

CONGRESS

Congress may consider economic relief in Post Office bills.

When negotiations on further coronavirus relief funding hit an impasse in early August, members of Congress left Washington and it appeared no action would be taken until after Labor Day. Now, after media reports on the U.S. Postal Service's challenges, the House is [returning](#) to vote on added USPS funding and other provisions on Saturday, August 22. Senate leaders are [drafting a bill](#) covering the USPS as well as provisions from the [HEALS Act](#) (introduced in late July) but have not called the Senate back into session. They are [reportedly](#) considering combining coronavirus relief with a continuing resolution to fund the federal government for the first part of fiscal year 2021, which starts October 1.

OPPORTUNITIES

HUD offers ROSS service coordinator grants.

Nonprofits, resident associations, tribal governments and TDHEs, and PHAs can [apply](#) by November 19 for funds to employ [Resident Opportunity and Self Sufficiency Service Coordinators](#) to work with residents of public or Indian housing. For more information, contact HUD staff, ROSS-PIH@hud.gov.

Indian Housing Block Grant funding competition open.

[Applications](#) are due December 10 for [Indian Housing Block Grants](#). Tribes and tribally designated housing entities are eligible for these grants, which can be used for a range of housing activities. For more information, contact HUD staff, IHBGCompetitiveProgram@hud.gov.

CORONAVIRUS

New estimate: 30-40 million people at risk of eviction.

Several housing researchers from universities and nonprofits co-authored [The COVID-19 Eviction Crisis: An Estimated 30-40 Million People in America are at Risk](#), aggregating existing research and providing new estimates. "If conditions do not change," they conclude, "29-43% of renter households could be at risk of eviction by the end of the year." The predicted tsunami of evictions has [not yet begun](#) in [most places](#) because the [30-day notice period](#) added to the CARES Act moratorium does not expire until August 23, some areas still have [state or local moratoriums](#) in place, some [emergency rental assistance programs](#) are still operating, and data do not include tenants who [move out](#) before an eviction filing.

"Pandemic leads to more precarious housing situation."

A [preview](#) of a forthcoming report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research presents research findings on housing insecurity before and during the coronavirus pandemic. Almost one-third of renters and one-sixth of homeowners experienced housing insecurity, on average, each week from late April 2020 through July 2020. Housing insecurity increased most notably for Hispanic and Black renters from 2019 to July 2020.

RuralSTAT

Approximately 15 million rural Baby Boomers comprise one-quarter of the rural and small town population.

Source: HAC tabulations of 2014-2018 American Community Survey Data. For more information on age and aging in rural America, see HAC's newest [Rural Research Brief](#).

Public charge injunction limited to three states.

An appellate court narrowed the [recent](#) injunction against USCIS [implementation](#) of its 2019 “[public charge](#)” regulation so that it applies in only Connecticut, New York and Vermont. The rule can be used in the rest of the country. The coronavirus-related lawsuit that led to this injunction, as well as other suits challenging the rule, are still ongoing.

The rate of new cases of Covid-19 is higher in rural areas than nationwide.

A [Daily Yonder](#) analysis finds that as of August 13 the seven-day average of new cases in rural counties was 16.6 per 100,000 residents, compared to 15.9 new cases nationwide.

“Coronavirus surge brings suffering to the impoverished, underresourced Mississippi Delta.”

[NBC News](#) covers the intense challenge of providing medical care in one of the poorest rural parts of the country. A majority of the Delta’s population are Black and NBC reports that more than half the people who have died of COVID-19 in Mississippi are Black.

“These essential workers face evictions and could become homeless during pandemic.”

The Los Angeles Times describes the [dire situation](#) faced by migrant workers in rural California who have lost income during the coronavirus pandemic.

REGULATIONS AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

HUD to extend moratorium on FHA foreclosures.

Politico reported August 18 that HUD will continue its [moratorium](#) on foreclosures and evictions of homeowners with FHA-insured mortgages through the end of 2020. [Similar protections](#) for homeowners with USDA single-family mortgages and those backed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are still scheduled to expire on August 31. President Trump’s August 8 [executive order](#) addressing evictions and foreclosures does not extend the CARES Act’s eviction moratorium for tenants; it directs federal officials to review options for protecting renters and homeowners, but does not require any specific action.

USDA RD summary of coronavirus relief measures updated.

The document reviews past guidance for housing, community facilities, business and utilities programs, and labels indicate new or revised provisions in the [August 5 update](#). RD notes that it has processed over 4,000 requests for payment deferrals for Section 515 or 514 mortgages and is still accepting requests.

OMB releases 2020 compliance supplement for audits.

The [2020 Compliance Supplement](#) to OMB’s Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements applies to audits of fiscal years beginning after June 30, 2019 for nonprofits, state and local governments and tribes receiving federal funds. [Comments](#) are [due](#) October 10. For more information, contact the relevant federal agency.

Fair Market Rents for fiscal 2021 posted.

In developing its [proposed FMRs](#) for the year that begins October 1, HUD updated its economic assumptions to reflect the economic downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic. [Comments](#) are due September 30. For more information, contact HUD USER, 800-245-2691.

Temporary change extended for hiring H-2A farmworkers.

The Department of Homeland Security is [extending](#) part of a [temporary final rule](#) issued in [April](#). Farmworkers with H-2A visas will not have to leave the U.S. before beginning work for new employers

who file H-2A petitions between August 19 and December 17, 2020. DHS did not extend another April provision, which allowed H-2A workers to stay in the U.S. longer than three years. For more information, contact Charles L. Nimick, USCIS, 202-272-8377.

PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA

Rural unemployment rate declines, but 1.8 million rural workers still unemployed.

A [HAC analysis](#) finds the June unemployment rate was 8.8% for counties outside metropolitan areas, using the most recent county-level data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Rural unemployment peaked at 13.6% in April.

New HAC Rural Research Brief looks at age and aging in rural America.

The impacts of the aging U.S. population are especially pronounced in rural America, due to natural population change as well as outmigration. More details are available in a new [Rural Research Brief](#) published by HAC.

State of Black America contends that in 2020 America has been unmasked.

The 2020 issue of the National Urban League's annual [State of Black America](#) report offers analysis and commentary on inequalities in the coronavirus pandemic, the economy and U.S. institutions.

GAO reports homelessness probably underestimated.

A Government Accountability Office review concluded that HUD's point-in-time counts for 2017-2019 probably underestimated the U.S. homeless population. In [Homelessness: Better HUD Oversight of Data Collection Could Improve Estimates of Homeless Population](#) (GAO-20-433), it recommends HUD provide better guidance to Continuums of Care, which collect the data. GAO also calculated that rent increases are statistically correlated with increases in homelessness.

Native Americans have disproportionate share of fatal encounters with police.

While much of the discussion of racial bias in police shootings has centered on [Black Americans](#), the Center for Indian Country Development examined [Native Americans' fatal encounters](#) with police. Female Native Americans' police-involved deaths were more likely to result from vehicles, overdoses or other incidental causes, while males' deaths were more often from police use of force. Nationwide, from 2000 to 2017, Black males and Native American females had four times as many fatal encounters per population as their white counterparts. In the upper Midwest, Native American males had 14 times as many fatal encounters as white males and Native American females had 38 times more than white females.

“Two local leaders discuss how smarter federal policy can save rural America during COVID-19.”

A [Brookings Institution blog post](#) based on a webinar with local economic development leaders from Wytheville, VA and Charlevoix, MI considers needs including expanding broadband infrastructure and increasing access to finance. Reimagining federal policy for rural development can help “rural leaders meet the demands and opportunities of the modern economy and the additional pressures wrought by COVID-19.”

HAC News
Housing Assistance Council
1025 Vermont Ave., NW
Suite 606
Washington, DC 20005
202-842-8600
ruralhome.org
hac@ruralhome.org

Need capital for your affordable housing project?

HAC's [loan funds](#) provide low interest rate loans to support single- and multifamily affordable housing projects for low-income rural residents throughout the U.S. and territories. Capital is available for all types of affordable and mixed-income housing projects, including preservation, farmworker, senior and veteran housing. HAC loan funds can be used for pre-development, site acquisition, site development and construction/rehabilitation. Contact HAC's loan fund staff at hacloanfund@ruralhome.org, 202-842-8600.

Please note: HAC is not able to offer loans to individuals or families. Borrowers must be nonprofit or for-profit organizations or government entities (including tribes).