National Community Development Association
Minutes of the January 24, 2002 Housing Committee Meeting
Washington, D.C.

The meeting was chaired by Nancy Remington (East Providence, RI) and Paul Hilgers (Austin, TX). Paul called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The committee accepted and approved the minutes of the May 24, 2001 meeting.

Vicki Watson provided the committee with a written legislative update which covered appropriations and authorizing legislation for HUD's housing programs.

The committee next heard from Conrad Egan, Executive Director, of the Millennial Housing Commission. Mr. Egan provided an update to the committee on the Commission's mission and activities, including the draft recommendations of the Commission's report which is due to Congress on May 30, 2002. Included in these draft recommendations are proposals to increase the funding level of the HOME program, provide significant resources to address the problem of homelessness, concentrate on extremely low- and very low-income households, create a Single-Family Tax Credit, reform FHA, de-regulate public housing (particularly for smaller PHAs), and encourage comprehensive strategies at the Federal and State levels.

Several HUD staff then provided the committee with updates in the following areas:

(1) Mimi Kolesar, Director of the Office of Affordable Housing Programs, provided an update on the HOME program. Mimi told the committee that HUD will work on a proposed rule to the HOME program this year. In addition, HUD continues to push some small statutory changes to the program, including: (1) the elimination of the 30-day eviction notice. HUD would like the date of the termination to be based on State or local law; and (2) allow Pjs to submit match performance based on their program year, rather than the federal fiscal year.

HUD plans to provide extensive training on the HOME program this year in the following areas: monitoring, program management, combining HOME with tax credits and other funding sources, performance and productivity, lead-based paint, non-profits and CHDOs, and mixed-income financing and projects. Information on these courses will be forwarded to HOME grantees.

(2) Dave Jacobs, Director of the Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control, provided an update on the implementation of HUD's lead-based paint regulation. Dave told the committee that the last transition period for implementation of the regulation ended on January 10, 2002. Communities can continue to request waivers if they are having problems in implementing the rule. So far, only four communities have requested waivers and he sees this as very promising that communities are doing their best to implement the rule. In terms of training, HUD has trained over 25,000 lead workers and risk assessors.

Communities can request training for their jurisdiction by contacting Jack Anderson at the National Center for Lead-Safe Housing (410-772-2774). Grantees should receive information within the next few weeks on reimbursement for their clearance testing costs.

(3) John Garrity, Director of the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs, provided an update to the committee on HUD's homeless assistance programs. John told the committee that HUD met its 30% permanent housing requirement under its competitive homeless programs this year with no problem. More and more communities are submitting applications seeking permanent housing funds. Of the more than 2,000 applications submitted for funding through HUD's "Continuum of Care" competitive application process, HUD funded, in some manner, 89% of the applications submitted. HUD is committed to ending chronic homelessness (defined as being homeless for over six months) within 10 years.

HUD is involved in a working group with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Veterans Administration to open-up these mainstream programs to make them more easily accessible to the homeless. Since most of these programs are administered at the State level, the working group members are working with a select group of States to enroll more homeless into these programs. This will allow more funding from these agencies to meet the service needs of the homeless, while trying to concentrate more of HUD's funds on transitional and permanent housing.

John also informed the group that the FY 2001 and FY 2002 VA-HUD Appropriations bills required cities and counties to develop a system for tracking the homeless as they move into and out of various programs and services. This new Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is an eligible activity under the Supportive Housing Program. In addition, HUD is pushing for more funding to assist local jurisdictions in this requirement in the FY 2003 budget. HUD has a technical assistance contract with the University of Massachusetts to assist communities in developing these systems. The University of Massachusetts as well as other universities and private companies have developed very inexpensive software to assist communities in developing these systems.

Finally, John told the committee that the FY 2002 VA-HUD Appropriations bill required States and local governments to undertake discharge planning when the homeless are discharged from prisons, jails and/or mental institutions. At this point, HUD is requiring a signed certification that States and local governments are making their best effort.

Vicki then asked the committee to approve a list of legislative and regulatory priorities for the upcoming year. The list was accepted and approved (see attached). The list will be forwarded to the Board for their approval. Vicki also asked the committee to think about activities that they would like for NCDA to focus upon under the NAHTI contract and get back to her with recommendations. Finally, Vicki told the committee that she received only eight responses to the HOME Survey and will conduct a phone survey of NCDA's HOME grantees to solicit their feedback on increasing the administrative fee under the program.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.