



## U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development NEWS FROM REGION V April 2013

### From the Regional Administrator

As we head into our chilly Midwest spring, there's an extra cloud in the sky in the form of a word that now has instant recognition – Sequestration. Sequestration, the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 was delayed until March 1, 2013, and it means across-the-board spending cuts for all Federal agencies. Although this is unplowed ground in our nation's history and we can't be sure exactly how things will play out, I would like to share with you a few of the highlights from Secretary Donovan's congressional testimony last month. The unsettling truth is that these indiscriminant cuts would harm numerous families, individuals, and communities across the nation that rely on HUD. It is obvious that Sequestration would have devastating effects on homelessness and on other vulnerable groups that HUD works with on housing needs across the country, but there would also be a broader harmful effect on middle class families, communities and on the economy in general.



As we work through Sequestration, I want to reassure you that we, at the Department, are doing everything in our power to minimize the effects and make our scarce resource dollars go as far as possible. So if I am unable to travel to your area to make remarks at your conference or training session, or you find the office closed on a work day due to a furlough, please understand that it is because we are working to make our budget dollars go where the need is the greatest. If there is a way technology can be used, I am more than happy to join you in any way I can.

In the meantime, please check our [Sequestration website](#) for updated information, a complete transcript of the Secretary's congressional testimony and copies of letters sent to our Midwestern Governors and grantees. I am sure that together we will weather this storm.

On the good news front, HUD recently awarded [Illinois](#) and [Minnesota](#) grants under the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (PRA Demo) which enables persons with disabilities who earn less than 30 percent of median income to live in integrated mainstream settings. The state agencies are working closely with their state Medicaid and health and human services counterparts to identify, refer, and conduct outreach to persons with disabilities who need long-term services and support for independent living. According to Secretary Donovan, we are helping states reduce health care costs and improving quality of life for persons with disabilities. We are offering lasting solutions to people who might otherwise be institutionalized or living on the street.

On March 13<sup>th</sup> the Department announced the [Continuum of Care homeless funding of renewal](#) grants from Fiscal Year 2012 budget. Region V received nearly \$275 million to renew support for 1,285 local housing and service projects. These grants are particularly important because as Secretary Donovan said, “The evidence is clear that every dollar we spend on those programs that helps find a stable home for our homeless neighbors not only saves money but quite literally saves lives. We know these programs work and we know these grants can mean the difference between homeless persons and families finding stable housing or living on our streets.”

\*\*\*\*\*

**NOFA NEWS:** Go to [Grants.Gov](#) to find Notice of Funding Announcements and application information for all Federal Grants. Current [HUD NOFAs](#):

	<b>GRANT</b>	<b>Open Date</b>	<b>Close Date</b>
FR-5700-N-18	<a href="#">Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants</a>	03/25/2013	05/28/2013
FR-5700-N-24	<a href="#">Fair Housing Organization Initiative Continuing Development Component</a>	03/20/2013	04/22/2013
FR-5700-N-03	<a href="#">Fair Housing Initiative Program</a>	03/13/2013	06/11/2013
FR-5700-N-22	<a href="#">Housing Counseling Training</a>	03/04/2013	04/19/2013
FR-5700-N-11	<a href="#">Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP)</a>	01/23/2013	04/24/2013
FR-5700-N-07	<a href="#">Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency - Service Coordinators Program</a>	01/02/2013	04/30/2013
FR-5700-N-01	<a href="#">Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Policy Requirements and General Section</a>	08/08/2012	12/31/2013

**Social Security Income and Supplemental Security Income verification just got easier for our customers:** When housing applicants need proof of their Social Security or Supplemental Security Income benefits, let them know that they can get a benefit verification letter online instantly through a **my Social Security** account. This eliminates travel to a Social Security office or the wait for a letter to be mailed to them. They can get the up-to-date information they need online, perhaps even from a computer in your office. With **my Social Security** those who receive benefits can easily view, print, or save an official letter that includes proof of their: Benefit amount and type; Medicare start date and withholding amount; and Age. Instead of going to a Social Security office for a benefit verification letter; they should now go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount). Take 15 minutes to sign yourself up to see how convenient it is to check on your social security earnings and benefits.

**Secretary’s Award:** HUD in partnership with the Council on Foundations, announced the annual Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships – Housing and Community Development in Action – as part of the Council's annual Fall Conference. The Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships recognizes excellence in partnerships that have transformed the relationship between the sectors and led to measurable benefits in terms of increased economic employment, health, safety, education, sustainability, inclusivity and cultural opportunities, and/or housing access for low- and moderate-income families while emphasizing cross-sector partnerships between the philanthropic and public sectors. Recognizing that foundations of all sizes partner with public agencies, the jury will take asset and staff size into consideration to ensure that the award recipients reflect a diversity of foundations. Read more and apply [here](#). The deadline for completing submission is April 29, 2013.

**Discriminatory Effects Rule:** HUD has issued the final Fair Housing Rule on Discriminatory Effects. The regulation formalizes the standard and process for determining whether a practice had a discriminatory effect, regardless of whether there was intent to discriminate. Read more [here](#).

**The 2013 HOME income limits** have been published and are effective March 15. You may access these limits from the [HOME Program Income Limits Page](#). HOME is the largest Federal block grant to State and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households.

**Obama Administration releases [February Housing Scorecard](#):** housing recovery shows continued progress...

**Read PD&R's March e- newsletter, [THE EDGE](#),** to keep current on policy development and research breaking news.

**FHA NEWS:** Continuing the effort to help strengthen FHA's Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund, FHA addresses the MIP amounts, manual underwriting on certain loans, down payments on jumbo loans, and enforcement efforts with regard to lenders marketing to borrowers with previous foreclosures. Read the [Press Release](#) issued January 30.

FHA will consolidate its *Standard Fixed-Rate Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM)* and *Saver Fixed Rate HECM* pricing options for FHA case numbers assigned on or after April 1, 2013. Using the HECM Fixed Rate Saver for fixed rate mortgages will significantly lower the borrower's upfront closing costs while permitting a smaller pay out than the HECM Fixed Rate Standard product, thereby reducing risks to the Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund. Read FHA's new [HECM Mortgagee Letter](#).

FHA's [Powersaver Home Energy Retrofit Pilot](#) has been extended. FHA insurance will continue to be available through May 4, 2015 for loans to homeowners to finance energy-saving alterations, repairs, and improvements in existing structures or manufactured homes.

Visit the National Homeownership Center homepage at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hsgsingle.cfm>.  
**Servicing lenders can visit the National Servicing Center at:**  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/nsc/nschome.cfm>.

For FHA Mortgagee Letters, [click here](#).

**The Federal Housing Finance Agency** has announced that, beginning July 1st, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will require their servicers to “to offer eligible borrowers who are at least 90 days delinquent on their mortgage an easy way to lower their monthly payments and modify their mortgage without requiring financial or hardship documentation.” Eligible homeowners – those whose mortgages are owned or guaranteed by Fannie and Freddie – will need to demonstrate their “willingness and ability” to make three consecutive on-time payments after which their mortgages will be permanently modified. For more, click [here](#).

**Environmental Training:** HUD has launched the [Environmental Review Training Page](#) to help customers find webinars from HUD's Office of Environment and Energy (OEE) that cover a wide variety of topics; from the basics of a Part 58 environmental review to more advanced topics regarding historic preservation, tribal consultation and assessment tools.

**Healthier Homes:** The Department has taken significant steps towards eliminating radon exposure in renter-occupied homes by issuing two new policies that will incorporate radon testing and mitigation into HUD programs to help prevent some of the estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths radon causes in the United States every year. Read release [here](#).

**Interagency plan for Healthy Homes:** The Environmental Protection Agency, the Departments of Energy and Health and Human Services, the White House Council on Environmental Quality and HUD have unveiled [Advancing Healthy Housing - A Strategy for Action](#), to reduce the number of American homes with residential health and safety hazards.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Follow us on [Twitter @HUDMidwest](#)*

\*\*\*\*\*

**HUD unveils the first housing discrimination mobile application (app)** for iPhone and iPad. Developed by HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity and Hewlett Packard, the app uses the latest technology to provide the public with a quick and easy way to learn about their housing rights and to file housing discrimination complaints, and inform the housing industry about its responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act. The app also provides information about the fair housing complaint process, and allows the public to access HUD's toll-free discrimination hotline and link to HUD's fair housing website: [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing). To get this housing discrimination app please visit the [Apple App store](#).

**Section 184, Indian Home Loan Guarantee:** On March 26<sup>th</sup>, President Obama signed into a law a measure to continue funding the government through the end of fiscal year 2013 - September 30, 2013. This budget compromise includes more than \$12 million for HUD's Section 184 Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program that provides mortgages to American Indian and Alaska Native families, Alaska Villages, Tribes, or Tribally Designated Housing Entities to construct a new home or purchase or refinance an existing home on native lands. Starting March 27<sup>th</sup>, HUD resumed accepting new loan applications under the Section 184 Program and will begin issuing loan approvals no later than April 15, 2013.

**United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH ) Blog:** Opening Doors sets a national goal of ending family homelessness by 2020. In one way, this goal is audacious and bold, and in another, it's too far off—we need to end family homelessness as soon as possible. Each day we do not, children's lives are torn off-course and their futures are threatened. Homelessness is life-disrupting and potentially traumatizing for anyone, but it is particularly so for children; instability and lack of security can negatively impact children's health, development, and academic achievement. Unfortunately, in the last Point-In-Time count report, family homelessness was up slightly, 1.4 percent, from the previous year. [Find HUD release covering PIT here](#). Given that the 2012 PIT followed the deepest point of the recession this slight uptick wasn't surprising. In fact, family homelessness would almost certainly have been much worse had it not been for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing program, funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which assisted more than 1.3 million individuals and families with prevention and rapid rehousing assistance. Read complete [Blog](#).

**HUD-VASH:** Check out the following resources listed in the "What's New" menu on the right-hand side of [HUD's webpage for HUD-VASH](#):

- A letter from Assistant Secretary Henriquez to PHAs administering HUD-VASH, on HUD and VA strategies for the program moving forward
- The slides and video recording for the HUD-VASH webinar, Building Community Partnerships

- The HUD-VASH Reference Guide, a two-page document providing an easy-to-read overview of the unique requirements governing the voucher side of HUD-VASH

## HUD-VASH National Team

<http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/HUD-VASH.asp>  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/vash/>

**Rural News:** Check out the [Housing Assistance Council](#) (HAC) website for current events and news. According to the Housing Assistance Council, the fiscal year 2013 Continuing Resolution passed by the Congress and signed by the President includes provisions maintaining the eligibility of areas currently eligible for USDA Rural Development home mortgage programs through September 30<sup>th</sup>, the end of the 2013 fiscal year.

**Rural Housing Program:** The March 27<sup>th</sup> Federal Register seeks public comment by May 28, 2013 on a proposed rule through which HUD will establish the [Rural Housing Stability Assistance program](#) which replaces the previously-authorized but never implemented Rural Homelessness Grant program authorized by the HEARTH Act. Under the new program, HUD can competitively award grants to rural counties in lieu of awards under the traditional Continuum of Care program. The grants focused on “the homeless issues unique to rural areas” and may be used to provide “rent, mortgage, utility assistance; relocation assistance; short term emergency lodging; new construction; acquisition; rehabilitation; emergency food and clothing; employment assistance and job training; health related services; housing search and counseling services; referrals to legal services; mental health services; substance abuse treatment services; and transportation.”. Applicants must be county governments or designees of county governments such as units of local governments or non-profits. The notice also includes a proposed revision of the term “chronically homeless” as well as “rural area” and “rural community” as earlier defined by the McKinney-Vento Act for which HUD is also seeking comments.

**The Silver Jacket teams of Ohio and Indiana** with support of the Midwest Regional Climate Center have launched a **Silver Jackets Flood of 1913 website**. This [site](#) is packed with historical information on the storm as well as current day tips on flood preparedness, mitigation, and more.



**The Silver Jackets - An Ongoing National Flood Response** Public outcry after the landmark Flood of 1913 event helped drive the creation of many of the federal, state and local flood prevention and education efforts we rely on today. In the spirit of collaboration, the Silver Jackets gathers teams of federal, state and local agencies to work on state-initiated flood preparedness, warning, and response projects. The Silver Jackets commemoration of the Flood of 1913 is being led by the Ohio and Indiana Silver Jacket teams including the HUD Field Offices in Ohio. A full list can be found [here](#):

**USDA Rural Development** will be holding a series of teleconferences in the months ahead about its Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program. Participation is limited and the times and dates of the teleconferences will be sent to participants who register according to instructions in the [March 21<sup>st</sup> Federal Register](#).

**The Building Michigan Communities Conference** is April 29-May 1 at the Lansing Center in Lansing. In its 15<sup>th</sup> year, the conference has grown to become the largest event of its kind in the United States. National experts and advocates on housing, community development, finance and public policy are featured. Highlights this year include such exceptional speakers as U.S. Congressman Barney Frank of Massachusetts and HGTV star Carter

Oosterhouse. Registering online is fast and easy. Find out more and register at [www.buildingmicommunities.org](http://www.buildingmicommunities.org).

## IN THE NEWS

**New 2012 Rental Housing Finance Survey** (Housingonline.com): The U.S. Census Bureau and HUD recently released the new 2012 Rental Housing Finance Survey, which provides a more complete picture of the nation's multifamily rental properties, including data on property values, how their mortgages are financed, and characteristics of the structures. More specifically, this new survey builds on previously known information and collects additional data. Read results here: [HUD and Census Bureau release joint study on Multifamily Housing properties](#)

**Home sales are set to keep marching upward (USA Today)** this year after hitting their highest level in five years in 2012, economists say. Existing-home sales for the full year rose 9.2% from 2011, according to preliminary data, the National Association of Realtors reported...[read full article](#).

**Americans Seizing Second Chance Lifting Recovery: Mortgages (Washington Post)** Jason Schmitt lost his \$90,000-a- year job at an oil rig in 2009. The bank repossessed his Tulsa, Oklahoma home and the former Army combat engineer went bankrupt. Last month, after moving with his family to his Missouri hometown, he got a Veterans Administration mortgage that lets borrowers buy property just two years after a foreclosure. [Read full article](#).

**Home Loans Fest Announced by Loans.net (Yahoo!News)** An online carnival of home loan companies will cater to thousands of customers at Loans.net. If you have ever been to a job fair you know how it works. Hundreds of employers gather at one place and conduct one-on-one interviews with applicants. The ambience facilitates quick decision-making and helps both parties expedite the overall process. Loans.net decided to apply the same concept to home loans, and has hosted an online fest where thousands of lenders gather and work collectively to help applicants interested in applying for a home loan. The only difference is that this networking will take place online at Loans.net. Since hundreds of lenders will work together, it is more than likely that individuals with credit issues and previous rejections will find help as well. The fest is all about choices -- lots of choices for both parties. [Read full article here](#).

**Short sales skyrocket in past year (philly.com)** Over the past year, no two words have been heating up the real estate world more than "short sales." As RealtyTrac reports, short sales accounted for almost a third of all sales in 2012. That's not necessarily bad news for the housing market. With fewer foreclosures and more short sales, more lenders and borrowers are walking away from homes without paying the huge financial (and often emotional) price of a foreclosure. "A lot of short sales involve sellers who are having financial problems but they're still willing to make something work," says Elizabeth Weintraub, a real estate agent in Sacramento, Calif. In a short sale, a homeowner owes more on a loan than the property is worth. The property is put up for sale, and the lender accepts the proceeds from the sale as repayment of the loan. While a short sale still negatively affects a borrower's credit score, and it is certainly not a "short" process, both the borrower and lender avoid the fees and costs of a foreclosure. Do your research: Before you set your sights on a short sale, speak with a lender who can assess your situation, says Tracy Royce, an Arizona-based short sales and foreclosure expert. "See if your lender can do a loan modification instead and then discuss whether or not a short sale is the best way to go," she says. Typically, a short sale is not the only solution for financially struggling homeowners. "It's just one tool in the tool box," Royce says. However, if it's determined that a short sale is optimal, reach out to a local professional with extensive short sale experience. "There's no cookie cutter

process and all short sales are different, so it's important to find an agent who knows how to do them all," Weintraub explains. [Read full article.](#)

***APRIL IS FAIR HOUSING MONTH***  
***“Our Work Today Defines Our Tomorrow.”***

**Fair Housing Media Campaign:** HUD and the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) today launched a national media campaign to educate the public and housing providers about their rights and responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act. The campaign, titled “Fair Housing Is Your Right. Use It,” includes English, Spanish, and Chinese radio and print public service advertisements (PSAs) that feature examples of actions which violate the Fair Housing Act and let the public know what to do if they experience housing discrimination. In addition to radio and print public service announcements, the campaign will use the latest digital and social media to amplify the outreach effort. The launch of the campaign coincides with the beginning of Fair Housing Month when the nation marks the passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. **The Fair Housing Act** makes it illegal to discriminate in the sale or rental of housing based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, familial status or disability. This year’s Fair Housing Month theme is “Our Work Today Defines Our Tomorrow,” spotlighting HUD’s current enforcement and education and outreach efforts and the work of its fair housing partners are helping to foster sustainable, inclusive communities of opportunity for future generations. One of the campaign’s print ads features a woman in a wheelchair and her service animal, drawing attention to persons with disabilities who often face housing discrimination. Another print ad featuring a woman wearing traditional Muslim headdress highlights the persistence of discrimination based on religion. Each PSA encourages anyone who experiences discrimination to call HUD’s housing discrimination hotline (1-800-669-9777), contact a local fair housing agency, or visit HUD’s fair housing Web site: [www.HUD.gov/fairhousing](http://www.HUD.gov/fairhousing). **Read complete press release [here](#).**

**Field Office Happenings**

**To read all press releases announcing grants and other HUD news in your area, check out the state pages on the HUD Website here: [Illinois](#); [Indiana](#); [Michigan](#); [Minnesota](#); [Ohio](#); and [Wisconsin](#).**

**Chicago**

Midwest Regional Administrator, Antonio R. Riley joins HUD Deputy Secretary Maurice Jones (at podium) and Governor Pat Quinn (far right) in February to announce that HUD and HHS awarded [Illinois nearly \\$12 million](#) in rental assistance to provide permanent supportive housing to extremely low-income persons with disabilities in Illinois to prevent homelessness or unnecessary institutionalization. A grant was also made to [Minnesota](#).



On March 12<sup>th</sup>, Antonio R. Riley participated in Chicago’s Federal Executive Board’s (FEB) Interagency Sustainability Forum. The half-day session started with the FEB presenting Mayor Rahm Emanuel a Green Government Leadership award, crafted from recycled metals and reused bicycle parts, for his efforts in creating a sustainable Chicago. Mayor Emanuel’s efforts resulted in the



**Antonio Riley joins Chicago’s FEB to present Mayor Emanuel (standing center) a Green Government Leadership Award**

U.S. Chamber of Commerce naming Chicago as the most sustainable large community in 2012. In his remarks the mayor said his goal is to make Chicago the model green city in America and in the process put more people to work. The mayor also focused on the importance of Chicago's partnerships with HUD, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Following the award ceremony, Mr. Riley participated on a sustainability panel with federal and city partners. The current successes in creating sustainable communities in Region V have a lot to do with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Since 2009, this joint partnership between HUD, DOT, and EPA, has focused on "creating solutions to address regional challenges and opportunities."

## Columbus

Columbus Field Office Leverages Smart Phone Technology to Promote Fair Housing: Other than texting, taking photos, using apps, and occasionally making calls, a unique capability of smart phone technology is accessing videos on demand. The challenge is how to connect people directly to the information they need. To promote access to free videos on HUD's Fair Housing Playlist on YouTube, the Innovation Time Team at the Columbus Field Office developed a simple, full-color business card-sized handout that features the Fair Housing message, contact numbers and a QRC (Quick Response Code) that provides a direct link to the playlist via a free smart phone app. On the reverse of the card is contact information for the Columbus Field Office and a second QRC which provides directions to the office via Google Maps. The Innovation Team has also developed a second card on homeownership and avoiding foreclosure.

**FAIR HOUSING**

It's the law...

**HUD**  
1-800-765-9372  
TTY 312-353-7143

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Columbus Field Office  
200 North High St 7th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Phone: 614-469-5737  
Fax: 614-469-2432

## Grand Rapids



On Monday, February 18, 2013, Field Office Director, Louis M. Berra, Sr. Management Analyst, Terri Sanchez and Single Family Appraiser, Kathy Coon volunteered to participate in a Bingo event for at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans as part of the Federal Day of Caring. Employees brought in a variety of items to distribute to Veterans. This event is one that our Veterans look forward to each year. Their enthusiasm is heartwarming to all of us volunteers who take pleasure in seeing their smiling faces.

Throughout the year employees from the Grand Rapids HUD office, as well as Department of Labor staff bring in donations based on a list of Veteran's needs. These additional items help defer costs to Veterans who are often limited in financial resources. Items such as toiletries, books, games, movies and clothing are delivered in boxes at least three times a year.

If this Region V Newsletter was forwarded to you by a colleague or you know someone who would like to sign up to receive it, please select your State to register for automatic e-mail delivery: [Illinois](#), [Indiana](#), [Michigan](#), [Minnesota](#), [Ohio](#) or [Wisconsin](#). For other HUD newsletters, go [here](#).

## Minneapolis

### HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF EFFORTS

Anthony Landecker, Mary Burbank, and Thomas Koon spent several weeks working in New York and New Jersey in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Mr. Koon is a Program Manager with the HUD Minneapolis Field Office of Community Planning and Development. He explained that most of his time was spent at the Toms River Disaster Recovery Center which is the busiest center in New Jersey. Tom worked in coordination with FEMA, local social service agencies, and the Small Business Administration (SBA). Each day, Tom



Thomas Koon

assisted individuals with housing related issues including referrals to HUD housing counseling agencies regarding mortgages or credit counseling, housing authorities, affordable housing developments, conducting searches for rental housing, suggesting tactics for obtaining housing, and addressing other barriers to obtaining housing. Often there were very stressful moments as many survivors were dealing with emotional issues about major decisions moving forward in their lives. Tom worked closely with social workers, SBA and FEMA officials whose clients had multiple issues that were exacerbated by the storm or individuals who needed additional assistance and could not be served by one agency. Tom explained that it was a very rewarding experience to provide more direct information to clients and to see the importance of effective government involvement in the lives of people during the aftermath of a disaster. He thanks those coworkers who stepped in to help with his regular duties in Minnesota and commends his supervisor for allowing him to have the opportunity to serve on disaster duty.



Secretary Donovan meets with leaders



Sincerely,  
*Antonio R. Riley*

*If this Region V Newsletter was forwarded to you by a colleague or you know someone who would like to sign up to receive it, please select a State from [Illinois](#), [Indiana](#), [Michigan](#), [Minnesota](#), [Ohio](#) or [Wisconsin](#). For other HUD newsletters, go [here](#). Follow us on [Twitter @HUDMidwest](#)*