



Press Release

Shola Olatoye Wins NAHRO's Commissioner Award

Washington, D.C. (Oct. 16, 2017) – Shola Olatoye, Chair and CEO of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), was named the 2017 recipient of the Elizabeth B. Wells Memorial Award by the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). The award will be presented on Oct. 28 at the NAHRO National Conference in Pittsburgh, Pa.

"Shola's efforts are an inspiration to commissioners across the nation," said Adrienne Todman, NAHRO Chief Executive Officer. "She has overseen the creation of an ambitious strategic plan, and has been exceptionally resourceful in its implementation, especially with regard to reaching out to stakeholders, forming strong community partnerships and advocating for NYCHA residents."

In 2014, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio tasked Olatoye with balancing NYCHA's financial accounts and resetting relationships with NYCHA's residents. To help accomplish the first task, Olatoye commissioned the creation and implementation of NextGeneration NYCHA (NextGen), a 10-year strategic plan to preserve and protect public housing for current residents and the next generation of New Yorkers. In 2015, Olatoye launched the Fund for Public Housing (The Fund), a 501(c)(3), which raises money to connect NYCHA residents to private companies, community groups and opportunities in a partnership-based model, rather than one of direct service. The Fund is a nonprofit that activates public-private partnerships to better provide resources to residents and their communities by providing a platform for the community at large to financially contribute to NYCHA.

Olatoye has also fought to improve the public image of NYCHA residents. She says that NYCHA residents should experience the same treatment as market-rate renters and that their homes should be held to the same expectations as those that are privately owned. She also uses her platform to advocate for the proper funding of the housing stock. At the March 13, 2017 preliminary budget hearing for the New York City Council's Committee on Public Housing, Olatoye challenged the public officials in attendance to react to budget cuts: "Washington does not get to walk away from public housing. We will fight any and all cuts, and I hope you will join us. Invite your constituents and your residents. Go to Albany, knock on doors, and ask them to commit to rebuilding public housing."

The Wells award was established in 1987 in the name of Elizabeth B. Wells to provide a living acknowledgment of the outstanding contributions she made to the housing field as a member of the Board of Commissioners of the King County (WA) Housing Authority and as NAHRO's first Vice President of the Commissioners Committee.



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About NAHRO

NAHRO, established in 1933, is a membership organization of nearly 20,000 housing and community development agencies and professionals throughout the United States whose mission is to create affordable housing and safe, viable communities that enhance the quality of life for all Americans, especially those of low- and moderate-income. NAHRO's membership administers more than 3 million housing units for 7.9 million people.

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