



2021-2023 DEI Subcommittee  
Virtual Meeting MINUTES  
February 15, 2023 | 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. EST

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**Presiding: Zella Knight, Subcommittee Chair**

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**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME – Chair Zella Knight**

**Speaker: Jake Joseph – Author of JOHCD Nov/Dec article**

- [Bringing Equity and Inclusion into the Heart of NAHRO: the LGBTQ+ Subcommittee](#)

Subcommittee Background: Jake Joseph, Chair of the LGBTQ+ subcommittee of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group introduces the subcommittee in his article. The need for this subcommittee arose to expand the committee's reach to address the need for mentoring and support for residents and staff and from being a layperson to an LGBTQ+ liaison in this community, and allies to everyone. Mr. Joseph offered the Savvy Ally Action book is a great resource to cultivating allied partnerships and to answering questions about the topic. (see link in attachments)

Subcommittee work includes:

- Creating a toolkit each May, in advance of Pride Month, for interested agencies who may sponsor celebratory events, who serve a large population of LGBTQ+ residents and who may have housing for LGBTQ+ seniors and specific communities. Some LGBTQ+ agencies partner with nonprofits, Continuum of care provider, MTW and LGBTQ+ homelessness using LIHTC to build housing. If agencies are dealing with homelessness, a large portion may be LGBTQ+ youth.
- Be proactive, reactive and creative in how to resource agencies for the sake of employees, residents and mentoring into greater leadership. Creating safe spaces. When performing maintenance on units, how do the technicians address the resident in a gender-neutral way. Goal to make everyone feel safe and secure in their home and communities which can bring out healthy outcomes – social determinants of health.
- Networking and idea sharing activities for LGBTQ+ and allies including identifying mentors for those who request it, may be planned for the 2023 National Conference.
- Assisting Communications Department in crafting messages/materials as needed.

**QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

**Q:** Comment period has opened for Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH). How can we articulate the importance of inclusion for all during this comment period?

**A:** Be active, attentive, and informed. Consult with NAHRO Directors Tess Hembree and Eric Oberdorfer regarding legislative and policy updates.

**Q:** As a millennial, how can we cultivate a relationship with next gen professionals in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion.

**A:** Membership stats: 25% of survey respondents were housing veterans – 10+ years in the industry. 25% were new – less than 5 years in the industry. This is a great start to determining a plan. Work to actively engage and retain and offer programs, products and services that will create great partnerships.

Survey to determine board diversity, proactive steps to diversity with new appointments. Cultivating boards to include individuals from various backgrounds to include working professionals along with retirees and commissioners to become passionate champions of the community. Create lifelong housers.

**Q:** As a resident commissioner, it is difficult to get others to release their identify for fear and intimidation. Please provide insight to counter that. Conflict with Gen Next, Millennials, Gen Z.

**A:** When vacancies come, consider executive directors of LGBTQ+ centers or agencies, grassroots organizer doing intersectional work or seek candidates with a series of traits and experiences.

**Q:** Please expand upon how to create a safe and welcoming environment?

**A:** Great framework, now we have expanded to an advisory committee, helps us to learn, act, reflect. The expanded platform will help us to make this effort sustainable.

**Q:** Our subcommittee met with Housing America Advisory Group to determine how we could collaborate to get the word out about the poster contest to meet diversity, equity and inclusion goals and found gaps in how to engage others to participate. How can we resolve this problem?

**A:** Mentoring and identifying mentors within the NAHRO membership. Visibility – who will be willing to be visible as housing professionals and then making those resources known to create a safe space and facilitate networking.

**Q:** In a perfect world, what would be your ultimate strategy to achieve mentoring?

**A:** Agency toolkit produced by the LGBTQ+ Subcommittee to include practical tips other agencies are using which helps with visibility. Visibility means those who would like to self-identify LGBTQ+ professionals within NAHRO, create safe space, then network.

#### **UPDATE: CEO Mark Thiele**

- Thanked the members for their service to NAHRO.
- NAHRO, and other industry organizations published a letter submitted to HUD leadership objecting to unilaterally alter Annual Contributions Contract (ACC).
- Encouraged attendance at the Washington Conference, to be heard on Capitol Hill and to urge full funding of programs, in housing production, preservation that assist our residents.

#### **REMINDERS**

- **NAHRO Commissioners Survey:** <https://forms.gle/EoyLWPipwha5VFs56>  
*Deadline moved to March 15, 2023. If you have questions along the way, please do not hesitate to reach out to [lucilleboss@me.com](mailto:lucilleboss@me.com). A PDF of the survey can be found [here](#)*
- [Washington Conference - Leadership Meeting Schedule](#)
- [NAHRO Leadership Volunteer Form](#)  
It is time to complete the leadership volunteer form for the 2023-2025 term. If you are interested in continuing to serve on the Commissioners Committee or wish to serve on any other committee, please sign in and click on the link above to record your preferences.  
**DEADLINE is March 31, 2023.**

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES | NEXT STEPS

While we continue to gather data from the commissioner survey. The subcommittees were asked to provide a goals/objectives contingency plan. We will continue to work with DEIAC to assist with discussions on the ongoing items below:

- **In Progress/Ongoing**
  - Survey responses:
    - Developing non-traditional partnerships
    - Addressing social determinants of health as defined in NAHRO framework
    - HR tools (recruiting, succession planning, etc.)
    - Next Gen Professionals
  - Partnership with DEIAC
  - Partnership with Housing America

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### Attachments:

- [Commissioners at work - new](#)
- [Commissioners Mentors List](#)
- [2023 NAHRO Monitor Print Schedule](#)
- **New JOHCD schedule** - twice-yearly. The first issue -July, second in December.  
*Article deadline:* mid-June and mid-November respectively.
- **Subcommittee recurring meeting schedule** (attached)
- [List of Upcoming Trainings for Commissioners](#)  
[New committee/subcommittee objectives document](#)
- 2022 NOV. DEC. JOHCD article: [Race, Equity and Housing: NAHRO's Response](#)
- **Jake Joseph's suggested web source:** <https://www.savvyallyaction.com/>
- **Book:** <https://www.savvyallyaction.com/about-1>

**Attendance:** Zella Knight, Angela Reed, Bobby Wilson, Joe Grisson, Joycelynn Straight, Thomas Jefferson **Guest:** Jake Joseph, Chair, LGBTQ+ Subcommittee/ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, CEO Mark Thiele

### RECAP FROM DECEMBER, 2022 MEETING:

How to best market the Housing America poster contest and the [scholarships](#) (see attachment for background information) to more students across the country via their respective public housing agencies. How can the DEI subcommittee work with Housing America Advisory Group (HAAG) to build non-traditional partnerships (educational institutions prek-12, post-secondary colleges, to get the word out?

### **Discussion:**

#### **Items of concern from the HAAG**

- All of the chapter/regions are not submitting chapter/regional scholarship applicants.
- Struggle to get males to apply.
- Program redesign, including rating/grading system, is a consideration to alleviate administrative burdens.
- Outreach marketing is primarily done via the housing authorities as the scholarship criteria dictates that the applicants must receive rental assistance (voucher, HOME, HOPE, etc.) from a nahro member agency.

#### **Suggestions**

- Consider creating a regional chapter and national NAHRO Diversity and Equity Scholarship with same criteria.
- Consider expansion of award to head of household population or caregiver of children with a sponsor or a fundraising entity.
- Market to non-traditional entities that come to PHA properties and to school guidance counselors, community colleges, social workers, homeless liaisons, resident councils PHA fairs, school fairs and other events directly connected with PHAs can, share, navigate and encourage participation.
- If tuition is covered, can we allow the funds for other college costs, food, etc.?

#### **Next Steps**

- Staff Liaison will compile data for DEI subcommittee with scholarship recipients list by gender, and sub-group demographics. (Libby Miller left NAHRO 1/24/23).
- Conversation will continue with CEO Thiele, President Wells, HAAC Chair Anna Judge and Staff Liaison on possible redesign of the scholarship program components.
- The DEI subcommittee as well as the Communication Subcommittee, who had a conversation with HAAC Chair Judge and Staff Liaison, stand ready to work with HAAC in the realm of diversity, equity, inclusion and communication.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES RECURRING MEETINGS**

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion- Zella Knight, Chair**

**Bi-monthly schedule – Third Wednesday, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., Eastern Time**

**February 15, April 19, June 21,**

**August 16 Provide final report at the last meeting in October**

### **Meeting URL**

<https://nahro-org.zoom.us/j/87694500331?pwd=anlwSmozR25ER0JMdVJadz1U2R5Zz09>

**Meeting ID:** 876 9450 0331

**Passcode:** 363666

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