

NAHRO-IRGE Study Exchange
August 2015
“Low Income Housing in the Netherlands and Germany”

Purposes and Outcomes

As you may be aware, Betsey Martens, chair of the Research Subcommittee of the NAHRO IRGE Standing Committee, has drafted a white paper that attempts to provide some guidance for certain national housing policies. It examines public housing preservation and repositioning strategies in Canada, the UK and the Netherlands to help inform our current preservation agenda in the U.S. as expressed primarily through the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program. The paper frames five policy questions and suggests that the best practices from all four countries create the basis for a very compelling next generation public housing policy.

The Executive Summary indicates:

“This paper is inspired by our engagement with colleagues in the UK, Canada, and the Netherlands. The more we’ve talked with them about the challenges of managing public housing in their countries, the more the differences between our systems dissolved and we found that we are all wrestling with similar themes:

- *The worry and the reality of federal disinvestment.*
- *The constant threat of devolving housing policy and funding to the state.*
- *The desire to diversify in order to supplement public funding.*
- *The frustration of managing an aging portfolio with limited access to capital funds to make improvements.*
- *The successes and challenges of merging housing associations.”*

A copy of this draft policy paper will be provided to all Delegates selected for this NAHRO-IRGE Study Exchange. Using this draft paper as a backdrop, Delegates participating in this Study Exchange will visit a sample of current low-income/social/public housing in the Netherlands and Germany, as well as engage in a dialogue with host country housing practitioners concerning their experiences within the context of the themes of the paper. Upon returning the Delegates will provide a written commentary to the IRGE Committee and the author that will react to the conclusions and policy proposals put forth in the paper based on this “boots-on-the-ground” interaction with our international partners. Ultimately, this commentary will inform the author as she moves toward a final version of her white paper for broad circulation to the NAHRO membership and to policy makers.

May 12, 2015