

CHAPA Housing Briefs

April 13, 2015

State Updates

HomeBASE Program Receives Additional Funding

The House and Senate approved a **supplemental budget** that includes an additional \$3 million for the HomeBASE program (7004-0108), bringing FY15 spending to \$28,955,535. HomeBASE has helped more than 1,800 families exit or avoid shelter in the first six months of the current fiscal year by offering families an alternative to shelter that includes stabilization services and up to \$8,000 in financial assistance to pay rent, utility bills, security deposits, and other expenses that would allow families to stay in their homes, move into new housing, or live with other families. According to the Regional Housing Network, whose members administer the program, without the additional funding, the program would have ended in April. By providing additional funds to HomeBASE this fiscal year, approximately 100 families will continue to receive temporary time-limited assistance, helping them to remain in their homes, while other families will continue to receive stabilization services. Without these resources, more families would likely have needed to re-enter the shelter system. The supplemental budget also includes an additional \$51.5 million to pay for the Emergency Assistance family shelter system (7004-0101) through FY15, bringing total spending for FY15 to \$191,799,718. The family shelter line was depleted in March. Governor Charlie Baker signed the supplemental budget into law on March 31st.

Upcoming Events

April 14, 2015

**CHAPA Breakfast Forum:
Implementation of the National
Housing Trust Fund (NHTF)**

April 23, 2015

Stand Against Racism

May 12, 2015

**Using Community Preservation Act
funding for Affordable Housing**

To view all CHAPA events please
visit www.chapa.org/event.



C H A P A

**Citizens' Housing and
Planning Association**



Federal Updates

House, Senate Budget Chairs Aim for April 15 Concurrent Budget Resolution

On March 25 and March 27 respectively, the House and Senate approved budget resolutions, in both cases without a single Democratic vote in support. The House and Senate chairs of the Budget Committees hope to reconcile the differences and win passage of a joint budget resolution by April 15 (Congress returns on April 13). Non-defense discretionary spending, the portion of the budget that funds HUD programs among others, totaled \$493 billion in both chambers, up 0.2% from FY 2015. The White House published a **report** on the differences between the proposed resolutions and the President's FY2016 budget proposal, and impacts on various programs if the House and Senate resolutions go forward. It also posted an interactive **map** showing a state-by-state breakdown of the differences. Assuming funding restrictions are applied across the board, it estimates that the House proposal would result in about 133,000 fewer very low income families and individuals receiving housing choice vouchers, relative to the President's budget (the latter would increase vouchers by 67,000).

HUD Issues New Instructions for Designating State Agency to Administer NHTF

HUD has posted **new procedures** that states must follow to designate the entity in their state that is to receive National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) funds from HUD. The NHTF statute requires states to designate a housing finance agency, housing and community development entity, tribally designated housing entity, or any other qualified instrument. While many states have designated a state agency already, all states must now submit formal notification to the HUD Secretary. It plans to post a list of designated agencies soon on its **NHTF** website.

HUD Issues Draft Rule on Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) for Comment

On April 1, HUD published a **proposed rule** revising its regulations to implement the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization of 2013 (see March 24 **announcement**). Comments are due June 1. VAWA provides protections and services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking and was reauthorized in 2013. VAWA will now apply to **nearly all HUD programs** (previously it applied to public housing and housing choice vouchers), and to Low Income Housing Tax Credit properties. It prohibits denying assistance or admission to assisted rental housing on the basis of being a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. It also requires public housing agencies and owners to notify tenants of their rights under VAWA. HUD is also publishing a notice of occupancy rights and an emergency transfer plan, both for public comment.

HUD Issues Section 3 Proposed Rule for Comment

On March 27, HUD published a **proposed rule** amending the 1994 interim Section 3 regulations (HUD circulated a preview version on March 19). Section 3 was created to give low income people access to some job, training and contracting opportunities related to HUD assisted housing and community development projects. Comments are due on May 26. The National Low Income Housing Coalition has published a **summary** of the proposed rule.

HUD Issues New Guidance on Project-Based Vouchers

HUD issued new **guidance** on April 1 on the use of project-based vouchers (PBV), in response to “recent increased interest and activity” in the PBV program. PIH-2015-05(HA) addresses three topics: timely reporting, how to calculate “20% of voucher funding” limit and demonstrate compliance, and requirements when using PBV for PHA-owned units.





Recent Research & Reports

State of Homelessness in America 2015 Released

On April 2, the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) published its fifth annual report on homelessness trends and counts, ***The State of Homelessness in America 2015***, using data collected through HUD's Continuum of Care grantees in January 2014. As NAEH notes, the data is not perfect, especially since counting the number of unsheltered persons was not mandatory in 2014. Overall, NAEH reports that nationwide homelessness decreased by 2.3%, including a 2.7% decrease in families. However, there are large variations among the 50 states plus the District of Columbia. In Massachusetts, the number of homeless persons (individuals and in families) rose by 11.6% compared to January 2013 – from 19,029 to 21,237 – due almost entirely to increases in the number of homeless families in Massachusetts (4,781 - up 10.5% from 2013) and the number of persons in homeless families (14,449 - up 17.1%). The number of chronically homeless individuals remained almost unchanged. The number of persons in Massachusetts categorized as at risk of homelessness also rose between 2012 and 2013. While the number of poor renter households paying more their half their income towards housing fell by 8% (declining by about 10,500 households to just over 118,000), the number of people in poor households who were doubled up rose by 29.5% (to 109,556 persons - up almost 35,000).

Study Finds Continued Concentration of Vouchers and Tax Credit Units in Minority Neighborhoods

A new study, ***Housing Programs Fail to Deliver on Neighborhood Quality, Re-examined***, looks back at a 1997 study that found that project-based rental assistance did little to improve the quality of neighborhoods that assisted households live in, relative to welfare households, and examines whether the same is true for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) programs today. The authors conclude that the HCV and LIHTC programs do modestly better at delivering higher quality locations, with 23% of LIHTC units and 22% of vouchers in 2009 in census tracts with poverty rates of 10% or less. However, they also find that a rising share of units in these programs are in tracts with high minority concentrations (above 40%): 50% for LIHTC and 52% for HCV in 2009, up from 41% and 45% respectively in 1997.

Enterprise releases 2015 Green Communities Criteria for Affordable Housing.

Enterprise Community Partners released updated **Green Communities Criteria** on April 7. Started in 2004, the criteria were last updated in 2011. They are intended to provide a national standard for affordable housing developers undertaking all types of development (single, multifamily housing, new construction, moderate and substantial rehabilitation). The update adds resilient design and "Active Design" criteria to improve resident health through low cost measures such as stairwell access. The eight categories of criteria include: integrative design, location/neighborhood fabric, site improvements, water conservation, energy efficiency, materials, healthy living and operations/management/resident engagement.

Brief Finds Capacity Investment in the MBTA System Critical to Future of Regional Economy

Transportation for Massachusetts has issued a new brief, *The Route to Growth*, which outlines the link between proposed expansion of the Metropolitan Boston Transportation Authority (MBTA) and current development activities in the region. It notes the importance of expanding capacity to meet growing transit demand and support the long term growth of the regional economy and urges policymakers to continue to recognize the importance of expansion as they debate how to maintain and reform the current system.

HUD Publishes Evaluation of Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP2)

An **evaluation of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)** by Abt Associates on behalf of HUD has found that the program had no detectable effect on housing prices and other housing outcomes in the surrounding neighborhoods. The evaluation focuses on the second round of program funding (NSP2), created to address the spillover effects of foreclosures. The report includes a discussion of program design and implementation challenges that may have played a role in this finding.

New Policy Brief Describes Phase II of Secure Jobs Program for Homeless Families

The Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP) at Brandeis University recently issued a **policy brief** outlining changes and challenges to the program model in the second phase of the Secure Jobs initiative. The initiative currently operates in eight sites in Massachusetts and is launching in Connecticut. The second phase expanded eligibility to families living in shelters and motels and families receiving prevention or shelter diversion assistance. The authors report that continuing housing instability and “cliff effects” (earnings exceed limits for housing subsidy but are too low to maintain housing) are major challenges.

American Housing Survey Data Released for Boston MSA

HUD has posted the **2013 American Housing Survey (AHS)** data for the **Boston MSA**, as well as the national survey data. The AHS is a joint HUD-Census effort and is conducted every other year nationally, every 2-4 years for MSAs. While not available below the MSA level, it provides more information on housing stock characteristics than other Census surveys. Topics include single-family homes, apartments, manufactured housing, vacant units, family composition, income, housing and neighborhood quality, housing costs, HVAC equipment, appliances, fuel type, remodeling and repair, and recent moves.





Citizens' Housing and Planning Association

18 Tremont Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02118
www.CHAPA.org

[Follow on Twitter](#)
[Like on Facebook](#)

