HAC News

information on rural low-income housing issues

February 8, 2012
Vol. 41, No. 3

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR HAC'S FEDERAL BUDGET WEBINAR. The February 21 presentation and Q&A will cover rural housing programs in the Administration's budget. Visit http://www.ruralhome.org to register. HAC will also post budget information and analysis on its site when the budget is released February 13.

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE MOVES HOUSING BILLS FORWARD. On February 7 the House Financial Services Committee's housing subcommittee approved the Affordable Housing and Self-Sufficiency Improvement Act, the most recent version of legislation to improve Section 8. Proposed amendments, including one to remove a $69.45 minimum rent for all tenants, were deferred for full committee consideration. Bills relating to FHA and to child homelessness were also passed. The bills and a recording of the markup are available at http://financialservices.house.gov/Calendar/?EventTypeID=311.

REFI PLAN FOR SECTION 502 BORROWERS ANNOUNCED. As part of the Obama Administration's broader efforts to make refinancing possible for more homeowners, USDA is offering a pilot program in 19 states. Borrowers who are current on payments for their Section 502 direct or guaranteed loans may qualify for new guaranteed loans at lower interest rates without credit reports, appraisals, or property inspections. Upfront and annual fees apply. See Administrative Notice 4615 at http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd-an_list.html and USDA's February 1 press release at http://www.rurdev.usda.gov. Contact an RD office.

SECTION 538 RENTAL HOUSING GUARANTEES OFFERED. USDA RD will guarantee loans for new construction, acquisition with rehabilitation, or preservation of affordable rental housing. It will commit funds first to approved applications from prior years, then to new applicants. See *Federal Register*, 2/6/12. Contact an RD state office.

HUD ISSUES EQUAL ACCESS FINAL RULE. The regulation, effective March 5, prohibits discrimination in HUD-funded housing on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. Complaints will be handled in the same way as claims of violations of other program rules, and some may also be actionable under the Fair Housing Act. A separate rule will address this topic for HUD's Native American housing programs. See *Federal Register*, 1/26/12, or Contact Kenneth J. Carroll, HUD, 202-708-2333.

ESG RECIPIENTS MUST AMEND ACTION PLANS. A HUD notice explains that to receive a second allocation of funding under the Emergency Solutions Grants program (which replaces Emergency Shelter Grants), each ESG recipient must submit a substantial amendment to its FY11 Con Plan Annual Action Plan by May 15, 2012. Other requirements are also explained. See *Federal Register*, 1/27/12, or http://www.hudhre.info. Submit questions at http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewHelpdesk.

USDA PLANS MULTIFAMILY HOUSING INDUSTRY MEETINGS. Teleconferences or webinars will be held at least four times in 2012. See *Federal Register*, 1/26/12. To register for notices, contact Timothy James, USDA, 202-720-1094, timothy.james@wdc.usda.gov. Those who registered previously do not need to register again.

OFFICIAL POVERTY GUIDELINES FOR 2012 ISSUED. The poverty line for a family of four in the continental U.S. is $23,050. Visit http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty. Contact Kendall Swenson, HHS, 202-690-7507.

ASSET POVERTY INCREASING, SAYS SCORECARD REPORT. While the nationwide poverty rate for individuals was 15.1% in 2010, asset poverty – living without assets such as a home or car – was 27% and 43% were "liquid asset poor," lacking savings that could pay living costs in an emergency. CFED's *Assets and Opportunity Scorecard* includes data for each state and is free at http://assetsandopportunity.org/scorecard/. Contact scorecard@cfed.org.

TOOLKIT OFFERED FOR PROVIDING BROADBAND TO TENANTS. This online information from the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California assumes that broadband is available in an area and is intended to help those who maintain computers, equipment, and networks serving residents to address day-to-day challenges. Visit http://www.nonprofithousing.org/bbtoolkit/index.html.

FEBRUARY IS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH. This year's theme is "Black Women in American Culture and History," says President Obama's proclamation, http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions.

SAVE THE DATE! 2012 National Rural Housing Conference!
December 6-7 with pre-conference activities December 5
Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC