



Housing Assistance Council  
**HAC News**

**115<sup>th</sup> Congress convenes.** The new Congress began work on January 3. A budget resolution released by Senate Budget Committee chair Mike Enzi (R-WY) will serve – for procedural reasons – as the vehicle for changing or repealing Obamacare; appropriations for the rest of FY17 or for FY18 are not yet under consideration.

**Carson confirmation hearing set for January 12.** The Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs' hearing on Ben Carson's nomination to be HUD Secretary will be held on January 12 at 10 a.m. Eastern time and will be webcast live.

**HUD concludes major Native American housing study.** The executive summary of *Housing Needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives in Tribal Areas: A Report From the Assessment of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing Needs* was posted online January 3. Researchers report that overcrowding and physical housing problems of American Indians and Alaska Natives living on reservations and other tribal areas remain "strikingly more severe" than those of other Americans. Housing problems and the barriers to addressing them are challenging, more so in some locations and regions of the country than in others. The study found that NAHASDA programs have worked well but, while funding levels have remained fairly steady since 1998, inflation has substantially reduced the program's actual purchasing power.

**VA requires Grant and Per Diem grantees to reapply.** VA is terminating existing contracts for its Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem program on September 30, 2017 or later. Current awardees must compete for new per diem funding. Applications are due April 4. For more information contact Jeffery L. Quarles, VA, 1-877-332-0334.

**HOME commitment deadline corrected.** Comments are due January 31, rather than January 3, on an interim final rule that changes the way HUD determines participating jurisdictions' compliance with the statutory requirement to commit HOME funds within 24 months. (See HAC News, 12/8/16.) For more information contact Virginia Sardone, HUD, 202-708-2684.

**HUD requires ConPlans to address hazard resilience and broadband.** A new final rule requires two concepts be added to the Consolidated Planning process. First, if low-income residents in their communities do not have broadband access, ConPlan jurisdictions must consider providing it. Second, jurisdictions must consider incorporating resilience to natural hazard risks, anticipating how risks will increase due to climate change. For more information contact Lora Routt, HUD, 202-402-4492.

**Nominations invited for HUD Tribal Intergovernmental Advisory Committee.** HUD has decided to create this committee to help further develop and improve its Indian housing programs. (See HAC News, 6/29/16.) Nominations are due February 21. For more information contact Heidi J. Frechette, HUD, 202-401-7914.

**HUD asks tribal leaders for comment on environmental reviews.** As federal agencies work to develop a coordinated environmental review process for housing in Indian Country, a HUD letter to tribal leaders requests review and comments by February 14 on a draft interagency Memorandum of Understanding and draft Statement of Intent, which are intended to encourage the use of tools that can streamline the federal environmental review process. The final documents will be used by entities, including tribes, that are responsible for conducting federal environmental reviews. For more information contact Heidi J. Frechette, HUD, 202-401-7914.

**USDA Ombudsperson helps women and Hispanic farmers and ranchers access FSA, NRCS, and RD.** The Ombudsperson seeks a fair process for everyone involved and helps USDA identify and address issues relating to program access by women and Hispanic producers, focused on Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development programs in California, Missouri, New Mexico, and Texas. Contact the Ombudsperson, Joanne Dea, at 202-205-1000 or ombudsperson@usda.gov.

**Exit memos summarize work of HUD, USDA, and other agencies over past eight years.** President Obama asked each member of his Cabinet to write an [exit memo](#). [HUD Secretary Julián Castro's memo](#) describes HUD as the “Department of Opportunity.” [USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack](#) cites “significant investments in affordable rural housing” along with other achievements.

**HAC seeks proposals for housing projects serving rural veterans.** Supported by The Home Depot Foundation, grants will go to nonprofits, tribally designated housing entities, and housing authorities serving veterans at or below 80% of area median income in rural areas. Projects may be new construction or rehab, temporary or permanent housing, in progress or beginning within 12 months. Grants will not normally exceed \$30,000. Several smaller requests may be granted rather than a few larger ones. [Letters of Interest](#) are due Feb. 3, 2017. For more information contact [Shonterria Charleston](#), HAC, 404-892-4824.

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