



**Tax bill differences reportedly resolved.** On December 13 congressional leaders announced they had developed a compromise between the House and Senate tax bills. Both houses are expected to vote on the measure the week of December 18. The agreed-upon text was not available at press time, but media reports indicate that the final bill caps the mortgage interest deduction at \$750,000 and preserves private activity bonds and the 4% LIHTC. The House and Senate versions of H.R. 1 differed on the New Markets Tax Credit. The Senate version also would have treated rural areas as LIHTC Difficult Development Areas, which receive a basis boost. To offset the cost of that boost, the maximum basis boost for other developments would be reduced. Both bills, by significantly lowering the corporate tax rate, seemed likely to reduce corporate interest in LIHTC investments.

**Continuing resolution takes funding to December 22.** This CR does not include disaster funding, but the next one may. The House and Senate have postponed their holiday adjournment to December 22. They are expected to adopt a third CR then to fund the government into January, while continuing to seek a deal to lift the spending caps in the Budget Control Act of 2011.

**USDA announces RHS Chief of Staff.** Curtis Anderson has been named Chief of Staff for the Rural Housing Service. It is unclear how this appointment relates to the position of RHS Administrator, since past Administrators have sometimes had Chiefs of Staff. Anderson has worked at USDA's Rural Utilities Service and, most recently, as an advisor on telecommunications issues.

**Rental housing study emphasizes cost-burden issues.** *America's Rental Housing 2017*, by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, points out that almost half of all U.S. renters pay more than 30% of their income for their housing. In rural areas, both housing costs and incomes are lower, leaving 40% of rural renters cost-burdened. The need for housing assistance is growing, the report says, and much of the existing subsidized rental stock is at risk due to either under-maintenance or expiring affordability periods. The report suggests a number of steps to improve the situation, including both preservation and new construction.

**Homeless rate increases in high-cost areas, rural data remains unclear.** HUD's *2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress* shows the first rise in seven years, a 0.7% increase in homelessness nationwide from 2016 to 2017. The homelessness rate for veterans increased by 1.5% although, if Los Angeles and New York City were excluded, it fell by 3.1%. Chronic homelessness increased by 12% from 2016. A HAC analysis reports that homelessness in balance of state continuums of care fell by 1.4%, but points out this is an imperfect estimate for rural places.

**VA cancels diversion of HUD-VASH funding.** VA planned to allow its medical centers to use funding from the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program as they wished, according to an initial report by Politico. After objections from Senators and others, the Department announced there would be no change, and that it would seek input on improving geographic targeting of VA homeless program funding.

**HUD to launch EnVision Centers to test collaboration for economic mobility.** A new demonstration program plans to help HUD-assisted households in approximately ten communities become self-sufficient through partnerships among federal agencies, state and local governments, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, corporations, PHAs, TDHEs, and HFAs. Comments are due February 12. For more information, contact Ariel Pereira, HUD, 202-402-5132.

**Significant affordability gap remains for people with disabilities and SSI income.** Research shows the nationwide average rent for a studio apartment is 99% of income for the average adult with disabilities living on Supplemental Security Income. An interactive database offers details for metro areas, some counties and cities, and the nonmetro portion of each state. *Priced Out: The Housing Crisis for People with Disabilities* is published by the Technical Assistance Collaborative and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force.

**Deadlines compiled for hurricane survivors.** The National Low Income Housing Coalition summarizes deadlines for survivors of Hurricanes Irma, Maria, and Harvey for programs administered by FEMA, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Labor, and HUD, as well as SNAP.

**HAC issues disaster guide supplement for southern California wildfires.** The [supplement](#) provides resources for residents affected by the ongoing fires in southern California. HAC's [disaster guide](#) offers more detailed information for residents and communities on short- and long-term resources. FEMA also provides a [summary and links](#).

**HUD seeks comments on suspension of Small Area FMRs.** HUD [requests comments](#) by January 11 regarding its two-year suspension of mandatory Small Area Fair Market Rents in 23 metro areas, announced in August (see [HAC News, 8/17/17](#)). For more information, contact Todd M. Richardson, HUD, 202-708-1537, ext. 5706.

**Input requested on FSS performance measurement system.** HUD [proposes](#) a performance measurement system for PHAs that receive HUD Family Self-Sufficiency program coordinator grants. It also asks whether and how to develop a performance measurement system for FSS programs that do not receive HUD FSS coordinator funding. [Comments](#) are due January 26. For more information, contact HUD staff, [FSS@hud.gov](mailto:FSS@hud.gov).

**HUD streamlines administration and income verifications.** Changes regarding utility reimbursements and asset declarations, made in 2016 for the Housing Choice Voucher and public housing programs, are now expanding to Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance, Section 202 properties, and Section 811 properties. HUD is also modifying some provisions, applicable to all these programs, related to determining income changes for tenants with fixed incomes. [Comments](#) on this [interim final rule](#) are due January 11. Contact persons vary by program and are listed in the notice.

**HAC's board and staff wish peace, prosperity, and affordable housing to all!**

#### **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](mailto: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).*

#### **Housing Assistance Council**

1025 Vermont Ave N.W., Ste 606, Washington, DC 20005

P: (202) 842-8600 | F: (202) 347-3441 | [www.ruralhome.org](http://www.ruralhome.org) | [hac@ruralhome.org](mailto:hac@ruralhome.org)

