



Housing Assistance Council
HAC News

FY17 continuing resolution extended for one week. [H.J.Res 99](#) keeps program funding at FY16 levels through May 5, providing time for further negotiations regarding the fiscal year that ends September 30.

Sonny Perdue sworn in at USDA. Confirmed by the Senate on April 24, former Georgia governor Perdue took office as Secretary of Agriculture on April 25. A USDA [statement](#) says he will be guided by four principles. “First, he will maximize the ability of the men and women of America’s agriculture and agribusiness sector to create jobs, to produce and sell the foods and fiber that feed and clothe the world, and to reap the earned reward of their labor. . . . Second, he will prioritize customer service every day for American taxpayers and consumers. . . . Third, as Americans expect a safe and secure food supply, USDA will continue to serve in the critical role of ensuring the food we put on the table to feed our families meets the strict safety standards we’ve established. . . . And fourth, Perdue will always remember that America’s agricultural bounty comes directly from the land . . . and our responsibility is to leave it better than we found it.”

Trump creates Agriculture and Rural Task Force. An [Executive Order](#) titled “Promoting Agriculture and Rural Prosperity in America” establishes the task force, comprised of representatives from 21 agencies and headed by USDA Secretary Perdue. At a [briefing](#) a reporter asked an administration representative whether the order covered rural development, housing, and broadband. He answered: “Those things are absolutely included. I would say on the messaging point there that we do believe that in these rural communities, the best thing we can do to make them grow quickly and economically is to focus on agriculture because it is the number-one driver in most of these rural communities. But we certainly understand that's not the only silver bullet. And so one of the things the task force is charged with doing is looking at those rural communities and also making recommendations with regard to what we can do to promote their economic stability as well.” In response, the [Daily Yonder](#) analyzed the role of agriculture in the rural economy.

Patenaude and Rackleff nominated for HUD. [Pamela Hughes Patenaude](#), selected as HUD Deputy Secretary, is President of the J. Ronald Terwilliger Foundation for America’s Families and previously Director of the Bipartisan Policy Center Housing Commission. [Neal J. Rackleff](#) has been named HUD Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development. He is an attorney and the former director of Houston’s Housing and Community Development Department. Both nominees will need to be confirmed by the Senate.

HUD postpones Small Building Risk Sharing Initiative. Through the [initiative](#), launched in 2015 (see [HAC News, 7/22/15](#)), HUD would have shared 50% of the risk for financing small multifamily properties. HUD did not implement the program. A [notice](#) announcing its “indefinite deferral” says it may not be needed “under current economic conditions.” For more information, contact [Donald Billingsley](#), HUD, 202-402-7125.

FY17 income limits released. The [median family incomes and income limits](#) are used by HUD, USDA, and other agencies.

GAO issues report on federal programs. *2017 Annual Report: Additional Opportunities to Reduce Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication and Achieve Other Financial Benefits (GAO-17-491SP)* does not add any new items on housing or homelessness. Regarding a past suggestion that Congress consider requiring HUD and USDA to examine the costs and benefits of merging similar housing programs, GAO’s [online tracker](#) states that, “According to the Office of Management and Budget, the current administration may reevaluate ongoing collaborative efforts across the different agencies, which could have implications for housing program consolidation.” A 2015 [recommendation](#) has also been added to the tracker for the first time in April 2017: “The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, in consultation with the Rental Policy Working Group, should work with states and localities to develop an approach for compiling and reporting on the collective performance of federal, state, and local rental assistance programs. Such an effort may begin with one or more pilot programs to test approaches before they are considered for wider application.”

Annual NLIHC Advocates' Guide published. *Advocates' Guide 2017: A Primer on Federal Affordable Housing & Community Development Programs* can be downloaded free, or purchased for \$33 (NLIHC members) or \$47 (non-members). To order more than one copy, contact Josephine Clarke, 202-662-1530 ext. 226.

Affordable housing manual offers tools. Intended for advocates, grassroots organizers, and community members, *Housing for All: Western Center on Law & Poverty's Affordable Housing Manual* addresses local and HUD-mandated planning, accessing government documents, and some HUD programs. California housing planning requirements are covered as well. Some chapters, including one on fair housing assessments, will be added.

HAC supports Native American housing. An opinion piece by HAC Executive Director Moises Loza, posted April 20 by The Hill, is titled "It's time for Congress to reauthorize, fully fund Native American housing."

NHLP webinar will cover rural rental housing preservation. "Prepayments and Loan Maturities: Protecting Residents and Preserving RD Rental Housing" is scheduled for Tuesday, May 30 at 2:00 Eastern. It will explain how to find out whether a development is maturing or is being prepaid. It will review RD regulations, Administrative Notices, and other policies intended to preserve these developments and protect residents against displacement. It will also discuss what nonprofit and public entities can do to preserve the housing. Register here for this free 90-minute session, presented by the National Housing Law Project.

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