



Housing Assistance Council

HAC News

February is African American History Month.

Carson approved by Senate committee, hearing not set for Perdue. Ben Carson's nomination as HUD Secretary received unanimous approval from the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee on January 24. His answers to written questions posed by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) are online. Carson has not been scheduled for consideration by the full Senate. The Senate Agriculture Committee has not yet scheduled a hearing on the nomination of Sonny Perdue for USDA Secretary.

Trump order requires reducing federal regulations. An Executive Order signed on January 30 requires federal agencies to repeal two regulations for every new one, and to try to offset costs of new regulations by eliminating costs of prior ones. It tells OMB to develop guidance on how to carry out this process, and to "consider" phasing in the requirements. "Regulation" is defined broadly, so it may include agency guidance documents as well.

New regulations frozen for review. Like past incoming presidential administrations, the Trump Administration told federal agencies to hold regulations (including proposals and policy guidance) until they are reviewed by Trump-designated officials. Regulations sent to the Office of the Federal Register for official publication, but not yet published, have been withdrawn. Those that were published but had not yet taken effect by January 20 must be postponed for at least 60 days. It is not clear yet whether this directive applies to independent agencies like the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

FY18 budget process begins late this month. The Administration is expected to release a "skinny budget" providing topline figures on February 28 and a more detailed proposal in May.

Senate Democrats include housing and rural places in infrastructure proposal. A \$1 trillion Blueprint to Rebuild America's Infrastructure, released by leading Democrats on January 24, states: "We will make a historic investment in our cities, towns, and rural communities, to address their unique challenges. Federal funding will enable communities to rethink their downtowns, creating places for people to live, work, and thrive. Projects could include safety improvements, congestion reduction, grade crossings, resilient infrastructure projects, intelligent transportation systems, bicycle and pedestrian safety projects, and other locally-determined priorities. Funding could also be used to address housing challenges, remove blighted buildings, or remediate lead and other hazards in the 1.25 million homes where children are at high risk of lead poisoning. Further, funding could be used to support solutions geared toward helping the more than 11.4 million households that pay more than half of their income monthly on rent, including expanding existing tax incentives and other affordable housing federal programs." Others making the case for housing as infrastructure include Enterprise Community Partners and the National Housing Conference.

Possible loss of HUD vouchers estimated for each state. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has calculated that if another Continuing Resolution keeps HUD funding at FY16 levels for the rest of FY17, more than 100,000 vouchers would be unfunded, a loss of assistance greater than that caused by the across-the-board 2013 sequestration cuts. Even under the Senate and House HUD appropriations bills for FY17 developed last year, tens of thousands of vouchers would be cut. CBPP's estimate of voucher reductions for each state is now available. USDA vouchers would be underfunded as well (see HAC News, 12/8/16).

HUD requests comment on expansion of Moving to Work. A draft Operations Notice describes implementation of the authority provided in HUD's FY16 appropriations act to expand the Moving to Work demonstration program from the current level of 39 PHAs to an additional 100 PHAs over a period of seven years. Comments are due March 24. For more information, contact Marianne Nazzaro, HUD.

Orientation guide video available for Section 502 applicants. Applicants for Section 502 direct loans now have the option of watching an Applicant Orientation Guide video and completing Form RD 3550-23, "Applicant Orientation Guide" (revised on 1/27/17). Meeting in person with RD staff to review the guide is also

still an option. For more information, contact an [RD office](#).

RD updates domestic violence guidance. [Administrative Notice 4814](#) sets out policies for implementing the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 in RD Section 515, 514/516, 533, and 538 multifamily housing. Owners and managers of RD-financed housing can use HUD forms (see [HAC News, 11/21/16](#)). For more information, contact an [RD state office](#).

NAHASDA has worked, but housing conditions remain worse for Native Americans than for others. [Three reports](#) just published by HUD and the Urban Institute expand on the executive summary released in early January (see [HAC News, 1/6/17](#)). Special circumstances in tribal areas – remoteness, lack of infrastructure, complex legal issues, and other constraints related to land ownership – make it extremely difficult to improve housing conditions in some areas, according to the reports. Based on the assessments of doubled-up households and the number of severely distressed housing units in tribal areas, it is estimated that 68,000 more units are needed to replace severely inadequate units and to eliminate overcrowding in tribal areas. While tribes have been able to use NAHASDA funds effectively, their purchasing power has been eroded by inflation.

Official poverty guidelines adjusted. The Department of Health and Human Services has issued its [annual adjustments to poverty levels](#), accounting for inflation. For more information, contact Suzanne Macartney, HHS, 202-690-6143.

USDA RD posts names of Acting State Directors. The [online list](#) of state offices and their directors has been updated with the names of those serving in the top positions until political appointees are named.

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