Those delays may put some HAs’ CFP funding at risk.

**Conclusion**
PHADA believes that the flawed processes HUD has used to publicize the new ACC, receive and respond to public comments concerning that form, and “execute” the new ACC with a first withdrawal of CFP resources from eLOCCS, render the new ACC illegitimate. PHADA also believes that inconsistencies and contradictions among terms of the new ACC, HUD regulations and federal statutes render the terms of concern to PHADA and others unenforceable.
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The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) continues to work to improve the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. On July 2, 2018, HUD issued two new notices that improve the process by which Public Housing Authorities (PHA) can convert units under their existing public housing portfolio to long-term project-based Section 8 assistance under the First Component of the RAD program.

The following is a discussion of a few major changes the Supplemental RAD Notice and the Implementation Notice make to the First Component of the RAD program.

Expanding Rent Bundling Sources

The Supplemental RAD Notice provides PHAs with greater flexibility to provide support to RAD developments. PHAs have the option to borrow traditional Section 8 project-based voucher subsidy from properties that receive project-based voucher assistance to support higher rents for units at developments receiving RAD project-based voucher subsidy under certain circumstances. Prior to the Supplemental RAD Notice, the Existing Notice permitted PHAs to "rent bundle" by using only RAD subsidy (not traditional Section 8 project-based voucher subsidy) from one RAD development to support higher RAD rents at another RAD development.

The Supplemental RAD Notice provides a welcome change that can improve the viability of developments that will include RAD project-based voucher units by providing an additional stream of subsidy to support higher rent levels at such developments. What the Supplemental RAD Notice does not do is to address a major underlying limitation of the RAD program: revenue neutrality. In other words, even though the pool of funds that PHAs are permitted to draw from to support higher RAD project-based voucher rents at RAD developments is now expanded, the burden remains on PHAs and their developer partners (rather than HUD) to generate any funds necessary for those higher rents.

Site Specific Utility Allowances

The Supplemental RAD Notice further provides that for RAD project-based voucher developments that will not include traditional Section 8 project-based voucher units, PHAs can elect to establish a site-specific Utility Allowance Schedule for tenant-paid utilities. PHAs will no longer be required to apply the PHA's Utility based voucher developments that will also include traditional Section 8 project-based voucher units, PHAs can request a waiver from HUD to establish a site-specific Utility Allowance Schedule for both the RAD project-based voucher units and the traditional Section 8 project-based voucher units. To be approved, the PHA must demonstrate good cause that the Utility Allowance Schedule that the PHA uses program-wide for its Section 8 voucher program would either (i) create an undue cost on families because the utility allowance provided under the voucher program is too low, or (ii) discourage conservation and efficient use of subsidy because the utility allowance provided under the voucher program would be excessive if applied to the particular RAD development.

Furthermore, where a RAD conversion will result in the reduction of one or more utilities used to establish the Utility Allowance Schedule, HUD will permit the RAD contract rent to be increased by a portion of the utility savings.

Higher RAD Contract Rents

The Implementation Notice makes an important change to the calculation of RAD contract rents for all awards issued between July 3, 2018 and January 1, 2019. Instead of using fiscal year 2016 as the base year to calculate the RAD contract rents—essentially, the sum of operating subsidy, tenant rent and Capital Fund Formula Grant—for these awards, HUD will instead use fiscal year 2018 Capital Fund Formula Grant for such calculation. The operating subsidy and tenant rent will still be factored into the calculation at fiscal year 2016 levels. Prior to the Implementation Notice, HUD used fiscal year 2016 as the base year for calculating RAD contract rents, subject to adjustments each year by HUD's published Operating Cost Adjustment Factors (OCAF). For awards made on or after January 1, 2019, the base year for all components of the RAD contract rent calculation will be fiscal year 2018. This is a welcome change. Since fiscal year 2018 Capital Fund Formula Grant awards were substantially higher than in previous years ($2.75 billion in 2018, up from $1.942 billion in fiscal year 2017), RAD contract rents based on fiscal year 2018 levels of Capital Fund Formula Grant will also be higher.

PHAs interested in learning more about the RAD program and how the Supplemental RAD Notice or the Implementation Notice may impact their particular RAD conversion or development initiatives can contact Michael Syme (email: msyme@foxrothschild.com; phone: 412-391-2450) or Alec Stone (email: ajstone@foxrothschild.com; phone: 412-391-2523).
HUD NOTICES IMPROVE FLEXIBILITY AND VIABILITY OF RENTAL ASSISTANCE DEMONSTRATION CONVERSIONS (continued from page 26)


Michael H. Syme is a partner in the Real Estate Department of Fox Rothschild LLP and focuses his practice on affordable housing and mixed-finance development.

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Food provides our energy, our social connections, and is the source of nourishment for our bodies. Food can heal us or harm us, depending on our dietary choices. Unfortunately, many residents in affordable housing live in food deserts where healthy, fresh food isn’t affordable or available. Food deserts are neighborhoods that have low access to grocery stores or transportation to fresh food. The health impacts of hunger are immense. According to Just Harvest, hunger triples obesity rates among women and doubles the chances of developing diabetes. Hungry children are three times more likely to be suspended from school and two times as likely to repeat a grade and need special education.

Farm to Table Buy Local

Farm to Table Buy Local is a non-profit organization based in Pittsburgh beginning in May 2018. A significant component of the organization is to deliver Food Coordination programs in affordable housing communities throughout Pennsylvania. On-site Food Coordinators will provide on-going programming for both family communities and senior high-rise buildings.

The goals of the Food Coordination program are to:

- Increase the amount of fresh, healthy and local food consumed
- Assist residents to acquire and prepare fresh, healthy and local food

At the end of a 12-month period, we hope to have launched a self-sustaining Cooking Club for the residents in the building or community. The Food Coordination program can work with any affordable housing site that has a Community Room with tables and chairs for the residents to receive, prepare and/or share meals. All equipment will be obtained for both the Cooking Club and for individual residents who would like to participate. The program is funded by a grant from Heinz Endowments.

Ongoing curriculum will be provided, including:

- Bulk/batch cooking to provide ongoing meals to community members;
- Food preservation and storage methods to enhance nutrition and storing healthy food to last all month long;
- How to organize community gardens

How to Implement on a Small Scale

Housing authorities and other residential affordable housing developers have a unique opportunity to improve access to fresh, healthy food for their residents. Community rooms are ideal spaces for food delivery, food storage and meal preparation (community meals and take-out). Supportive Services or Tenant Councils can put together purchasing programs for on-site grocery delivery service.

You can help residents connect to food resources in many ways:

- Connect residents to County Aging office for Farmers Market Nutrition Vouchers
- Find a local Farmers Market and ask a farm to stop at your site on their way to or from the Farmers Market
- Help residents apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through the online COMPASS program or at your local County Assistance office.
- Receive donations from 412 Food Rescue, 724 Food Rescue, or your local food rescue organization
- Contact your local Food Bank to receive donations
- Add a “Free Food” book shelf to the Community Room for non-perishable food items to be available
- Add a chest freezer to store large items for community meals organized at holidays, birthdays, etc
- Start a voluntary Cooking Club on donation days for residents to assist in breaking down bulk items for single use

View Additional Resources:

FarmToTablePA.com
american-healthcare.net/wellness-programs
NEW FOOD COORDINATORS
ON-SITE BI-WEEKLY

We’ll provide staff to:
• Manage incoming food donations
• Help residents prepare snacks & meals
• Start on-site resident cooking & garden clubs

Erin Hart
412.657.3028
ehart@american-healthcare.net
The recent tax reform package from President Donald Trump represents the largest change to our federal tax system in over 30 years. Do you know how it will affect you and your business?

After years of discussion surrounding business tax reform, the Senate and House of Representatives finally agreed on a package. In late December, President Trump signed these new regulations into law. The laws provide a net tax reduction of approximately $1.456 trillion over the 10-year budget window.

For many reasons, business owners and investors were optimistic about the passage of this bill. And rightfully so, as there are many potential benefits for both businesses and individuals in this tax package. It slashes both corporate and personal taxes, offers a wide array of new deductions and creates some interesting benefits for S-Corporation owners, individuals and owners of pass-through entities.

With that being said, the new laws are incredibly convoluted. Rather than simplifying the tax code, the revisions have resulted in a higher level of complexity than ever before, and many businesses may struggle to understand and properly respond to the new code.

Luckily, reduced tax rates tend to mean more business capital which, in turn, may lead to greater flexibility for investment and growth. Without a doubt, the new tax package contains more growth accelerators than just reduced liabilities.

While the overall corporate tax reduction is here to stay, most of the changes affecting individual taxpayers (including the deduction for certain owners of pass-through businesses) are scheduled to cease to apply after December 31, 2025, at which time they will revert to their pre-2018 levels. Future legislation would be required to make the provisions effective beyond the year 2025.

**Business Income and Losses/Deductions**

There is a new deduction for business income from pass-through entities and sole proprietorships. For tax years 2018–2025, an individual, generally, may deduct 20% of qualified business income from a partnership, S corporation, or sole proprietorship. However, the 20% deduction is not allowed in computing Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), but rather is permitted as a deduction reducing taxable income.

**C Corporation Business Tax Rates**

Currently, C corporations are used to graduated tax rates, with a top rate of 35% if taxable income exceeds $10 million. For tax years beginning after December 31, 2017, the new law lowers the corporate tax rate to a flat 21%.

The purpose for this? According to the Republican Party, a significantly lower corporate tax rate is needed to promote economic growth and global competitiveness.

**Business Expensing and Depreciating Property Section 179 Deduction**

Under the prior provisions, the maximum Section 179 deduction was scheduled to be $520,000 for 2018. The new law increases the maximum Section 179 deduction to $1 million for property placed in service during tax years beginning after December 31, 2017. For tax years beginning after 2018, these amounts will be indexed for inflation. Interesting enough, the revisions also expand the definition of Section 179 property to include certain tangible personal property used predominantly to furnish lodging and particular improvements to nonresidential real property (roofs, HVAC, fire protection, alarm systems and security systems, for example).

**Immediate Expensing of Qualifying Business Assets**

The new tax package establishes a 100% first year deduction for qualified property acquired and placed in service after September 27, 2017 and before January 1, 2023 (January 1, 2024 for certain property with longer production periods). This regulation applies to both new and used property.

In later years, this first-year deduction phases down as follows:

- 80% for property placed in service in 2023
- 60% for property placed in service in 2024
- 40% for property placed in service in 2025
- 20% for property placed in service in 2026.
Business Deduction for Fringe Benefits

This new tax bill makes the following adjustments to the fringe benefit rules (for amounts paid or incurred after December 31, 2017): Disallows deductions for entertainment expenses; expands the current 50% limit on the deductibility of business meals to those provided in an in-house cafeteria or otherwise on the employer’s premises; denies a deduction for employee transportation fringe benefit; and eliminates a deduction for transportation expenses that are the equivalent of commuting for employees, except when provided for the safety of the employee.

Highlights of Individual Tax Updates

• For tax years beginning after December 31, 2017 and before January 1, 2026, seven tax brackets apply for individuals: 10%, 12%, 22%, 24%, 32%, 35% and 37%.

• For tax years beginning after December 31, 2017 and before January 1, 2026, the standard deduction is increased to $24,000 for married individuals filing a joint return, $18,000 for head-of-household filers and $12,000 for all other taxpayers, adjusted for inflation in tax years beginning after 2018.

• For tax years beginning after December 31, 2017 and before January 1, 2026, the deduction for personal exemptions is effectively suspended by reducing the exemption amount to zero.

• For tax years beginning after December 31, 2017 and before January 1, 2026, the deduction for interest on home equity indebtedness is suspended and the deduction for mortgage interest is limited to underlying indebtedness of up to $750,000 ($375,000 for married taxpayers filing separately).

• For contributions made in tax years beginning after December 31, 2017, no charitable deduction is allowed for any payment to an institution of higher education for which the payor receives the right to purchase tickets or seating at an athletic event, in exchange for their donation.

• For any divorce or separation agreement executed after December 31, 2018, or executed before that date but modified after it (if the modification expressly provides that the new amendments apply), alimony and separate maintenance payments are not deductible by the payor spouse and are not included in the income of the payee spouse.

• For tax years beginning after December 31, 2017 and before January 1, 2026, the deduction for miscellaneous itemized deductions subject to the 2% floor is suspended.

• For months beginning after December 31, 2018, the amount of the individual shared responsibility payment (ACA or Obamacare) is reduced to zero.

About Anthony R. Marciano, EA

Anthony R. Marciano joined Duncan Financial Group, LLC in November of 2003. As an over 20-year veteran of the financial, tax, and accounting industry, Anthony works passionately and professionally with individual and investment clients to create an overall plan and strategy to minimize income tax burdens, build an overall investment portfolio designed to meet their specific goals and objectives, and monitor the plan and strategy on a regular basis. Anthony currently holds FINRA series 7, 63 and 65 licenses. He also holds the Enrolled Agent designation with the Internal Revenue Service. Anthony received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting from St. Vincent College and has completed graduate studies at Point Park University, Northwestern University and the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.
Research shows that where we live has an important impact on our life outcomes. As a result, affordable housing providers face the dual challenge of how to bring opportunity to people and places as well as affordable housing.

The Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation (PAHRC) at HAI Group has released a new study, “Strategies for Investing in Opportunity”, that brings together a variety of data sources to map the neighborhoods holding assisted housing units in relation to their community’s typical level of opportunity capital and neighborhood quality and the neighborhood’s trajectory. In doing so, it defines five investment strategies that community stakeholders can use to expand assisted housing in opportunity areas, bring opportunities to places, and preserve assisted housing in opportunity areas.

Overall, the study finds that nearly half of all federally assisted rental units are located in neighborhoods that offer typical or above the area level of opportunity capital to residents. ‘Opportunity capital’ is the term used to capture the various opportunities for upward mobility in a neighborhood that residents can access and later ‘spend’ to reach their goals. It includes indicators of transit access, labor market access, educational opportunity, and health. While many communities have been able to place a significant amount of assisted housing in neighborhoods with typical or above opportunity capital, others face barriers that make this effort more difficult.

Visit www.housingcenter.com/spotlight to read the report and access data and mapping tools to explore the strategies that might work best for your housing portfolio and community.
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WHEN TO PROTEST AN UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIM

Submitted by Debbie Gross / U-COMP Member Service Representative

You have done everything you possibly could as an employer to provide all of the information for a particular unemployment claim to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Still the determination is in favor of the claimant and you don’t understand why. A claim determination will be sent to you by Labor and Industry with all of the points/reasons for their decision as well as instructions for the next step, should you disagree with their determination.

When the initial claim determination is for the claimant, it will be difficult, as the employer, to have that decision overturned. It is much easier for the employer, once the initial decision is in their favor, for the employer to prove their case at a hearing and have that decision upheld.

You as the employer should appeal (and request a hearing) if you disagree with the initial claim decision. Employers shouldn’t always appeal unemployment determinations if they don’t have enough supporting information. If you don’t have the following pieces of information, you will not be able to provide a convincing case:

1) Clear written policy.
2) Written acknowledgment showing the claimant has received that policy.
3) A written resignation from the claimant.
4) Written warning notices.
5) Admission by the claimant.
6) Firsthand witness testimony.

As the appealing party, you have the responsibility to prove your position. Live, firsthand witness testimony is always the best source, in addition to documentation. If you are not able to provide live testimony, a witness’s written statement is acceptable, but will not be given the weight that live, firsthand testimony provides.

It is important not to rely only on testimony; please make sure that you also provide the above-listed items in writing when available.

Once you have received a claim determination there are two levels of appeal available to either party in Pennsylvania. They are:

1) The Hearing – Where you will present your case.
2) Board of Appeal Review – Where all of the documents and testimony from the hearing will be provided to a select board of Labor and Industry representatives who will review the case and communicate their decision.

If you are in disagreement with the Board of Appeal Review decision, the case may be brought to Civil Court for a final hearing determination. If the case is taken to Circuit Court, it becomes a legal matter and must be handled by legal counsel.

U-COMP members always receive the option of having a claim advocate present for hearings with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry as a membership benefit.

Please contact Debbie Gross, U-COMP Member Service Representative, for a free, non-binding quote at: dgross@pml.org or 1-800-922-8063 ext *254
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A Service Program of the Pennsylvania Municipal League
2018 PAHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Best Practices Showcase & Awards

Conference Schedule (as of July 15, 2018)
Visit www.pahra.org for updated information on training sessions, speakers, events and other conference news.

Sunday, September 23, 2018
- 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Early Registration
- 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. PAHRA Committee Meetings
- 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
- 8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. Meet, Mix and Mingle Event (generously sponsored by Fox Rothschild, LLP)

Monday, September 24, 2018
- 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast Buffet
- 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Registration
- 8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Welcome & Gathering Session
- 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. PAHRA Annual Membership Meeting (generously sponsored by Infradapt, LLC)
- 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Concurrent Educational Sessions
- 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Lunch On Your Own
- 1:50 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Concurrent Educational Sessions
- 3:00 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. Afternoon Refreshments (generously sponsored by Kidde)
- 8:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. Happy Hour at Happy Valley Brewery (generously sponsored by Chrislynn Energy Services)

Off-Site Networking Event - Shuttle Service Provided

Monday Concurrent Educational Sessions Include:

- **PIC-NG In Progress** – The HUD REAC team will report on the comprehensive overhaul of PIC infrastructure and digital transformation of 50058 data collection systems (multi-session)
- **Prevailing Wage Rates, Rules & Requirements** – In-depth discussion of state Prevailing Wage Rates, federal Davis-Bacon applicability, and other government funded contract payroll requirements (multi-session)
- **Validating Your Agency’s HUD Energy Incentives** – Learn to accurately calculate energy and utility savings to apply the results to your Operating Subsidy (multi-session)
- **Utility Law for Public Authorities** – Discover utility-specific programs to help avoid eviction, aid in connecting and maintaining service, available bill discounts, payment assistance, collections, etc.
- **RAD Affects & Effects** – Pros and cons of conversion and how it relates to: Capital Fund Planning • LIHTC • Housing Choice Voucher Programs • Resident Rights and Participation • And More
- **Balancing the Sound Rationale for Smoke-Free Housing with Resident Concerns** – Practical tips on implementation and enforcement while being respectful of tenants. Sharing a newly published smoke-free housing lease enforcement guide
- **HARIE Safety Incentive Awards** – Highlights of improvements made utilizing the 2017 grants, a synopsis of 2018 grant requests, and an overview of ideas to promote the program and incentivize you to apply
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<td>7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Breakfast Buffet</td>
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<td>8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<td>8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Concurrent Educational Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Mid-Morning Refreshments (generously sponsored by FHLBank Pittsburgh)</td>
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<td>10:10 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Concurrent Educational Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Best Practices Showcase &amp; Presidential Cocktail Reception (generously sponsored by HARIE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Annual Banquet &amp; Awards presentations (generously sponsored by HARIE)</td>
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<td>9:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.</td>
<td>After-Party (generously sponsored by American HealthCare Group)</td>
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**Tuesday Concurrent Educational Sessions Include:**

- **Financial Forum** – BDO PHA Finance presents important information for your PHA financial team including:
  - HCV Financial Management
  - LIPH Cash Management
  - HOTMA Operating Subsidy for Capital Items
  - RAD & Capital Fund Program Updates
  - Other New Accounting Issues (multi-session)
- **Know Your Rights When Faced with Right-To-Know Requests** – Balancing your agency’s responsibility with the privacy rights of residents. Chester Housing Authority stands firm, sets precedent, and creates new case law
- **Grant Writing Workshop** – Obtain essential skills and tools to write powerful, professional grant applications that get noticed…and funded (multi-session)
- **USDA Rural Development** – Offering 65 loan and grant programs, funding just about anything to build a community from the ground up
- **Rooftop (and other) Revenue** – Learn the intricate legalities of leasing unused, yet marketable, space; the applicability of HUD PIH Notice 2016-20; your Resident Association’s right to revenue, and other related issues
- **Cultural Competency** – Dr. Donald Sheffield discusses “Developing the Capacity to Deal with Diverse Communities” and how to “Build Bridges Out of Poverty” (multi-session)
- **Improving Outcomes Through Coordination of Healthcare & Supportive Services** – Spotlighting a variety of successful partnerships that have enhanced the lives of low-income seniors, families, and communities
- **Redevelop / Revitalize Your Community Through the Use of Non-Profits** – Discuss how others are utilizing non-profit entities to get things done
- **FSS / ROSS Service Coordinator Roundtable** – Converse with colleagues on who they serve, what they provide, and how they operate their service grant programs
- **Best Practices Showcase** – Even if your agency did not submit an entry, join your colleagues to browse through the Showcase, share innovative ideas, view outstanding projects, learn about interesting programs, efficient policies and effective procedures that are successful in other H&CD agencies

**Wednesday, September 26, 2018**

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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Closing Breakfast &amp; Plenary Session (generously sponsored by Pennsylvania House Finance Agency)</td>
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<td>Keynote Speaker to be Announced</td>
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### 2018 PAHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Best Practices Showcase & Awards

(please use black ink and print clearly)

| Name: | ____________________________ |
| Title: | ____________________________ |
| Organization: | ____________________________ |
| Address: | ____________________________ |
| City: | ____________________________ | State: | __________ | Zip: | __________ |
| Email: | ____________________________ | Telephone: | ____________________________ |

**Don’t forget the PAHRA MEMBER BONUS**
for each two full registrations, the third full registration is half-price!

**FULL PACKAGE:**  
- **Member** - $300  
- **Non-member** - $340

**DAILY SESSIONS:**  
- **Member** - $170  
- **Non-member** - $200  
- **Specify date:** __________

**BEST PRACTICES SHOWCASE & AWARDS BANQUET ONLY:**  
- **$75**

**GUEST PACKAGE:**  
- **$100**

*Sorry – in order to keep costs low, we do not accept credit cards.*

| Total Amount: | $ ____________________________ |

### Attendees are encouraged to email registration forms to kelly@pahra.org with payment to follow. Please copy and complete a separate form for each attendee. Checks made payable to PAHRA should be mailed to:

PAHRA, PO BOX J, New Florence, PA 15944

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Technology constantly evolves. With Infradapt, you can master the change.
By Steven A. Fischer, Executive Director

We diligently guarded the personal information of our clients…and got sued.

Too often, we have seen public officials try to paint a scarlet letter on the homes of lower income families receiving assistance paying their rent. But late last year, the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court ruled Public Housing Authorities can keep the addresses and names of Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) participants private. This ruling clearly states that Housing Authority clients cannot be singled out.

The case stems from a 2014 Right to Know Law request by Chester Township Solicitor Stephen Polaha. Under the law, Polaha asked the Chester Housing Authority (CHA) for a list of properties at which tenants receive housing assistance. In claiming that certain properties were not being inspected as required, the solicitor pressed for the names of the renters, as well as the names and addresses of the owners of those properties. In accordance with Right to Know, we responded by providing inspection records and census track numbers. We also included the names and addresses of the owners of the properties responsible for inspections. However, the CHA did not believe Polaha had legal grounds for obtaining HCVP participants’ names and addresses.

In 2015, as a result of Polaha’s legal action, a Delaware County Common Pleas judge ordered CHA to turn over the requested information. Wanting to protect our clients’ privacy, we took our arguments to the Commonwealth Court and then to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The Supreme Court sent the matter back to the Commonwealth Court, which reversed the original decision on November 21, 2017. Happy Thanksgiving! In doing so, the Commonwealth Court found that voucher recipients have a constitutionally-protected right to privacy in their home addresses. The fact that they receive assistance for their housing does not waive their right to privacy.

We fought the original decision because we believed it was wrong. Although the case dealt specifically with the Chester Housing Authority, the new ruling applies to every Housing Authority in Pennsylvania.

Outside counsel was assisted by CHA General Counsel Maria Zissimos and HCVP Director Mary Militello. Philadelphia Housing Authority provided an amicus curiae brief. The next time your Housing Authority gets such a request, deny it citing Polaha v CHA.

Fighting the case was not without its own cost. Over several years, we far outspent our legal budget. As advocates for, as well as landlords to, our clients, we believed it was the right thing to do. Because this case applies to every housing authority in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, some, including the PAHRA Board of Directors, have offered up kind gestures including financial contributions to be applied to our legal costs, which we greatly appreciate. Our intent in standing firm in this case was not financial gain or notoriety, but simply to serve as an advocate for our clients in protecting their right to privacy. Learn more about our legal battle and ultimate victory at the PAHRA Annual Conference where we hope to spark a lively conversation regarding required responses to Right to Know requests such as these.
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Contract # 201604-02
A bill that could give communities a helping hand to fight blight was signed into law Tuesday [June 19] by Governor Tom Wolf.

Senate Bill 667, introduced by State Senator Pat Stefano, R-Bullskin Township, is designed to convey the same powers that land banks have to local redevelopment authorities, offering them the ability to potentially take control of blighted properties through delinquent property tax enforcement, property disposition and other means.

The state House of Representatives passed the bill in a 195-0 vote, and the Senate did so in a 49-0 vote. Stefano called the bill’s passage “a landmark day in the fight against blight in our communities.”

Stefano explained that, as amended by the House, the bill allows counties to bestow land bank functions upon their redevelopment authorities without the recurring cost of setting up and supporting a new administrative board.

“This reduces redundancy [and allows] more resources to be aimed at fighting blight,” Stefano said. Stefano said that the startup and recurring costs associated with forming a land bank were too expensive for several areas within his district, acknowledging Fayette County Redevelopment Authority Executive Director Andrew French for pointing out that dilemma to him.

The Pennsylvania Land Bank Act, enacted in 2012, allows counties and municipalities with populations of 10,000 or more to establish land banks that help return abandoned and tax-delinquent properties to productive use through delinquent property tax enforcement, property disposition and other means.

“In many of the 16 land banks that have been formed, it’s been the redevelopment authorities that have led the way in providing the staff support necessary to run the land bank’s operation,” Stefano told his Senate colleagues.

Washington County officially created a land bank in April 2016, more than two years after Westmoreland County formed one. Stefano said he could personally attest to the good work that land banks do, recalling having observed progress being made in the Westmoreland County portion of his district.

Stefano said the bill will go into effect 60 days after becoming law [August 16].

“Senate Bill 667 is not a silver bullet when it comes to fighting blight,” Stefano said. “But it is an important tool that we are providing to those areas who have not been able to put together the resources necessary to form a land bank under current law.”

The bill was one of two Wolf signed Tuesday [June 19]. The second, House Bill 653, allows for an accelerated foreclosure process on properties that have been abandoned and are already in foreclosure proceedings.

Wolf’s office noted that the foreclosure bill is four years in the making from the state’s Blight Task Force. He noted that eight other states currently have expedited foreclosure laws.

The average foreclosure in Pennsylvania can last from 300 to 540 days, Wolf’s office said. The bill will reduce that time frame to about 240 days.

Editor’s Note: PAHRA extends our appreciation to Andrew French, Executive Director, Fayette County Redevelopment Authority, for his tireless advocacy efforts on this legislation. Andrew is a former President of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council (MARC) NAHRO, past member of the PAHRA Board of Directors, past Chair and current member of the PAHRA Legislative Committee and the PAHRA Professional Development Committee.

By Mike Tony, Herald Standard, June 20, 2018

FIGHTING BLIGHT
GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION INTO LAW

Clearly blighted homes like this one on Heslep Avenue in Donora can now be more easily addressed thanks to legislation signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf. Photo courtesy of Mark Soroka and Herald-Standard
Bryce Washington, an 18-year-old resident of the Fayette County Housing Authority, is the recipient of the 2018 Michael Stefan Memorial Scholarship presented by the Housing and Redevelopment Insurance Exchange (HARIE).

In what appears to be a first, Mr. Washington is also the recipient of a 2018 L. Dewitt Boosel Scholarship Award presented by the Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA).

Each award is a one-time $2,000 grant for high school seniors residing in public housing, who are pursuing higher education.

Mr. Washington attended Belle Vernon School District, finishing his senior year with a Quality Point Average of 4.5 while earning 10 college-level credits along the way. According to his official transcript, Mr. Washington was 39th in his class of 183.

In nominating Mr. Washington for the HARIE Scholarship, Fayette County Housing Authority Executive Director Mark Yeager wrote that the authority "takes pride in residents like Bryce who have positive experiences in public housing, help their community, and look forward to continuing their education."

Although Mr. Washington was accepted at several institutions of higher learning, he matriculated Waynesburg University where he will study accounting with a goal of eventually becoming a Certified Public Accountant. In his application submission, Mr. Washington wrote, "I have found through my years of high school that I am really good with numbers." He searched through many different fields of study that included his strengths, finally settling on accounting. He got a head start on college prep by taking a college level accounting class in high school.

According to Mr. Washington, most of his family members attended college. "This was a standard set in my family a long time ago, that I absolutely plan to live up to," he wrote.

In nominating Mr. Washington for the scholarship, Barbara Vandermer of the Belle Vernon School District English Department wrote that Mr. Washington is "motivated and hardworking.” Ms. Vandermer went on to say, "Bryce is one of the rare students I have had the opportunity to teach. He combines academic ability, passion, and energy for whatever project he undertakes, and is a kind-hearted spirit that makes him a delight to have in a classroom and he is well-liked by his classmates."

Mr. Washington is a member of several honor societies, including the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society and the Science Honor Society. He is also a member of his school's basketball team, a sport he said he plans to continue at Waynesburg University.

The HARIE Board of Directors congratulates Bryce on his accomplishments and wishes him good luck in his future endeavors.
The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council (MARC) of the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) recently announced their region’s selections for the 2018 NAHRO Awards of Merit during our Spring Conference & Expo in Hershey, PA.

Congratulations are in order for the following PAHRA Members whose programs and projects earned them regional recognition through MARC and advancement to the national NAHRO competition:

**Housing Authority of the County of Beaver** – Brian L. Yaworsky, Executive Director  
**Crestview Village Renovations** – Project Design Category  
Crestview Village, a 24 building, 103 unit development originally built in 1952, was in serious need of a cosmetic overhaul to increase the marketability to the surrounding neighborhoods. Utilizing Capital Grant Funds, in conjunction with Franus Architectural Associates, Inc. and Southwestern Pennsylvania Builders, Inc., an attractive, marketable, affordable housing complex available for families now exists in a quaint historical town.

**Housing Authority of the County of Chester** – Dale Gravett, Executive Director  
**The Whitehall Affordable Veterans Housing** – Project Design Category  
Mission First Housing Group renovated the historic Whitehall Inn and constructed a new addition to create 48 permanent supportive housing apartments for veterans in need – The Whitehall. Mission First developed The Whitehall in response to a local need for housing for at-risk veterans and a national effort to end veteran homelessness. The key project building block was a 15-year voucher contract from the Housing Authority of the County of Chester, which translates into $5 million in housing assistance. The Whitehall was built using Passive House design standards for energy efficiency, which will reduce utility usage by 80% over standard construction.

**Clarion County Housing Authority** – Penny Campbell, Executive Director  
**Northwest 9 Program** – Affordable Housing Category  
The Northwest 9 Program is a collaboration between nine rural counties in Pennsylvania that were experiencing high rates of homelessness among the population of individuals and households who are not eligible for federal housing subsidies. This population includes those owing debts to PHAs, residents in areas with closed voucher waiting lists and, most commonly, ineligibility due to criminal history and/or sex offender status. The development of a voucher-like program using reinvestment funds was implemented across the region with an emphasis on self-sufficiency. The Program has successfully housed more than 200 households and transitioned over 30% to self-sufficiency.

**Housing Authority of the City of Erie** – Michael Fraley, Executive Director  
**Lethality Assessment Program** – Resident & Client Services Category  
Domestic violence calls have historically been the highest reported incidence of crime at the Housing Authority of Erie (HACE). In 2015, the HACE Community Policing Program partnered with SafeNet Domestic Violence Safety Network to implement the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) in HACE neighborhoods. LAP provides an easy and effective method for law enforcement and other community professionals to identify victims of domestic violence who are at the highest risk of being seriously injured or killed by their intimate partners, and immediately connects them to the local community-based domestic violence service program.

**Housing Authority of the City of Meadville** – William Thomas, Executive Director  
**STEM Connection After-School Program** – Resident & Client Services Category  
The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Connection After-School Program was initiated in 2015 to address the achievement gap that exists for rural, low-income children in technology. For the past 3 years, classes have been held at the Housing Authority’s learning centers, concentrating on a variety of project-based, hands-on activities that relate to real-world experiences. Through resident engagement, broad community support, financed by Resident Council MOU funds, 40 youth between the ages of 7 through 17 have participated. Proven results include increased self-confidence working on science projects, increased knowledge in STEM topics and careers, and strengthened families.
Housing Authority of Northumberland County – Edward Christiano, Executive Director

Phoenix Court Apartments – Community Revitalization Category

Phoenix Court Apartments were constructed in 2016-2017 on a site in Atlas, PA, Northumberland County. A number of blighted properties that were severely damaged by a fire in 2013 were demolished to construct the development, which features five apartments for modest income seniors. One unit is available for persons with behavioral health disabilities. The total project cost was $850,676; construction was completed in April 2017; and all units are occupied. All units are visitable and one is fully accessible. Phoenix Court also earned the 2017 PAHRA Bellamy Award, which is our highest award of excellence.

Philadelphia Housing Authority – Kelvin Jeremiah, Executive Director

Blumberg Phase 1 – Project Design Category

Blumberg Phase 1 is part of the Philadelphia Housing Authority’s Transformation Plan for the Sharswood neighborhood in North Philadelphia. Two of three high-rise units located on a superblock were imploded in March 2016, adjacent low-rise units were demolished mechanically, and mostly vacant properties surrounding the old site were acquired through condemnation. The plan calls for development of 1,200 units over one-quarter square mile. Two streets will be reconnected through the superblock and a third connecting street will be added. The restoration of Ridge Avenue commercial corridor that serves Sharswood is also a major goal of the plan.

Reading Housing Authority – Daniel F. Luckey, Executive Director

Berks Community Health Center – Resident & Client Services Category

For the duration of Wellness Program delivery, coordination with mainstream healthcare providers was most challenging for Oakbrook Homes residents. Because of the issues of access to care, Reading Housing Authority (RHA) entered into a partnership with a local Federally-Qualified Health Center (FQHC) to pursue funding for a satellite center. Funding was awarded, and in six months, RHA secured a neighboring property, engaged in extensive retrofit, and entered into a long-term lease with the FQHC. The center provides key health services to individuals and families in Oakbrook Homes, Southwest Reading, and surrounding communities, by improving access to primary health care.

Westmoreland County Housing Authority – Michael L. Washowich, Executive Director

Building Your Financial House Program – Resident & Client Services Category

Public housing residents’ dreams of a financially secure and independent future are coming true through the Building Your Financial House Program. Westmoreland County Housing Authority’s Family Self-Sufficiency Program partnered with the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency in offering the program to HUD-assisted families to increase their earned income and reduce their dependency on welfare assistance and rental subsidies. Participants meet once a month for eight months, learning such things as how to save money, plan for retirement, and even buy a house. The program, which was introduced in 2015, has been so successful that it is now being offered annually.

Westmoreland County Housing Authority – Michael L. Washowich, Executive Director

Nothing Old About This New Senior Initiative – Resident & Client Services Category

According to U.S. Census figures, Westmoreland County has a larger population age 65 and older than any other county in the state of Pennsylvania, and the numbers are increasing. As the senior population rate continues to increase, Westmoreland County Housing Authority recognized the need to implement a three-pronged initiative to help residents in this age bracket live healthier, happier, and longer lives. The initiative includes an elderly wellness program that focuses on diet and nutrition, a flex-fit exercise program, and a pen pal program which pairs seniors with first graders to encourage social interaction.
Persistence, purpose, and passion make up much of what separates the successful from others. Our 2018 PAHRA Scholarship recipients have distinguished themselves by staying focused and motivated. In our 31st year of awarding educational scholarships, PAHRA is pleased to provide these ambitious achievers with financial assistance to help them continue turning obstacles into opportunities in order to realize their definition of success.

2018 Paul G. Pecharko Adult Scholarship Recipients:

1st Place $3,000 award
Kelsey Hutchins – sponsored by Blair County Housing & Redevelopment Authorities
Being a full-time student, while juggling demands as a single mother of three young boys, Kelsey encounters and overcomes many struggles and scheduling conflicts every day. Yet she has earned recognition for academic success each semester and recently received the Mount Aloysius College McCue Scholarship. Kelsey is pursuing her Associate Degree as a Registered Nurse, after which she plans to enroll in the RN to BSN program, specializing in the mental health field.

2nd Place $2,000 award
Tabatha Thurston-Randle – sponsored by Johnstown Housing Authority
Hoping to advance in her career path in the health care field through Nursing studies at the Greater Johnstown Career & Technology Center, Tabatha is currently employed at the Cambria Care Center, where she works with patients suffering from Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease. She credits losing her home and all belongings in a fire, along with a subsequent loss of her job and car as a life-changing event that has made her stronger and more determined to succeed.

3rd Place $1,000 award
Betsy Espinosa – sponsored by Lebanon County Housing Authority
Betsy is pursuing her degree in Business Studies at Harrisburg Area Community College, hoping to eventually make a difference by influencing industries to reuse resources, reduce waste, and shrink their ecological footprints. She is a single mother, who still finds time to be involved in numerous civic and community activities. To define success, Betsy quotes Maya Angelou, “Success is liking yourself, liking WHAT you do, and liking HOW you do it.”
2018 L. DeWitt Boosel Student Scholarship Recipients:

1st Place $3,000 award
Maxine Lapp – sponsored by Bethlehem Housing Authority
Taking her love of the arts and pursuing a career in which she can assist others in projecting their emotions and stress into a therapeutic coping mechanism to help them heal, Maxine will major in Art Therapy at Marywood University. Her school counselor describes Maxine as having “personal perseverance and an exceptional work ethic”, which is evidenced by her 4.2 GPA.

2nd Place $2,000 award
Bryce Washington – sponsored by Fayette County Housing Authority
Graduating from Belle Vernon High School with a QPA of 4.5, Bryce exemplifies academic achievement coupled with a variety of extracurricular activities including sports and community service. Aspiring to become a CPA, he plans to pursue his degree in Accounting at Waynesburg University beginning this fall.

3rd Place $1,000 award
Scott Leydig – sponsored by Blair County Housing & Redevelopment Authorities
In his words, Scott is driven to “climb out of the pit of poverty” by building upon his training in Drafting & Design at Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center with a degree in Electro Mechanical Engineering from Penn State University Altoona Campus. He previously received the Challenge Program Award for Academic Excellence and was honored as the Outstanding Senior in Drafting & Design Technologies this year.

PAHRA wishes each of our recipients continued success as they pursue their dreams with “persistence, purpose, and passion”.
By Bob Swetz, Project Manager
Horizon Information Systems, Inc.

The Fair Housing Act was signed into law on April 11, 1968 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. One of the primary provisions of the law was to prohibit the refusal to sell or rent a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, or national origin. The law was expanded in 1974 and again in 1988 to include prohibition of discrimination based on gender, those with disabilities, and families with children. In 2017 a federal judge ruled that discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity was also prohibited, however this has not yet been formally incorporated into the law.

The law was passed in large part due to social rioting in the late 1960s, when it was determined that the unrest was substantially due to discrimination in housing and a general lack of opportunity for those protected by the act. The Act would provide the opportunity for many Americans to settle and find a place to call home, which also leads to access to jobs, schools, hospitals and other community facilities.

When the law was first passed in 1968, HUD did not have full enforcement authority, however this would come with the passage of the 1988 amendment.

Over the years, local housing authorities have played an integral role in ensuring equal opportunity in housing across the United States on the backbone of the 1968 Act. Over recent decades, HUD has tracked continuing declines in housing discrimination due to ongoing enforcement and education efforts. Clearly these efforts originate right in our home towns with our local authorities. As we at Horizon work with authorities and individual staff members on a regular basis, the commitment to providing fair and adequate housing in the community never ceases to amaze me.

New and ongoing segregation, continued discrimination and other housing crises will always present challenges, but the progress made over the last 50 years cannot be ignored. We at Horizon Information Systems, Inc. are humbled and honored to do our small part in providing affordable software solutions to the local agencies in PA who do so much to see that this progress continues long into the future.
PLEASE SUPPORT OUR INDUSTRY PARTNERS

The following companies and organizations exhibited at the 2018 Spring Conference & Expo. We hope that you took the time to get acquainted. When you are in the market for related products and services, please consider purchasing from or contracting with those who support PAHRA.

Affordable Housing Accountants, Ltd.
All Weather Products
Always Safe Sidewalks
American HealthCare Group
American Property Consultants
Auto-Out Cooktop Fire Prevention
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Charles P. Johnson & Associates
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Opco, Inc.
Quadel Consulting & Training, Inc.
Roland Stock
Santander Bank
TSUNAMI – Ocean 10 Security
U-Comp
U.S. Census Bureau
Yardi Systems

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

2019 SPRING CONFERENCE & EXPO
JUNE 2-5, 2019, Seven Springs Mountain Resort
CLAIMS:
213 Smith Street
Dunmore, PA 18512
570-969-4074

WESTERN BRANCH:
Gulf Tower
30th Floor
707 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA
412-697-1380

ADMINISTRATION/UNDERWRITING:
423 Jefferson Avenue
Scranton, PA 18510
570-961-5105

A PROUD FRIEND OF
Pennsylvania Association of Housing & Redevelopment Agencies
# 2018 PAHRA Partners & Friends

PAHRA expresses our sincere appreciation to our PAHRA Partners and Friends of PAHRA for your continued and generous support of our association, our members and our mission. Thank you!

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**Friends of PAHRA:**

- Affordable Housing Accountants, Ltd.
- Always Safe Sidewalks
- BDO PHA Finance
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