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## **Denali Commission Housing & Infrastructure Workgroup History and Direction**

**Purpose:** Engage relevant federal and state agencies, regional housing authorities and non-profits involved in development of rural Alaska housing and infrastructure.

Address rural infrastructure planning and coordination issues, such as interrelated housing and utility projects, as well as the availability of housing for rural professionals such as teachers and nurses.

The **Housing and Infrastructure Workgroup** was formed in May 2002 under the umbrella of the Denali Commission's interagency MOU. The group's formation grew from the desire by funding agencies: USDA-RD, the Denali Commission, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), HUD, EPA, IHS, VSW, and the regional housing authorities (RHAs), to better coordinate the development of housing and the infrastructure necessary to support that housing (primarily water and sewer). It has evolved to include the development of roads, power, and solid waste services necessary for the operation of housing.

As a task from the Sustainable Utilities Workgroup, the Housing and Infrastructure Workgroup's initial focus was to resolve issues between infrastructure agencies and housing developers (mainly regional housing authorities) regarding a proposed VSW policy of not providing water and sewer services to new housing developed with HUD funding. A policy change was announced during the December 2001 Building Our Communities Workshop in Anchorage. After an initial meeting of the Workgroup, a smaller task force, consisting of representation from RHAs, ANTHC, IHS, VSW and USDA-RD, was paneled to review and recommend solutions to the issues raised. The Task Force recommendations were presented to the full Workgroup. In August 2002, the recommendations were adopted by the RHAs, ANTHC and VSW as a solution to coordination and delivery of infrastructure to future housing developments.

Since 2002, the Workgroup has been involved in advising the Denali Commission on several housing issues critical to the State. The following represent some key activities of the Workgroup:

- 1/2002: First meeting of a group interested in housing and the infrastructure that supports it.
- 5/2002: Workgroup officially recognized by the Denali Commission.
- 9/2002: Recommended solutions for issues between infrastructure and housing agencies.
- 3/2003: Reviewed and commented on draft Denali Commission Investment Policy.
- 6/2003: Planning committee for *Building our Communities II* workshop convened.
- 7/2003: Participated in and commented on development of the Teacher Housing Program.

- 9/2003: Participated in discussion related to Teacher housing and Elder housing issues.
- 1/2004: Reviewed and commented on the Draft Teacher/Healthcare Professionals Housing needs report.
- 3/2004: Workgroup sponsored an RHA training session on community housing plans, which are required to obtain sanitation funding.
- 4/2004: Participated in the *Building Our Communities II* workshop.
- 5/2005: Reviewed/commented on the Cold Climate Housing Research Corp./AHFC State of Alaska Housing Needs Study.

## **OBJECTIVES FOR 2006-2007**

1. Provide technical advice support for Denali Commission housing programs.
2. Promote collaboration in research and development of healthy, durable, energy-efficient and economically sound housing throughout rural Alaska.
3. Evaluate and make recommendations for incorporating enhanced energy efficiency into Denali Commission capital projects. Promote development of standards to:
  - reduce end-user energy consumption in project design and rehabilitation practices;
  - coordinate housing rehabilitation efforts; and
  - fund allocations targeting energy efficiency.
4. Promote coordination between rural Alaska infrastructure and housing agencies (including regional housing authorities, non-profits, municipal and tribal governments).
5. Develop Phase II of the Housing Needs Assessment (shared housing and infrastructure database.)

### **Co-Chairs**

#### **State**

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#### **Federal**

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