



To the Editor:

The articles, "Recession Hasn't Missed Renters," (March 10) and "Affordable Housing Efforts in NYC Could Spread Nationwide (March 15) bring to the forefront a critical issue – the ongoing need for more affordable rental housing in our area. And although today's tough economy presents daunting challenges, we heartily agree with Housing and Development Secretary Shaun Donovan that now is the time for innovative solutions and partnerships.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program, for instance, provides millions of dollars to help communities struggling with massive foreclosure rates, uncut grass, and vandalized, de-valued homes. The NSP is a great idea, but it's been slow to show results. Why? Communities are often taking a shot gun approach – working with one home, one family at a time in scattered neighborhoods.

A concentrated effort – rehabilitating a significant block of foreclosed homes to rent to qualified families who are looking for stable housing for future sale – could jumpstart the process and breathe new life into a community.

As a 35-year veteran in the affordable housing community, AHC has seen first-hand how innovative public/nonprofit partnerships can stabilize neighborhoods. Funds are leveraged and lights go back on – sooner rather than later. Over time these homes can be sold. Meanwhile, vacant homes are occupied, the whole neighborhood grows in value, and low- and middle-income families can begin to build a better life for themselves and the community.

Walter D. Webdale
President
AHC Inc.
Arlington, VA
www.ahcinc.org