



## **RYAN PLAN WOULD INCLUDE USDA RENTAL ASSISTANCE IN BLOCK GRANT**

**TO STATES.** On July 24 Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI), chair of the House Budget Committee, released a “discussion draft” of an anti-poverty proposal called [Expanding Opportunity in America](#). Among other changes, it would fold several safety net programs into a new block grant to states: USDA’s Section 521 Rental Assistance; HUD’s Section 8 vouchers and project-based aid, public housing funds, and CDBG; and HHS’s weatherization, LIHEAP, [Child Care and Development Fund](#), [WIA Dislocated Workers](#), SNAP (Food Stamps), and TANF. The [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) calculates the plan would reduce food and housing assistance overall.

**MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WRITE TO USDA ABOUT 502 SPENDING.** Concerned that available Section 502 direct funds may not all be spent by the end of the fiscal year on September 30, the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees sent a [letter](#) to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack on July 31, asking for a report in two weeks on steps to increase the program’s obligations.

**VA REFORM BILL CAN HELP RURAL VETERANS.** A key portion of the [veterans](#) bill approved by Congress will help rural veterans have better access to [health care](#). Among many provisions, the legislation would allow veterans who live at least 40 miles away from a VA facility, and those who face long delays in getting VA appointments, to seek medical care outside of the VA health system. It authorizes \$10 billion in [emergency](#) mandatory funding to subsidize the outside medical care. The House passed the bill ([H.R. 3230](#)) by a 420 to 5 vote on July 30. The Senate approved the bipartisan legislation 91 to 3 on July 31 and sent it to the President, who is expected to sign it.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE PASSES NAHASDA REAUTHORIZATION BILL.** On July 30 the House Financial Services Committee approved [H.R. 4329](#), which would renew the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act for five years. The Senate version, [S. 1352](#), passed the Indian Affairs Committee in January but has not yet been considered by the full Senate. Meanwhile, NAHASDA programs continue operating because Congress has continued to appropriate funds for them.

**CASTRO AND DONOVAN SWORN IN, HUD PIH NOMINEE ANNOUNCED.** On July 28, [Julián Castro](#) was sworn in as Secretary of HUD and [Shaun Donovan](#) as Director of OMB. On July 31, President Obama [announced](#) he will nominate Lourdes Castro Ramirez, President and CEO of the San Antonio Housing Authority, to be HUD’s Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing.

**USDA VOUCHERS AVAILABLE.** [Section 542 vouchers](#) can be used by tenants of Section 515 buildings whose mortgages were prepaid or foreclosed after September 30, 2005. Tenants in these properties should receive notice from USDA RD after the prepayment or foreclosure occurs, offering vouchers and providing application information. Contact Stephanie B.M. White, RD, 202-720-1615.

**HUD OFFERS FUNDS FOR FAIR HOUSING.** [Applications](#) are due September 2 for three [Fair Housing Initiative Program](#) components: Fair Housing Organization Initiative Grants, Education and Outreach Initiative Grants, and Private Enforcement Initiative Grants. Contact Myron P. Newry, HUD, 202-402-7095.

**CHANGES SUGGESTED FOR HMDA RULES.** [Comments](#) are due October 22 on a [proposal](#) to revise Home Mortgage Disclosure Act regulations. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau suggests revising the tests determining which financial institutions and housing-related credit transactions are covered under HMDA, collecting additional data, requiring some quarterly data submissions, and more. Contact CFPB’s Office of Regulations, 202-435-7700.

**NO POOLING FOR 502 DIRECT FUNDS THIS YEAR.** HAC has learned that USDA does not plan to pool and redistribute funds for Section 502 direct loans in FY14, since every state has funds available.

**DATA SHOW HOW WELL-BEING OF U.S. CHILDREN HAS CHANGED OVER 25 YEARS.** The 25th edition of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's annual [Kids Count Data Book](#) reports positive gains in child health and education since 1990, but a decline in the economic well-being of children and their communities. Data are presented at the national and state levels.

**PLEASE NOMINATE NATIONAL OR LOCAL RURAL HOUSING LEADERS FOR HAC AWARDS!** [Nominations](#) are due September 30 for the Cochran/Collings Award for national rural housing service and the Skip Jason Community Service Award. The honors will be presented at the National Rural Housing Conference in December. Complete the [online nomination form](#). Questions? Contact [Lilla Sutton](#),

**Housing Assistance Council**

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