



NATIONAL RURAL HOUSING COALITION



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Rural Definition Update: "Rural In Character"

Last week, USDA announced that it will postpone implementation of any changes to eligibility for Rural Housing programs---based on the "Rural In Character" criteria---until October 1, 2015. "Rural in Character" is one of four criteria established in Section 520 of the Housing Act to determine eligibility for Rural Housing programs. Other criteria include population size, the availability of mortgage credit, and location in a metro county for certain communities.

As you recall, we worked closely with NRHC Member Karen Phillips of Crawford-Sebastian Community Development Council to reach out to Senator Pryor, who urged Secretary Vilsack to give at-risk communities greater notice and to make USDA's decision-making process more transparent.

USDA has also published a [helpful guide](#) to answer some important questions that you may have on the impact of this decision and what it means for your community.

The guide also provides information on how the Department will make its "rural in character" determinations, including providing a secondary review, initial notice to at-risk communities, a 90-day comment period, 30-days final notice of any changes in eligibility, and issuing an Administrative Notice to ensure consistent implementation.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson