



## **Virginia State President's Report** July 2019-September 2019

### ***Virginia Legislative Issues***

- VAHCDO continues support for the changes to Virginia laws from the 2019 General Assembly to address the high eviction rates in Virginia cities. Although the PHA's eviction rates are drastically lower than those across their respective cities, Virginia PHA's are either leading or participating in the Virginia Housing Alliance and the Campaign to Reduce Evictions (CARE).
  - Eviction diversion programs are being rolled out in four Virginia cities: Danville, Hampton, Petersburg and Richmond. Richmond allocated \$485k to its program and the local PHA has begun working to educate and inform residents about the options available to them.
  - Several of the new laws enacted in 2019 were already in place by Virginia PHA's such as the requirement for written leases and a right of redemption prior to eviction.
- The Public Policy Committee has been working to expand the Communities of Opportunity Program (COP), a Virginia income tax credit program enacted by the 2010 General Assembly that is intended to decentralize poverty by providing Virginia income tax credits to landlords with property in less-impooverished areas. VAHCDO is working with lawmakers to expand the program beyond the Greater Richmond/Petersburg.
- A joint partnership with VAHCDO, the Virginia Housing Commission and the Virginia Housing Development Authority was formed to make state legislators aware of HUD's notice and intent to Reposition Public Housing. A research study will be released in November 2019 to highlight the capital investment needed to bring Virginia's public housing to market standards.

### ***Conferences and Special Events***

- The Chesapeake Redevelopment and Housing Authority opened the city's first Homeless Resource Center in September 2019. This opening follows a trend started by the Virginia Beach housing department whose Housing Resource Center was a first of its kind facility offering a health clinic, mental health services, a department of human services, and different employment agencies in order to "...to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring".
- The Virginia Governor's Housing Conference will be held on November 20 – 22, 2019 in Hampton, VA. VAHCDO is sponsoring a special session to discuss revitalization activities for PHA's converting Public Housing under the four (4) new tools offered by HUD. Both PHA and HUD staff will present to provide sample best practices for all Virginia PHA's.
- Two Virginia PHA's were among the four finalists for Choice Neighborhood Initiative grants and funding awards of \$35 million each were made to the Marshall-Ridley community in Newport News, VA and the St. Paul's community in Norfolk, VA. PHA's in both communities have already begun implementation which includes initiation of the 'people' portion of the plan as well as the related development.