Hi, this is Kenneth Free, HUD Field Office Director for the Alabama Office. I am proud to share this newsletter that our Office has created as a vehicle to enhance communications with the individuals and organizations that administer our programs in the State of Alabama. This is our first edition and we look forward to your feedback. Below you will find some priorities I would like to share in this first edition:

In response to the COVID 19 pandemic we ask that you place a priority on ensuring that stay-at-home and social distancing practices are adhered to in your communities. We have received reports of incidences on our properties where people are congregating in defiance of stay-at-home ordinances. We have vulnerable individuals living in our communities whose lives could literally be put at risk by the reckless behavior of a few. Let’s do all we can to stay safe and ensure the safety of the individuals and families we are responsible for.  

**Fair Housing:** Staci Gilliam is the FHEO Director. During this national emergency, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development wants to remind housing providers and the public at large of important federal fair housing laws that protect persons from discrimination, including harassment and intimidation, in housing and related services on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, and disability. The Fair Housing Act and other federal, state, and local laws collectively prohibit discrimination in nearly all housing transactions and residential settings across the nation, including rental housing, nursing homes, permanent shelters, and other places where people live and receive services together.  

**PIH:** Velma Byron is the PIH Director. There is great work that is being done across Alabama. The Birmingham Housing Authority (HABD) sponsored a virtual meeting in partnership with the University of Alabama (UAB) on COVID-19’s impact on the Black Community with health experts and faith leaders.

The Huntsville Housing Authority (HHA) in collaboration with the Huntsville City School System - School buses are providing WiFi access throughout our communities to give students the opportunity for digital learning. Also, prepackaged food boxes filled with nonperishable items are being distributed to Huntsville Housing Authority Residents.

These are just two highlights of how our community is coming together to address the COVID-19 issue.  

**CPD:** Karen Morris is the CPD Program Office Manager and CPD has put out COVID-19 Grantee Guidance and other information located at https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning.  

I want you to know that I and our entire Alabama Field Office is available to you during these difficult times. We have our main number 205-731-2617 being remotely monitored. You or those you serve can also reach us by email to Alabama_Webmanager@hud.gov, which is also being monitored and responded to during our normal business hours. Let me encourage all of you to stay safe and I look forward to being able to interact with you under more normal circumstances soon.