

As we draw closer to the end of 2019, I would like to thank the membership of MassNAHRO, board members, committee members and the entire team at MassNAHRO for their commitment in making a difference. Our work never ends. The challenges in providing safe and affordable housing and related services never decrease. We must always remain vigilant about preserving housing, expanding opportunities and collaborating with the numerous stakeholders involved with meeting our mission. Engaging partners in our mission may not always be comfortable or easy. But reaching out to our Legislature, community partners, residents, service providers, advocates, professional and membership organizations is necessary to make sure our voices are heard and goals are kept front and center.

Just last week, I met with Adriane A. Queiroz, a partnership specialist with Census2020. During our meeting, she was able to pull up areas of Chelmsford that were less responsive than others were to the last census. To my surprise, our public housing developments were located in a number of these offending areas. As Housing Authorities, we rely heavily on funding that is based upon accurate counts of our population. During our meeting, I stated to her that I did not have any engagement with Census2010 and did not make any special effort to make sure our residents and stakeholders responded to the Census. Based upon our meeting, our agency has offered space in our community rooms to recruit paid census workers and even offer space for trainings. She provided us with fliers that we can post from our office so our agency can do our share in making sure everyone is counted.

If any PHA is interested in engaging directly with Census2020, you can reach out to Adriane at adriane.a.queiroz@2020census.gov or, at a minimum, check out the website at www.2020census.gov. The next six months are critical. Each agency should be able to get the word out by including the following message:

"We are excited to announce that we've partnered with the U.S. Census Bureau to support the 2020 Census. As a partner, we'll be working to ensure that our community is accurately represented. To learn about the upcoming census, visit www.2020census.gov Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau undertakes a mammoth task: counting all the people residing in the United States. This count affects the allocation of funding for our community's public resources (e.g., housing, roads, hospitals, schools), how we plan for the future, and our voice in government."

In closing, I would like to congratulate Amy Stitely in her new position as DHCD's Chief of Programs and thank her for the commitment she has shown to public housing. In addition, I would also like to congratulate Ben Stone, our new Associate Director in the Division of Public Housing.

I wish all of our member a heartfelt Happy Holidays and may the coming New Year bring us health, success, new resources and the strength to continue our mission in making a difference in the lives of our residents, staffs and the communities we serve.