



**National Hispanic Heritage Month is September 15-October 15.** The federal government's website for the occasion is <http://www.hispanicheritagemonth.gov/>.

**Congress returns as end of fiscal year nears.** Congress, which reconvened this week, is expected to develop a continuing resolution to fund the government for the first part of fiscal year 2017, beginning October 1. Without a CR, the government will shut down. Media reports indicate the parties disagree whether a CR should last three months or six months. The Obama Administration has requested some “anomalies,” or changes from FY16 funding levels, for the CR. No anomalies are sought for HUD, and only one for USDA rural housing: like last year (see *HAC News*, 9/2/15), it asks for permission to spend a disproportionate amount of Section 521 Rental Assistance funds early in the fiscal year because about 40% of RA contracts will need to be renewed in the first quarter.

**USDA supports transitional housing for substance use recovery.** RD will take several steps to help address the opioid epidemic by improving housing options for people in recovery. It will encourage the use of Community Facilities financing for transitional housing projects. It will sell or lease vacant USDA single- and multifamily housing properties to nonprofits for transitional housing; an Unnumbered Letter dated August 26, 2016 provides details on this process. A pilot project in MO, NH, NV, and VT will provide Rental Assistance for USDA-financed multifamily units rented to tenants participating in drug court programs. Finally, recently released data (see *HAC News*, 8/10/16) can be used to locate and map facilities and housing. Contact a USDA RD office.

**Private Section 8 owners may now offer Family Self-Sufficiency programs.** HUD will now allow owners of rental properties under Section 8 contracts to use funding from residual receipt accounts to hire service coordinators and develop their own Family Self-Sufficiency programs. Eligible landlords include owners of USDA Section 515 properties that have Section 8 vouchers. Participation is voluntary for owners and families. Service coordinators will guide participants in developing and achieving self-sufficiency goals. Contact Danielle Garcia, HUD.

**HUD proposes changes to “elevated blood lead levels” regulation.** Comments are due October 31 on a proposed rule that would formally adopt a revised definition of “elevated blood lead levels” in children under the age of 6. It would also establish more comprehensive testing and evaluation procedures for federally owned or assisted housing built before 1978. Contact Warren Friedman, HUD, 202-402-7698. AN 4800 (see *HAC News*, 5/4/16) applies HUD and EPA lead regulations to USDA-financed housing.

**Party platforms support broadband access.** An analysis by the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition compares the Democratic and Republican platform positions on the issue. The coordinator of the National Rural Assembly’s Rural Broadband Policy Group writes for the Daily Yonder that neither party goes far enough to ensure rural broadband access.

**Broadband’s impacts are not always positive, research finds.** Economists found that from 2000 to 2011 increased broadband access in rural counties correlated with reduced proportions of entrepreneurs, though the correlation was positive in 2012. They theorize that entrepreneurs may have used broadband to find better employment opportunities elsewhere, while those who remained viewed broadband as a positive factor. They also note there is strong evidence that broadband can have other positive economic impacts. “Does Broadband Matter for Rural Entrepreneurs and Creative Class Employees?” is published in The Review of Regional Studies and summarized in the Daily Yonder.

**Data options limited for determining low- and mod-income population for CDBG, says GAO.** Because 70% of CDBG funds must benefit low- and moderate-income persons, HUD provides potential recipients with local income data from the American Community Survey. Nonentitlement communities that disagree with their ACS-based CDBG eligibility determinations can present alternative data. Community Development Block Grants: Sources of Data on Community Income Are Limited (GAO-16-734) reports there are few alternatives besides conducting local income surveys, which can be costly and challenging.

**HAC publishes update on USDA maturing mortgages.** HAC's analysis of USDA data shows that at the end of March 2016 there were about 13,830 Section 515 properties with over 416,000 rental units. Over the next 12 years (through 2027) an average of 74 properties (1,788 units) per year will leave the program as their mortgages end. In 2028, the number of properties exiting the program will increase significantly with an average loss of 556 properties (16,364 units) per year through 2032. Beginning in 2033, the numbers increase again, peaking in 2040. ["Maturing USDA Rural Rental Housing Loans: An Update"](#) and an [interactive map](#) of properties, including estimated exit dates for each property, are online.

**Rural Voices looks at the future of rural housing finance.** Articles in the August issue of HAC's quarterly magazine address demographic and financing trends, the role of the secondary market, manufactured housing finance, the need for building nonprofit capacity, and more. [Sign up online](#) to receive email notices when new issues are published.

#### Housing Assistance Council

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