

COMMISSIONERS' COMMITTEE 2019-2021 TRANSITION REPORT



Commissioners Committee Mission

- serve to broaden the constituency supporting NAHRO's goals and objectives;
- support programs to expand the skills of commissioners to effectively discharge their responsibilities; and
- work with staff, leadership and membership at all levels of the Association in fulfillment of these purposes.

Commissioners Committee Vision

- **advocate** for programs, program policy and necessary resources to address local housing needs in their respective communities;
- be **effective spokespersons** for responsible public policy impacting upon housing and community development concerns at the national level; and
- **empower** Commissioners to become housing and community development "Ambassadors" in their communities and wherever possible at the state and national level. Committee members support a wide range of meaningful advocacy opportunities and encourage their colleagues to make a case for viable and sustainable communities to the general public, governmental agencies, elected representatives at all levels of government and the media.

President Shaw's focus points for the 2019-2021 term

People- focus on the relationship between the three levels of NAHRO: state, regional, and national.

Purpose – strengthen advocacy, developing and expanding partnerships, and professional development.

Passion. What you do matters, unwavering commitment to this work.

As this term began, we were hit with the COVID-19 pandemic which made us think out of the box for solutions to address the needs of our residents, communities and families. This period became and continues to be a lesson in national and global preparedness as we work through the pandemic of 2019. With this focus in mind, the committee incorporated President Shaw's focus points, along with NAHRO goals A and E to craft the committee's objectives for this term:

Goal A - Maintain NAHRO's position as the preeminent organization for the development and implementation of responsible housing and community development policy by vigorously advocating for legislation, regulations, core programs and innovative initiatives.

Obj. 1. Work with Legislative Network Advisory Committee (LNAC) to actively engage in all letter writing campaigns.

- July 2020- Action call: participated in goal to send 2000 letters to Congress and the White House asking for H/CD programs in the next COVID-19 emergency legislation. by (completed: exceeded 2000 letters sent).
- August 2020 – participated in goal of 8501 letters to congress during August Advocacy Campaign. (Completed: exceeded goal -approximately 13,000 letters sent).
- December 2020. - Continue to answer call for advocacy letter writing
- August 2021 – Advocacy campaign goal 12,501. Goal exceeded - over 43,000!

Goal E – Strengthen NAHRO as a thought-leader by improving communication, networking, information exchange, and knowledge transfer with and among members, partners and stakeholders, and by enhancing the experience of members and next-generation professionals.

- June 2020 – uploaded “Commissioners at Work” - a compilation of activities at the 2019 National Conference and Exhibition in San Antonio, TX- for the NAHRO website Commissioners Resource page.
- August 2020 - Collaborated with IRGE Chair, Alan Zais to provide insight on diversity, equity and inclusion best practices.
- October 2020 – Collaborated with DEIAC Chair, Liz Glenn to provide insight on diversity, equity and inclusion best practices.
- Nov/Dec. 2020, JOHCD article - Commissioners Corner: Mitigating Fire Damage
- February 2021 – Speakers from Rapid Results Institute and C4 Innovations provided information on a 100-day challenge to galvanize and target diversity, equity and inclusion efforts with regards to homelessness.
- June 2021 - Self-care Policy Framework Focus - Social Determinants of Health - Health and Healthcare. Self-care guest speaker: Soni Myers, LCPC, NCC Disability Services Coordinator/Counselor, Idaho State University, Meridian Idaho Campus spoke to the committee on being mindful of our own health, mindfulness and compassion and how to decompress and rejuvenate our reserves to continue to help others and ourselves.
- July/August 2021, JOHCD article – Commissioners Corner: The Basics of Being a Housing Agency Commissioner
- September 2021- Knowledge exchange – Alaska. Carl Richie, NAHRO Past President; Patricia Wells, NAHRO Senior Vice President; and Griffin Hagel, Executive Director, Tagiugmiullu Nunamiullu Housing Authority, Utqiagvik, Alaska briefed the committee on their experience regarding Alaska housing.

Obj. 1. - Work with regions to ensure nominees for Commissioner of the Year Award.

- 2020 - Chair encouraged regional service officers to submit worthy candidates for the Commissioner of the Year award and to enter their regional recipients for the national award. Currently have two nominations.
- Reminder of award deadline and Commissioner of the Year award article published in the [June 15 NAHRO Monitor](#), July 31 award name update, August 15, August 31, September 15 deadline extended to October 8.
- July 2020 – reminder sent to Regional VP-Commissioners to encourage regional nominations and to nominate regional commissioner award recipients for national recognition.
- October 2020 - selected Commissioners of the Year recipient. 3 candidates.
- July 2021 eight nominees for the Commissioners of the Year award. Jury evaluated, selected and recognized during the 2021 Online National Conference and Exhibition in October.

Obj. 2 –Create substantive, relevant topics and sessions for the national conference track and possibly for sessions under different tracks.

- 2020 - A list of session topics has been compiled and commissioners' track group will resume work when warranted.
- March 2021 - 2021 National Conference call for proposals - submitted sessions.
- July 2021- one session proposal submitted by committee members was approved for 2021 National Conference.

Alternate Obj. 2: Due to the pandemic, work refocused encouraging board members and agencies to submit material for the #HousersAtWork Campaign to showcase the agency, commissioner and community work done during COVID-19 pandemic.

- March 2021 - Encourage testimonials by all committee members regarding value in NAHRO membership
1. **What are the most valuable aspects of your NAHRO membership?**
 2. **Why would you recommend joining NAHRO to a colleague?**

Goal F. Advance diversity, equity, and inclusion as crucial to healthy communities.

April - July 2021- committee member testimonials have been submitted

Obj 1: Discuss efforts that engage our agencies, residents and community to encourage diversity, equity and inclusiveness.

- August 2020 – Collaborated with IRGE Committee chair, Alan Zais addressed the committee on ways to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in housing authorities and communities.

- **Ongoing Discussion:** In 2020, efforts to focus attention on: empowerment, encourage our residents and community to complete the census form and to vote, attend workshops focused on government, the importance of the vote, electoral college, local activism, law enforcement, etc.

Empowerment - My Brother's Keeper Alliance, launched by Former President Obama. This program addresses gaps faced by boys and young men of color and focuses on building safe and supportive communities where they feel valued and have clear pathways to opportunity.

Scholarships – An annual scholarship program in Georgia garnered 16 applicants, despite COVID-19. Approximately 90% of the tenants are African American. Jurors will judge and \$2,500 will be awarded.

Law Enforcement- Several members worked task forces, to address police reform by crafting a set of recommendations for their respective cities to adopt.

Voter Registration- In Georgia, get drop boxes positioned on housing authority properties for residents who are 60 and older, who occupy a unit and who do not have transportation to get to polling sites. They are awaiting confirmation on that request at this time. If approved, drop box security issues will be handled by voting officials with cameras, etc.

- October 2020 - Collaborated with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee Chair, Liz Glenn to provide insight on diversity, equity and inclusion-best practices.
- February 2021 - Speakers from Rapid Results Institute and C4 Innovations spoke about DEI 100-day challenges to inspire goal setting, levels of innovation, collaboration and execution required to achieve goal.
- June 2021 - Self-care Policy Framework Focus- Social Determinants of Health - Health and Healthcare Self-care guest speaker: Soni Myers, LCPC, NCC Disability Services Coordinator/Counselor, Idaho State University, Meridian Idaho Campus spoke to the committee on being mindful of our own health, mindfulness and compassion and how to decompress and rejuvenate our reserves to continue to help others and ourselves.

FINAL COMMENTS

Finally, I offer congratulations to you all for a productive two years despite the pandemic. I commend and applaud my commissioner colleagues in your efforts both at home, as a member of NAHRO and more importantly, as a member of this commissioner committee family. I am forever humbled at the amazing talent I am surrounded by. Truly an honor to work alongside you all. We have an amazing team of professionals. I would like to give a big shout out to those of you who remained engaged and “showed up” each month, digging deep during uncertain and difficult times.

I would like to give special thanks to President Shaw for leading us through the unknown as a result of COVID and for continually supporting the important role Commissioners play locally and nationally. I would also like to thank Carl Richie for being an amazing mentor and leader and for allowing me to lean on his expertise when needed. Further, I would like to acknowledge our Interim CEO, Mike Gerber and Senior Vice President Patricia Wells for supporting our Committee and Commissioners. Thank you for joining our calls and providing valuable updates, expertise and kindness. Finally, I would like to thank LaTonya Rajah for her phenomenal leadership and support. She is the “rock” the “foundation” of our Commissioners Committee.

I look forward to our new incoming leadership as well, to supporting your vision and goals and I am here to continue to support and advocate for those we serve.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karina Mason Rorris