



**SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 15 IS NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**, proclaimed by President Obama.

**CONTINUING RESOLUTION TO FUND GOVERNMENT FOR SIX MONTHS.** Both the House and Senate passed H.J. Res. 117, keeping housing programs and almost all others at FY12 funding levels through March 27, 2013. President Obama is expected to sign it.

**USDA DELAYS CHANGES TO RURAL DEFINITION FOR HOUSING PROGRAMS.** Administrative Notice 4679 (September 25, 2012) announces that current area eligibility will remain unchanged until March 27, 2013, when the continuing resolution ends. After that date, USDA will use 2010 Census data to determine what places fit the definition of rural, unless Congress extends grandfathering of housing program eligibility for growing rural communities. Before Congress adjourned two new bills were introduced: S. 3541 would grandfather currently eligible places for ten years, H.R. 6416 for one year. New HAC research found that in 2011 as many as one-third of Section 502 direct loans and 40% of Section 502 guaranteed loans were made in these areas.

**SEQUESTER REMAINS IN PLACE.** Before adjourning Congress did not change the “sequestration” – cuts in federal funds – required in January, although a variety of bills have been introduced. The Administration’s sequestration report to Congress indicates how each agency will implement the requirement to cut 8.2% of nondefense discretionary funding, including housing programs. USDA and HUD will cut each housing program account by 8.2%. (Some program accounts encompass one program while others include several.)

**FARM LABOR HOUSING APPLICATIONS NOW DUE OCTOBER 31.** A notice in the *Federal Register*, 9/23/12, also makes other changes to the NOFA. (See HAC News, 7/25/12.) Contact an RD state office.

**“DYNAMIC SERVICING STRATEGIES” NOTICE FOR USDA MULTIFAMILY PROPERTIES REISSUED.** An Unnumbered Letter dated August 31, 2012 repeats instructions to RD field staff regarding prompt action on troubled multifamily properties. Contact Stephanie White, USDA, 202-720-1615.

**NEW CAPITAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE ISSUED FOR USDA MULTIFAMILY PROPERTIES.** See Unnumbered Letter dated August 7, 2012. Contact Carlton Jarratt, USDA, 804-287-1524.

**RESPA AND TILA INPUT REQUESTED.** Comment by October 9 on changes the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau proposes in Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act and Truth in Lending Act regulations on mortgage loan servicing and disclosures. See CFPB’s web site or regulations.gov. Contact Jane Gao, CFPB, 202-435-7700.

**USDA PROVIDES RESPA GUIDANCE FOR SECTION 502 DIRECT.** Administrative Notice 4676 (August 27, 2012) instructs RD staff on implementation of RESPA disclosure and accuracy requirements, and on good faith estimates and the HUD-1 “Settlement Statement.” Contact Migdaliz Bernier, USDA, 202-690-3833.

**HUD SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR NAHASDA COMMITTEE.** The negotiated rulemaking committee will review the Indian Housing Block Grant funding formula. Nominations are due November 19. See Federal Register, 9/18/12 or regulations.gov. Contact Rodger Boyd, HUD, 202-401-7914.

**USDA DISCONTINUES RURAL ENERGY PLUS FOR 502 DIRECT.** The program, which makes it easier for homebuyers to qualify for loans for energy-efficient homes, remains in effect for Section 502 guarantee borrowers. See Unnumbered Letter dated September 10, 2012. Contact Christopher Ketner, USDA, 202-690-1530. HAC has learned from RD that a replacement program will be implemented in 2013.

**GAO REPORT EMPHASIZES SIMILARITIES BETWEEN USDA, FHA, AND VA GUARANTEE PROGRAMS.** Housing Assistance: Opportunities Exist to Increase Collaboration and Consider Consolidation (GAO-12-554) reiterates previous findings (for example, see HAC News, 3/7/12) and adds new data. In 2009, FHA guaranteed more single-

family and multifamily loans, even for low-income residents of remote rural areas, than USDA. Detailed data on income levels and other characteristics are not included in the report. GAO suggests improving an Administration task force evaluating coordination or consolidation of single-family programs and recommends the agencies identify specific programs for consolidation. Contact [Mathew Sciré](#), GAO, 202-512-8678.

**SLIGHTLY FEWER USDA TENANTS ARE COST BURDENED.** USDA's [annual occupancy survey](#) shows 2,135 fewer units and 1,254 fewer occupied units (households) in Section 515 and 514/516 properties in 2012 than 2011, as well as 1,243 more households receiving Section 521 RA, 931 fewer with rental aid from other sources, and 1,562 fewer experiencing cost burdens. Contact Janet Stouder, USDA, 202-720-9728.

**RURAL VETERANS' HOUSING COVERED IN NEW RURAL VOICES.** Stories of successful local efforts are highlighted in [HAC's quarterly magazine](#). Contact [Dan Stern](#), HAC, 202-842-8600.

**Housing Assistance Council**

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