

HAC NEWS GOING FULLY DIGITAL. Beginning in 2016, the print version of the *HAC News* will no longer be available. The *News* will still be published every two weeks, will still provide the same concise updates on issues important to rural housers, and will still be free. Back issues will continue to be available online at <http://www.ruralhome.org>.

November is National Native American Heritage Month. Read President Obama's proclamation [here](#).

Congress and USDA agree to fund Rental Assistance shortages. On November 5 the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees – Reps. Robert Aderholt (R-AL) and Sam Farr (D-CA), and Sens. Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) – met with USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack. The parties agreed to provide Section 521 Rental Assistance funds for properties that were short funded in FY15, either because they used up RA funds before their one-year contracts expired or because their contracts expired near the end of the fiscal year and USDA had run out of contract renewal monies (see [HAC News, 10/28/15](#)). At least some property owners have been told they are about to receive back payments. Congress will need to increase the \$1.167 billion for RA provided in the FY16 funding bills that passed both Appropriations Committees in July 2015 (see [HAC News, 6/25/15](#)).

Two rural housing supporters resigning from Congress. [Rep. Sam Farr](#) (D-CA) has served as chair and ranking member of the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. [Rep. Rubén Hinojosa](#) (D-TX) co-founded the Congressional Rural Housing Caucus.

USDA issues new standards for underwriting MPR preservation deals. An [Unnumbered Letter dated October 26, 2015](#) replaces a [UL dated September 30, 2013](#) that emphasized reducing costs to the government. The new policy stresses long-term property viability, meeting tenants' needs for affordable housing, and completing transactions in a timely and efficient manner. Contact multifamily housing staff in an [RD State Office](#).

BIA amends Housing Improvement Program rule. A [final rule](#) issued by the Interior Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs is intended to align HIP with other federal requirements, allow leveraging of funds, and give tribes more flexibility. Contact Les Jensen, BIA, 907-586-7397.

Public housing smoking ban proposed. HUD [suggests requiring PHAs to ban smoking](#) in all indoor areas, including living units, and in outdoor areas within 25 feet of buildings. HUD's [press release](#) says more than 228,000 public housing units are already smoke-free, and this proposal would cover another 940,000 homes. [Comments](#) will be due 60 days after publication in the [Federal Register](#). Contact Leroy Ferguson, HUD, 202-402-2411.

Interim rule requires new tracking for CDBG grantees. Community Development Block Grant grantees will have to [track their obligations and expenditures](#) of CDBG funds by specific fiscal years. HUD also makes some technical corrections in CDBG regulations. The new rule takes effect December 14 and [comments](#) are due January 11, 2016. Contact Stanley Gimont, HUD, 202-708-3587.

Clean Power Plan can help fund energy efficiency in affordable housing. A [proposed federal plan](#) published by EPA offers opportunities to fund energy efficiency in affordable housing as part of state implementation plans. Several organizations joined to offer a [primer for affordable housing advocates](#), as well as other resources and more information at <http://energyefficiencyforall.org/>. [Comments](#) on the proposed federal plan are due January 21.

Unnumbered Letter on TRID now available. The [UL \(dated October 6, 2015\)](#) offers guidance on compliance with new mortgage disclosure requirements for direct Section 502 and 504 loans (see [HAC News, 10/14/15](#)).

HUD reports on homelessness. The [2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report \(AHAR\) Part 2](#) says homelessness declined by 6.3% since 2007, then increased by 4.6% from 2013 to 2014 although homeless people without shelter fell by 10% during that year. 70% of those who used shelter in 2014 were in major cities. Between 2007 and 2014, the number of people in families with children using shelters increased by 48.1% in suburban and

rural areas from 2007 to 2014 and decreased by 5% in cities. Part 1 was released in October 2014 (see [HAC News](#), 11/12/14).

A few spaces still available for HAC's November 19-20 trainings. The cost is \$75 each for these courses in North Charleston, SC. Register online for either [Sharpening Your Skills: Financial Management for Rural Nonprofits](#) or [Utilizing the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program: Creating and Preserving Affordable Housing](#). These are concurrent sessions; register for only one. Contact [Shonterria Charleston](#), HAC, 404-892-4824.

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