



Housing Assistance Council
HAC News

HUD and USDA nominations moving slowly. The Senate unanimously confirmed David Shulkin as VA Secretary on February 13 and is expected to confirm Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R-SC) as OMB director on February 16. The time taken to approve Mulvaney may delay the administration budget request for FY18 beyond the February 28 date previously predicted (see [HAC News, 2/2/17](#)). The Senate has not yet voted on Dr. Ben Carson as HUD Secretary and the Senate Agriculture Committee has not scheduled a hearing on Sonny Perdue's nomination to be USDA Secretary. Congress will be on President's Day recess the week of February 20.

HAC offers rural creative placemaking funds. HAC is partnering with the buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc]) to offer grants of up to \$7,500 each for two short-term [arts and community building projects](#) in communities with populations under 50,000. Housing or community development organizations are eligible and may apply in partnership with an artist or arts organization. HAC and [bc] can also facilitate selection of a partner artist/organization. A [recorded webinar](#) about this initiative is available on HAC's site, and a second webinar is tentatively scheduled for late March or early April. Apply by March 10. For more information, contact [Michaela Accardi](#), [bc].

Administration and Congress begin changing Dodd-Frank. President Trump's [Executive Order 13772](#) sets out Core Principles for regulating the U.S. financial system, which include "rationalizing" the federal financial regulatory framework. It orders the Treasury Secretary and Financial Stability Oversight Council to report on laws, treaties, regulations, and policies that promote or inhibit the Core Principles. The EO has been [described](#) as a request for a review of the 2010 [Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act](#), which made changes to oversight of the U.S. financial system, including housing finance. Separately, on February 14 President Trump signed [H.J.Res. 41](#) into law, canceling an SEC regulation required by the Dodd-Frank Act (not related to housing).

Pence economic advisor supports reforming mortgage interest deduction. Vice President Mike Pence has hired Mark Calabria, former Director of Financial Regulation Studies at the conservative [Cato Institute](#), as his chief economist. A few days before changing jobs, Calabria co-authored an opinion piece titled "[Time to reform the mortgage interest deduction](#)" with Diane Yentel, President and CEO of the [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#). They suggested that MID reform could "generate significant savings" which, "in turn, could provide some combination of tax cuts, deficit reduction, and reinvestment in critical affordable rental housing programs that serve people with the greatest needs."

House subcommittee considers "The Geography of Poverty." The Human Resources Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee held a [hearing](#) February 15, which included testimony and discussion of differences in rural, suburban, and urban poverty. Written testimony and the recorded hearing are available [online](#).

USDA RD encourages summer meal program again. An [Unnumbered Letter](#) suggests that USDA-funded multifamily properties, community facilities, and self-help communities provide sites where meals can be served when school is out. Contact an RD [state office](#).

Lead control funds offered. Local and state governments, tribes, and consortia of those entities can apply by March 23 for HUD [Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grants](#) to identify and remediate lead-based paint hazards in privately owned rental or owner-occupied housing. Those entities are also eligible for [Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration Grants](#), with the same deadline, if they have at least 3,500 pre-1940 occupied rental housing units. For more information, contact [Shannon Steinbauer](#), HUD.

Climate and cultural resilience grants available. [Enterprise Community Partners](#) will make five \$100,000 grants to CDCs, CHDOs, and tribal housing entities for projects in which residents, artists, and others collaborate to address a local climate resilience challenge. The deadline is March 31. An informational webinar will be held February 22. For more information, contact design@enterprisecommunity.org.

RD sets FY17 area loan limits for Sec. 502 direct, continues pilot alternative. An Unnumbered Letter dated February 3, 2017 explains how RD state offices can establish limits for Section 502 direct loans, and extends an FY15 pilot that uses an alternative method for a number of states. Georgia and Indiana are added to the pilot this year. For more information, contact an RD State Office.

ACF extends deadline for Native American input. The Administration for Children and Families will accept comments until May 9 rather than March 10 on issues, challenges, and recommendations related to American Indian and Alaska Native populations. (See HAC News, 1/19/17.) For more information, contact Camille Loya, ACF, 202-401-5964.

USICH offers suggestions on opioid use and homelessness. “Strategies to Address the Intersection of the Opioid Crisis and Homelessness,” published by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, describes five strategies for communities and provides links to other resources.

Nominations open for HUD awards on healthy homes, historic preservation. ♦ Submissions are due March 15 for the HUD Secretary’s Award for Healthy Homes, offered in partnership with the National Environmental Health Association to recognize excellence in healthy housing innovation. For more information, contact hudaward@neha.org. ♦ The HUD Secretary’s Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation is made in partnership with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The deadline is March 27. For more information, contact helpdesk@huduser.gov.

Rural housing is infrastructure, says HAC blog post. Investment in rural affordable housing creates jobs, benefits states and localities, and aids families, as explained in a recent post written as part of a series for the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding.

Students and communities benefit from art, including creative placemaking. In a post on Rooflines, Shelterforce’s blog, HAC staffer Stephen Sugg describes his research on arts education and the importance of creative placemaking for low-income communities.

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