

SERC-NAHRO

**Southeastern Regional Council of the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials
.....envisioning communities where everyone will have safe, decent, stable and affordable housing**

AN OPEN LETTER TO CONGRESS – MARCH 2021

The Southeastern Regional Council of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (SERC-NAHRO) is an association of knowledgeable and dedicated housing and community development professionals. SERC-NAHRO's mission is to facilitate the development of new affordable housing and support the preservation of existing housing. We will combine our voices to advocate for the improved living conditions and interests of those we serve and petition federal, state and local governments for adequate assistance. We will further our mission through the training and education of our membership. Organized over 80 years ago, SERC-NAHRO consists of more than 700 agency members that serve over a half million low-income households in ten southeastern states (Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee). Through this Open Letter, SERC-NAHRO seeks continuing support and a commitment by Congress to sufficiently fund HUD programs and/or amend rules and regulations in need of reform. SERC-NAHRO members are unified in their efforts to house America's economically disadvantaged and we urge Congress to recognize that these efforts are successful and gravely needed.

Throughout the United States, affordable housing agencies have been highly effective in providing critical housing resources through their federally funded Public Housing, Rental Voucher Programs, Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Program, and Multifamily Programs. However, many unmet needs remain. Demands on the rental market continue to shift with approximately one third of all Americans now living in rental housing reducing overall rental unit availability. Based on HUD's most recent study (2017), households meeting worst case criteria have steadily increased by 41% since 2007 with only one in four low-income families having access to rental assistance. While demand continues to grow for affordable rental housing as the nation's stock of public housing units dwindles, it is widely recognized that homelessness is reaching crisis levels. Past failure to re-invest in the aging public housing stock has resulted in the loss of over 250,000 units since the mid 1990's. Underfunding of multiple HUD programs over the past decade has resulted in housing authorities being unable to meet the housing needs of their local communities. Fortunately, the past four T-HUD Appropriations Bills have seen modest increases in funding for many affordable housing programs. It is imperative that Congress continue to support adequate funding of Affordable Housing.

SERC-NAHRO members understand Congress' fiscal concerns and we support efforts to responsibly reduce spending. However, we believe that safe, decent, and affordable housing is essential to the well-being of all citizens and that reductions in spending levels should not be directed at vital domestic programs. We urge Congress to do all it can to ensure that housing, one of the most basic and fundamental needs, is available to our nation's most vulnerable families, including our elderly citizens, disabled citizens and our veterans. In addition, we encourage Congress to continue efforts to provide regulatory relief. Housing Authorities must have more autonomy and flexibility to sustain operations and preserve housing stock.

The Corona Virus (COVID) pandemic's economic impact has put a huge strain on the rental market in the United States. Renter households have been deeply impacted by the shut down of retail stores, restaurants and other workplaces requiring in-person work that isn't necessarily considered essential. As a result, the ability of tenants to afford rent has been a growing concern during the pandemic. The ongoing evictions moratoriums will eventually end jeopardizing the housing of countless residents. Many Housing Agencies reactions to the pandemic have been complicated by differing requirements among states and between localities within states. Federal privacy guidelines have made it difficult to take appropriate action to protect personnel while still providing required services to tenants. Furthermore, unclear guidance regarding allowable uses of federal relief funding delayed the initial reactions of Housing Agencies to the pandemic. While the morale at most Housing Agencies seems to be holding up, COVID fatigue is definitely taking its toll through reduced productivity.

On the following page, you will find a breakdown by state of your constituency that we serve. SERC-NAHRO members are some of the most knowledgeable in the affordable housing industry and we hope that you will take advantage of this experience and contact the housing professional(s) in your district anytime that you have housing related questions or concerns. You will find that each Housing Agency is unique in its own right with unique challenges and needs.

Federal Rental Assistance Fact Sheet

South Eastern Region

State	Households Receiving Housing Choice Vouchers	Households Receiving Public Housing Assistance	Households Receiving Project Based Section 8	Assisted Households: Seniors	Assisted Households: Persons with Disabilities	Assisted Households: Families with Children	Total Assisted Persons	Working Households (by %)	Funding in Billions
Alabama	32,000	31,400	17,500	24,200 (12%)	34,800 (18%)	136,100 (69%)	196,100	57%	\$0.614
Florida	109,900	29,900	40,800	81,100 (18%)	104,600 (23%)	286,700 (64%)	451,000	59%	\$1.800
Georgia	56,600	30,200	31,200	37,400 (12%)	53,200 (18)	213,100 (71%)	301,800	60%	\$1.000
Kentucky	31,600	20,800	21,400	25,000 (15%)	39,500 (24%)	105,200 (63%)	166,100	52%	\$0.521
Mississippi	25,400	8,600	17,400	15,900 (12%)	21,000 (15%)	97,700 (72%)	135,400	53%	\$0.412
North Carolina	61,600	24,400	25,400	35,100 (13%)	53,900 (20%)	181,100 (69%)	263,000	57%	\$0.874
South Carolina	26,100	12,500	17,800	17,800 (12%)	23,300 (16%)	103,100 (72%)	143,200	56%	\$0.455
Tennessee	36,300	24,300	33,700	32,200 (15%)	44,700 (20%)	142,500 (65%)	218,700	52%	\$0.672
Virginia	47,100	15,000	29,400	30,600 (14%)	44,300 (20%)	147,400 (68%)	217,800	61%	\$0.872
West Virginia	14,300	6,000	10,500	12,100 (18%)	16,300 (25%)	37,100 (56%)	66,300	50%	\$0.223
Totals -	440,900	203,100	245,100	311,400	435,600	1,450,000	2,159,400	56% (Avg.)	\$7.443
Total Alabama Households	80,900								
Total Florida Households	180,600								
Total Georgia Households	118,000								
Total Kentucky Households	73,800								
Total Mississippi Households	51,400								
Total North Carolina Households	111,400								
Total South Carolina Households	56,400								
Total Tennessee Households	94,300								
Total Virginia Households	91,500								
Total West Virginia Households	30,800								
Grand Total of all Households	889,100								

***Note** – All statistics are from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Some statistics may include persons that fit into multiple categories. For example, an assisted senior may be raising their grandchildren, therefore, they would be included in the statistics for Assisted Seniors and Assisted Persons in Families with Children. Some statistics have been rounded to the nearest 100 for convenience.