



Housing Assistance Council
HAC News

FEDERAL SHUTDOWN IMPACTING HOUSING PROGRAMS, WEBSITES, DATA. Under its shutdown plan, USDA has furloughed all of its 3,336 Rural Development field staff. A total of 53 RD staff in Washington, D.C., and St. Louis, out of 1,394, are still on the job. On October 1 Under Secretary for Rural Development Doug O'Brien sent an email to RD offices explaining that "many [RD] services will be delayed or interrupted. For example, Rural Development will not be able to make any new loans or grants; the only exceptions will be for emergency purposes and to protect the Government's interest. Automatic disbursements for previously obligated Rental Assistance (RA) funds will continue, but no RA contracts will be renewed or issued." Over 600 properties whose RA contracts were not renewed in September did not establish alternative payment plans with USDA and expected to receive renewals in October using FY14 funds, which are not yet available. ♦ At HUD, 337 of 8,709 employees are still working. HUD updated its shutdown contingency plan and is expected to issue another update this week. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has estimated the shutdown's impact on HUD's housing programs. ♦ Some federal websites, including USDA's and the Census Bureau's, are offline, so archived information is not accessible. Others, including HUD's, remain live but are not being updated. Several news reports note the uncertainties raised by lack of federally generated data, including one by the Daily Yonder. ♦ The Federal Register is publishing essential items but has announced that "documents related to normal or routine activities of Federal agencies, even if funded under prior year appropriations, will not be published." ♦ Check HAC's website for links to media coverage of rural housing shutdown issues and for general updates.

HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION OFFERS FUNDS FOR RURAL VETERANS HOUSING. Projects must be bricks and mortar; either new construction or rehab, with priority given to renovation and rehab projects; and must be in progress or close to starting. Awards will range from \$25,000 to \$40,000. Concept papers are due November 15 and must be on an approved template. Email Janice Clark at HAC for a copy of the template.

HUD PROPOSES TO DESIGNATE SOME MORTGAGES AS QMS. The Dodd-Frank Act requires HUD to define what HUD-funded loans are qualified mortgages and therefore assumed to meet requirements for consumers' ability to repay. Comments are due October 31 on a proposed rule stating that Title I (home improvement), Section 184 (Indian housing), and Section 184A (Native Hawaiian housing) loans would be QMs. For FHA-insured mortgages, HUD proposes two categories similar but not identical to those established in the CFPB's final QM rule. Contact Michael P. Nixon, HUD, 202-402-5216, ext. 3094.

NHLP INVITES OTHERS TO SIGN ITS COMMENTS ON USDA'S VOUCHER PROGRAM. Comments are due October 15 on proposed regulations (see HAC News, 8/14/13). Those wishing to sign the National Housing Law Project's comments should contact Gideon Anders, ganders@nhlp.org, by October 13.

FAIR MARKET RENTS PUBLISHED FOR FY14. FMRs are used by HUD's Housing Choice Voucher, Moderate Rehabilitation, and project-based voucher programs and others. Contact local HUD staff for each program.

HUD SETS PROCESS FOR REPORTING MANUFACTURED HOME PROBLEMS. A final rule establishes procedures that manufacturers, retailers, distributors, state agencies, and inspection agencies must follow. Contact Henry S. Czauski, HUD, 202-708-6409.

PHA ADMINISTRATIVE FEE FACTORS ISSUED. The annual factors for determining PHAs' calendar year 2013 administrative fees for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and Moderate Rehabilitation Programs are posted on HUD's website. Contact Miguel Fontanez, HUD, 202-402-2934.

IMPORTANCE OF FEDERAL SPENDING VARIES WIDELY ACROSS STATES. The Pew Charitable Trusts compared the value of federal payments to individuals, grants, procurement, and wages to state GDPs and created a graphic depiction comparing states. The analysis includes funds affected and not affected by the

government shutdown. Pew's Fiscal Federalism Initiative has produced other fact sheets as well.

“WHAT IS THE QRM? AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR RURAL MORTGAGE MARKETS?” A new Rural Policy Note published by HAC provides background and explains the qualified residential mortgage concept. Comments on a proposed rule are due October 30 (see HAC News, 9/25/13). Contact Mike Feinberg, HAC, 202-842-8600.

MISSED A HAC WEBINAR? Materials from webinars are posted on HAC's site after the events. The most recent additions are about the Rural Data Portal and rental housing preservation for seniors.

NEED DATA ON HOUSING OR DEMOGRAPHICS WHILE THE CENSUS BUREAU'S WEBSITE IS UNAVAILABLE? Use HAC's Rural Data Portal, www.ruraldataportal.org

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