



June 24, 2015

Re: Comments to LHC's FY 2016 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

The Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA) is a collaborative of non-profit housing builders and community development corporations working to rebuild the housing stock available in the city of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina devastated the city's infrastructure. The collaborative advocates for the preservation and production of affordable housing for people within the Greater New Orleans metropolitan region and places a special emphasis on the needs of the most vulnerable in society - seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, low-wage workers and low-income families. The goals of GNOHA align closely with the work of the Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC). As federal resources become more limited for affordable housing we recognize the need to for the best use of resources and importance of leveraging funds for better outcomes.

As the LHC plans for its use of HOME funds for FY 2016, we have the following recommendations/concerns:

1. **Establish an annual schedule for all affordable housing funding opportunities:** We recommend the LHC establish, publish and adhere to an annual schedule for all affordable housing funding opportunities. Irregular, short-notice funding announcements contribute to lower-quality applications, inefficiency, elongated development time frames, and missed opportunities for leveraging resources. Knowing the schedule in advance will facilitate project planning for GNOHA members and developers throughout the state.
2. **Reimbursement schedule/timeline:** Organizations utilizing HOME funds range in size and location. Sometimes due to the length of the reimbursement process of HOME funds, it can put financial strain on organizations. It also deters some nonprofit developers who produce high quality affordable housing from participating due to the potential financial risk of the lengthy reimbursement process. Providing a clear timeline for reimbursement of funds will help organizations with planning and maintaining financial stability.
3. **Support capacity building efforts:** The opportunities for training are valuable. However moving forward it is important to provide the expectations and schedules for any planned trainings well in advance. If any trainings are going to be mandatory, this should be included in the NOFA.

Currently GNOHA is spearheading HousingNOLA, a broad-based initiative that will produce a community-led plan to meet the housing needs of all New Orleans for the next 10 years. This effort includes housing developers (non-profit and for-profit), fair housing advocates, City officials, neighborhood leaders, philanthropic leaders and community members. This plan will serve as a data framework to inform future housing policy so more thoughtful and scalable housing developments that are affordable for all income levels can be achieved.

We are pleased that the LHC has been active in this process to date, but moving forward in order to help the plan be successful, there is opportunity to leverage this partnership to make sure we are providing affordable housing and services needs for the residents of New Orleans. Our goal is that the HousingNOLA plan is a living document to be utilized by all including the LHC. We hope that it is utilized in LHC's planning process in the future. We also invite the LHC to continue to be an

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Finance Authority of New Orleans
Foundation for Louisiana
Global Green USA
Greater New Orleans Foundation
Green Coast Enterprises
Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center
Gulf Coast Housing Partnership
Harmony Neighborhood Development
Healthy Start New Orleans
Housing Authority of New Orleans
Iberia Bank
Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative
Jerusalem Economic Development Corp.
JPMorgan Chase Bank
Louisiana Appleseed
Louisiana Association of Affordable Housing
Providers (LAAHP)
Louisiana Homebuyer Education Collaborative
Louisiana Housing Alliance
Lowermine.org
Lower 9th Ward Homeownership Association
Lower 9th Ward NENA
Make It Right
Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of
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Neighborhood Development Foundation
Neighborhood Housing Services
New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity
New Orleans Redevelopment Authority
NO/AIDS Task Force
Northshore Housing Initiative
Office of Housing Policy & Community
Development
Operation Comeback
Pontchartrain Park CDC
Preservation Resource Center
Project Home Again
Project Homecoming
Providence Community Housing
Puentes New Orleans
Rebuilding Together New Orleans
Redmellon
Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corp.
Renaissance Property Group
Southern United Neighborhoods
St. Bernard Project
Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corp.
Urban Focus
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active participant beyond the document and join one of our many GNOHA committees to help us keep our membership informed on the LHC's activities and partner on any future opportunities. The committees include:

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- Policy Committee: The goal of the Public Policy Committee is to educate, engage, inform and guide affordable housing developers and non-profits to be influential policy advocates at all levels of government in order to support the building of safe, high quality affordable housing.
- Homeownership Committee: The Homeownership Committee handles the *Own the Crescent Homeownership Campaign* and addresses issues directly related to the creation of single family for sale units. Own the Crescent is a campaign to promote homeownership at all income levels throughout New Orleans through the partnership of homebuyer education agencies, housing developers and realtors.
- Rental Committee: The Rental Committee addresses issues where policy disrupts practice. It seeks to inform policy makers of both the advantages and challenges associated with the development of "affordable" rental housing – i.e. the green building, sustainability and resident/developer subsidy. This committee also reviews programs that will have a direct impact on affordable housing management and vulnerable rental housing populations like veterans, public and supportive housing tenants and low-income renters.

We look forward to our continued partnership with the LHC. If you have any questions, feel free to contact our Program Director, Lindsey Lewis at (504) 821-7235 or lindsey.lewis@gnoha.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andreanecia Morris'.

Andreanecia Morris
Chair, GNOHA Board of Governors