



## **FROM THE DESK OF CAROL GALANTE**

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### **We Want Your Comments**

June is homeownership month, so I would like to take this opportunity to highlight our latest efforts to expand access to homeownership to creditworthy borrowers across the country. Two weeks ago I announced the [Blueprint for Access](#), which includes our Housing Counseling pilot program and our latest Quality Assurance efforts, and we seek your comments and insight with regard to these new initiatives. See my blog post on this announcement [here](#).

The Homeowners Armed with Knowledge (HAWK) pilot program further incorporates housing counseling into the home buying process for borrowers using FHA insured financing. Under the four-year HAWK for New Homebuyers pilot program, homebuyers who commit to housing counseling will qualify for tangible savings on their FHA-insured loans. The average buyer would save approximately \$325 a year – or nearly \$10,000 over the life of their loan. FHA proposes that homeowners who complete housing counseling before signing a contract to purchase a home and who complete additional pre-closing housing counseling will receive a 50 basis point reduction in the upfront FHA mortgage insurance premium (MIP) and a 10 basis point reduction in the annual FHA MIP. Choosing to participate in post-closing counseling coupled with a track record of timely mortgage payments will bring even greater benefits. After two years with no serious delinquencies, participants receive an additional 15 basis point reduction in annual MIP. The HAWK program is a strong step toward integrating housing counseling into the home buying process and ensuring broad access to housing counseling services.

Also included in the [Blueprint for Access](#) package is the FHA's Quality Assurance Initiative. FHA's latest QA initiative is intended to provide greater clarity and transparency to FHA approved lenders to encourage lending to qualified borrowers across the credit spectrum. With respect to quality assurance measures, clarity enhances access for potential borrowers because lenders can originate loans confidently—knowing their mortgages meet FHA standards. By changing the way FHA provides policy direction and monitors lender compliance and performance, the FHA insurance fund, borrowers, lenders and taxpayers will be better protected.

How can you help? With both of these efforts we want your feedback. The HAWK pilot program is posted in the [Federal Register](#) for comments and the Quality Assurance effort is posted on our [Single Family Drafting Table](#) for your review. We truly value your comments and thoughts and take into consideration all of those we receive.

#### **Links:**

[Access Blueprint:](#)

[HAWK Fed Register:](#)

[Single Family Drafting Table:](#)

[HUD.gov/FHA](http://HUD.gov/FHA)

[HUD Press  
Releases](#)

## **Section 232 Handbook Published**

On May 28, the Office of Healthcare Programs published Handbook 4232.1 ([link here](#)), which is the first handbook devoted exclusively to the Section 232 Healthcare Mortgage Insurance Program. The Handbook is a comprehensive guide to the Section 232 Program, covering all aspects of production and asset management. It sets forth Section 232 policies and protocols, including those reflected in the Final Rule of September 7, 2012 (the “Accountability Rule”), documents published through the Paperwork Reduction Act process, mortgagee letters, and other publications.

Beginning September 1, 2014, the Handbook provisions will apply to new applications and requests to the Office of Residential Care Facilities (ORCF) and to projects already in the Section 232 pipeline or the Section 232 portfolio as of that date. ORCF will examine specific situations in the coming weeks and address any industry concerns with the publication of a transition matrix.

Additionally, ORCF has announced upcoming lender underwriter training in Seattle, WA, July 8-9 and Minneapolis, MN, July 29-30. The training will address many topics that are covered in the Section 232 Handbook and provide participants with an opportunity to ask any questions that they may have.

### [Handbook 4232.1](#)

Please follow these links to register:

#### **Seattle, WA**

July 8-9, 2014

[Registration](#)

#### **Minneapolis, MN**

July 29-30, 2014

[Registration](#)

## **Come Join a Great Team!**

HUD’s Office of Housing is currently recruiting for a variety of positions during Fiscal Year 2014. We encourage you to take the opportunity to establish a “saved Job Search” on the [USAjobs.gov](#) website now, that will automatically alert you to vacancy announcements in the Office of Housing as vacancies are posted.

To get the alerts, you must create a User Account on [usajobs.gov](#). The following link will provide you with a “Tips & Tricks for USA Jobs” document which you may find helpful in creating a User Account and establishing a Profile.

[Tips for Navigating USAJobs](#)

Come join a great team!