

Governor's Housing Recovery Council

Background

The Governor's Housing Recovery Council was established to bring together housing stakeholders to support and coordinate housing recovery efforts. Using the recommendations from the Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal and others generated over time, the Council will develop and help implement tangible solutions that reflect local needs. The scope of this work will go beyond the Commission recommendations to include additional priorities such as training, education, systems enhancement, funding and information coordination.

As a working body, the Council will identify gaps or deficiencies in the recovery effort as well as the resources (including funding, technical assistance and policies) needed to help the state rebuild the Coast better than it was before Katrina, while eliminating the unnecessary duplication of effort that often occurs following disasters. Collaboration is required in order to help shape overall policy and actions across housing concerns. To maintain an effective dialogue with the state's partners, the Council will provide a communication forum on news, information sharing, key meetings, and other important events. Providing both a strategic and tactical role in the recovery effort, the Council will be instrumental in executing the recommendations set by the Governor's Commission and those identified by Council participants.

Rand Institute and Housing Needs Assessment

- In order to ensure that accurate information will support decision-makers, the Rand Gulf States Policy Institute will conduct a comprehensive housing needs assessment. This study will look at long term housing needs throughout the region, barriers to affordable housing and best practices that may be applied in Mississippi. Additionally, an earlier Rand study has identified some 25 policy options building on the work of the Governor's Commission.

Housing Recovery Council Goals

The goals identified by the Council are consistent with the overarching strategic direction of the Commission's recommendations. They will become measurable indicators of the overall success. They include the following:

- **Effective Resource Allocation**—Getting the resources flowing, including appropriate financial, personnel and construction materials to the affected areas.
- **Unit Construction**—Expediting the delivery of safe, affordable housing units reflecting local needs.
- **Open and Transparent Communication**—Ensuring that disaster victims, new residents and communities know about available housing options, including the types of assistance available to assist them.
- **Policy Formation**—Creating policies and practices that ensure an adequate supply of safe, affordable housing.

Council Role

While strategic in its focus, the Council is designed to be a working body whose task is to assess and implement housing recovery and rebuilding efforts. The operational rhythm will involve both full committee meetings and subcommittee meetings.

All members of the Council will meet on a monthly basis. At these meetings the Council will assess the progress made since the last meeting and modify priorities, if necessary. The Council members will engage in dialogue around critical questions and select specific issues or policy options to be developed at the subcommittee level. The subcommittee meetings will be held as determined by the full committee meetings. It is intended that subcommittee work will be conducted at the Coast.

Council Structure

At the outset, the Council will be divided into three subcommittees. Their focus will be based upon the overall council goals. They will develop implementation strategies as well as facilitate coordination in key focus areas and ultimately provide recommendations or progress reports to the full Council. The Governor's office staff or its designee will coordinate and facilitate these meetings.

These committees include the following:

- 1) **Funding and Policy Coordination Committee.** This committee will assess the coordination and management of funding sources and policy by identifying available housing recovery assistance and the policies needed to achieve identified aims. Finally, they will make recommendations to fill in any gaps in the resource allocation process.
- 2) **Construction Committee.** This committee will focus on construction and determine how best to expedite the rebuilding effort and build it back "better than ever." This committee will examine and evaluate ideas to improve the building process, train builders on the coast (construction techniques), identify licensed contractors and provide for workforce housing.
- 3) **Technical Assistance and Local Government Committee.** This committee will focus on helping government (local and state) do its job better and more efficiently by building capability at the local level. They have a number of objectives:
 - Enhance institutional capacity by increasing the quality and quantity of technical assistance.
 - Help identify both the recipients and providers of technical assistance.
 - Ensure that individuals know their options.
 - Explore practices to inform local governments and communities of best practices in policy (codes, zoning, planning).

Governor's Office of Recovery and Renewal Commitments

To support the Council in its efforts, the Governor's Office of Recovery and Renewal will provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure its success. The Governor's Office will facilitate the following items:

- Identifying subcommittee chairs.
- Setting the agenda and coordinating monthly meetings.
- Coordinating and staffing subcommittee meetings.
- Establishing a Housing Recovery Council Intranet to provide a forum for information sharing among Housing Recovery Council members.