NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

http://nvaha.org/
Dear housing partners, colleagues and friends,

2020 was a year like no other. NVAHA began the year with high expectations as we prepared to celebrate our 15th Anniversary and hire a new Director of Programs and Community Engagement. In February we co-hosted a successful “Rx for Building Housing + Health Partnerships” event with HAND to examine proven strategies to build relationships between affordable housing developers and healthcare institutions. Two weeks later COVID-19 struck; all activity ceased, and we sheltered in place - but not everyone was able to shelter safely.

Our work has always been about changing the systems that do not adequately invest in creating and preserving affordable housing, but now we are intentional about grounding these efforts in racial and health equity, especially for Black and Brown residents in our community. This “2020 Year in Review” highlights some of our key accomplishments related to our core activities of housing education, advocacy and community engagement. While we hope to return to engaging in these activities in-person in 2021, we will bring the lessons of 2020 with us in our work moving forward.

Where You Live Matters. In 2021, competing priorities for depleted revenue in state and local budgets will create an even greater urgency for strong housing advocacy, and it will take all of us to deliver this message. COVID-19 has shown that safe, quality affordable housing is health, is racial equity, is economic justice. We can’t wait to implement long-range goals approved for housing and community development; we must act now.

We’ll use our expanded research and data analytics capabilities to explore housing and health, building networks between developers and healthcare institutions that result in housing investments and better health outcomes for residents. We will also maintain an approach in our research and community engagement activities that centers community voices, recognizing that our work is to support residents as they lead in identifying needs and priorities within their communities.

We will continue our work begun in 2020 to promote broadband as a necessity for every household. Our children’s success with virtual learning, and a household’s ability to access information and services like telehealth make affordable, accessible broadband with the appropriate devices essential for low income families.

Our task is clear: to be a thought leader and advocate for inclusive, diverse, equitable communities. That means neighborhoods with housing that is affordable and safe and includes recreational facilities; communities with reliable, accessible transportation and affordable healthcare.

We have work to do; please join us!

Michelle Krocker, Executive Director

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2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### NVAHA Leadership Council
- **6 bi-monthly meetings of 24 cross-sector housing industry organizations**
- **3 presentations**
  - Budget presentations by the Housing Directors from the City of Alexandria, and Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, May 2020
  - Panel Discussion on Permanent Supportive Housing moderated by Dr. Sylisa Lambert-Woodard, CEO, Pathway Homes, July 2020
  - COG’s Regional Fair Housing Initiative, Hilary Chapman, Housing Program Manager, Council of Governments, September 2020
- **Substantial revision of NVAHA’s mission and vision statement** centering our housing work in racial, economic and health equity
- **Workgroup on developer impediments** submitted recommendations to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

### COVID-19 Response
- **Added COVID-19 Resources and Updates** page to our website
- Developed **Eviction Prevention and Housing Stability Toolkit** with **Tenant Supplement** in English and Spanish
- **3 surveys** over 6 months assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the operations, staff and clients of affordable housing and homeless service providers in NoVA
- Presented Eviction Prevention Toolkit to groups of housing and human service providers and government agency staff in multiple jurisdictions
- Participated with providers from DC and MD in regional eviction forum

#### Northern Virginia Eviction Prevention & Housing Stability Toolkit

#### NVAHA On the Web
- NVAHA launched a new, expanded website that incorporates our Housing Toolkit in September 2020

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The Leadership Council pivoted to meeting via Zoom starting in May 2020

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2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Policy Initiatives and Advocacy

• 26 monthly summary policy briefs by jurisdiction for decision makers, industry organizations and citizen advocates
• Built a coalition of housing and human service providers to secure critical resources for COVID-impacted residents and nonprofit organizations in Fairfax County’s FY2021 budget
• Delivered survey-based recommendations for Fairfax County’s Task Force on Equity and Opportunity

NVAHA is also an active participant on several boards, authorities and committees across the region and with statewide partners. In 2020, we contributed to recommendations to revise the Workforce Dwelling Unit policies in Fairfax County, and to the Developer Contributions Work Group in Alexandria. At the state level we participated in the Governor’s Work Group on Broadband and joined the Virginia Housing Alliance in advocacy for expanding the Housing Trust Fund and Permanent Supportive Housing funding. In 2020, we were active in the following:

• Chair, Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee
• Executive Committee, Fairfax County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
• Housing Leaders’ Group of Greater Washington
• Board member, Housing Forward Virginia
• Virginia Housing Alliance, Legislative Committee member
• Truist Community Development Council member
• Northern Virginia Anchor Collaborative for Community Wealth Building in Fairfax County
• Co-Convener, Regional Eviction Prevention and Community Stability Task Force

NVAHA in the Community

• Co-hosted “Rx for Building Health + Housing Partnerships” with HAND, February 2020
• Presenter at the 2020 Housing Challenge, co-sponsored by Fairfax County and GMU
• Presenter at Regional Elected Leaders Initiative, sponsored by GMU’s Schar School of Public Policy, September 2020
• Celebrated our 15th Anniversary and honored 4 outstanding regional housing leaders at our virtual Housing Leaders Awards Ceremony, September 2020
• Panelist at Virginia Governor’s Housing Conference, November 2020

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In 2020, housing policy and advocacy organizations like NVAHA took a back seat, financially, to funding direct services for vulnerable residents - and rightly so. But as Northern Virginia emerges from the pandemic, a strong voice for change will be needed. NVAHA will continue to be a leading advocate in pursuing policies that address rising housing cost burdens, lack of affordability, inequitable land use systems and lack of inclusion of minority communities in our civic discourse. We will do this through our housing research, outreach and advocacy. However, we need your financial support to continue this work. Join the effort to hold ourselves and our elected leaders accountable to our goals. Your support is critical to sustaining our efforts, so please consider a donation to NVAHA.

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