

LHC NEWSLINE

LOUISIANA HOUSING COUNCIL (LHC) NEWSLINE - FALL 2019 EDITION



Congratulations to our LHC scholarship winners!

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THE PELICAN BRIEF: MESSAGE FROM THE LHC PRESIDENT



Dear LHC Members:

Thank you for picking up my last issue of the LHC Newsletter! As our “Holiday Season” approaches, I hope each of you take the time to spend it with family and friends. Over the last two years, we have worked together to make the Louisiana

Housing Council better and stronger. We have focused on providing more training opportunities both in North and South Louisiana to help better serve our families and communities in which we live. My quote for my two year term is “New Faces, New Places, New Ideas” and I feel we all accomplished this by working together.

We all still have work to do by continuing to provide training to our agencies and to be there for one another by networking and helping each other when one of us are in need. I will continue to be involved in leadership and will be here for whomever should need my help.

I encourage anyone who is interested and willing to serve in any capacity of LHC to start getting involved by attending meetings and conferences. Louisiana Housing Council is a great and wonderful organization to be involved with. Let’s continue to move LHC forward to help improve affordable housing and the communities we serve each and every day.

Thank you all for your hard work, passion and support over the last two years. A special thanks to my assistant Terri Touchet for all the support and help she gave at the beginning and throughout my term, couldn’t have done it without her. Even through all the challenges and changes of my term, I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as your LHC President from 2017-2019. I look forward to continue working with LHC’s leadership team during Bobby Collin’s upcoming term. I know he will do an outstanding job as LHC President as he continues to move our organization forward in a positive direction.

Pamela Fontenot

2019 LHC Training Opportunities

November 2019
Hearing Officer Training
Rayne, LA

December 2019
Financial Training
Shreveport, LA

Visit www.lanahro.org
for details!

LHC NAHRO OFFICERS

Pamela Fontenot
President

Bobby R. Collins
Senior Vice President

Tammy Richard
Secretary

Joe Ann Tyler
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Trina Henderson
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Jackie Folks
VP of Section 8 Housing

Colette Sikes
VP of Professional Development

Willie Haynes
VP of Commissioners

Pamela Adams
VP of Member Services

Ben Taylor
VP of Community Revitalization
& Development



LHC TO RELAUNCH FACEBOOK PAGE

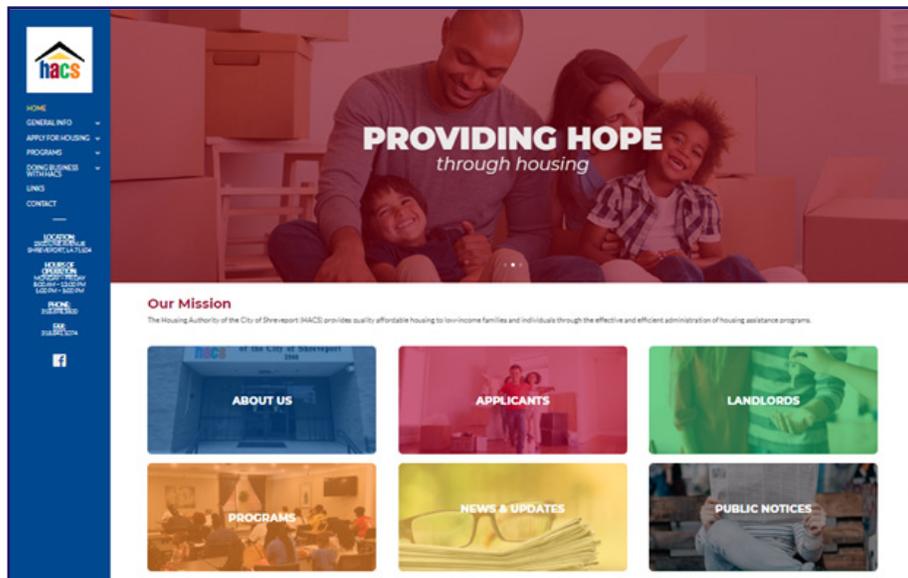
The LHC Public Relations Ad Hoc Committee is currently working on enhancing the social media presence of the organization. This fall, the Committee will relaunch a new Facebook page that will provide another communications tool to spread great news about housing authorities in Louisiana. The page will also be used to broadcast continuous, updated information about upcoming conferences, meetings and trainings. Once launched, each member agency and LHC committee will have an opportunity to submit announcements for approval to share with the public.



This page will be viewed by the public, which could include your clients, local, state and federal legislators and other agency staff.

Stay tuned for more information on exciting public relations projects!

SHREVEPORT HOUSING AUTHORITY LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE



Submitted by Shreveport Housing Authority

This month, the Shreveport Housing Authority (SHA) launched a new website. Go check it out at www.shvhousauth.com!

NAHRO RAD TRAINING HELD AT SHREVEPORT HOUSING AUTHORITY



Submitted by Shreveport Housing Authority

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) held an informative Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) training at the Housing Authority of the City of Shreveport.

Nineteen professionals from six housing agencies and management companies participated in the day and a half training session and exam hosted by NAHRO.

Additional NAHRO trainings will be held at the Housing Authority of the City of Shreveport in the near future. Check NAHRO's training calendar at <http://nahro.personifycloud.com/PersonifyEbusiness/Default.aspx?TabID=1355&> for more information.

SECTION 8 WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY



Amy Crockett & LHC scholarship recipient Joniah Brown pictured with City of Tallulah Section 8 Director Merunda Brown

Submitted by City of Tallulah Section 8 Program

City of Tallulah Section 8 Director Merunda Brown has had a very busy 2019! On May 22, 2019, Ms. Joniah Brown, a high school senior who resides in Tallulah, participated in a scholarship essay

contest and received a \$5,000 scholarship from the Louisiana Housing Council. “There were two scholarships available for section 8 clients,” Director Brown said. “I let all of my eligible clients know and Joniah submitted her essay and was selected. She and her mother travelled to Baton Rouge to attend the Louisiana Housing Council’s Annual Conference, where she was presented with her \$5,000 check.”

In addition to working with the community, Brown’s Section 8 program is setting high merits for its overall sustainability. On June 6, 2019, Brown met with representatives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to complete Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) training, in accordance with HUD regulations.

“SEMAP is the Public Housing Authority (PHA) Report Card for housing choice vouchers,” said Brown. “The training covered the basics of regulations, submissions and certifications. The SEMAP scoring is based on various indicators which include quality control review and voucher management, amongst others. I’m proud to say that the City of Tallulah Section 8 reporting rate score was 105, which shows that we are meeting all of the parameters set by the state. We will have our annual SEMAP rating by October 2019.”

Brown says that she will continue to run a successful program and work with the community. “Next year, we are planning to take part in HUD Strong Families Fun Day, which is generally held between May and June,” Brown said. “This is an initiative that HUD does throughout the country. It’s an opportunity for HUD and Section 8 clients to come out and utilize the community resources. I’m planning on inviting organizations that can assist with family health screening, interactive lessons for parents and children through the Southern University/LSU Ag Center and possibly a fitness workout for families as well, amongst others. It’s billed as a family filled fun day and I think it’s going to be great event for our community.”

The City of Tallulah Section 8 program is not currently accepting applications. If you have any other questions, please contact Section 8 Director Merunda Brown at (504) 574-0051.

MAKING PROGRESS AT JENNINGS HOUSING AUTHORITY



Submitted by Jennings Housing Authority

With assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Louisiana Housing Corporation, the Jennings Housing Authority is making progress in developing a new three bedroom duplex building on Guillot Drive. This new duplex building will replace a flood damaged duplex building on Mouton Drive, which was demolished in August 2019.

HUD IN THE NEWS



HUD AWARDS \$5.2M TO 23 PHAS FOR EMERGENCY SAFETY & SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently announced it is awarding \$5.2 million to 23 Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) in 15 states to make needed improvements to their safety and security systems.

HUD's Capital Fund Emergency Safety and Security Program supports public housing authorities as they address the safety of public housing residents. These grants may be used to install, repair, or replace capital needs items including security systems/surveillance cameras, fencing, lighting systems, emergency alarm systems, window

bars, dead bolt locks and doors.

"Every family deserves to feel safe in their home," said HUD Secretary Ben Carson. "HUD is determined to ensure the well-being of public housing residents and these grants give communities the tools they need to make that happen."

The Housing Authority of Homer in Louisiana will receive \$246,664 in funding to install security camera systems, lighting, doors, software and fencing.

For more information, visit www.HUD.gov.

HUD AWARDS OVER \$25M TO 25 LOCAL HIV/AIDS HOUSING PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently announced nearly \$25 million to assist more than 2,054 low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families over a three-year period. The funding is offered through HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA) and will renew HUD's support of 25 local programs. These grants provide a combination of housing assistance and supportive services for this vulnerable population.

"HUD is committed to ensuring

the best outcomes for HIV and AIDS survivors in our care," said HUD Secretary Ben Carson. "Through the combination of supportive services and stable housing, we will be able to assist in bringing healing to these individuals and their communities."

HUD has awarded a renewal grant of \$796,621 to Unity of Greater New Orleans, a non-profit coordinating community partnerships to end homelessness.

For more information, visit www.HUD.gov.

HUD AWARDS \$4.8M TO HELP LOW INCOME VETERANS REHABILITATE THEIR HOMES

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently announced \$4.8 million in funding through the Veterans Housing Rehabilitation and Modification Pilot (VHRMP) Program to assist disabled veterans with modifying or rehabilitating their homes, making them more accessible.

Through the VHRMP program, grantees will make necessary physical modifications to address the adaptive housing needs of eligible veterans, including wheelchair ramps, widening exterior and interior doors, reconfiguring and reequipping bathrooms, or adding a bedroom or bathroom for the veteran's caregiver.

"Our veterans gave everything in service to our country so it's now our duty to ensure they have a safe and decent place to call home," said HUD Secretary Ben Carson. "The grants awarded today ensure veterans living with disabilities can make the necessary adaptive modifications to their homes, allowing them to lead self-sufficient lives."

St. Bernard Project, a non-profit disaster relief organization in New Orleans, received a \$1 million grant as part of HUD's VHRMP program to assist veterans and low income families who need adaptive housing.

For more information, visit www.HUD.gov.



PICTORIAL:
**LHC'S MAY 2019
LEGISLATIVE
CONFERENCE
ACTIVITIES**



PICTORIAL:

**LHC'S MAY 2019
LEGISLATIVE
CONFERENCE
ACTIVITIES**



PICTORIAL:

LHC'S 2019 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

- > Leslie Hingle (New Orleans)
- > Alexis Brown (Calcasieu Parish)
- > Brianna Collins (Shreveport)
- > Amiya Dawson (Ouachita Parish)
- > LaChelsey Francis (St. John the Baptist Parish)
- > Raegan Washington (Natchitoches Parish)
- > Kiaya James (Opelousas)
- > Stephani Bradley (Natchitoches Parish)
- > Ravin Terry (Natchitoches Parish)
- > Joniah Brown (Tallulah)



PICTORIAL:
**LHC'S 2019
AGENCY
AWARD
RECIPIENTS**



2019 LHC AWARD WINNERS:

BEST ANNUAL REPORT:

- *Small Housing Agency* - Westwego Housing Authority
- *Large Housing Agency* - Housing Authority of the City of Shreveport

BEST NEWSLETTER:

- *Very Small Agency* - White Castle Housing Authority
- *Small Housing Agency* - Westwego Housing Authority
- *Medium Housing Agency* - Housing Authority of Lafourche Parish
- *Large Housing Agency* - Housing Authority of New Orleans

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT:

- *Meritorious Single Accomplishment by an Employee* - Lionel Basso (Independence Housing Authority)
- *Meritorious Continuing Accomplishment by an Employee* - Ariauna Jolly (Housing Authority of Lafourche Parish)
- *Special Achievement by a Family Self Sufficiency Graduate*- Marsha Smith (Housing Authority of the City of Shreveport)
- *Meritorious Accomplishment by a Law Enforcement Officer* - Sgt. Keniyelle Frank (Housing Authority of Lafourche Parish)

MEDIA RECOGNITION:

- *KTBS* - Housing Authority of the City of Shreveport

MEMBER OF THE YEAR:

- *\$500 Monetary Award plus trophy* - Tonya Mabry (Tangipahoa Parish Section 8)

COMMISSIONER OF THE YEAR:

- *\$250 Monetary Award plus trophy* - Ella Selmon (Covington Housing Authority)

THE HORSES AFT AWARD:

- Shirley Bagwell - Dequincy Housing Authority

THE EXTRA MILE AWARD:

- *\$100 Monetary Award plus trophy* - Terri Touchet (Iowa Housing Authority)

ALABAMA HOUSING OFFICIAL TAPPED TO LEAD HOUSING AUTHORITY OF NEW ORLEANS



Evette Hester
Photo Credit: The Advocate

Published in The Advocate

Evette Hester, the former head of the Montgomery, Alabama, public housing agency, has been named as executive director of the Housing Authority of New Orleans, assuming a job of considerable importance as New Orleans continues to

grapple with a shortage of affordable housing.

Hester, 54, will replace Gregg Fortner, whose contract was due to expire in July.

The HANO board voted unanimously in July to extend Fortner's contract for up to three months and to enter negotiations with Hester.

"It's an honor to be able to serve the citizens of New Orleans, and ... to be able to do what you love in a city that you love," Hester, a Baltimore native, recently told the board.

Hester is the second locally appointed director since HANO returned to local control in 2014 after a dozen-year federal receivership. She will inherit an agency that has had to contend with diminished federal funding in recent years, prompting Fortner to cut its staff and take money from its surplus.

She will also take on HANO's portfolio of roughly 200 "scattered site" properties, which have increasingly become a focus of discussion about solutions to the affordable housing shortage.

To help remedy a citywide problem blamed on rising rents and stagnant wages, Fortner embraced a strategy of redeveloping rather than selling those parcels, so as to keep units on them affordable in centrally located city areas.

But that effort has been criticized as too slow-going by some housing advocates, and it will be up to Hester to either speed up the process or choose a different route.

"I would analyze (that) ... and see how to best reposition those properties, and knowing that there is a lack of affordable housing, (ask) how can we leverage that and get even more housing?," Hester said.

Hester's career in public housing spans more than 25 years and includes a dozen years as chief of Alabama's Montgomery County Housing Authority, which serves roughly 4,000 families and has a \$50 million budget.

She's also had lesser management roles at the Houston Housing Authority, and in housing agencies in her native Baltimore; Philadelphia and Chester, Pennsylvania; and Petersburg, Virginia.

Board members said she is well-equipped to manage issues pertinent to New Orleans. Hester has also received praise from Mayor LaToya Cantrell.

"She talked about a focus on customer service ... which I think was good," said HANO board President Casius Pealer. "Her experience involves (leading) a smaller agency but also prior experience at larger agencies ... and I think that will put us in good standing."

HANO's 2019 budget is \$201 million. It serves more than 20,000 families, the vast majority of whom receive vouchers under the federal Section 8 program to help pay the rent at privately owned apartments or houses.

Hester was the board's top choice from a pool of 11 eligible applicants. The board whittled down that number to four semifinalists, and then to two finalists. After one finalist dropped out, Hester was the last person standing.

Citing a state attorney general's opinion and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development rules, HANO has refused to provide the names and resumés of the other candidates.

Its attorney said it can withhold that information until it signs a contract with Hester. That process is expected to take weeks.

For more updates on the Housing Authority of New Orleans, visit www.HANO.org.

DENHAM SPRINGS HOUSING AUTHORITY GETS FINAL OK FROM FEMA FOR \$10.6 MILLION RECONSTRUCTION

Published in The Advocate

A public housing complex in Denham Springs that was severely damaged by the August 2016 flood has received permission from a federal disaster agency to rebuild.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved the \$10.6 million reconstruction of the Denham Springs Housing Authority units, according to the authority's director, Fred Banks.

"The one thing I learned from all of this you never never never give up," Banks said. "With prayer, all things are possible."

The 52-unit, multi-family complex located off Range Avenue has been vacant since the disaster. Due to substantial damage, it cannot be repaired but rather must be

demolished and elevated.

Banks expects the project will be completed within the next two years. Former residents will have a right to return to their apartments, if they wish. For now, those former residents are eligible for vouchers to live elsewhere.

"We are elated it's going to finally get off the ground. We're looking forward to bringing this community back," Banks said.

Banks said FEMA is paying 90 percent of the cost; he is seeking the additional 10 percent cost-share through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The housing authority is one of just a few income-based apartment complexes in Livingston Parish.

WILKINSON TERRACE - SHREVEPORT'S OLDEST DEVELOPMENT TO BE DEMOLISHED



Submitted by Shreveport Housing Authority

The Shreveport Housing Authority has plans to demolish the oldest public housing property in the City of Shreveport. The Wilkinson Terrace Development began leasing in 1952. Although this is bittersweet, this demolition will provide the residents with an opportunity to select where they wish to live. All current residents will receive a Tenant Protection Voucher for relocation to a unit of their choice.

MAYOR CANTRELL LAUNCHES AFFORDABLE HOUSING TOUR



Featured in Fox 8 Live News Broadcast

The tour consisted of seven community meetings across the area to talk about making affordable housing more available. The mayor says the project expects to have \$600 million to work along with 642 new affordable housing spaces that will become available for residents. She says they are also working to give more opportunities through the homeless initiative.

They're also focusing on helping the elderly or physically challenged to help them with their rent.

"Our rental community working with our landlords, making sure that they're able to keep units affordable so that we don't have to revisit the issue we had earlier," says Cantrell. "I would say in my administration when American Can came about, you know we had residents where, you know, the landowners had met their covenants and they were going to go ahead and increase those rates to market levels. But in being creative and using our incentives more appropriately, we can have rates that they know they can sustain as well as those property owners as well."

HOUSING AUTHORITIES MAKING AN IMPACT



NAHRO's CEO Adrienne Todman

*Featured in
NAHRO Monitor:
CEO Message*

*Submitted August
15, 2019*

Allow me to introduce you to Ms. Pamela Fontenot, Executive Director

of the Iowa Housing Authority in Louisiana and President of the Louisiana Housing Council. Director Fontenot is wearing my new favorite t-shirt. And while executive directors certainly have more than their fair share of challenges, many of you may agree that we can insert almost any title in our industry and the message still rings true.

This is one of the reasons why each time I read a negative press story about a housing authority, I think about the 100 positive stories that have not been written. It drives me crazy.

So whenever there are uplifting stories about your work, NAHRO takes pride in sharing them. We are particularly pleased to see the nationwide media coverage of the mobility work undertaken by the Seattle and King County Housing Authorities (both NAHRO members and Moving to Work agencies) as part of the "Creating Moves to Opportunity" (CMTO) research project.

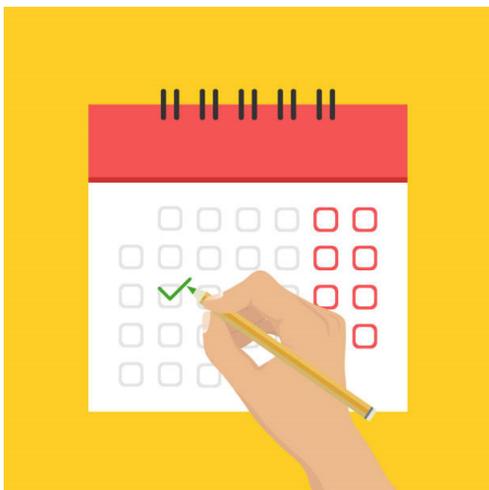
Housing Authority staff are indeed "miracle workers"; often achieving the near impossible using creativity and partnerships despite reductions in federal funding and excessive regulations. Imagine the magic that is possible when agencies are allowed

to formulate and fund outcome-driven solutions? Would that look like the results in Seattle and King County? What would that look like for you?

The NAHRO team and I are putting the finishing touches on the National Conference in San Antonio where we conclude this year's CONNECT conference series with CONNECT to Partners. Whether you are managing, building, and preserving housing or administering your locality's CDBG funding, you depend on colleagues to achieve your goals. Sometimes those partners are your sister agencies, local developers, resident councils or school principals. I recall partnering with the local Girl Scouts chapter to create troops on DC's public housing sites for the first time, and also partnering with ex-offenders to encourage some youth to choose a better path for themselves.

In the CMTO project, the agencies partnered with economist Raj Chetty and his Harvard-based research team, which also included Stefanie DeLuca of Johns Hopkins who has also conducted a fair amount of mobility and landlord research in Maryland. You will have a chance to hear from members of the CMTO housing authority and research team during the conference in San Antonio where they will share information about the project's outcomes to date, the collaboration and costs involved, and their next steps.

Housing authorities are making an impact, everywhere. Share your good news with me by e-mailing nahroceo@nahro.org.



REMINDER: LHC Membership Dues for FY 2019-2020

LHC membership dues are now due for the 2019-2020 fiscal year!

Past and future members should visit www.lanahro.org to access the dues statement. Please submit the completed form and payment to Louisiana Housing Council (P.O. Box 283 Hammond, LA 70404) to join the Louisiana Housing Council.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Danyelle Sanders-Horton at 866-210-1883 or via e-mail at dhorton@lanahro.org.

To become a member of Southwest NAHRO or National NAHRO, log on to the respective websites: <https://www.swnahro.org/> or www.nahro.org/.

STAYCONNECTED



VISIT LHC'S NEW WEBSITE AT
[WWW.LANAHRO.ORG!](http://WWW.LANAHRO.ORG)



Any comments or recommendations
for the LHC website?

Contact Danyelle Sanders-Horton at
dhorton@lanahro.org.

UPCOMING 2019-2020 NAHRO HOUSING CONFERENCES

October 10-12, 2019

*NAHRO National Conference & Exhibition
San Antonio, TX*

March 29-31, 2020

*NAHRO National Conference & Exhibition
Washington, DC*

*Reminder: The LHC will no longer host Winter Planning
Committee Meetings as was voted on by the Executive Committee
during the May Legislative Conference.*



NAHRO 2019 National Conference & Exhibition

CONNECT TO PARTNERS

October 10-12

Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center
San Antonio, TX

