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ADVOCATES LAUNCH LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION OF ALABAMA

The Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama (LIHCA) seeks to increase housing opportunities for Alabamians with the greatest financial need.

The affordable housing crisis in Alabama has reached staggering proportions. Based on data from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Alabama has an estimated shortage of 44,673 affordable and available housing units¹. This means many of our neighbors, coworkers, friends, and family members are unable to find safe and affordable housing for their families. Compounding this problem is the fact there is no clear policy or statewide coalition designated to address this matter...until now. A number of local and statewide advocates have created the Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama (LIHCA) to address the housing crisis and increase housing opportunities for Alabamians with the greatest financial need.

The Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama (LIHCA) has recently established a 26-member Steering Committee to implement its mission to *"increase housing opportunities for Alabamians with the greatest financial need."* This body began meeting in April 2006 at the leadership of Collaborative Solutions, Inc. (CSI) and United Cerebral Palsy of Birmingham. A series of four statewide meetings have taken place with over 70 unique participants from the following groups: HUD, banking institutions, elected officials, nonprofit service providers, low-income persons, developers, fair housing experts, legal services groups, housing counselors, real estate experts, and advocates interested in low-income housing. This broad participation continued to fuel the enthusiasm of subsequent meetings and workshops. Information from other state Housing Trust Funds, legislation passed by other states, and operating models for other low income housing coalitions were gathered and shared with all participants. An affordable housing workshop was held in September of 2006 and a visit from the National Low Income Housing Coalition occurred in February 2007 as participants of the group continued to shape LIHCA's formation.

¹ National Low Income Housing Coalition Congressional District Profile Study, January 2007

At present, LIHCA is formally organized with a mission statement and plans to incorporate as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit entity within the next year. LIHCA's Steering Committee consists of experienced low-income housing developers with several hundred units developed and operating at present. These leaders have successfully passed funding issues through the Alabama Legislature for several different types of funding areas including HIV/AIDS, mental health, physical disabilities, elderly, and economic development.

LIHCA's goals for Year One include: solidifying nonprofit status for the group, advocating for a low income housing trust fund, and creating a stable membership base.

LIHCA needs your help! Please become a member and support the advocacy of affordable housing in our state!

For more information on this topic, please contact Ashley Kerr at Collaborative Solutions, Inc., (205) 939-0411 or by email ashley@collaborative-solutions.net.