



# Overview of the Comprehensive Housing Strategy

September 15, 2008

The state of Louisiana and its federal, local and nonprofit partners have worked diligently to recover housing stock and to ensure that all Louisianians have a safe and affordable place to live. In the spring of 2008, Paul Rainwater, executive director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), convened a meeting with representatives from our housing partners to identify common goals for meeting our housing needs. This group would also identify barriers, develop strategies to remove those barriers, and to develop roles and responsibilities for all housing partners.

## Phase 1:

In April 2008, the LRA called its first meeting of federal, state and regional partners (listed below). At this meeting partners developed a mission for collective work and identified goals.

### **Mission:**

To ensure permanent sustainable housing is available in storm-impacted parishes by identifying common goals and coordinating state, local, non-profit and stakeholder efforts

### **Goals:**

- 1) Transition households to permanent, sustainable housing solutions
- 2) Increase availability and affordability of low-income housing units and integrate into mixed income neighborhoods
- 3) Increase availability of workforce housing and integrate into mixed income neighborhoods
- 4) Assist homeowners to repair and rebuild
- 5) Effectively communicate available housing and housing resources
- 6) Ensure Fair Housing
- 7) Give parishes devastated by disasters authority to reassemble land for coordinated and comprehensive development
- 8) Incentivize mitigation measures in vulnerable areas

- 9) Increase cost-effectiveness and energy efficiency in reconstruction
- 10) Prevent foreclosures
- 11) Increase availability and affordability of insurance
- 12) Create capacity at the local level for code enforcement
- 13) Establish recurring sources of funds for a housing trust fund

## **Phase 2:**

In May and June 2008, LRA staff worked with state and federal partners to identify barriers to achieving the goals and to devise initial strategies to overcome those barriers.

## **Phase 3:**

Though several federal, state and nonprofit programs had been developed to address a number of goals related to low income and workforce housing, there was not a comprehensive view of what units were expected to come online, what the rental market looked like on a weekly basis, and the demand for affordable units.

The LRA took three immediate steps to address these issues. First, the LRA, Office of Community Development (OCD) and Louisiana Housing Finance Agency (LHFA) partnered to create a unified Rental Housing Pipeline report, which was completed in late August 2008. Second, the LRA worked with FEMA to get weekly updates of the available rental units resource databases. Third, the LRA has been working with FEMA and HUD to track the number of residents receiving federal rental assistance.

As the state and its vulnerable residents prepare for March 1, 2009—the day that the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP) ends—it is critical that the state has accurate data in these important areas so it can make realistic, informed federal asks.

## **Phase 4:**

The input and roles of nonprofit organizations and faith-based groups are critical in achieving the goals of a truly comprehensive housing strategy. Their first-hand experience in working with residents on a daily basis will ensure that goals, barriers and strategies are properly identified. Additionally, these groups have much to offer in their assessment of residents in need of housing assistance who may or may not be served under existing programs. Also, many nonprofit and faith-based groups have developed housing programs that are bringing more units online that can be added to the growing pipeline report.

## **Phase 5:**

The fundamental framework for our Comprehensive Housing Strategy is well-established. Before we finalize the goals, barriers and strategies of our plan, we are seeking input from nonprofits, faith-based groups, and the Legislature. In mid-August, LRA staff was planning meetings for this phase with its partners. Given that the state of Louisiana was devastated by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in the immediate days ahead, the LRA will resume scheduling these meetings the week of September 22, 2008. As the LRA and its partners learn more about the consequences of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the Comprehensive Housing Strategy will be adjusted.

### ***Partners who participated in Phase 1:***

#### **State/Federal**

-Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA)/Office of Community Development (OCD)

-Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

-Housing and Urban Development (HUD)/Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP)

-Louisiana Housing Finance Agency (LHFA)

#### **Local/Regional**

-Orleans Parish Government and Housing Authorities

- City of New Orleans/Office of Recovery and Development Administration (ORDA)
- New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA)
- Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO)
- Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC)