

What's New

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NYS Rural Housing Coalition 31st Annual Affordable Housing and Community Development Conference October 17, 18, 19 2010 at the Holiday Inn, Auburn, NY

Conference Brochure Now Available! Please Register using our online registration.

All registration for the 2010 Conference can be found online at <http://www.acteva.com/go/conference2010>

Looking for an EPA lead safe certified contractor? Search for certified contractors in your area.

For a List of Licensed Asbestos Contractors who can be hired to evaluate and remediate asbestos in homes and businesses in New York State, check here

Late Breaking News

Fair Market Rents have been Released for 2010

HUD Seeks Comments On Draft Guidelines For HQS Inspections

HUD is seeking comment from all interested persons on a draft Notice which provides Guidelines for Housing Quality Standard inspections including a list of published guidance which inspectors may rely upon in making determinations in their inspections, as well as, additional clarifying guidance regarding the inspection and standards for certain electrical receptacles. The Department is particularly interested in receiving comments on the potential impact the inspection guidelines regarding ungrounded three prong outlets will have on owners and the availability of housing to participants in the HCV program.

Commenters are requested to explain in detail the basis for all comments provided. All comments must be submitted electronically to the following mailbox HCVHQSComments@hud.gov by Wednesday, September 30th.

Reverse Mortgage Counseling Rules

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has just published specific written protocols to provide guidance to counselors on what must be covered during Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (reverse mortgage) counseling sessions. The new rules, which will go into effect September 11th, require that agencies provide prospective borrowers with an information packet prior to the counseling session and in enough time so the client has time to review the information and prepare questions. Counselors are also being instructed to withhold the completed counseling certificate if they believe that the homeowner does not have an adequate understanding of a reverse mortgage, its implications for their specific situation, and the responsibilities as a reverse mortgage borrower. They also must withhold the certificate if the client is being coerced into obtaining a reverse mortgage or is a potential victim of fraud. Ten general questions (provided by HUD) about reverse mortgages must also be asked and if the borrower cannot answer five of the ten questions correctly during the initial counseling session, the certificate must be withheld. All of these counseling rules are designed to provide seniors with the facts prior to making what for them is a lifelong commitment.

Small Businesses are the driving force behind job creation, yet many struggle to find the capital they need to survive and grow. Women and minority owned businesses face additional impediments. NCRC recently announced a new study,

"Does CRA Small Business Lending Increase Employment: an Examination on a County Level." The study looks at over 500 counties around the country, exploring the national impact of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) on small business lending.

Bank of America Commits \$10 Million to Spur Small Business Lending

Bank of America

has announced a \$10 million commitment in support of microloans for small and rural businesses. The bank also announced it will purchase \$10 billion in products and services from small, medium-size, and diverse businesses over the next five years. T

o help spur lending to small and rural businesses, BoA will award grants to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and nonprofit lenders looking to leverage funds from the US Small Business Administration and the

US Department of Agriculture. The grants, which will be used as loan loss reserves, could unlock as much as \$100 million in low-cost, long-term capital for small business microloans nationwide over the next year.

SBA and USDA microloans are made through local nonprofit lenders, which also provide business training and technical assistance. To access the capital, nonprofit lenders participating in the federal loan programs must set aside loan loss reserves at levels of up to 15 percent of the capital provided by the agencies. The economic downturn has made it difficult for most lenders to meet the reserve requirements, however, limiting their access to loan capital at a time when small businesses most need support. Through microloan programs, CDFIs can borrow for up to twenty years at rates of less than 2 percent -- twice as long and half the cost of other currently available CDFI lending programs

RHC co-sponsored a conference with USDA for buyers and sellers of Section 515 projects. If you missed this important event, you can still view presentations from the conference.

American Community Survey Overview and Affordable Housing Trends in the Capital District- presentation at the Capital District Peer-to-Peer Session. Check the Resources Tab for the powerpoint.

Meetings and Trainings

The Housing Assistance Council and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, New York Regional Office invite you to participate in Business Planning for CHDOs and Nonprofits on September 14-15, in Rochester, NY. Participants will learn to utilize practical tools to institute an organizational planning process and develop a sound business plan. Learn how to analyze a market, develop organization and financial plans, develop a market strategy, and conduct a risk analysis. Use

online registration. There is no registration fee for this event but space is limited, so please register beforehand. Limited travel scholarships are available.

Lead Safe Work Practices scheduled trainings

DHCR Affordable Housing Development Seminars

NOFAS and Funding Opportunities

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) announces the availability of funds under the State's 20010-11 State Operations and Aid to Localities Budget for the Supported Housing for Families and Young Adults (SHFYA) Program. SHFYA funds will be provided for services and expenses related to a supportive housing program for families and/or young adults age 18 to 25, who are eligible for benefits under the State plan for the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, whose incomes do not exceed 200 percent of the Federal poverty level and, unless in receipt of public assistance, whose participation in such a program would not constitute assistance under Federal TANF regulations.

The TD Bank Charitable Foundation is accepting grant applications from housing agencies in the TD Bank footprint in NY until early September. Grants are available in the Housing for Everyone grant competition. TD Bank is also making funds available on a rolling basis to allow staff of housing nonprofits to obtain education that they need to improve their ability to serve lower income individuals.

A new lending program from Enterprise and the National Housing Trust Community Development Fund provides nonprofit owners and developers capital to jump-start green retrofits of older affordable rental communities

Boating Infrastructure Grants Available

Federal funds are available to develop facilities for recreational boating. Private agencies may apply through the state as a sub-recipient. A total of \$10,000,000 is available in this competition. There is no minimum grant level. Applications are due on Sept. 22nd.

DHCR OCR Open Window for Economic Development CDBG Applications 2010 includes micro enterprise

DHCR Announces Open Window For Funding For Homes For Working Families Applications for site-specific projects funded under HWF may be submitted using the Community Development Online (CDOL) System. Applicants are responsible for using the proper application for funding. Applications are available on the DHCR web site. Applications for HWF will be accepted on a continuous basis until 5:00 PM, Wednesday, December 1, 2010.

FY11 Budget Proposes Changes for Rural Housing

While many rural housing programs would remain at FY10 funding levels under the Administration's FY11 budget request, some relatively small but important rural pieces would receive no funding. These include programs at both U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and HUD.

The President's FY11 USDA budget proposal would end two demonstration programs, the Multi-Family Housing Revitalization Demonstration (MPR) program and Preservation Revolving Loan Fund (PRLF), each of which assist in the preservation of affordable rental housing in rural areas. Rural rental preservation has been an important USDA housing focus over the last several years, but these programs were created in USDA's appropriations laws beginning in FY06 and were never authorized by Congress. Activities without authorization are subject to attack as "earmarks."

The third component of USDA's preservation program, the Section 542 voucher program, provides vouchers for tenants

whose rents are increased in renovated or prepaid USDA rental housing, This program is authorized by legislation and would be funded in FY11 at \$18 million.

The Administration would increase funding for the Section 515 Rural Rental Housing program from \$69.5 million in FY 10 to \$95.2 million in FY11. In its budget, the Administration notes that Section 515 is the "traditional" way of financing rural preservation. While Section 515 funds can be used for preservation as well as new construction, advocates notes that the program is less flexible than MPR. In addition, MPR and PRLF have covered preservation of Section 514/516 farmworker housing properties since FY08, and these needs would not be addressed by Section 515 preservation financing.

In the HUD budget, the Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP) and the Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED) program would also be zeroed out. SHOP, which provides funds for the preparation of sites on which self-help homes will be built, serves both rural and urban areas, and has been very successful in rural places, where there is a long tradition of "sweat equity" construction by low income homebuyers. The budget suggests that SHOP activities can be supported by HOME funds. At the same time, however, the Administration proposes to cut HOME funding.

The Administration intends to shift RHED's funding for innovative developments and for local organizational capacity building to a new set-aside within the Community Development Block Grant program. For FY10, HUD requested a \$25 million Rural Innovation Fund within CDBG, and Congress appropriated that amount. However, HUD has not yet released any details of this FY10 program, and did not include it in the FY11 budget. Instead, in testimony before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on March 11, HUD Secretary Donovan indicated that activities previously covered by RHED would be included in the \$150 million Catalytic Investment Competition Grants. The Secretary's written testimony does not explain how rural projects would fit into this new program, which will finance "innovative, high impact economic development projects at scale that create jobs."

At the March 11 hearing, in response to questions from Senators Bond (R-MO) and Leahy (D-VT) regarding the Administration's attention to rural housing needs, Secretary Donovan also mentioned development of a new rural homeless initiative. The Rural Housing Stability Assistance program was created by last year's HEARTH Act. The budget proposes \$160 million to cover both that program and "new competitive [Continuum of Care] projects," without further details.

The budget leaves rural housing advocates with a handful of challenges in addition to addressing funding levels for these programs in FY11 appropriations laws. Legislation that would authorize USDA's preservation programs, and thus respond to the Administration's major concern regarding MPR and PRLF, has been introduced in the House as H.R. 2876, the Rural Housing Preservation Act, and is also expected to be included in a larger preservation bill to be introduced by Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) the week of March 15. HUD proposals for the FY10 Rural Innovation Fund and the FY11 rural components of the CDBG and homelessness programs are also anticipated.

-Thanks to Leslie Strauss of the Housing Assistance Council for this article.