



Housing Assistance Council
HAC News

HUD SECRETARY TO SPEAK AT THE 2018 HAC RURAL HOUSING CONFERENCE.

Register now for the conference, to be held December 4-7 at the Capital Hilton in Washington, DC. HUD Secretary Ben Carson is confirmed as one of the keynote speakers.

USDA will reallocate rental assistance that was held in reserve.

Over 2,900 units of Section 521 Rental Assistance, which had been used in properties that left USDA's portfolio during FY 2017 and 2018 and have been held in the Rural Housing Service Administrator's reserve, are now being reallocated to the states where they were formerly used. USDA's Unnumbered Letter (dated September 19, 2018) lists the number of units for each state. These units cannot be used as incentives for owners who want to prepay their USDA mortgages. For more information, contact a USDA RD State Office.

New report on rural rental housing production released.

HAC, in conjunction with the Urban Institute, published *Rental Housing for a 21st Century Rural America: A Platform for Production*. The report analyzes the demand for new affordable rental housing in rural places and suggests ways to increase funding and capacity to deliver new units. It acts as a companion piece to HAC's *Rental Housing for a 21st Century Rural America: A Platform for Preservation*.

HAC updates disaster guide and issues supplement for recent hurricanes.

The full disaster guide provides updated contact lists and information on relevant organizations to contact after a disaster including FEMA, HUD and USDA, while a Florence-specific supplement provides more detailed information on short- and long-term resources to residents and communities affected by Florence in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia and a supplement for Hurricane Michael covers Florida and other states. A recent GAO blog post and report explain how decisions about disaster declarations and individual assistance are made, along with recommendations.

Public charge proposal would limit admission to U.S. for immigrants who have used assistance or may need it in the future.

The Department of Homeland Security proposes to revise the standards used to determine whether noncitizens may become "public charges" who need government assistance and to require them "to demonstrate that they have not received, are not currently receiving, nor are likely to receive, public benefits." Housing Choice Vouchers, project-based Section 8 and public housing are specifically mentioned. The changes would apply to those who are in the U.S. and want to adjust their status (for example, to obtain a green card), as well as to those wanting to enter the U.S. as nonimmigrants or immigrants. Comments are due December 10. For more information, contact Mark Phillips, DHS, 202-272-8377.

AmeriCorps grant competition open.

Nonprofits, tribes, local and state governments and institutions of higher education can compete for grants that will be used to engage AmeriCorps community service members. FY19 funding priorities are economic opportunity, education, prescription drug and opioid abuse, veterans and military families, rural intermediaries, public safety and faith-based organizations. Deadlines vary by state. For more information, contact Corporation for National and Community Service staff.

Fannie Mae offers funds for innovative health and housing ideas.

Applications are due November 1 for a new round of Fannie Mae's Innovation Challenge, seeking innovative technologies, policies, practices and/or programs at the intersection of affordable housing and health and wellness. Public, private and nonprofit organizations, as well as individuals and teams, are eligible, with cross-sector teams encouraged.

Data map shows social mobility for every census tract.

A Harvard University team worked with the Census Bureau and Brown University to create a new tool, [the Opportunity Atlas](#). Using data from Census and IRS, it shows average outcomes in adulthood of people who grew up in each census tract, including data on income, graduation, incarceration, and employment rates. It is the first dataset that provides such longitudinal information at a detailed neighborhood level.

USDA launches interactive data tool to help address opioid epidemic.

USDA Assistance Secretary Anne Hazlett has [announced](#) the creation of an opioid misuse [Community Assessment Tool](#). It combines substance misuse data with socioeconomic, census and other public information to provide community leaders and policymakers with a more complete understanding of how to address the opioid epidemic on a local level. This tool was launched following President Trump's declaration of October as [National Substance Abuse Prevention Month](#).

Bi-partisan opioid response bill to become law.

Passed overwhelmingly by the Senate on October 3 and the House on September 28, [H.R. 6](#) addresses the opioid crisis, which has hit hard in rural areas. Among the legislation's many provisions are amendments to Medicare regulations and authorization of federal funding, to be distributed through states, to provide temporary housing for people in recovery. President Trump is [expected](#) to sign the bill into law.

USDA moves to modernize homeownership programs' field staff functions as staffing levels decline.

Recognizing that RD's overall staffing has been declining, an [Unnumbered Letter](#) (August 31, 2018) explains agency plans to standardize state staffing for the single-family housing programs. The letter also says that, because vacant positions cannot be filled, "core SFH functions in some states will be impacted, in some cases severely," and promises more information about that impact soon. For more information, contact an RD [State Office](#).

Public input sought for modifications to Fannie Mae's Duty to Serve plan.

The Federal Housing Finance Agency [asks for comments](#) on four of 22 requests from Fannie Mae (none from Freddie Mac) to modify its Underserved Markets Plan under the Duty to Serve program. The proposed changes relate to distressed properties, manufactured housing chattel loans, rural LIHTC properties and small financial institutions in rural areas. [Comments](#) are due November 2. For more information, contact FHFA [staff](#).

Research indicates rural families benefit from the Earned Income Tax Credit.

A new research brief from the [Carsey School of Public Policy](#) highlights the Earned Income Tax Credit's impact on families with children. [EITC Continues to Reach Families in Poor Places](#) shows that the share of people who file for the EITC who are also families with children is especially high in the poorest counties, many of which are nonmetropolitan. The researchers argue this data suggests that EITC can provide additional support for families in places where other services may not be readily available or accessible.

USDA manufactured housing pilots expanding further.

One pilot allows the Section 502 direct and guarantee programs to finance existing manufactured homes that are not already financed by USDA. The second reduces the required land lease term for energy-efficient homes in nonprofit communities. RD State Directors can ask for their states [to be added](#) to either pilot. For more information, contact an RD [State Office](#).

HAC webinar to cover proposed changes to Community Reinvestment Act.

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency [recently issued](#) a call for input on a proposed new framework to transform and modernize its Community Reinvestment Act rules. Join HAC on October 24 at 2:00 pm Eastern for an [overview](#) of the proposed changes and a discussion on how rural communities can weigh in. [Registration](#) is free.

HAC offers Section 502 packaging training courses in Nebraska and DC.

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 October 30-November 1 in Lincoln, NE and again December 5-7 in Washington, DC (simultaneously with HAC's conference). 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 haclloanfund@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).