

Select Highlights from the Houston Housing Conference, 10.28.2022

- At the start of the HHC conference, **Dr. Assata Richards** talked about affordable housing from the perspective of her life experience and said HHC's primary objective is to promote creation of a comprehensive housing plan.
- The issues of housing insecurity represent a market failure and a policy shortcoming (**Luis Guajardo**).
- **Dr. Adrienne Holloway** said we need to 'pick up the pace' to keep housing needs from becoming more serious.
- Data gathered on housing affordability needs to be disseminated more widely with the public (**Laolu Davies-Yemitan**).
- **Jonathan Campbell** sees HHC as an example of what an open conversation about housing production, health policy, and other intersecting issues is about. He said with resources being scarce, providing first-time homebuyers with large amount in down-payment assistance for a new home may not be the best use of those funds. It's preferable to leverage existing, favorable financing programs to provide those homebuyers with more modest DPA for homes resales.
- **David Steinwedell** from Austin said he thought market-oriented development was complicated, but the affordable side of the equation is much more complex. Greater creativity is required.
- **Christa Stoneham** of the Houston Land Bank encouraged getting beyond our silos to be able to accomplish more.
- **Michelle Byrd** from PNC said we need a variety of tools to address housing affordability.
- In his **keynote** luncheon address, **Mark Carmona** said, 'If you have thin skin, you need to thicken it if you're going to do a housing plan.' San Antonio intentionally focuses on people with incomes below 30% of the area median who need the most help. He laid out his city's approach as it created a comprehensive housing plan recently. Prioritize public funding and tools to preserve homes for the long term to meet community needs while listening to neighborhood residents who know what's going on.
- Also, Mark said San Antonio worked to reframe the conversation as housing affordability. The plan included job training initiatives to lift incomes of low-to moderate-income households.
- HHC Executive Director **Alan Watkins** reported that the Collaborative plans to host sessions with mayoral candidates in 2023 on the issue of a comprehensive housing plan.
- As moderator of a panel on advocacy, **Amanda Timm** stated that HHC was created specifically to advocate for creation of a comprehensive housing plan. She also said that advocacy is how to promote accountability.
- **Chrishelle Palay**: To do a comprehensive housing plan, you need a comprehensive advocacy plan.
- **Mary Lawler**: The idea of a comprehensive housing plan may appear abstract to most people. We need to determine how to enlist a broader range of people in this effort.