



Special Legislative Session Slashes State Budget

In a special session of the New York State Legislature called by Governor David Patterson, Legislators and the Governor agreed on \$400 million in cuts to the current year's state budget. Included in these cuts was \$191,000 in reductions to the Rural Preservation Program and \$696,000 to the Rural Rental Assistance Program.

Citing "deteriorating economic conditions and declining revenues", the Governor set out to reduce spending by \$2.6 billion this year and next. For the current year, the Governor presented the legislators with a menu of proposed cuts totaling \$1.0 billion and asked that they agree on \$600 million in current reductions.

Although the Governor's call was for shared pain, advocates noted that the proposed pain is clearly focused on low income people and the organizations that provided services to low income people. While Governor Patterson had said that "all options are on the table", he was not willing to talk of tax increases on higher income New Yorkers.

The one billion in budget cuts proposed by the Governor included reducing the Aid to Localities proportion of the budget by 6% across the Board (\$250 million), reducing

legislative adds to the executive budget by 50% (\$132 million), a fifty percent reduction in member items (\$100 million) and various cuts to Medicare and other health care programs and the City University of New York (\$557 million). As originally proposed, the Governor's plan would have cut RPC spending by nearly \$1 million.

While they generally agreed with the Governor about the severity of the State's fiscal crisis, Legislative leaders appeared to be skeptical of the Governor's approach which they understood would devastate programs that they have long supported. In the final agreement reached in the early morning hours of August 20th, the Governor and Legislature agreed on a package of cuts based on a 6% reduction in unexpended Local Assistance funds and a 6% reduction in unexpended legislative additions to the Executive Budget. More modest reductions were also made to Health and CUNY, the Legislature returned \$50 million in member item funds, and other adjustments to the general fund totaled a little more than \$400 million.

The budget agreement ignored a call by New Yorkers For Fiscal Fairness and others who suggested that State leaders look back to the suc-

cessful solution of the 2003 budget crisis that was based on a blend of program cuts and tax increases on the wealthiest New Yorkers.

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Did You Receive Your Conference Brochure?

Copies of the 2008 Rural Housing Coalition Conference brochure were mailed in mid-August. If you did not receive your conference information, please contact Kate Mackey at (518) 458-8696, ext 10, to obtain your copy. See you in Buffalo in late October!

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Rural Delivery

Rural Delivery is published by the
New York State Rural Housing Coalition, Inc.
The Coalition is a non-profit statewide membership organization dedicated
to strengthening and revitalizing rural New York by assisting housing and
community development providers.

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Bits and Pieces...

TD Bank Grants Available

TD Bank, NA, through the TD Charitable Foundation, is pleased to announce the availability of \$1.5 million in funding in the 2008 Housing for Everyone grant competition, to be used by affordable housing non-profit organizations for capacity building. The TD Charitable Foundation will make available, on a one-time basis, operational funding for fiscally-responsible non-profit organizations that have made and continue to make a meaningful difference in the affordable housing landscape of their community. Applications must meet the following guidelines:

- the applicant organization must be tax-exempt under IRS Code 501(c)(3);
- the applicant organization must develop or maintain affordable housing or provide housing-related programs and services targeted to very-low, low- and moderate-income individuals or families (income may not exceed 80% of the area median income);
- the applicant organization must be able to show the impact they have made to affordable housing efforts in their community;
- the applicant organization must show fiscal responsibility; and
- programs and services must be provided within a TD Bank, NA CRA assessment area.

Applications will only be accepted through the TD Charitable Foundation's on-line application system. Paper applications will not be accepted. Applications will be accepted until 4:00 PM on September 12, 2008. Notification of awards will be made within 45-days of the application deadline. The application and additional information about the Housing for Everyone competition is available at www.TDBanknorth.com (click on 'About Us' and then 'Our Community') or at www.commerceonline.com/communityrelations. This year organizations can apply for the competition and regular grant funding both of which can be found on the website at www.tdbanknorth.com/community/our_community.html.

Federal and U.S. military employees can support the Rural Housing Coalition through the annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). If you are a federal government or military employee and would like to donate through the CFC, please enter CFC code #9614 on your pledge card during the next fund drive.

DHCR Schedules Dates For RPC Training On Needs Assessment And Strategic Planning

Rural Preservation Companies should be on the lookout for mailings from DHCR with registration information for the regional trainings on the development of needs assessments and strategic plans, which will be required as part of the Preservation Company certification process. The six regional trainings will be held from 9:00 AM-4:30 PM on:

September 22nd and 23rd, Syracuse, at the Sheraton Syracuse University Hotel;

September 24th and 25th, Albany, at the Hampton Plaza Ballroom;

October 16th and 17th, Rochester, at the Marriot Rochester Airport Hotel;

October 23rd and 24th, Buffalo, at the Holiday Inn Airport Hotel in Cheektowaga;

October 27th and 28th, in Manhattan;

and November 5th and 6th in Manhattan. The Manhattan sessions will be held at the DHCR regional office at 25 Beaver Street.

Detailed information on the location and times of the trainings will be included in the DHCR registration materials. For more information, check on the DHCR website at www.dhcr.state.ny.us for training updates, or contact your regional office representative. Attendees should pre-register with their DHCR regional office.

Open Window For Small Project Funding

DHCR is currently soliciting proposals from non-profit housing providers interested in developing small scale rental projects. The NOFA that is posted on the DHCR website seeks projects that are 15 units or less, and require no Low Income Housing Tax Credits. These Small Projects are a perfect fit for rural villages and hamlets.

Despite some language in the NOFA that appears to impose a deadline for submission of Small Project proposals in October, Lenny Skrill of DHCR assures us that there is no explicit deadline. Potential applicants are encouraged to put together their projects and submit them as soon as they are ready. DHCR anticipates making funding awards under this NOFA within 60 days of receipt of a complete proposal.

O'Donnell-Nixon Retires

A retirement party was held in Ballston Spa on August 14th for Dottie O'Donnell-Nixon of the Saratoga County RPC. Dottie began her service at SCRPC in 1983. As Executive Director, Dottie was responsible for administering Section 8 rental assistance, as well as developing a 12 unit veterans housing complex, plus 10 transitional units, also for veterans. She also developed Hill Manor, a subdivision in Victory Mills.

In recognition of Dottie's quarter century of service, commendations from the NYS Senate and Assembly were read at the retirement dinner. She also received congratulatory letters from Congresswoman Kirsten Gillebrand and Senator Hillary Clinton. In a final tribute, the veteran's transitional shelter in Ballston Spa was officially renamed 'Dottie's House'

Learn the Basics: Housing Tax Credits

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The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), already a well known and highly successful development tool, continues to grow in importance. Particularly in these challenging times, anyone involved in affordable housing development, finance, investment, and management needs to be fully in command of the LIHTC program and the various strategies being applied in transactions utilizing the LIHTC. This popular seminar more than meets that need.

The training will be held on October 16th and 17th at the Marriott Copley Place Hotel in Boston.

Sold-out every time it's offered, this seminar is intended for newcomers to the field as well as those seeking an up-to-the-minute refresher course. This seminar presents the basic rules governing the LIHTC and how the tax credit is utilized in today's transactions; a "hands on" analysis of a financial model generated for a typical tax credit project; an overview of the legal, accounting, and business issues involved in negotiating transactions; a practical look at tax credit transactions from the lender, agency, developer, and investor perspectives; special issues that arise in deals involving non-profits; the basic rules that apply when the LIHTC is used together with tax-exempt bonds; and real world advice on the occupancy and compliance essentials that are critical to the long-term success of every project. For more information, visit www.ipedinc.net.

Grants.gov Gets Easier To Use

As of this month, you can now search *Grants.gov* using the Google search engine. In announcing the change, Local/State Funding Report (July 28, 2008) pointed out how this will ease access to the Grants.gov help files, FAQs, and all information text. They also announced Grants.gov's new RSS feed, which

allows you to get automatic updates of important announcements. Finally, they noted that by year end, all 26 federal grantmaking agencies will streamline the proposal process by accepting applications in portable document format (PDF), including the new 9.0 version of Adobe Acrobat.

Orientation Training Slated For New Executives

New executive directors of Rural and Neighborhood Preservation Companies are invited to attend an orientation training on Wednesday, October 29th at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Buffalo, just before the start of the 29th annual Affordable Housing and Community Development Conference.

The orientation session will take place after lunch on the 29th, and will include information on background and history of the preservation program, required reports, timing of contract actions, resources available, and other information that should prove helpful to anyone who has recently taken on the responsibility of running a preservation company.

For more information, contact Anne Patnode at (518) 458-8696 ext. 15.

Rural Advocates Board Meeting September 18th

A Regular Meeting of the board of the NY Rural Advocates will take place on Thursday, September 18, 2008, beginning at 10:00AM. The meeting will be held at the offices of the Rural Housing Coalition, 879 Madison Avenue, Albany. For more information, contact Nancy Berkowitz at (518) 352-7787.

The 2008 Rural Housing Coalition Conference Brochure is available on our website, along with a fillable PDF of the registration form for your convenience. We look forward to seeing you in Buffalo for an information-packed event!

Visit our website at www.ruralhousing.org
