

March 2, 2017

Dr. Benjamin Carson
451 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20410

Re: Welcome from the National Housing Conference

Dear Mr. Secretary,

As the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, you have an opportunity to strengthen America's housing policy and help people in communities across this country. The National Housing Conference therefore writes to you in welcome, to introduce ourselves as a source of assistance, and with an invitation.

About the National Housing Conference

The National Housing Conference educates decision makers and the public about housing policies and practices to move housing forward together. NHC convenes and collaborates with our diverse membership of housing stakeholders including tenant advocates, mortgage bankers, nonprofit and for-profit home builders, property managers, policy practitioners, real estate professionals, equity investors and more to advance our policy, research and communications initiatives to effect positive change at the federal, state and local levels. Founded in 1931, we are a nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. NHC's research team operated as the Center for Housing Policy until the organizations merged in 2013.

Our research work covers a wide range of affordable housing issues: documenting the need for affordable housing in our annual Paycheck to Paycheck report and database; describing best practices for housing developers and policy makers to create and sustain affordable housing; and highlighting intersections between housing and other issues such as health and education. Most recently, our How Housing Matters convening in December of last year showcased research and practice connecting housing to health, education, and economic opportunity.

Our policy work brings together the widest range of housing stakeholders to provide nonpartisan, objective expertise on affordable housing challenges. Through our working groups and convenings, we bring experience from housing practitioners to bear on questions of federal policy, and we help housing practitioners understand changes to their work emerging from new directions in federal policy. Our policy staff interacts regularly with federal agencies and lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

Our communications work builds a national network of housing communicators, discovers and disseminates best practices in message development and communications and promotes new ways of thinking about the role of communications in housing work. Our annual Solutions for Housing Communications conference, coming in April 2017, connects affordable housing developers, advocates, funders and government officials around gaining community acceptance for affordable housing.

Offer of assistance in challenging times

HUD helps many Americans afford rental homes or begin homeownership. But HUD can only reach as far as its funding allows. Only one quarter of the people eligible for housing assistance actually receives it. That leaves more

than 11 million households spending more than half of their income on rent and many others homeless or at risk of homelessness. For many potential homeowners, HUD's FHA mortgage insurance is their only option for a mortgage, with all other forms of homeownership assistance limited by available funding. Before, during and as the recession receded, programs like these at HUD have been vital to preventing homelessness, promoting economic opportunity and stabilizing the housing market.

We believe you share our desire to see all in America have equal opportunity to live in a quality, affordable home in a thriving community, so we offer our assistance in the work ahead. As HUD Secretary you have the visibility to make housing a national priority. We offer our help, both to advocate vigorously for HUD's funding and to improve and expand solutions to affordable housing challenges. Your leadership and your voice can make a profound difference for all those in this country who struggle daily to afford a safe, healthy place to call home. When people can afford to live where they work, study and build their lives, we all prosper.

Invitation to speak at NHC Policy Symposium

NHC's Policy Symposium is an annual event of long standing that highlights housing issues of national importance. The Policy Symposium occurs the day after our annual Housing Gala, which honors organizations and individuals shaping the path forward for affordable housing in America. We invite you to offer a keynote address at our 2017 Policy Symposium on Friday, June 9, at the Marriot at Metro Center in Washington, DC.

Event details

NHC Policy Symposium

Date: June 9, 2017, event runs approximately from 9am to 1pm (subject to adjustment)

Location: Marriot at Metro Center, Washington, DC

Time: 9:15-9:45 a.m. including Q&A (we can adjust this to later in the event if that helps your schedule)

Format: Speech followed by moderated Q&A.

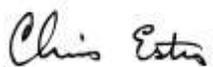
Press: The event is open to the media and will be webcast (in 2012 C-SPAN carried the event).

Audience: Approximately 200 people including housing leaders from around the country

Conclusion and meeting request

NHC wishes to be a resource to you as you address America's housing challenges. We request a time at your earliest convenience for our CEO and policy staff to meet with you. An initial meeting would be an opportunity to hear your plans for the Department, share NHC's priorities, and explore ways we could aid HUD in fulfilling the mission of affordable housing and thriving communities. Ethan Handelman, our Vice President for Policy and Advocacy, ehandelman@nhc.org, 202-466-2121 x238, is the best point of contact for scheduling the meeting. We look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,



Chris Estes
President and CEO