FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2012 Housing America Poll Shows Palpable Support for Affordable Housing

In face of ongoing difference of opinion over the provision of federal funding to address affordable housing needs across the country, support is still there to adequately house those in need.

WASHINGTON, DC (December 14, 2012) – The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) today released its annual Housing America public opinion poll. This year, as the threat of sequestration and the larger fiscal cliff looms large, and in light of current budget pressures, respondents were asked to comment on the value and importance of affordable housing and community development programs. Although respondents were generally divided on many of the questions posed, the most positive responses were to affordable housing options in their own hometown, and more than half agreed that it was important that cuts to housing programs should not be unfairly high in relation to other cuts. The poll did reveal a sizable percent, around a quarter, who responded as ‘don’t know’ to most, or all, the questions on continued federal support of affordable housing programs. This number signals a conflicted and undecided population and a possible shift in public perception with respect to this vital need.

“Today’s poll provides important insight into public opinion on housing programs, demonstrating that Americans largely favor efforts to provide affordable housing in their communities said Rep. Chris Van Hollen (Md.), the ranking Democrat on the House Budget Committee. “These programs provide stable homes for families, help seniors and persons with disabilities live independently, and connect homeless veterans to housing and support services. They are critical to our recovering economy. As we debate ways to reduce the deficit and debt, we must take a balanced approach that protects the vital services, like housing, that provide a foundation for economic prosperity.”

Key findings in this years’ poll are as follows:

- More than half of respondents think the federal government is spending the right amount or not enough on programs that make housing affordable for low- and moderate-income Americans, while only a quarter think the federal government spends too much.
• A plurality of respondents think affordable housing programs should be exempted from across-the-board cuts.
• Sixty one percent of respondents think it’s important that affordable housing programs not be unfairly targeted for funding cuts as part of deficit reduction efforts, while only 30 percent think it’s unimportant.
• When respondents considered the places where they live, 69 percent said that it was important to them that affordable homeownership and rental housing options for homeownership and rental be available in their own communities. Only 19 percent of respondents said it was unimportant.
• Even when they consider the current fiscal climate and the federal deficit, nearly half (49 percent) of respondents support an increase in funding for affordable housing programs if that increase is funded from a reduction in a different area of the federal budget. Only 29 percent oppose such an increase.

**Among those supporting an increase, the most popular choices for paying for the increase were 1) deficit spending (42 percent) and 2) cuts to defense spending (41 percent).**

A full narrative of this year’s poll, which was conducted by Zogby Analytics, can be found here.

ABOUT NAHRO
Based in Washington, D.C., the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials is a professional membership organization comprising approximately 23,000 housing and community development agencies and officials throughout the United States who administer a variety of affordable housing and community development programs at the local level. NAHRO members own or administer nearly 1 million units of public housing (a vast majority of the nation's inventory), 1.65 million units of tenant-based Section 8 housing, and over 700,000 units of other assisted housing. In all, NAHRO's members provide housing for more than 7.9 million low-income people. www.nahro.org

ABOUT HOUSING AMERICA
NAHRO’s Housing America campaign is designed to educate the American public about the critical role safe, decent and affordable housing plays in all aspects of life – for individuals, families, children and young adults, seniors, persons with disabilities, and our veterans, as well as for our communities and the national economy. Its mission is to raise national awareness of the need for and importance of safe, decent and affordable housing through stimulating partnerships and encouraging the ongoing commitment on the part of federal, state, local and government. www.housingamericacampaign.org/index.html#.

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