



2019/2020 Program Year Highlights

Advocacy and Outreach

- 2020 Virginia General Assembly
Through VAHCDO's Public Policy Committee, which includes representation by the Legislative Strategies Group, we maintained constant contact throughout every day the General Assembly was in session, including the October Special Session. Through VAHCDO, members were represented in Richmond at the various meetings, sessions and presentations that led to the passing of groundbreaking legislation. A few of the successes are listed below. See the **2020 VAHCDO GA Session Summary** for a full recap.
 - 1) Passage of legislation to add source of income to protected class under Fair Housing Law (HB 6 Bourne),
 - 2) Passage of legislation to establish a Virginia housing opportunity tax credit program, and
 - 3) Passage of legislation to expand the Communities of Opportunity Tax Credit.
- Virtual Capital Hill
In lieu of an annual trip to Washington D.C., VAHCDO and the Virginia Housing Alliance held a Virtual Capital Hill Day on June 9, 2020 to discuss our affordable housing needs in light of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as housing related COVID legislation. The participants included representation from the offices of Senators Warner and Kaine along with either virtual or direct phone calls with each of the Virginia Representatives.
- Ongoing Advocacy
Following the Virtual Capital Hill, the Public Policy Committee stayed in routine contact with the Virginia Congressional delegation to 1) offer thanks and appreciation for the CARES Act and other legislation, 2) give real world examples of how CARES Act funding is being used in Virginia and 3) advocate for additional funding and regulatory relief to allow PHA's to provide housing (and safety and education and connectivity) needs to low income families during the pandemic.

Training and Education

- VAHCDO Annual Conferences
The 2020 VAHCDO Annual Conference was initially postponed along with the VAHCDO Legal & Policy Seminar. Now, both events will be combined into a virtual event at the end of the year. Stay tuned for dates and details.

(over)



Training and Education (continued)

- **VAHCDO Scholarships**
Although VAHCDO was not able to hold an in-person conference in 2020, the Scholarship Committee was able to solicit applications, interview students and award eight scholarships, and \$16,000, to an excellent group of high school seniors at member PHA's.
- **Training Events**
The 2020 slate of on-site trainings were canceled and are just starting to be rescheduled. The REAC training, set for Dec. 1 & 2, 2020 is the first training to be rescheduled and will be followed by others in early 2021.
- **CARES Act Training**
With the support of the HUD-Richmond Field Office, a VAHCDO Conference on COVID-19 was held on March 25, 2020 to dissect and understand HUD legislation (waivers and funding) to help PHA's address the coronavirus. Another CARES Act Virtual Training was held by the Field Office on Sept. 22nd for the benefit of Virginia PHA's.

Planning for the Future

- **2030 Strategic Planning Initiative**
Although 2020 will forever be marked by COVID-19, VAHCDO is looking towards the future of PHA's in Virginia as we all transition from public housing to providing broad-based real estate management and development for a range of families. To this end, VAHCDO obtained a \$20,000 grant to conduct a Strategic Plan. The Plan kickoff will occur at the end of 2020 but WE NEED YOU to create a successful and relevant Plan to present to the membership in 2021. Stay tuned and be ready to participate.
- **Housing and Health**
Before the term "Social determinants of health (SDOH)" became a catchphrase, PHA's have known that the physical spaces we provide have a direct effect on a wide range of health and quality-of-life risks and outcomes. Stay tuned for the release of studies and the introduction of a new VAHCDO partner to help us provide healthier spaces in existing and new developments.
- **Broadband and The Persistent Digital Divide**
Several Virginia PHA's stepped up to close the digital divide by providing computing devices and expanding wireless internet access in their housing communities. This will be a continuous fight in 2021 and VAHCDO is working with its partners to provide best practices, and access to funding, to eliminate this divide throughout Virginia.