



Housing Assistance Council
HAC News

CONGRESS BACK FROM RECESS, RETURNS TO APPROPRIATIONS BILLS.

Appropriations leaders in both houses have said they hope to complete FY15 appropriations bills before August 1, when Congress's five-week summer recess begins. Both appropriations committees first need to set their 302(b) allocations, the totals for each of the 12 individual spending bills. USDA and Transportation-HUD will not be among the first bills considered.

HUD OFFERS FUNDS FOR FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY COORDINATORS. Public housing authorities and Indian housing authorities can apply by May 29.

COMMENTS ON PROMISE ZONE APPLICATION REQUESTED. HUD requests comments by June 16 on its upcoming competition for the second round of Promise Zone designations. A draft Second Round Application Guide is posted at www.hud.gov/promisezones. Promise Zones do not receive specific funding, but get technical assistance to help them access federal assistance from existing programs and may receive some preferences in funding competitions. Contact Brooke Bohnet, HUD, 202-402-6693.

HUD AND USDA CLOSE TO ADOPTING REVISED ENERGY CODES. Comments are due May 30 on the agencies' preliminary determination that two revised codes – one applicable to single-family homes and low-rise multifamily buildings, the other to high-rise multifamily – can be used for new housing. They would apply only to USDA's Section 502 direct and guaranteed programs and to HUD's HOME, Section 202, Section 811, public housing, Choice Neighborhoods, and FHA single-family insurance programs. Contact Meghan Walsh, USDA, 202-205-9590, or Michael Freedberg, HUD, 202-402-4366.

USDA RD REMINDS FIELD STAFF OF PROTOCOLS FOR BORROWER CREDIT REPORTS. The explanation is in an Unnumbered Letter dated March 25, 2014, which notes instances of field staff errors in checking credit histories of applicants for Section 502 direct loans.

SOME USDA RD SINGLE-FAMILY LOAN LIMITS WILL CHANGE ON MAY 1. Changes will be posted at http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HSF-Area_Loan_Limits.html on or after May 1.

MORE THAN 100 GROUPS OPPOSE USDA MINIMUM RENTS. The National Low Income Housing Coalition reports that over 100 national and state organizations signed a letter to key members of Congress's appropriations subcommittees opposing the \$50 minimum rent requested in the Administration's budget (see HAC News, 3/5/14).

CENSUS BUREAU RECONSIDERING AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONS. Census will compare the usefulness of each ACS question to negatives such as the time needed to answer and complaints from the public. Feedback from respondents and data users will also be collected. The first topics to be reviewed are plumbing, commuting, income, and disability. The Pew Research Center reports that ACS data, the only source of local data on topics including housing, are used to allocate significant amounts of federal funding each year.

UN COMMITTEE CRITICIZES US LAWS CRIMINALIZING HOMELESSNESS. At a session in March reviewing the United States' record on a number of issues, the United Nations Human Rights Committee concluded that the criminalization of homelessness "raises concerns of discrimination and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment" under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty summarize the issues and the reasons for addressing homelessness in a human rights context.

FDIC REPORTS ON CHANGES IN THE BANKING INDUSTRY SINCE 1985. "The Continued Resiliency and Importance of Community Banks Amid Long-Term Industry Consolidation" says the smallest and largest banks have been most impacted by consolidation. The number of small banks with assets under \$100 million dropped by 85% from 1985 to 2013, and banks with assets over \$10 billion have grown significantly. Least affected by consolidation are community banks – those that focus on traditional bank services with a limited geographic scope – which comprise more than 90% of FDIC-insured institutions.

JOIN HAC ON MAY 23 FOR A WEBINAR ENTITLED “PRACTITIONER’S GUIDE TO MEETING ENERGY STAR 3.0.” This one-hour session will cover ENERGY STAR fundamentals; identifying the building envelope; controlling air infiltration; insulating attics, walls, and other spaces; insulating and sealing ducts; and understanding heating and cooling units. This webinar is the first of two. The second, “Advanced ENERGY STAR,” will cover check lists, formulas, and the duties of contractors and HERS Raters. [Register online.](#)

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