



APRIL IS FAIR HOUSING MONTH. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act 40 years ago on April 11, 1968. Visit <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/> and <http://www.nationalfairhousing.org>.

HOUSE AND SENATE TO ACT ON HOUSING CRISIS. Numerous bills have been introduced. For more details, links, and updates on legislation and other news on the current housing crisis, visit HAC's web site at http://www.ruralhome.org/infoAnnouncements_2008HousingCrisis.php.

- ◆ The Senate continues work this week on legislation introduced by Sens. Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Richard Shelby (R-AL) to help address the mortgage crisis. Final details may change, but the package as proposed would expand the HUD FHA loan limit, provide \$4 billion in CDBG funds to buy and rehab foreclosed homes, provide \$100 million in additional counseling funds through NeighborWorks, allow non-itemizing taxpayers to take a deduction if they pay property taxes, provide help to veterans facing foreclosure, expand consumer protections under the Truth in Lending Act, and provide tax breaks to homebuilders and others and tax credits to buyers of foreclosed homes. Despite strong bipartisan support in the Senate, the White House is threatening a veto.
- ◆ The House Financial Services Committee holds hearings April 9 and 10 on legislation proposed by Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA). His bill (not yet introduced) would allow FHA to guarantee up to \$300 billion in refinanced mortgages that have been written down by lenders. The bill also would allow FHA to create a facility to refinance loans in bulk. And the bill would provide \$10 billion in loans and grants from the Treasury Department to states for the purchase, rehab, and prompt occupancy of vacant, foreclosed homes.
- ◆ Responding to a House Financial Services Committee request for comments, HAC suggested that in rural areas intense marketing efforts would be advisable, and supported a National Rural Housing Coalition recommendation to use Section 502 loans for owners and Section 533 grants for nonprofits as well as FHA loans.
- ◆ Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) on April 2 introduced H.R. 5678. It would provide \$10 billion in CDBG funds to redevelop foreclosed, vacant homes.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS SHOW STRONG SUPPORT FOR RURAL HOUSING. Many Representatives and Senators signed letters to the appropriations subcommittees supporting FY 2009 funding for USDA housing programs. Circulated by Reps. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and Sens. Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME), the letters are at http://www.ruralhome.org/infoAnnouncements_2009approps.php.

USDA ISSUES FUNDING ALLOCATION. The "1940-L" notice, explaining how most rural housing programs' FY 2008 funds are allocated among states, and other USDA FY 2008 funding notices are at http://www.ruralhome.org/infoAnnouncements_2008RDNOFAs.php. See *Federal Register*, 3/28/08, pp. 16624-38. Contact RD state offices.

GRANTS OFFERED TO DEVELOP TREATMENT SYSTEMS FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE. Nonprofits, local governments, and tribes can apply by May 29 for new Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration funds that can be used for services linked to housing, though not for housing costs. See http://www.samhsa.gov/Grants/2008/ti_08_013.aspx. Contact Joanne Gampel, SAMHSA, 240-276-2895, joanne.gampel@samhsa.hhs.gov.

CENSUS CRITERIA PROPOSED FOR ALASKA NATIVE AREAS AND AMERICAN INDIAN AREAS. Comments on these categories for the 2010 Census are due June 16 and June 30, respectively. See *Federal Register*, 3/17/08, pp. 14203-14 (Alaskan) and 4/1/08, pp. 17303-14 (Indian), at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/frcont08.html. Contact Michael Ratcliffe, Census, geo.tsap.list@census.gov or 301-763-3056.

HOME RENT AND INCOME LIMITS FOR FY 2008 AVAILABLE. Figures were reposted April 8 with some corrections. Visit <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/programs/home/limits/index.cfm>.

HUD SECRETARY ALPHONSO JACKSON RESIGNS. Deputy Secretary Roy Bernardi becomes Acting Secretary on April 18. HUD's press release and a statement from President Bush are available at <http://www.hud.gov>.

RENTAL HOUSING REMAINS OUT OF REACH FOR MILLIONS. The National Low Income Housing Coalition's *Out of Reach 2007-2008*, released April 7, reports a full-time minimum wage worker still cannot afford even a one-bedroom apartment in any metro area or nonmetro county at HUD's Fair Market Rent. *Out of Reach 2007-2008: The Wait for a Home Grows Longer*, including data for each state, county, and metro area, and nonmetro areas in each state, is at <http://nlihc.org/oor2008/>, or call NLIHC, 202-662-1530 ext. 235 for print copy prices and to order.

USDA'S ERS REVIEWS DATA ON HIRED FARMWORKERS AND IMMIGRATION. "Hired Farmworkers a Major Input for Some U.S. Farm Sectors" summarizes what is known about farmworkers' immigration status, housing, and other factors. Visit <http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/April08/Features/HiredFarm.htm>.