



**2019-2021 Member Services Committee – Conference Call
Tuesday, August 10, 2021 – 3:00 pm-3:30 pm**

Staff Liaison: Lori Myers-Carpenter || lmcarpenter@nahro.org
<http://www.nahro.org/content/nahro-member-services-committee>

Attendance Member Services:

Those on the call: Denita Johnson, Milet Hopping, Rickey Bouffard, Donna Brown-Rego, Dale Gravett, Eric Chubenko, Keon Jackson, Anna Judge, Peggy Rice, Dannie Walker, Cynde Smith, Jake Oglesby, Sharon Dixson, Jhaila Brown, Lisa Stevens, Zachary Guerin, April Thompson, and Revonda Stordahl

Those absent: Randy Waters, Gary Centinaro, Kathy Walter, Joseph Anderson, Lillian Stringer, Shauna Boom, Beverly Banks, Billie Shelburn, Karen Reynolds, Larry Guanzon, MaryLiz Paulson, Liz Morales, Michele Poletti, Andy Rodriguez, Lori McGowan, and Zach Bale

Guests:

Patricia Wells, NAHRO Sr. Vice President
Gina Gibson, Emerging Leaders Subcommittee
Betsy Soto, Emerging Leaders Subcommittee
Chonda Tapley, Emerging Leaders Subcommittee

NAHRO Staff:

Mike Gerber, Interim CEO
Lori Myers-Carpenter

Denita Johnson welcomed everyone on the call and asked if anyone wanted to share a ripple effect. Interim CEO Mike Gerber said one of their long-time non-profits held a ground-breaking ceremony for permanent supportive housing for transitioning homeless in their community. He said more than 250 people showed up, which included most of the city's leadership. Denita said her agency celebrated a national night out last week, which featured socially distanced events. She said it was a great event and everyone enjoyed having that in-person connection they've missed due to the pandemic.

Patricia Wells, NAHRO Senior Vice President, thanked everyone for the work they are doing, and she said she enjoyed the ripples they shared. She said she is looking forward to hearing about other things the committee thinks are important, which leadership should pay attention to. Mike Gerber thanked everyone for their encouragement as he stepped into the role of Interim CEO, and he stressed the importance of taking part in NAHRO's advocacy efforts, especially now with the recent infrastructure bill. He also thanked everyone for their input on the conference. He understands not everyone is happy with the decision to require vaccinations to attend, but since there is another surge, he felt it was the best way to make sure it was a safe conference for everyone.

Denita thanked Patricia and Mike for joining them, and she also thanked Mike for the thought they put into making the conference safe. Denita asked staff for an update. Staff reminded everyone about the August 13 deadline for the Individual Awards. She encouraged them to look around, especially at the Emerging Leaders who joined them today, and consider nominating them for the Emerging Leaders Award. Denita then welcomed Tess Hembree, NAHRO's Director of Congressional Relations to talk about all things advocacy.

Tess thanked Denita for the opportunity to talk to the committee. She said they launched their annual August Advocacy campaign last week. The campaign is held in August to tie in with the Congressional recess, although lately that recess has been growing shorter. Each week they will send a letter on a topic they feel needs to be elevated in Congress. Last week's letter focused on infrastructure, which was timelier than they could imagine since the bill was voted on by the Senate today. This week they are focused on universal vouchers – a voucher for everyone who is eligible and wants one. Next week they will ask for the funds needed in order to administer the vouchers, and that will be followed up by letters on low-income tax credits and community development programs, and finally the budget for fiscal year 2022. The goal is to send 12,501 letters – one more letter than last year. Tess said she needed their help to reach the goal, not only by sending letters themselves, but by asking their colleagues to do so as well. She provided a link to the action center, and she encouraged them to share it with their colleagues.

Tess said it's particularly important to send the infrastructure letter, which she is going to update today, since housing wasn't included in the bill that passed the Senate. However, now that the bill passed, the Senate is working on a budget resolution to include some of the items that were dropped from the passed bill. Resolutions can then be passed without needing the full 60 votes. In the resolution there is 332 billion dollars available to the banking committee with instructions to spend it on things like the public housing capital fund. Once the resolution clears the Senate, staff who received instructions to contribute to the bill, will put the details down on paper. Tess said this is our opportunity to get the things we've been asking for and the funds needed in order to do them. That is why keeping the idea that housing is infrastructure is so important as they start filling in those details.

Mike said from his experience on Capital Hill, he knows even if the representative isn't in favor of a bill, if their constituents are sharing their opinions and experiences on why it's needed, the representative may not oppose the bill as strongly. Tess said even if they know their representative is in favor of the package, she encouraged them to still send the letters to show support. Patricia said after the first week of August Advocacy, she usually calls her representative to let them know more letters will be coming. She said this helps reinforce the issue and makes a personal connection with her representative's office. Tess encouraged anyone who is comfortable in making those calls to do so, but if they felt just wanted to send the letters, that was great too. She also mentioned they could edit the letters if they wanted to, and she encouraged them to add details about what is happening in their communities.

Finally, she mentioned NAHRO re-launched their Congressional District program. The concept of the program is to get a volunteer from each district to send a letter to their representative to make sure every representative gets at least one letter. She said they are looking to expand in Texas and California and several other states. She provided a link to the form, which includes a

congressional district map so they could see the areas needing coverage if they were interested in volunteering. She said even if there area was covered, she still encouraged them to volunteer.

Denita thanked Tess for joining them today. She said she would do her part and, she asked the committee members to do theirs as well. Ricky Bouffard said he just signed-up, and he sent his letters.

Denita asked if there was anything else, and hearing none, the call ended at 3:40 pm.

The next call is scheduled for September 14 at 3:00 pm.