



Housing Assistance Council
HAC News

Executive Order addresses work requirements.

On April 10 President Trump [issued](#) an “[Executive Order Reducing Poverty in America by Promoting Opportunity and Economic Mobility.](#)” It establishes “Principles of Economic Mobility” that include strengthening or imposing work requirements for those receiving means-tested federal aid; increasing state and local flexibility in administering aid; combining or eliminating “duplicative or ineffective” programs; and involving the private sector in poverty solutions. Cabinet departments that run assistance programs, including USDA and HUD, must submit reports within 90 days recommending changes consistent with these principles. They must also list which programs restrict benefits to lawful U.S. residents and which do not.

Draft Farm Bill includes SNAP work requirements.

The House Agriculture Committee released the text of [H.R. 2](#), the 2018 Farm Bill, on April 12. It proposes new requirements for SNAP participants to work or enroll in work training. The only housing provision updates the definition of rural areas eligible for the RHS housing programs so that it refers to the 2020 Census as well as 2010. The bill reauthorizes several RUS and RBS programs. It also reauthorizes the Delta Regional Authority and the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority, but cuts the authorized funding for the DRA from the current \$30 million per year to \$12 million and for the NGPRA from \$30 million to \$2 million. (The DRA’s FY18 appropriation is \$25 million. The NGPRA [has never received](#) an appropriation.)

CRA recommendations released by Treasury Department.

Treasury published a [report](#) on April 3 identifying regulatory and administrative improvements for the Community Reinvestment Act. The suggestions would broaden bank assessment areas to account for technological access in places without physical branches, expand the range of eligible CRA activities, clarify rating criteria and subjective terms such as “excellent,” require timely examinations, and strengthen incentives for banks to avoid low performance ratings.

Opportunity Zones designated in 18 states and territories.

The first round of [Opportunity Zones](#) were [announced](#) by the Treasury Department and the IRS for the states and territories that nominated areas by March 21. Other states requested 30-day extensions and must make their submissions by April 20. The IRS [invites](#) comments as it develops guidance for the program on topics including the certification of Qualified Opportunity Funds and eligible investments in Qualified Opportunity Zones. It does not provide a deadline.

HUD invites Choice Neighborhood Planning Grants applications.

Nonprofits, PHAs, local governments, and tribal entities are eligible for planning grants or planning and action grants focusing on transforming a neighborhood by redeveloping at least one severely distressed public or HUD-assisted housing project. [Applications](#) are due June 12.

Stakeholders suggest Rural Development provisions for Farm Bill.

HAC and other interested organizations [sent a letter](#) to the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees listing recommendations for provisions related to USDA Rural Development that could be included in this year’s Farm Bill. Among the suggestions are incentives for investing in the rural communities with the greatest need, including those with populations under 10,000; authorization for the multifamily housing [preservation technical assistance program](#); and support for infrastructure, including broadband.

RD clarifies asset management fee for nonprofits.

An [Unnumbered Letter](#) dated March 30, 2018 explains that nonprofit and cooperative owners of Section 515 and 514/516 properties are eligible for a \$7,500 asset management fee per property, rather than per owner. For more information, contact a USDA RD [state office](#).

Section 538 industry calls planned.

During 2018 and 2019, USDA will hold a [series of teleconference](#) and/or web conference meetings regarding the Section 538 guaranteed rental housing program. To register to receive information when calls are scheduled, contact [Monica Cole](#), USDA, 202-720-1251.

HUD income limits set.

FY18 median area incomes and income limits for metro areas and nonmetro counties are available [online](#).

CFPB requests comments on its guidance and its consumer financial education.

[Comments](#) to help CFPB assess the overall effectiveness and accessibility of its guidance materials and activities (including implementation support) to members of the general public, including regulated entities, are due July 2. For more information, contact Kristin Switzer, CFPB, 202-435-7700. [Comments](#) on CFPB's consumer financial education programs are due July 9. For more information, contact Davida Farrar, CFPB, 202-435-9523.

Appraisal threshold increased.

Effective on April 9, the federal agencies that regulate banks and savings and loans [require appraisals](#) for lenders' real estate transactions above \$500,000. The previous threshold was \$250,000. Loans secured by residential properties with one to four units are exempt from the appraisal requirement; for those, lenders must instead obtain evaluations that are consistent with safe and sound banking practices. [Contacts](#) for further information vary by regulatory agency.

Comments requested to improve FHFA regulations.

The Federal Housing Finance Agency [invites comments](#) by June 4 on how its regulations can be made more effective and less burdensome, except for rules of agency organization, procedure, or practice, or regulations adopted or substantially amended since April 2016. For more information, contact [Ellen S. Bailey](#), FHFA, 202-649-3056.

Wage gap for rural women quantified.

The Center for American Progress [reports](#) that rural women who work full time, year round, make 76 cents for every dollar that rural men make. Rural African-American and Hispanic women make 56 cents for every dollar made by rural white, non-Hispanic men, while Rural Native American women make 69 cents and rural Asian American and Pacific Islander women make 75 cents.

Disaster survivors' stories sought.

The [Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition](#) developed an [online tool](#) to capture disaster survivors' individual stories. These accounts of unmet need will be used to illustrate the unique housing challenges low-income survivors face after a disaster and to build support for solutions. The coalition asks organizations serving disaster survivors from the hurricanes and wildfires of 2017 to fill out the online questionnaire for any client/individual with a compelling need for direct rental assistance.

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