



Notes

IS BACK AGAIN!

A Publication of University Neighborhood Housing Program

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Capitol Hill Housing Update: Trust Fund Stalled

The situation with Iraq, the continuing war in Afghanistan and War on Terrorism, along with the upcoming election have many important domestic issues, including housing, off the main radar screen on Capitol Hill.

HUD appropriations bills have finally been marked up in both the House and the Senate. At this point, the big loser is the Section 8 voucher program in the House version, which would receive 150,000 fewer vouchers than the President requested (when re-

newal and incremental vouchers are combined). Appropriations are not expected to go much further until after the November election.

Whether Rep. Roukema's Omnibus Housing Bill (*H.R. 3995*) will come to floor at all remains an open question. House leadership does not want a vote on the bill, especially because of the proposed National Housing Trust Fund amendment. The trust fund would create a permanent, dedicated federal funding source that would build, rehabilitate and preserve 1.5

million units of rental housing for low income families over the next 10 years. To date, more than 3,000 national, state and local organizations have endorsed the trust fund.

Several other provisions in *H.R. 3995* would put additional demands on appropriators, including allowing Public Housing Authorities to increase the voucher payment standard to 120% of fair market rent without HUD approval. Given the problems voucher holders have in finding a place to use their vouchers in certain areas, flexibility to increase the payment standard will help people find housing in tightening rental markets. This provision would also decrease the risk of recaptured and rescinded Section 8 funds.

As a result of the various objections, the housing bill may not reach the floor, even though it represents a compromise and was approved by the Financial Services Committee on a voice vote.

Walk-a-thon Brings Spotlight and Donations to Affordable Housing

A clear September Sunday afternoon saw thousands of affordable housing supporters from all over New York City walk almost five miles from Central Park through Harlem to Morningside Park. About 25 UNHP staff and supporters participated in the *Walk on Home* walk-a-thon, sponsored by Washington Mutual. A total of four walks were held throughout the metropolitan area. 100% of the more than \$4000 in donations raised by UNHP will go towards our work. Thanks to the more than 70 people who supported us in this successful fund-raising event!

Housing First! Rally December 5

A rally to call on Mayor Bloomberg to invest in affordable housing for all New Yorkers has been scheduled for **Thursday, December 5 at 12:00 noon at City Hall Park**. The *New York Needs a Place to Live!* rally is being organized by the Housing First! coalition of which UNHP is a member.

Housing First! is a broad coalition of nonprofit and for-profit developers, community-based organizations, religious

institutions, civic groups, businesses, banks and labor unions. The coalition holds the belief that New York City must make a significant and sustained commitment to expand the preservation and production of affordable housing.

Subway directions to the rally: Take the 4, 5 or 6 train to the *Brooklyn Bridge* stop, or the N or R train to the *City Hall* stop. For more information, email Housing First! at info@housingfirst.net.

Data Problems?

Looking for community specific data on the internet and having a hard time? Intimidated by the Census website? UNHP Project Coordinator Greg Jost will demonstrate how to use the Community Resource Guide to solve your data-finding problems online at an ANHD workshop on **Wednesday, November 6 at 9:00 AM at Madison Ave Baptist Church (30 E. 31 St)**. If you are interested in attending, contact Don Morlan @ 212-463-9600.

Daycare Providers Begin Homeownership Process with Credit Counseling

The process that began with basic interest surveys is now completing its first major step. A number of members of the Providers United Family Daycare Network and their spouses have completed budgeting and credit workshops sponsored by UNHP. Greenpath Debt Solutions, formerly known as Consumer Credit Counseling Services, ran the Spanish language

workshops here at Concourse House in September and October.

Nine providers attended, including four who brought their spouses with them. They participated in budgeting and credit exercises and had their credit reports reviewed to determine how they can improve their scores.

The workshops were subsidized by UNHP, and GreenPath is currently providing one-on-one counseling free of charge to all of the providers who participated. Those without major credit problems will move onto the next phase of homebuying workshops.

Old Computers to Good Cause

Thanks to a technology grant from the Enterprise Foundation two years ago, UNHP has been able to replace a number of the older computers in the office. These older machines have been reformatted and donated to three lucky daycare providers (chosen out of a hat) in the Providers United Network for use in their programs.

Welfare Reauthorization Held Up

The predetermined September 30 deadline for reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant has come and gone without decisive action. The House of Representatives has already approved a bill that would increase work requirements by individuals and participation levels by states that many fear will only make the situation worse. The Senate is yet to approve anything, but there are a number of bills and amendments on the table. However, with the current debate in Congress over Iraq and the upcoming election, it is not clear what will happen with this piece of legislation, or when the matter will be dealt with at all.

UNHP sponsored a forum on welfare reform reauthorization this past May. Bich Ha Pham from the *Hunger Action Network of New York State* spoke about Federal TANF Reauthorization, including a review of the 1996 law and the battle in Congress over the future of welfare. Don Friedman of the *Community Food Resource Center* presented information on the NYS Safety Net Assistance Program and time limits, including what is required of New Yorkers receiving assistance now and how things could change.

If you are interested in the topic and would like to receive the handouts from the forum, please contact Greg Jost at gjost@unhp.org or 718-933-3101. Additional information and reports are available on the websites of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities at www.cbpp.org and the Coalition on Human Needs at www.chn.org.

More Notes?

In the last issue, we told you that *Notes* was coming to an end after 12 years of housing and community updates. OK, so we fooled you. *Notes* is not officially retired, but will continue to be published less frequently interspersed with our longer format journal type publication that will begin this winter. If you would like to join UNHP's mailing list and receive both publications in the mail free of charge, please contact us at 933-3101 or mail@unhp.org.

6.5% Water Rate Hike Approved

The Water Board has approved and finalized a water and sewer rate hike of 6.5% effective July 1, 2002. In addition, the criteria for termination of service has been expanded to include delinquent charges greater than \$1,000 "open and unpaid" for at least one year, and charges of greater than \$10,000 "open and unpaid" for at least three months.

was approved while the suspension of the Leak Forgiveness Program during drought emergencies was rejected. The wastewater rate will remain at 159% of the corresponding water charge which is payable on each account.

For more information on the changes and to read about UNHP's work with water & sewer issues, visit the *In Depth* page on our website at www.unhp.org.

The Denial of Access Regulation

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