

NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

ADVOCACY ACTION ALERT

Arlington/Alexandria Housing Activities August 2020

Rental Assistance and Eviction Response Alexandria, through their [COVID-19 Emergency Rent Relief Program](#), and Arlington with their [Housing Resources](#), are working with landlords and residents to provide rental assistance for COVID-impacted residents who have lost their jobs and cannot pay rent. Virginia's [Rent and Mortgage Relief Program](#) (RMRP) provides an additional \$50 million statewide for rental and mortgage assistance, and is administered locally. The challenge with all of these programs - in varying degrees - is getting the money into the hands of landlords. Whether it's regulations emanating from the CARES Act legislation, or requirements/documentation needed by the state or locality, funds have not flowed as quickly as everyone would like. This bottleneck in the system, coupled with the expiration of eviction moratoriums and loss of the federal UI of \$600/week, results in the makings of a perfect storm for catastrophe for residents who may lose their housing.

Virginia General Assembly Special Session August 18 The [Virginia Housing Alliance](#) is organizing advocates across the Commonwealth to urge GA members to protect the gains secured for the Housing Trust Fund (\$60 million) and Permanent Supportive Housing (\$22 million) in the pre-COVID approved biennium budget. Funding of \$6.6 million was proposed for an Eviction and Diversion Prevention program at the start of this year's General Assembly session; that funding should move forward for immediate programming. **Eviction protections** are top of mind during this special session [in the absence of any action by the Virginia Supreme Court](#) [as of this writing] to extend the moratorium. **The Virginia Legislative Black Caucus** has included protections related to housing and evictions and rent relief for COVID-impacted residents in their [Special Session Priorities](#). We hope to provide an update later in August on the Special Session. Now is the time for advocacy! [Contact your state delegate and senator](#) and [send a message to Governor Northam](#) to extend the ban on evictions now to allow time for rental assistance funds to be disbursed. Let's keep people in their homes.

Accessory Dwelling Units Interest in this housing type is growing nationwide. Recently [Housing Virginia](#) hosted a webinar [ADUs: The Next \(Little\) Thing in Affordable Housing](#) followed by a Q&A session. ADUs have also caught the attention of folks at Freddie Mac where they've done a national scan of accessory dwellings based on real estate listings. You can read their report "Granny Flats, Garage Apartments, In-Law Suites" [here](#). While Arlington revised their standards for accessory dwelling units in 2019, Alexandria is midway through their community engagement process to develop policies for ADUs in the City, working in

collaboration with the Urban Institute. In July, City staff recorded a second presentation that summarizes initial community feedback received, addresses questions asked, and explains how the City's Zoning Ordinance currently regulates ADUs. You can watch the presentation at this [link](#) and share your thoughts [here](#). The deadline for feedback is August 10. We note that similar community engagement on revisions to county ADU policy is taking place in neighboring Fairfax County. We are encouraged to see so many NoVA jurisdictions looking at all available tools and strategies to increase housing supply and promote affordability in the region.

League of Women Voters of Virginia - In 2019, the League of Women Voters of Virginia chose the issue of affordable housing for their statewide study and analysis. Recently, NVAHA joined a meeting of the **LWV - Arlington** Housing Committee to discuss the report and the [Consensus Questions](#) posed to local League chapters statewide. We commend the League for their comprehensive analysis of this critical topic, and thank them for this valuable contribution to a better community-wide understanding of housing affordability and the need for increased investments in housing. Their report, and a listing of resources used in the study, can be found [here](#).

NVAHA 2020 Regional Housing Leaders Awards Ceremony and 15th Anniversary Celebration Thursday, September 17, 5:00 - 6:00 PM, online. [Registration is now open](#) and is free, so we hope you'll join us to toast our awardees and celebrate 15 years of working together to provide housing opportunities for low and moderate income households in Northern Virginia. NVAHA is expanding its footprint and our staff. COVID-19 and systemic injustices against Black and Brown residents have caused us to refocus our mission and our core beliefs. Please review our revised [Mission and Vision Statements and our Core Beliefs](#) on our website.