



**Rural Housing Service administrator named.**

[Bruce Lammers](#) has been appointed RHS administrator and began work on May 28. His career has been in banking with an emphasis on government-guaranteed lending.

**Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants available.**

State and local governments, nonprofits, federally recognized Indian Tribes, and consortia of eligible entities are eligible for [these grants](#), which can be used to repair and rehab homes for low- and very low-income owners or rental units available to low- and very low-income tenants. Apply by July 8 to an [RD state office](#) or at [grants.gov](#). For more information, contact [Bonnie Edwards-Jackson](#), RD, 202-690-0759.

**House subcommittees approve USDA and HUD spending bills for FY20.**

FY20 funding bills for both [USDA](#) and [HUD](#) passed separate House appropriations subcommittees in May 23 and next will be considered by the full Appropriations Committee. No spending measures have been introduced in the Senate so far. Both House bills provide level funding or increases for housing programs, rejecting the [Administration's budget](#) requests. [USDA Rural Development](#) would see increases in the Section 523 self-help program and rental housing preservation resources including Section 515, MPR and Section 542 vouchers, although technical assistance funding for preservation is not included. USDA's funding bill would also prevent USDA's planned move of ERS and NIFA out of the Washington, DC area.

**Disaster bill passes Senate but not House.**

The Senate passed the repeatedly delayed disaster relief bill, [H.R. 2157](#), on May 23, after President Trump agreed to sign it into law. The House was not able to pass the bill, however, and Congress is now on recess until June 3.

**Section 504 repair pilot announced.**

In an attempt to [increase use](#) of the Section 504 repair loan program by low- and very low-income homeowners, [USDA is waiving](#) some regulatory requirements in 20 states and Puerto Rico for fiscal years 2019 and 2020. The pilot also raises the dollar limits in those places from \$20,000 for loans and \$7,500 for grants to \$40,000 for loans and \$10,000 for grants. For more information, contact an [RD state office](#).

**USDA will propose rule on housing for mixed-status families.**

USDA is drafting a regulation on housing aid for families with mixed immigration statuses. The agency's [summary](#) says it will "harmonize" its requirements with HUD's. HUD recently [proposed](#) to evict people who are ineligible for HUD housing assistance because of their immigration status, rather than continuing to allow them to live in units with eligible family members and receive pro-rated aid. USDA [hopes](#) to publish its rule for public comment in August.

**HUD drafting change to rule on gender identity protection.**

HUD is [preparing](#) a change in regulations that would allow HUD-funded homeless shelters to treat transgender people as belonging to the sex they were assigned at birth rather than the sex with which they identify, eliminating a [2016 rule](#) that requires recognition of individuals' gender identities. HUD [estimates](#) that the revised rule will be published for public comment in September. The House's [HUD appropriations bill](#) includes language that would block this change.

**RuralSTAT.** In 2010, 79.3% of U.S. households completed Census forms, resulting in a national non-response rate of 20.7%. Census response rates were not evenly distributed across the country and varied

greatly by location. See the Census 2020 estimated response rate for your community using the Census Bureau's [ROAM](#) tool. Over the next year HAC will provide updates and resources to help improve Census response in your community.

### Recent publications and media of interest

- ☞ [Community Based Advocates Toolkit: A Resource Guide for Professionals Helping Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Dating Violence Survivors](#) explains the housing rights of survivors and offers sample demand letters that advocates and survivors can use. The toolkit was developed by the [National Alliance for Safe Housing](#) and the [National Housing Law Project](#).
- ☞ [Contract-for-deed Settlements Spreading Across Rural Missouri](#) reports on a [Phelps County Focus](#) and [Salem News](#) investigation into a land purchase arrangement in Missouri and 16 other states that allows those with poor credit scores or lacking resources to put down small amounts of money to live on a lot and pay monthly installments toward formally obtaining a property deed. However, those signing these contract-for-deed agreements can lose the land for non-payment or violating covenants in their contracts. Many of the lots do not have access to electricity, running water, or paved roads. Contracts for deed were responsible for the development of many [colonias in Texas](#), known for their inadequate infrastructure and utilities.
- ☞ [Ending Child Poverty Now](#) updates a 2015 Children's Defense Fund publication and identifies nine policy improvements that could be enacted immediately, including expanding housing vouchers. Investing an additional 1.4% of the federal budget could cut child poverty at least 57%, CDF says.
- ☞ [The Impacts of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Redemptions on County-Level Employment](#), published by ERS, reports that use of USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps) increased employment in nonmetro counties before and during the recession. After the recession, from 2011 through 2014, the impact was not statistically significant.
- ☞ [Insult to Injury: Natural Disasters and Residents' Financial Health](#), by the Urban Institute, reveals that natural disasters that do not receive federal aid – typically less severe disasters – cause the greatest decreases in area residents' credit scores. The negative impacts on financial health sometimes increase over time. Persons and communities hardest hit are often those who are more likely to be struggling before the disaster.
- ☞ [Life in Rural America—Part II](#) is a report based on a survey conducted for NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The original [Life in Rural America](#) report was published last fall. [Findings in Part II](#) include 40% of rural Americans struggling with routine medical bills, food and housing costs. And 49% say they could not afford an unexpected \$1,000 expense. [A U.S. News & World Report story](#) on the survey highlights the housing elements of the poll results and references HAC's research on the [looming crisis](#) in affordable rental housing.

### HAC Section 502 packaging training for nonprofits in Nashville set for June 19-20.

[This three-day advanced course](#) trains experienced participants to assist potential borrowers and work with RD staff, other nonprofits, and regional intermediaries to deliver successful Section 502 loan packages. The training will be held June 19-20. For more information, contact [HAC staff](#), 404-892-4824.

### 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 [hacloanfunds@ruralhome.org](mailto:hacloanfunds@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 organizations or government entities (including tribes).*