



Housing Assistance Council
HAC News

Non-priority low-income Section 502 funds are fully committed. RD staff tell HAC that FY16 funds for direct Section 502 loans to low-income borrowers are being pooled on June 30 and will be used on a case-by-case basis for low-income applicants purchasing program REO properties or working with Section 523 self-help grantees or intermediary packagers. Direct Section 502 funds for very low-income borrowers will be re-distributed to states, as will Section 504 repair grants. Section 504 repair loans are available to obligate in all states/territories without restrictions. All unobligated funds will be re-pooled August 15. RD expects to use the Section 502 direct funds for very low-income borrowers (40% of the total) by late August or early September.

Housing bill introduced in Senate. S. 3083, filed last week by a bipartisan group of Senators, is a companion to H.R. 3700, which passed the House on Feb. 2 (see HAC News, 2/3/16). Both are named “the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act” or HOTMA.

Senate hearing reviews USDA RD aid to Native Americans. On June 22 the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs held an oversight hearing on “Accessing USDA Rural Development Programs in Native Communities.” A witness who focused on housing praised RD’s past and current efforts, but identified tribal capacity and the amount of required documentation as barriers to better tribal use of the housing programs.

HUD adopts tribal consultation policy, considers creating advisory committee. The department is adopting without change the proposed Tribal Government-to-Government Consultation Policy published in 2015 (see HAC News, 4/29/15), outlining principles and procedures for HUD employees with regard to federally recognized Indian or Alaska Native tribes. HUD requests comments by July 25 on establishing a Tribal Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, consisting of tribal representatives, to help HUD further develop and maintain its Indian housing programs. Contact Heidi J. Frechette, HUD, 202-401-7914.

USDA RD sets this year’s voucher policies and procedures. The provisions of this notice govern the program in FY16. Section 542 vouchers are available to tenants when a property owner either prepays a Section 515 loan or USDA action results in a foreclosure after September 30, 2005. Contact Stephanie B.M. White, USDA, 202-720-1615.

Continuum of Care NOFA published. Applications for FY16 CoC funds are due September 14. Contact a local HUD CPD office.

Housing market recovery yields to affordability challenges, says *State of the Nation’s Housing 2016*. The Joint Center for Housing Studies’ annual study includes an interactive mapping utility and analyzes demographic drivers, rental and owner-occupied housing, and housing challenges for communities across the U.S. It examines how the strengthening market has led to affordability challenges that outstrip the availability of federal housing assistance. There are a record high 11.4 million severely cost-burdened renter households. The report also details ongoing challenges facing nonmetro and tribal areas.

Poll shows Americans agree affordable housing needs more attention. Nearly two-thirds of adults (63%) believe actions can be taken to solve problems of housing affordability. Poll respondents across political parties – 74% of Democrats, 66% of Independents, and 49% of Republicans – believe the issue has not received enough attention from the 2016 presidential candidates. The 2016 How Housing Matters Survey is the fourth annual national survey of housing attitudes commissioned by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, this year with additional support from the Kresge Foundation and the Melville Charitable Trust.

List of nonmetro areas to receive CRA community development credit released. The federal bank regulatory agencies’ 2016 list of distressed or underserved nonmetropolitan middle-income geographies, where revitalization or stabilization activities will receive Community Reinvestment Act consideration as community development, is based on local economic conditions, including unemployment, poverty, and population changes.

Data on kids shows improvements in health and education but not poverty. The 2016 Kids Count Data Book reports that nationwide, despite rising employment numbers, 22% of children lived in poverty in both 2013 and 2014, and almost one in three children live in families where no member of the household has full-time, year-

round employment. In 2006-2010, 11% of children lived in high-poverty areas and now that figure is 14%. The Annie E. Casey Foundation publication offers data for every state.

Webinars set to cover RD's Limited English Proficiency guidance. USDA RD's Office of Civil Rights will host webinars on July 7 and 14 (each with the same content). They are open to all, and the agency particularly encourages attendance by those involved in the certified loan application packaging process and/or the self-help program. To register, email Darren.kaihlanen@wdc.usda.gov.

HAC offers webinar on VA grant program. "VA Housing Resources for Heroes Part II: An Overview on the VA Specially Adapted Housing Grant Program" will be on July 13 at 2:00 Eastern. The webinar is free but registration is required. Contact [Shonterria Charleston](mailto:Shonterria.Charleston@hac.org), HAC, 404-892-4824.

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