



**2020 General Membership Meeting
October 14, 2020
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions: Darsonya Switzer, Co-Chair
2. Adoption of 2019 Membership Meeting Minutes: Niccole Clements, Secretary
See pp. 2–4 for 2019 Membership Meeting Minutes.
3. Financial Report: Kurt Kuyawa, Treasurer
4. Election of Directors: Slate Presented by Carl Wolf, Co-Chair
See pp. 5–6 for candidate biographies.

For a 3-Year Term Beginning January 2021:

- Shalonda Bedenfield, Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago
- Jackie Newman, Springfield Public Housing Authority
- Laura Olvera, Community Partners for Affordable Housing, Lake County
- Darsonya Switzer, Dove, Inc., Decatur
- Margaret Wooten, Chicago Urban League

To Fill a 1-Year Term Ending December 2021:

- John Herring, Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living

5. Recognition of Board Service: Presented by Sharon Legenza, Executive Director
 - Kelli Harsch, Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen
 - Joyce Hothan
 - Mary Lu Seidel, Preservation Chicago
6. Housing Action Illinois Highlights: Sharon Legenza, Executive Director
 - Overview of Public Policy Advocacy and Public Education & Organizing Programs by Bob Palmer, Policy Director
 - Overview of AmeriCorps VISTA Program by Willie Heineke, National Service Program Manager
 - Overview of Capacity Building Program by David Young, Director of Capacity Building
7. Remarks from Kristin Faust, Executive Director, Illinois Housing Development Authority
8. Closing: Sharon Legenza, Executive Director
9. Adjournment: Darsonya Switzer, Co-Chair

HOUSING ACTION ILLINOIS
Annual Membership Meeting

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel & Conference Center
Bloomington, Illinois
Thursday, October 24, 2019

Minutes

1. **Welcome & Introductions:** Sheila Dodd, Co-Chair of the Board of Directors, opened the meeting and welcomed members and guests to Housing Action Illinois' 2019 Annual Membership Meeting.
2. **Adoption of 2018 Membership Meeting Minutes:** Niccole Clements, Secretary of the Board of Directors, asked for a motion to approve the 2018 Membership Meeting Minutes as presented.

Bob Campbell from ZION Development Corporation moved to approve the minutes. David Noble from Midland States Bank seconded the motion. The membership subsequently voted "Yes" unanimously. The motion passed.

3. **Financial Update:** Kurt Kuyawa, Treasurer of the Board of Directors, presented Housing Action's current financial report. He noted that a large portion of Housing Action's \$2,131,559 in revenue comes from CNCS and HUD government grants, both of which have significant pass-through components.
4. **Election of Directors:** Co-Chair Dodd presented the proposed slate of Directors to the membership for their votes.

For a 3-Year Term Beginning January 2020:

- Niccole Clements, PNC
- Kurt Kuyawa, Citizens Bank
- David Noble, Midland States Bank
- Mary Lu Seidel, Preservation Chicago

To Fill a 1-Year Term Ending December 2020:

- Laura Olvera, Community Partners for Affordable Housing

To Fill a 2-Year Term Ending December 2021:

- Bob Campbell, Zion Development Corp.

Kurt Kuyawa, Treasurer of the Board of Directors, motioned to approve the Board slate as presented. Carl Wolf from Respond Now seconded the motion. The membership subsequently voted "Yes" unanimously. The motion passed.

5. **Recognition of Board Service:** Co-Chair Mary Lu Seidel recognized the service of retiring board members Sheila Dodd and Mary Ellen Tamasy.
6. **In Memoriam:** Co-Chair Seidel spoke in memoriam of David Harrison of Madison County Community Development and noted his mission in life to serve those whose needs were not always recognized or met. Ms. Seidel also spoke in memoriam of Marca Bristo, founding Executive Director of Access Living, and noted Ms. Bristo’s role in the creation and passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The membership took a moment of silence to reflect on these lives of service.
7. **Staff Remarks:** Executive Director Sharon Legenza invited staff to speak about Housing Action’s programs.
 - a) **Overview of Public Policy Advocacy and Public Education & Organizing Programs:** Bob Palmer, Policy Director, summarized Housing Action’s recent accomplishments and updates in the areas of public policy advocacy and public education and organizing. Mr. Palmer noted Housing Action’s recent state public policy successes, which included \$200 million in the state capital budget to fund affordable housing, a \$6 million increase in funding for lead poisoning prevention, a \$4 million increase for homelessness prevention, and the extension of graduated foreclosure filing fees to support the rehabilitation of abandoned properties and foreclosure prevention counseling. Mr. Palmer also discussed the success of the Just Housing Initiative, and thanked out-going Outreach Manager, Gianna Baker, who would be leaving to pursue a new opportunity.
 - b) **Overview of National Service Program:** Willie Heineke, National Service Program Manager, spoke on the status of Housing Action’s AmeriCorps VISTA Program. Mr. Heineke announced that Steven Johnson, a former AmeriCorps VISTA Leader, had joined Housing Action’s staff as a National Service Program Associate. Mr. Heineke presented highlights from the program. During the 2018–2019 service year, VISTA members recruited and managed 1,534 volunteers and raised \$413,000 in cash and in-kind donations for their host sites. Mr. Heineke discussed goals for the upcoming year, including improving geographic distribution to ensure host sites represent regions across Illinois, and increasing the recruitment and retention rate. Mr. Heineke encouraged meeting attendees to apply to host a VISTA.
 - c) **Overview of Capacity Building Program:** David Young, Director of Capacity Building, spoke about Housing Action’s housing counseling intermediary network, and HUD’s recent \$1.2 million award to Housing Action for this 33-affiliate network. Mr. Young thanked the affiliates for their work. Mr. Young also spoke about the expansion of Housing Action’s Online Study Group to help housing counselors pass the HUD-mandated individual certification exam. He shared a quote from a housing counselor in California who passed the exam after participating in the study group. Mr. Young recognized Bibian Cristino, Wanda Collins, and Jennifer Pallas, Housing Action’s Capacity Building Specialists, for their work.

Mr. Young retained the floor to discuss the Community Revitalization Challenge.

8. **Community Revitalization Challenge:** Mr. Young gave an overview of the Community Revitalization Challenge (CRC), and reported that there continues to be a lot of enthusiasm for the initiative. Seventeen participants are in the development phase, working on proposals to get their projects funded. Over \$200,000 in funding has been secured so far, with seven participants working on implementing their projects, and ten refining their proposals.

Mr. Young invited three CRC participants to address attendees.

- a. **METEC Resource Center:** Julie Hudelson Schmidgall, Executive Director of METEC Resource Center, explained that METEC is a HUD-approved housing counseling agency located on the south side of Peoria, and that one of the region's needs is affordable housing. METEC's CRC proposal is a project to increase affordable housing stock by purchasing and rehabilitating older stock in the area. Through the CRC, METEC has worked to obtain financing for the project, and now has a path to bring more affordable housing to Peoria.
- b. **Renaissance Social Services, Inc (RSSI):** Joe Moag, Director of Development and Communications at RSSI, discussed RSSI's proposal to create housing support centers to assist people experiencing homelessness on Chicago's south and west sides. RSSI matched with BMO Harris Bank through the CRC, and determined that the project should have health and employment services to help stabilize the community. RSSI has received a grant from the Polk Bros. Foundation, developed partnerships with westside agencies, and will now move into a community engagement phase.
- c. **Respond Now:** Carl Wolf, Executive Director of Respond Now, who is also a member of Housing Action's Board of Directors, discussed Respond Now's CRC entry: a proposal to develop new headquarters in Chicago's south suburbs to provide more robust community services. Through the CRC, Respond Now has developed relationships with financial institutions, which has been a great resource for Respond Now in planning the project.

Mr. Young thanked everyone for their help and partnership.

9. Feedback from the Field

There were no comments from the field.

10. Closing Statements & Adjournment

There being no other business, Co-Chair Sheila Dodd adjourned the meeting by consensus.

**Housing Action Illinois
Board of Directors Election
Candidate Brief Biographies**

Shalonda Bedenfield has been at the **Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago** for 8 years and is inspired by serving others. She is an AVP, Lead Community Investment Operations Specialist, and currently works on all aspects of AHP Operations. She is committed to operational excellence while leading her team, and serves as an active member of multiple groups within the bank. Ms. Bedenfield has diverse experiences in operations, project management, real estate development, and leadership. She is very excited about the continued efforts toward affordable housing and bringing her two decades of experience to Housing Action’s board. A proud alumni of DePaul University, Ms. Bedenfield believes in Servant Leadership, which is to serve first; if one person wins, we all win!

John Herring is the Executive Director of the **Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living**, where he advocates for individuals with disabilities. Mr. Herring is a native of Danville, IL. He has been in Administration for over twenty years, and he has been an advocate for teens, adults, families, and homeless male veterans. His goal continues to be assisting individuals on their journeys to become self-sufficient in their struggle for equity and equality in work, school, housing, transportation, and health care. In his current position, he wants to make Illinois a “Best Practice” State for Centers of Independent Living. Mr. Herring is also a Pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and a community activist. He and his wife, Patricia, have three children and four adorable grandchildren.

Jackie L. Newman has served as Executive Director of the **Springfield Housing Authority** since June 2005. Ms. Newman currently serves as President of the Illinois Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, Chairperson of the Chicago Federal Home Loan Bank Advisory Council, 1st Vice President of the Illinois Association of Housing Authorities Board, and Member of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials Board of Governors. Since April 2018, she has served as the Chief Executive Officer for the Peoria Housing Authority. She was named a “Woman of Influence” as sponsored by Security Bank and the Springfield Business Journal and “Woman of Excellence” as sponsored by the YWCA. Ms. Newman is a lifelong resident of the Springfield community, where she resides with her husband and daughters.

Laura Olvera is the Director of Counseling and Education for **Community Partners for Affordable Housing** (CPAH) in Lake County. Ms. Olvera oversees CPAH’s education and counseling services and has the responsibility of educating and empowering future homebuyers to prepare for successful homeownership. She also works with current homeowners, providing Post-Purchase Counseling to offer guidance and assist them in sustaining their homeownership. Ms. Olvera joined CPAH in 2004 and has assisted over 1,000 families. Ms. Olvera is a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor.

Darsonya Switzer is the Homeward Bound Program Director for **Dove, Inc.** in Decatur, Illinois. She has been involved with the Homeward Bound Program, which is the Coordinated Entry Program for the Macon County Continuum of Care, for nearly twenty years. She began in 1999 as a Case Manager for the Homeward Bound Program. She currently serves as the director for the program and the Chair of the Homeless Advisory Council for the Macon County Continuum of Care. Ms. Switzer is a mother of four daughters and the grandmother of eight. She and her husband, Ted, live in Mt. Zion, Illinois with their youngest daughter. She has her bachelor's degree in psychology.

Margaret Wooten has served as Senior Director of the **Chicago Urban League Housing and Financial Empowerment Center** for more than twenty-six years and manages the day-to-day operations of the department. Ms. Wooten is a certified housing counselor from the American Homeowner Education and Counseling Training Institute, as well as the NeighborWorks Training Institute for HUD. Prior to joining the Chicago Urban League, she served as a Social Worker for the City of East Orange, New Jersey Department of Public Welfare's General Assistance Program. Prior to that, Ms. Wooten was employed as a paralegal for the law firm of Franklin and Crutcher in downtown Chicago, where she was responsible for the landlord/tenant court call and the file review of buyers and sellers for real estate property transactions. She received her formal education from Chicago State University.