



NATIONAL RURAL HOUSING COALITION



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President Obama Outlines New Proposals to Streamline Refinance Programs

Earlier today President Obama detailed two refinancing proposals under his Blueprint for an America Built to Last. Both aim to help homeowners, including those who are currently underwater, to refinance their mortgages at lower interest rates.

Under the Department of Agriculture's two-year Single Family Housing Guaranteed Rural Refinance Pilot Program, borrowers with loans made or guaranteed by USDA Rural Development will be able to refinance into lower interest rates. The program will operate in 19 states, including Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Tennessee. To ensure that this program is streamlined and cost effective, the President has directed USDA to eliminate the need for a new appraisal, home inspection, credit report, and other documentation normally required when refinancing. In addition, homeowners will be allowed to roll any refinancing costs into the loan principal.

The President has also called on Congress to streamline the existing Home

Affordable Refinance Program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The administration faces a major hurdle; it proposes to pay for these changes by levying a Financial Crisis Responsibility tax on large banks, a measure opposed by many in Congress.

Click [here](#) for more details on the President's proposals.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Better Than Zero

With the release of the FY 13 budget, USDA took a slight turn away from last year's proposal to eliminate all rural housing except guaranteed loans. While the Rural Housing Service FY 13 budget is an improvement. It is not by much and leaves several big issues facing rural housing advocates.

In the big picture, direct lending is down by almost \$300 million – due to a cut in section 502 from \$900 million to \$653 million and elimination of section 515 loans. Budget authority for direct lending also falls from \$75 million to \$34 million. An indication of how low the subsidy cost is for section 502: the difference in budget authority to support the current level of \$900 million is only \$4 million more than the proposed level of \$653 million.

This applies to apples comparison on the budget should include the recommendation for multi-family restructuring. The Administration had proposed elimination in past years, because the program was not authorized. In this budget restructuring is back and with a promise for legislative proposal. The budget includes \$46 million for restructuring with \$12 million for vouchers. This compares with \$13 million in FY 12, of which \$11 went to vouchers.

While the Administration got \$22 million in savings from elimination of section 515, there is still an increase in BA overall.

As with last year, the biggest loser in percentage terms is mutual and self-help housing. The budget proposes a two-thirds or \$20 million reduction from \$30 million that is available in FY 12. While this is better than the FY 12 request, it is not hard to do better than zero.

Late in the year, we ran into a House Member with a major say in rural housing program. After thanking him for his support of rural housing programs, he asked, "What is it with those guys at USDA and this program?" Good question.

In this election year, much of the President's budget will be put on hold until after the election. While there are major issues in the budget, the Agriculture Appropriation Bill is one the least controversial, so is it possible that Congress will complete action prior to leaving town for the campaign. Look for early action in the House, which will try to move bills in the May and look for a

difficult campaign to again persuade a very conservative Congress that it should spend more on rural housing than those liberals at USDA.

Visit our [website](#) for a detailed look at the 2013 budget for Agriculture and stay tuned for more details on HUD and other programs.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

House Subcommittee Hearing on FY13 RD Budget

Today, March 1, 2012, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and FDA held a [hearing](#) on the FY13 USDA Rural Development budget, featuring Mr. Dallas Tonsager, Under Secretary for Rural Development, and Tammye Trevino, RHS Administrator.

In response to a question from Ranking Member Farr (D-CA) about the ever-growing backlog of Section 502 Direct Loan applications, RHS Administrator Trevino defended the agency's cuts to the program, stating that such cuts were due to significant budget restraints. She did not, however, provide an estimate on the backlog. However, when asked to compare the number of Section 502 Direct Loans that were financed in the last two fiscal years with the number that will be financed if the President's budget request of \$653 million is approved, Trevino said that the number of loans will go from 10-12,000 to 5-6,000.

Candidly, Mr. Tonsager noted that as a result of the budget cuts, the agency will simply be unable to serve many of the poorer, less prosperous rural communities that rely on Section 502 Direct Loans. Finally, Ranking Member Farr asked the panel what will happen to those families who qualify, but who will be unable to receive this assistance because of the cut backs. To summarize RHS's response: They'll have to wait.

When asked about ways to get out loan money, Trevino also briefly and vaguely discussed the timeline for the release of new regulations that would allow the agency to partner with nonprofit organizations in packaging Section 502 loans. She expects the regulation to come out by the end of this year. Both Subcommittee Chairman Kingston and Ranking Member Farr indicated their support for this, asked Trevino to keep them informed, and urged RHS to speed up the process.

Members of Congress focused most of their questions, however, on recommendations recently made by the Inspector General on ineligible Section 502 loans, a report by the GAO on duplicative federal programs, delays in doling out broadband funds, and rural health issues.

REMINDER ON FY13 HUD BUDGET: Please remember to email Sarah@rapoza.org with any success stories, photos, examples, or other information about how your organizations have used rural CDBG or HOME

funds in your communities. Be sure to tell us how the programs could be better utilized, or what, if any, drawbacks there are to using these funds.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

NRHC Blasts President's FY13 Budget

Today, March 5, 2012, the National Rural Housing Coalition responded to the President's weak FY13 USDA Rural Housing budget request, urging advocates to contact their Members of Congress to demand more support for rural communities. Check out our new "[Take Action](#)" page on the NRHC's website for more details on the FY13 budget and how you can make a difference!

The Coalition is deeply concerned that the budget's shortfalls—including significant cuts to the Section 502 Direct Loan and Self-Help Housing programs, and the elimination of the Section 515 Rural Rental Housing program—will only make it harder for low-income, rural Americans to access safe, decent, affordable housing.

Making matters worse, the Administration's FY13 proposed budget follows nearly a decade of withering federal support for these programs. Contrary to the President's goal of creating "An Economy Built to Last," these budget cuts will instead continue to weaken those very programs that help improve quality of life and economic opportunity in rural America. These programs overwhelmingly serve our communities' most vulnerable residents—including lower-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. For rural communities across the nation, these cuts could mean the difference between continued economic struggle and a stronger recovery.

ON ANOTHER NOTE: The National Rural Housing Coalition has leaped into the 21st century. Now you and other advocates can connect with the Coalition through social media. Follow us on Twitter [@RuralCoalition](#) or on [Facebook](#)!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Action Alert: Call Your Representatives!

Tomorrow, March 8, 2012, two Representatives—Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX) and Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH)—will be issuing Dear Colleague letters, urging Members of Congress to support appropriations requests for Rural Housing programs and the HOME Investment Partnerships programs.

This is our first budget battle: We are counting on you to help us by calling your Representatives and urging them to sign on in support of these appropriation requests!

Rural Housing Programs:

Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX) will release a Dear Colleague letter, urging the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and the FDA to fund rural housing programs at the higher of either FY12 levels or the President's FY13 Budget Request.

Starting TOMORROW, please call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Hinojosa in supporting this funding request. **The DEADLINE to sign on is MONDAY, March 12th.** Staff can contact Holly Bullard at Holly.bullard@mail.house.gov to sign on or to get additional information.

Last year, a number of Representatives signed on in support of rural housing programs, including: Rep. Barney Frank (MA-4), Rep. Bennie Thompson (MS-2), Rep. William "Lacy" Clay (MO-1), Rep. Mel Watt (NC-12), Rep. Al Green (TX-9), Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3), Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-3), Rep. Lois Capps (CA-23), Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2), Rep. Ben Lujan (NM-3), Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3), Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7), Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51), Rep. Jim Costa (CA-20), Rep. Peter Welch (VT-At Large), Rep. Chellie Pingree (ME-1), Rep. Colleen Hanabusa (HI-1), Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7), Rep. Gregoria Kilili Camacho Sablan (Northern Mariana Islands), and Rep. David Wu (OR-1).

Remember to tell them just how critical and successful these programs are in their districts!

HOME Investment Partnerships Program:

Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH) has issued a Dear Colleague letter, urging the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development to increase funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships

Program to \$1.6 billion, equal to FY11 levels.

Starting TODAY, please call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Marcia Fudge in supporting this funding request. **The DEADLINE to sign on is THIS FRIDAY, March 9th.** Staff can reach Maheen Siddiqui at maheen.siddiqui@mail.house.gov or ext. 57032 to sign on or to get additional information.

Last year, no Members of Congress signed on in support of this program, so it is even more important that you call! And, remember to tell them just how HOME has helped their districts.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

“Dear Colleague” Letter Links

Please find links to the [Dear Colleague](#) from Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX) urging the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and the FDA to fund rural housing programs at the higher of either FY12 levels or the President’s FY13 Budget Request.

As well as the [Dear Colleague](#) from Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH) urging the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development to increase funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program to \$1.6 billion, equal to FY11 levels.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Call Your Representatives TODAY!

Thanks to National Rural Housing Coalition members, a number of Representatives have already signed on in support of appropriations for Rural Housing and the HOME Investment Partnerships programs.

But, your hard work is not over yet. We need your help to sign on as many Representatives as possible!

Rural Housing Programs

Please call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Hinojosa in support of his [funding request](#) for Rural Housing Programs. **The DEADLINE to sign on is MONDAY, March 12th.** Staff can contact Holly Bullard at Holly.bullard@mail.house.gov to sign on or to get additional information.

Below is a list of those Members of Congress who have already signed on in support of FY13 rural housing appropriations:

Rep. Barney Frank (MA-4)
Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3)
Rep. Mel Watt (NC-12)
Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-3)
Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2)
Rep. Gregoria Kilili Camacho Sablan (Northern Mariana Islands)
Rep. Silvestre Reyes (TX-16)
Rep. Earl Blumenauer

We need your help, however, reaching out to Representatives who signed on last year, including:

Rep. Bennie Thompson (MS-2)
Rep. William "Lacy" Clay (MO-1)
Rep. Al Green (TX-9)
Rep. Lois Capps (CA-23)
Rep. Ben Lujan (NM-3)
Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7)
Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51)
Rep. Jim Costa (CA-20)
Rep. Peter Welch (VT-At Large)
Rep. Chellie Pingree (ME-1)
Rep. Colleen Hanabusa (HI-1)

Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7)

Rep. David Wu (OR-1) – Suzanne Bonamici replaced Wu in a special election

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

Please call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Marcia Fudge in supporting her [funding request](#) for the HOME program. **The DEADLINE to sign on has been extended to THURSDAY, March 15th.** Staff can reach Maheen Siddiqui at maheen.siddiqui@mail.house.gov or ext. 57032 to sign on or to get additional information.

So far, only a few Representatives have signed on in support of FY13 appropriations. And last year, no Members of Congress signed on in support of this program. That means that it is even more important that you call and tell them just how important HOME is to their districts!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Call Your Representatives and Senators

Rural Housing Programs:

Remember to call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Hinojosa in support of his [funding request](#) for Rural Housing Programs. **The DEADLINE to sign on is MONDAY, March 12th.** Staff can contact Holly Bullard at Holly.bullard@mail.house.gov to sign on or to get additional information.

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Rep. Barney Frank (MA-4)
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Rep. Mel Watt (NC-12)
Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-3)
Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2)
Rep. Gregoria Kilili Camacho Sablan (Northern Mariana Islands)
Rep. Silvestre Reyes (TX-16)
Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)
Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51)

We need your help, however, reaching out to Representatives who signed on last year, including:

Rep. Bennie Thompson (MS-2)
Rep. William "Lacy" Clay (MO-1)
Rep. Al Green (TX-9)
Rep. Lois Capps (CA-23)
Rep. Ben Lujan (NM-3)
Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7)
Rep. Jim Costa (CA-20)
Rep. Peter Welch (VT-At Large)
Rep. Chellie Pingree (ME-1)
Rep. Colleen Hanabusa (HI-1)
Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7)
Rep. David Wu (OR-1) – Suzanne Bonamici replaced Wu in a special election

Community Development Block Grants:

Remember to call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Robert Brady (PA-1) in support of his funding request for CDBG. **The DEADLINE to**

sign on is Tuesday, March 13th. Staff can contact Bianca Lacey at Bianca.Lacey@mail.house.gov to sign on or to get additional information.

Below is a list of those Members of Congress who have already signed on in support of FY13 rural housing appropriations:

Rep. Ben Luján (NM-3)
Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (NY-11)
Rep. Alcee L. Hastings (FL-23)
Rep. Joe Baca (CA-43)
Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (NY-4)
Rep. Rush D. Holt (NJ-12)
Rep. Tim Holden (PA-17)
Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (TX-15)
Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (NY-14)
Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-4)
Rep. Laura Richardson (CA-37)
Rep. Jerrold Nadler (NY-8)
Rep. Hank Johnson, Jr. (GA-4)
Rep. John D. Dingell (MI-15)
Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-2)
Rep. James P. McGovern (MA-3)
Rep. Michael H. Michaud (ME-2)
Rep. Paul Tonko (NY-21)
Rep. Robert E. Andrews (NJ-1)
Rep. Dennis J. Kucinich (OH-10)
Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey (NY-22)
Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-9)
Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51)
Rep. Mike Doyle (PA-14)
Rep. Judy Chu (CA-32)
Rep. Bill Keating (MA-10)
Rep. Hansen Clarke (MI-13)
Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2)
Rep. Dale E. Kildee (MI-5)
Rep. Jim Moran (VA-8)
Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-5)
Rep. Sander Levin (MI-12)
Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3)
Rep. Edolphus Towns (NY-10)
Rep. Brian Higgins (NY-27)
Rep. David Cicilline (RI-1)
Rep. Silvestre Reyes (TX-16)
Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (MO-5)
Rep. Niki Tsongas (MA-5)
Rep. Charles Gonzalez (TX-20)

Rep. John F. Tierney (MA-6)
Rep. Loretta F. Sanchez (CA-47)
Rep. Bill Pascrell (NJ-8)
Rep. John A. Yarmuth (KY-3)
Rep. Dan Boren (OK-2)
Rep. Mike Ross (AR-4)
Rep. Diana DeGette (CO-1)
Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-3)
Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-20)
Rep. Nick J. Rahall (WV-3)
Rep. Grace F. Napolitano (CA-38)
Rep. John Lewis (GA-5)
Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC-At Large)
Rep. Edward J. Markey (MA-7)

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

Remember to call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Marcia Fudge in supporting her [funding request](#) for the HOME program. **The DEADLINE to sign on has been extended to THURSDAY, March 15th.** Staff can reach Maheen Siddiqui at maheen.siddiqui@mail.house.gov or ext. 57032 to sign on or to get additional information.

Below is a list of those Members of Congress who have already signed on in support of FY13 appropriations:

Rep. John Conyers (MI-14)
Rep. John Lewis (GA-5)
Rep. Eleanor Holmes-Norton (DC-At Large)
Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (NY-11)
Rep. Charles Rangel (NY-15)
Rep. Jim Moran (VA-8)
Rep. Edolphus Towns (NY-10)
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)
Rep. Niki Tsongas (MA-5)
Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)
Rep. Gene Ackerman (NY-5)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

It Only Takes 5 Minutes!

Please, take 5 minutes to call your Representatives, tell them why Rural Housing programs, CDBG, and HOME are critical to their districts, and ask them to sign on in support. If you care about these programs, please call TODAY.

Rural Housing Programs:

The DEADLINE to sign has been extended until TOMORROW, TUESDAY, March 13th. We still have a lot of work ahead of us.

Call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Hinojosa in support of his [funding request](#) for Rural Housing Programs. Tell them to contact Holly Bullard at Holly.bullard@mail.house.gov to sign on or to get additional information.

Below is a list of those Members of Congress who have already signed on in support of FY13 rural housing appropriations:

Rep. Barney Frank (MA-4)
Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3)
Rep. Mel Watt (NC-12)
Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-3)
Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2)
Rep. Gregoria Kilili Camacho Sablan (Northern Mariana Islands)
Rep. Silvestre Reyes (TX-16)
Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)
Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51)
Rep. G.K. Butterfield (NC-1)
Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (NM-3)
Rep. Pedro Pierluisi (PR-At Large)
Rep. Peter Welch (VT-At Large)
Rep. Chellie Pingree (ME-1)
Rep. Jim Costa (CA-20)
Rep. Hank Johnson, Jr. (GA-4)
Rep. Jerry McNerney (CA-11)
Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7)

These Representatives signed on last year, but haven't signed on this year. Please call them today:

Rep. Bennie Thompson (MS-2)
Rep. William "Lacy" Clay (MO-1)
Rep. Al Green (TX-9)
Rep. Lois Capps (CA-23)
Rep. Colleen Hanabusa (HI-1)
Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7)
Rep. David Wu (OR-1) – Suzanne Bonamici replaced Wu in a special election

This is a list of Representatives that we're reached out to:

Rep. Gary Ackerman (NY-5)
Rep. Joe Baca (CA-43)
Rep. Michele Bachmann (MN-6)
Rep. Spencer Bachus (AL-6)
Rep. Judy Biggert (IL-13)
Rep. John Campbell (CA-48)
Rep. Francisco Canseco (TX-23)
Rep. Shelly Capito (WV-2)
Rep. Michael Capuano (MA-9)
Rep. John Carney (DE-At Large)
Rep. Andre Carson (IN-7)
Rep. William "Lacy" Clay (MO-1)
Rep. Bennie Thompson (MS-2)
Rep. Al Green (TX-9)
Rep. Lois Capps (CA-23)
Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7)
Rep. Colleen Hanabusa (HI-1)
Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7)
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (OR-1)
Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (MO-5)
Rep. Robert Dold (IL-10)
Rep. Joe Donnelly (IN-2)
Rep. Sean Duffy (WI-7)
Rep. Keith Ellison (MN-5)
Rep. Michael Fitzpatrick (PA-8)
Rep. Scott Garrett (NJ-5)
Rep. Michael Grimm (NY-13)
Rep. Luis Guterrez (IL-4)
Rep. Nan Hayworth (NY-19)
Rep. Jeb Hensarling (TX-5)
Rep. Jim Himes (CT-4)
Rep. Bill Huizenga (MI-2)
Rep. Robert Hurt (VA-5)
Rep. Walt Jones (NC-3)
Rep. Peter King (NY-3)
Rep. Frank Lucas (OK-3)

Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (MO-9)
Rep. Stephen Lynch (MA-9)
Rep. Carolyn Maloney (NY-14)
Rep. Donald Manzullo (IL-16)
Rep. Kenny Marchant (TX-24)
Rep. Kevin McCarthy (CA-22)
Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (NY-4)
Rep. Thaddeus McCotter (MI-11)
Rep. Patrick McHenry (NC-10)
Rep. Gregory Meeks (NY-6)
Rep. Gary Miller (CA-42)
Rep. Brad Miller (NC-13)
Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-4)
Rep. Randy Neugebauer (TX-19)
Rep. Ron Paul (TX-14)
Rep. Stevan Pearce (NM-2)
Rep. Ed Perlmutter (CO-7)
Rep. Gary Peters (MI-9)
Rep. Bill Posey (FL-15)
Rep. Jim Renacci (OH-16)
Rep. Ed Royce (CA-40)
Rep. David Schweikert (AZ-5)
Rep. David Scott (GA-13)
Rep. Brad Sherman (CA-27)
Rep. Steve Stivers (OH-15)
Rep. Nydia Velazquez (NY-12)
Rep. Maxine Waters (CA-35)
Rep. Mel Watt (NC-12)
Rep. Lynn Westmoreland (GA-3)
Rep. Jim Costa (CA-20)
Rep. Henry Cuellar (TX-28)
Rep. Vicky Hartzler (MO-4)
Rep. Randy Hultgren (IL-14)
Rep. Tim Johnson (IL-15)
Rep. Laurence Kissell (NC-8)
Rep. Bobby Schilling (IL-17)
Rep. Austin Scott (GA-8)
Rep. Marlin Stutzman (IN-3)
Rep. Glenn Thompson (PA-5)

Community Development Block Grants:

Remember to call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Robert Brady (PA-1) in support of his funding request for CDBG. **The DEADLINE to sign on is Tuesday, March 13th.** Staff can contact Bianca Lacey at Bianca.Lacey@mail.house.gov to sign on or to get additional information.

Below is a list of those Members of Congress who have already signed on in support of FY13 rural housing appropriations

Rep. Ben Luján (NM-3)
Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (NY-11)
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Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (NY-4)
Rep. Rush D. Holt (NJ-12)
Rep. Tim Holden (PA-17)
Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (TX-15)
Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (NY-14)
Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-4)
Rep. Laura Richardson (CA-37)
Rep. Jerrold Nadler (NY-8)
Rep. Hank Johnson, Jr. (GA-4)
Rep. John D. Dingell (MI-15)
Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-2)
Rep. James P. McGovern (MA-3)
Rep. Michael H. Michaud (ME-2)
Rep. Paul Tonko (NY-21)
Rep. Robert E. Andrews (NJ-1)
Rep. Dennis J. Kucinich (OH-10)
Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey (NY-22)
Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-9)
Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51)
Rep. Mike Doyle (PA-14)
Rep. Judy Chu (CA-32)
Rep. Bill Keating (MA-10)
Rep. Hansen Clarke (MI-13)
Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2)
Rep. Dale E. Kildee (MI-5)
Rep. Jim Moran (VA-8)
Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-5)
Rep. Sander Levin (MI-12)
Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3)
Rep. Edolphus Towns (NY-10)
Rep. Brian Higgins (NY-27)
Rep. David Cicilline (RI-1)
Rep. Silvestre Reyes (TX-16)
Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (MO-5)
Rep. Niki Tsongas (MA-5)
Rep. Charles Gonzalez (TX-20)
Rep. John F. Tierney (MA-6)
Rep. Loretta F. Sanchez (CA-47)

Rep. Bill Pascrell (NJ-8)
Rep. John A. Yarmuth (KY-3)
Rep. Dan Boren (OK-2)
Rep. Mike Ross (AR-4)
Rep. Diana DeGette (CO-1)
Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-3)
Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-20)
Rep. Nick J. Rahall (WV-3)
Rep. Grace F. Napolitano (CA-38)
Rep. John Lewis (GA-5)
Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC-At Large)
Rep. Edward J. Markey (MA-7)

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

Call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Marcia Fudge in supporting her [funding request](#) for the HOME program. **The DEADLINE to sign on has been extended to THURSDAY, March 15th.** Staff can reach Maheen Siddiqui at maheen.siddiqui@mail.house.gov or ext. 57032 to sign on or to get additional information.

Below is a list of those Members of Congress who have already signed on in support of FY13 appropriations:

Rep. John Conyers (MI-14)
Rep. John Lewis (GA-5)
Rep. Eleanor Holmes-Norton (DC-At Large)
Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (NY-11)
Rep. Charles Rangel (NY-15)
Rep. Jim Moran (VA-8)
Rep. Edolphus Towns (NY-10)
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)
Rep. Niki Tsongas (MA-5)
Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)
Rep. Gene Ackerman (NY-5)
Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (NM-3)
Rep. Steve Cohen (TN-9)
Rep. Alcee L. Hastings (FL-23)
Rep. Joe Baca (CA-43)
Rep. Laura Richardson (CA-37)
Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34)
Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7)
Rep. John F. Tierney (MA-6)
Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr (IL-2)
Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-4)
Rep. Bonamici (OR-1)

Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (TX-15)
Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-2)
Rep. Andre Carson (IN-7)
Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7)
Rep. Frederica Wilson (FL-17)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Final Push for Rural Housing Programs

The FY13 budget process is moving quickly in both Congressional chambers.

In the House, today, Tuesday, March 13th is the final deadline for Representatives to sign on in support of Rural Housing programs and CDBG funding and this Thursday, March 15th marks the deadline to sign on in support of HOME funds. In the Senate, the deadline to sign on in support of CDBG is Monday, March 19.

Rural Housing Programs:

So far, **26 Representatives** have signed on! Let's make one more push before **today's deadline!**

Call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Hinojosa in support of his [funding request](#) for Rural Housing Programs. Tell them to contact Holly Bullard at Holly.bullard@mail.house.gov to sign on or to get additional information.

Below is a list of the 26 Representatives who have already signed on in:

Rep. Barney Frank (MA-4)
Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3)
Rep. Mel Watt (NC-12)
Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-3)
Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2)
Rep. Gregoria Kilili Camacho Sablan (Northern Mariana Islands)
Rep. Silvestre Reyes (TX-16)
Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)
Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51)
Rep. G.K. Butterfield (NC-1)
Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (NM-3)
Rep. Pedro Pierluisi (PR-At Large)
Rep. Peter Welch (VT-At Large)
Rep. Chellie Pingree (ME-1)
Rep. Jim Costa (CA-20)
Rep. Hank Johnson, Jr. (GA-4)
Rep. Jerry McNerney (CA-11)
Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7)
Rep. Dave Loebsack (IA-2)
Rep. Lois Capps (CA-23)

Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (OR-1)
Rep. Madeleine Bordallo (GU-At Large)
Rep. Dennis Cordoza (CA-18)
Rep. Bennie Thompson (MS-2)
Rep. Kurt Schrader (OR-5)
Rep. Peter DeFazio (OR-4)

These Representatives signed on last year, but haven't signed on this year.
Please call them today!:

Rep. William "Lacy" Clay (MO-1)
Rep. Al Green (TX-9)
Rep. Colleen Hanabusa (HI-1)
Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7)

Community Development Block Grants:

Today is also the deadline for Representatives to sign on in support of CDBG funding. Call your Representatives today and ask them to join Rep. Robert Brady (PA-1) in support of his funding request for CDBG. They can contact Bianca Lacey at Bianca.Lacey@mail.house.gov to sign on or to get additional information.

The Senate's CDBG Dear Colleague letter—which requests \$3.3 billion in FY13 funding—was drafted by Sen. Leahy (D-VT). Senate staff can contact Lauren Brackett at Lauren.Brackett@leahy.senate.gov to sign on or get more details. **The deadline to sign on is Monday, March 19.**

Below is a list of those Members of Congress who have already signed on in support of FY13 rural housing appropriations:

Rep. Ben Luján (NM-3)
Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (NY-11)
Rep. Alcee L. Hastings (FL-23)
Rep. Joe Baca (CA-43)
Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (NY-4)
Rep. Rush D. Holt (NJ-12)
Rep. Tim Holden (PA-17)
Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (TX-15)
Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (NY-14)
Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-4)
Rep. Laura Richardson (CA-37)
Rep. Jerrold Nadler (NY-8)
Rep. Hank Johnson, Jr. (GA-4)
Rep. John D. Dingell (MI-15)

Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-2)
Rep. James P. McGovern (MA-3)
Rep. Michael H. Michaud (ME-2)
Rep. Paul Tonko (NY-21)
Rep. Robert E. Andrews (NJ-1)
Rep. Dennis J. Kucinich (OH-10)
Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey (NY-22)
Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-9)
Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51)
Rep. Mike Doyle (PA-14)
Rep. Judy Chu (CA-32)
Rep. Bill Keating (MA-10)
Rep. Hansen Clarke (MI-13)
Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2)
Rep. Dale E. Kildee (MI-5)
Rep. Jim Moran (VA-8)
Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-5)
Rep. Sander Levin (MI-12)
Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3)
Rep. Edolphus Towns (NY-10)
Rep. Brian Higgins (NY-27)
Rep. David Cicilline (RI-1)
Rep. Silvestre Reyes (TX-16)
Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (MO-5)
Rep. Niki Tsongas (MA-5)
Rep. Charles Gonzalez (TX-20)
Rep. John F. Tierney (MA-6)
Rep. Loretta F. Sanchez (CA-47)
Rep. Bill Pascrell (NJ-8)
Rep. John A. Yarmuth (KY-3)
Rep. Dan Boren (OK-2)
Rep. Mike Ross (AR-4)
Rep. Diana DeGette (CO-1)
Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-3)
Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-20)
Rep. Nick J. Rahall (WV-3)
Rep. Grace F. Napolitano (CA-38)
Rep. John Lewis (GA-5)
Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC-At Large)
Rep. Edward J. Markey (MA-7)

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

THURSDAY, March 15th is the deadline for Representatives to sign on in support of HOME funding. Remember to call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Marcia Fudge in supporting her [funding request](#) for the HOME program. Congressional staff can reach Maheen Siddiqui at maheen.siddiqui@mail.house.gov or ext. 57032 to sign on or to get additional information.

Below is a list of those Members of Congress who have already signed on:

Rep. John Conyers (MI-14)
Rep. John Lewis (GA-5)
Rep. Eleanor Holmes-Norton (DC-At Large)
Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (NY-11)
Rep. Charles Rangel (NY-15)
Rep. Jim Moran (VA-8)
Rep. Edolphus Towns (NY-10)
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)
Rep. Niki Tsongas (MA-5)
Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)
Rep. Gene Ackerman (NY-5)
Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (NM-3)
Rep. Steve Cohen (TN-9)
Rep. Alcee L. Hastings (FL-23)
Rep. Joe Baca (CA-43)
Rep. Laura Richardson (CA-37)
Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34)
Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7)
Rep. John F. Tierney (MA-6)
Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr (IL-2)
Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-4)
Rep. Bonamici (OR-1)
Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (TX-15)
Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-2)
Rep. Andre Carson (IN-7)
Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7)
Rep. Frederica Wilson (FL-17)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Turning Our Attention to the Senate

Thank you for all of your hard work! **Because of your advocacy, a total of 33 Representatives—or 12 more than in FY12—joined Rep. Hinojosa in support of his funding request for rural housing programs.**

We are certainly off to a great start, but we must continue our advocacy in the Senate. Later this week, we expect Sen. Schumer to send out a Dear Colleague letter in support of rural housing programs. As soon as he does, we'll need NRHC members to call their Senators, explain how these programs benefit their state, and ask them to sign on!

The **33 Representatives** that signed on include:

Rep. Barney Frank (MA-4)

Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3)

Rep. Mel Watt (NC-12)

Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-3)

Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2)

Rep. Gregoria Kilili Camacho Sablan (Northern Mariana Islands)

Rep. Silvestre Reyes (TX-16)

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)

Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51)

Rep. G.K. Butterfield (NC-1)

Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (NM-3)

Rep. Pedro Pierluisi (PR-At Large)

Rep. Peter Welch (VT-At Large)

Rep. Chellie Pingree (ME-1)

Rep. Jim Costa (CA-20)
Rep. Hank Johnson, Jr. (GA-4)
Rep. Jerry McNerney (CA-11)
Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7)
Rep. Dave Loebsack (IA-2)
Rep. Lois Capps (CA-23)
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (OR-1)
Rep. Bennie Thompson (MS-2)
Rep. William "Lacy" Clay (MO-1)
Rep. Madeleine Bordallo (GU-At Large)
Rep. Dennis Cordoza (CA-18)
Rep. Bennie Thompson (MS-2)
Rep. Kurt Schrader (OR-5)
Rep. Peter DeFazio (OR-4)
Rep. Kathy Castor (FL-11)
Rep. William Keating (MA-10)
Rep. Brad Miller (NC-13)
Rep. Eliot Engel (NY-17)
Rep. Al Green (TX-9)
Rep. Frederica Wilson (FL-17)

Community Development Block Grants

Yesterday was the deadline for Representatives to join Rep. Robert Brady (PA-1) in support of CDBG funding. A total of **76 Representatives** signed on!

Again, this is a great start, but we must continue to focus our efforts to the Senate. **Please, call your Senators and urge them to join Sen. Leahy (D-VT) in [support of CDBG funds](#) by the March 20th deadline.** Senate staff can contact Lauren Brackett at lauren_brackett@leahy.senate.gov to sign on or get more details.

The **76 Representatives** who signed on include:

Rep. Ben Luján (NM-3)

Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (NY-11)

Rep. Alcee L. Hastings (FL-23)

Rep. Joe Baca (CA-43)

Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (NY-4)

Rep. Rush D. Holt (NJ-12)

Rep. Tim Holden (PA-17)

Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (TX-15)

Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (NY-14)

Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-4)

Rep. Laura Richardson (CA-37)

Rep. Jerrold Nadler (NY-8)

Rep. Hank Johnson, Jr. (GA-4)

Rep. John D. Dingell (MI-15)

Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-2)

Rep. James P. McGovern (MA-3)

Rep. Michael H. Michaud (ME-2)

Rep. Paul Tonko (NY-21)

Rep. Robert E. Andrews (NJ-1)

Rep. Dennis J. Kucinich (OH-10)

Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey (NY-22)

Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-9)

Rep. Bob Filner (CA-51)

Rep. Mike Doyle (PA-14)

Rep. Judy Chu (CA-32)

Rep. Bill Keating (MA-10)

Rep. Hansen Clarke (MI-13)

Rep. Mazie Hirono (HI-2)

Rep. Dale E. Kildee (MI-5)

Rep. Jim Moran (VA-8)

Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-5)

Rep. Sander Levin (MI-12)

Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3)

Rep. Edolphus Towns (NY-10)

Rep. Brian Higgins (NY-27)

Rep. David Cicilline (RI-1)

Rep. Silvestre Reyes (TX-16)

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (MO-5)

Rep. Niki Tsongas (MA-5)

Rep. Charles Gonzalez (TX-20)

Rep. John F. Tierney (MA-6)

Rep. Loretta F. Sanchez (CA-47)

Rep. Bill Pascrell (NJ-8)

Rep. John A. Yarmuth (KY-3)

Rep. Dan Boren (OK-2)

Rep. Mike Ross (AR-4)

Rep. Diana DeGette (CO-1)

Rep. Corrine Brown (FL-3)

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-20)

Rep. Nick J. Rahall (WV-3)

Rep. Grace F. Napolitano (CA-38)

Rep. John Lewis (GA-5)

Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC-At Large)

Rep. Edward J. Markey (MA-7)

Rep. Gary L. Ackerman (NY-5)

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)

Rep. Colleen W. Hanabusa (HI-1)

Rep. Ted Deutch (FL-19)

Rep. Gene Green (TX-29)

Rep. Keith Ellison (MN5)

Rep. Pedro R. Pierluisi (PR-At Large)

Rep. Peter Welch (VT- At Large)

Rep. Shelley Berkley (NV-1)

Rep. Dutch Ruppersburger (MD-2)

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34)

Rep. Mark S. Critz (PA-12)

Rep. Susan Davis (CA-53)

Rep. Chellie Pingree (ME-1)

Rep. Gary Peters (MI-9)

Rep. Betty Sutton (OH-13)

Rep. Donna Edwards (MD-4)

Rep. André Carson (IN-7)

Rep. Allyson Y. Schwartz (PA-13)

Rep. Steve Cohen (TN-9)

Rep. Frederica Wilson (FL-17)

Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (MD-7)

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

TOMORROW, Thursday, March 15th is the deadline for Representatives to sign on. Call your Representatives and ask them to join Rep. Marcia Fudge in supporting her [funding request](#) for the HOME program. Members of Congress can reach Maheen Siddiqui at maheen.siddiqui@mail.house.gov or ext. 57032 to sign on or to get additional information.

Again, our focus turns to the Senate, where Sen. Leahy (D-VT) and Coons (D-DE) have issued a Dear Colleague letter in support of HOME funds. **Please, call your Senators and ask them to join Sen. Leahy and Sen. Coons in their [request for HOME funds](#).** Senate staff can contact Lauren Brackett at lauren_brackett@leahy.senate.gov to sign on or get more details.

Below is a list of those **39 Representatives** who have already signed on:

Rep. John Conyers (MI-14)

Rep. John Lewis (GA-5)

Rep. Eleanor Holmes-Norton (DC-At Large)

Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (NY-11)
Rep. Charles Rangel (NY-15)
Rep. Jim Moran (VA-8)
Rep. Edolphus Towns (NY-10)
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)
Rep. Niki Tsongas (MA-5)
Rep. Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)
Rep. Gene Ackerman (NY-5)
Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (NM-3)
Rep. Steve Cohen (TN-9)
Rep. Alcee L. Hastings (FL-23)
Rep. Joe Baca (CA-43)
Rep. Laura Richardson (CA-37)
Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34)
Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7)
Rep. John F. Tierney (MA-6)
Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr (IL-2)
Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-4)
Rep. Bonamici (OR-1)
Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (TX-15)
Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-2)
Rep. Andre Carson (IN-7)
Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7)

Rep. Frederica Wilson (FL-17)

Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-9)

Rep. Mel Watt (NC-12)

Rep. Xavier Becerra (CA-31)

Rep. Lois Capps (CA-23)

Rep. William Keating (MA-10)

Rep. Stephen Lynch (MA-9)

Rep. Eliot Engel (NY-17)

Rep. Lloyd Doggett (TX-25)

Rep. David Loebsack (IA-2)

Rep. McDermott (WA-7)

Rep. David Cicilline (RI-1)

Rep. Peter Welch (VT-At Large)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Title

As advocates, we know just how critical Rural Housing programs are to the communities we serve. Now is our chance to tell Congress and have your voice be heard! By submitting testimony in support of these programs, you can make sure that Members of Congress—and especially those with the power to fund Rural Housing programs—know exactly why these programs matter.

The deadline to submit testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Rural Development is due Tuesday, March 20th. We'll be submitting our own testimony. Will you?

Just follow the 5 easy steps below!

Step 1: Follow the Subcommittee's Guidance on Submission and Formatting.

You can find the Subcommittee's guidance [here](#). Remember, you **must** keep your testimony to 5 pages, double-spaced, with standard margins, and 12 point Times New Roman font. If you have any questions, feel free to call us or the House Appropriations Committee at 202-225-7771.

When you're ready, email your testimony to ag.approp@mail.house.gov by COB on Tuesday, March 20th. Please cc Sarah@rapoza.org along with your submission.

Step 2: First Paragraph

Your first paragraph **must** include some basic details about who you are and what your testimony is about, including:

- Your name, title, and name of your organization;
- Identify yourself as the point of contact, in case they have any questions, and your email address;
- Tell them that the subject of your testimony is Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Housing program appropriations; and
- Tell them the dollar amount programs should be funded.

Remember, the NHRC requested the following funding levels:

- Section 502 Family Direct Homeownership Loans: \$900M
- Section 504 Very-Low Income Rural Housing Repair Loans: \$28M
- Section 504 Very-Low Income Rural Housing Repair Grants: \$29.5M
- Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Program Loans: \$26M
- Section 516 Farm Labor Housing Program Grants: \$9M
- Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Program: \$64.5M
- Section 521 Multi-Family Rental Housing Rental Assistance Program: \$907M

- Section 523 Self-Help Housing Program: \$30M
- Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants Program: \$3.6M
- Section 538 Guaranteed Multi-Family Housing Loans: \$150M
- Multi-Family Housing Preservation and Revitalization Program: \$46.9M
- Rural Community Development Initiative: \$13M

Step 3: How Do Rural Housing Programs Impact Your Community

This is easily the most powerful part of your testimony. Share stories about how your organization has used these programs to benefit your communities. For example, if your organization received Section 523 Self-Help Housing funds, you could talk about how many families you helped and how the program impacted local families and communities. Tell them what these programs mean to you.

Your goal should be to paint a picture of how these programs translate into actual help for real rural families.

For help, feel free to use NRHC Fact Sheets on [Section 502](#), [Section 514/516](#), [Section 515](#), [Self-Help Housing](#), and [Rental Preservation](#), located on the [“Take Action”](#) page of the NRHC website.

Step 4: Things to Emphasize

In your testimony, you may want to emphasize some key themes, including how these programs:

- Create jobs and encourage economic growth in rural America;
- Are the **ONLY** federal programs designed to serve rural families;
- Target those with the greatest needs, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, and very low- and low-income families;
- Help meet the significant need for affordable housing in rural communities; and
- Cannot be replaced by programs at other agencies, like HUD or Veterans Affairs.

Step 5: Submit Your Testimony ON TIME

Email your completed testimony to ag.approp@mail.house.gov by COB on Tuesday, March 20th. Please cc Sarah@rapoza.org along with your submission.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Submit Testimony on Rural Housing Programs

TOMORROW is the deadline to submit testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Rural Development by emailing your completed testimony to ag.approp@mail.house.gov. Remember, this is your chance to tell Congress exactly why these programs matter.

The process to submit testimony is easy! But, if you need some extra help, please feel free to contact us. We are here to help!

- **Step 1:** Follow the [Subcommittee's Guidance](#) on Submission and Formatting;
- **Step 2:** Include Key Information in the 1st Paragraph;
- **Step 3:** Tell Them How Rural Housing Programs Impact Your Community;
- **Step 4:** Emphasize Job Creation, Economic Growth, and Serving Families with the Greatest Needs; and
- **Step 5:** Submit Your Testimony ON TIME by COB tomorrow, March 21 to ag.approp@mail.house.gov.

Rural Housing Programs

Did your Representative join Rep. Hinojosa in support of Rural Housing programs? If so, please consider sending them a quick email to thank them for their leadership!

You can check out the [FINAL letter with 35 Representatives](#)—or 15 more than in FY12—that signed on here!

Sen. Schumer has not yet sent out his Dear Colleague letter in support of rural housing programs. But, as soon as he does, we'll need NRHC members to call their Senators, explain how these programs benefit their state, and ask them to sign on!

Community Development Block Grants

Again, thank you for your hard work. There was a huge uptick in Representatives who signed on in support of CDBG funds. And we've gain our first Republican, Rep. Barletta (R-PA), making this effort officially bipartisan!

Check to see if your Representative was one of the [135 Representatives](#) that signed on!

Remember, there is still time to call **your Senators and urge them to join [Sen. Leahy \(D-VT\) in support of CDBG funds](#) by TOMORROW's deadline on March 20th**. Senate staff can contact Lauren Brackett at lauren_brackett@leahy.senate.gov to sign on or get more details.

So far, 19 Senators have joined Sen. Leahy:

- Senator Landrieu (LA)
- Senator Harkin (IA)
- Senator Wyden (OR)
- Senator Coons (DE)
- Senator Lieberman (CT)
- Senator Kerry (MA)
- Senator Whitehouse
- Senator Franken (MN)
- Senator Gillibrand (NY)
- Senator Menendez (NJ)
- Senator Merkley (OR)
- Senator Bill Nelson (FL)
- Senator Stabenow (MI)
- Senator Begich (AK)
- Senator Sanders (VT)
- Senator Levin (MI)
- Senator Blumenthal (CT)
- Senator Casey (PA)
- Senator Rockefeller (WV)

Last year, the following Senators signed on:

- Senator Schumer (NY)
- Senator Akaka (HI)
- Senator Boxer (CA)
- Senator Reed (RI)
- Senator Durbin (IL)
- Senator Tom Udall (NM)
- Senator Lautenberg (NJ)

HOME Investment Partnerships

A total of [58 Representatives](#) joined Rep. Marcia Fudge in supporting her funding request for the HOME program. You can see the final list [here](#).

The Senate deadline to join [Senator Leahy and Coon's funding request](#) for HOME is Wednesday, March 21st. Please, call your Representative today!

So far, only 5 Senators have signed on:

- Leahy (VT)
- Coons (DE)
- Gillibrand (NY)
- Stabenow (MI)
- Sanders (VT)
- Levin (MI)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Rep. Paul Ryan's Budget Resolution

Today, House Budget Committee Chairman, Rep. Paul Ryan (WI-1) [releases his plan](#) for an FY13 budget resolution, the blueprint for spending decisions by Congress. As a reminder, last August, Congress agreed to hold all FY13 discretionary spending, including spending for the Department of Defense, at \$1.047 trillion. The Ryan budget plan reportedly proposes to cut discretionary spending by another \$19 billion, and also seeks additional cuts in other mandatory federal programs—food stamps and health care in particular—to shield the Department of Defense from further reductions that are required as part of the Budget Control Act. In addition, Ryan proposes to cut individual taxes by reducing the top rate to 25 percent and cutting corporate taxes.

The Senate will not take up a budget resolution because essential decisions on discretionary spending were made last year. The Ryan plan, which almost certainly will be adopted by the House, ensures gridlock for most of this calendar year, and an omnibus appropriations bill that will reach the President's desk in December. More later...

Rural Housing Testimony

TODAY is the last day you can [submit testimony](#) to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Rural Development by emailing your completed testimony to ag.approp@mail.house.gov.

We want to give a shout-out to Claudia Shay of Self-Help Housing Corporation, who submitted strong testimony outlining why Hawaii families need these programs. Without them, she argued, many families would continue to live in substandard conditions—conditions as bad as what she saw first-hand as a Peace Corps volunteer in developing nations.

You can read [Claudia's testimony](#), in addition to [NRHC's official testimony](#), at our website!

Community Development Block Grants

Today is also the last day to call **your Senators and urge them to join [Sen. Leahy \(D-VT\) in support of CDBG funds](#)**. Senate staff can contact Lauren Brackett at lauren_brackett@leahy.senate.gov to sign on or get more details.

And, with Sen. **Scott Brown (R-MA)** on board, this effort is officially bipartisan!

So far, **25 Senators** have joined Sen. Leahy:

- Senator Landrieu (LA)
- Senator Harkin (IA)
- Senator Wyden (OR)
- Senator Coons (DE)
- Senator Lieberman (CT)
- Senator Kerry (MA)
- Senator Whitehouse (RI)
- Senator Franken (MN)
- Senator Gillibrand (NY)
- Senator Menendez (NJ)
- Senator Merkley (OR)
- Senator Bill Nelson (FL)
- Senator Stabenow (MI)
- Senator Begich (AK)
- Senator Sanders (VT)
- Senator Levin (MI)
- Senator Blumenthal (CT)
- Senator Casey (PA)
- Senator Rockefeller (WV)
- Senator Shaheen (NH)
- Senator Schumer (NY)
- Senator Reed (RI)
- Senator Scott Brown (MA)
- Senator Sherrod Brown (OH)

Last year, the following Senators signed on:

- Senator Akaka (HI)
- Senator Boxer (CA)
- Senator Durbin (IL)
- Senator Tom Udall (NM)
- Senator Lautenberg (NJ)

HOME Investment Partnerships

TOMORROW is the Senate's deadline to join [Senator Leahy and Coon's funding request](#) for HOME. Please, call your Representative today!

So far, only 5 Senators have signed on:

- Leahy (VT)
- Coons (DE)

- Gillibrand (NY)
- Stabenow (MI)
- Sanders (VT)
- Levin (MI)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Call Your Senators: Support Rural Housing Funding

Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) have just released their [Dear Colleague letter](#), urging the Appropriations Committee to adequately fund Rural Housing programs.

Please, **call your Senators TODAY**, tell them why these programs are critical to their states, and ask them to sign on in support. **The deadline to sign on is Wednesday, March 28th—less than 1 week** from today to garner as much Senate support as possible. Senate staff can contact Megan Richardson at Megan_Richardson@schumer.senate.gov to sign on or to ask additional questions.

We need your help to protect Rural Housing programs, our organizations, and the people we serve in our communities.

Last year, 14 additional Senators signed on, including:

- Sen. Dodd (CT) – now served by Sen. Blumenthal
- Sen. Durbin (IL)
- Sen. Tester (MT)
- Sen. Akaka (HI)
- Sen. Leahy (VT)
- Sen. Harkin (IA)
- Sen. Johnson (SD)
- Sen. Sanders (VT)
- Sen. Lincoln (AR) – now served by Sen. Boozman
- Sen. Wyden (OR)
- Sen. Gillibrand (NY)
- Sen. Sherrod Brown (OH)
- Sen. Tom Udall (NM)
- Sen. Merkley (OR)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Call Your Senators Today!

Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) have issued their [Dear Colleague letter](#), urging the Senate Appropriations Committee to adequately fund Rural Housing programs.

Call your Senators TODAY, tell them why these programs are critical to their states, and ask them to sign on in support. **The deadline to sign on is TOMORROW, Wednesday, March 28th.** If they are unable to sign on, please ask them to submit their own personal appropriations request. Senate staff can contact Megan Richardson at Megan_Richardson@schumer.senate.gov to sign on or to ask additional questions.

So far, 9 Senators signed on, including:

- Sen. Leahy (VT)
- Sen. Akaka (HI)
- Sen. Levin (MI)
- Sen. Wyden (OR)
- Sen. Gillibrand (NY)
- Sen. Tester (MT)
- Sen. Franken (MN);
- Sen. Sanders (VT); and
- Sen. Carper (DE).

Our targets include those who signed on in support in FY12, including:

- Sen. Durbin (IL);
- Sen. Harkin (IA);
- Sen. Webb (VA);
- Sen. Coons (DE);
- Sen. Johnson (SD); and
- Sen. Boxer (CA).

And, those who signed on in support in FY11, including:

- Sen. Dodd (CT) - now served by Sen. Blumenthal;
- Sen. Lincoln (AR) – now served by Sen. Boozman;
- Sen. Tom Udall (NM); and
- Sen. Merkley (OR).

We are also reaching out to members of the Senate Banking Committee--charged with overseeing these programs--including:

- Sen. Reed (RI);
- Sen. Menendez (NJ);
- Sen. Sherrod Brown (OH);
- Sen. Warner (VA);
- Sen. Bennet (CO);
- Sen. Hagan (NC);
- Sen. Shelby (AL);
- Sen. Crapo (ID);
- Sen. Corker (TN);
- Sen. DeMint (SC);
- Sen. Johanns (NE);
- Sen. Toomey (PA);
- Sen. Kirk (IL); and
- Sen. Wicker (MS).

Finally, we are also focusing on members of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Many of these members do not sign onto joint appropriations requests. However, it is still important for them to know how important these programs are to the communities we serve:

- Sen. Inouye (HI)
- Sen. Kohl (WI);
- Sen. Feinstein (CA);
- Sen. Nelson (NE);
- Sen. Pryor (AR);
- Sen. Blunt (MO);
- Sen. Cochran (MS);
- Sen. McConnell (KY);
- Sen. Collins (ME);
- Sen. Moran (KS);
- Sen. Mikulski (MD);
- Sen. Murray (WA);
- Sen. Landrieu (LA);
- Sen. Lautenberg (NJ);
- Sen. Hutchison (TX);
- Sen. Alexander (TN);
- Sen. Murkowski (AK);
- Sen. Hoeven (ND);
- Sen. Ron Johnson (WI)
- Sen. Graham (SC); and
- Sen. Coats (IN).

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Today is the Last Day to Call Your Senators

Today is the deadline for Senators to join Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME)'s [Dear Colleague letter](#), urging the Senate Appropriations Committee to adequately fund Rural Housing programs.

Let's make one final push: Call your Senators TODAY, tell them why these programs are critical to their states, and ask them to sign on in support. If they are unable to sign on, please ask them to submit their own personal appropriations request. Senate staff can contact Megan Richardson at Megan_Richardson@schumer.senate.gov to sign on or to ask additional questions.

So far, 12 Senators signed on, including:

- Sen. Leahy (VT)
- Sen. Akaka (HI)
- Sen. Levin (MI)
- Sen. Wyden (OR)
- Sen. Gillibrand (NY)
- Sen. Tester (MT)
- Sen. Franken (MN);
- Sen. Sanders (VT);
- Sen. Coons (DE);
- Sen. Durbin (IL);
- Sen. Harkin (IA); and
- Sen. Carper (DE).

Our targets include those who signed on in support in FY12, including:

- Sen. Webb (VA);
- Sen. Johnson (SD); and
- Sen. Boxer (CA).

And, those who signed on in support in FY11, including:

- Sen. Dodd (CT) - now served by Sen. Blumenthal;
- Sen. Lincoln (AR) – now served by Sen. Boozman;
- Sen. Tom Udall (NM); and
- Sen. Merkley (OR).

We are also reaching out to other key Senators:

- Sen. Sherrod Brown (OH);
- Sen. Bennet (CO);
- Sen. Cantwell (WA);
- Sen. Bingaman (NM);
- Sen. Landrieu (LA);
- Sen. Stabenow (MI);
- Sen. Klobuchar (MN);
- Sen. Baucus (MT);

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Congratulations and Thank You!

With your help, **23 Senators**--more than in both FY11 and FY12--submitted appropriations requests for rural housing programs. A total of 17 joined [Sen. Schumer](#) and [Sen. Snowe](#) on their letter, and 4 more agreed to submit their personal appropriations requests. Sen. Feinstein, who serves on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Agriculture and Rural Development, promised to fight hard for rural housing programs, and especially for the Section 502 Direct Loan and Mutual Self-Help Housing programs.

This letter sends a strong message to Congress: rural housing programs are critical to our communities and must be protected. Improving the lives of rural families starts with affordable housing!

Please, remember to thank your Senators for their support!

The 19 Senators that signed on include:

- Sen. Schumer (NY)
- Sen. Snowe (ME)
- Sen. Leahy (VT)
- Sen. Akaka (HI)
- Sen. Levin (MI)
- Sen. Wyden (OR)
- Sen. Gillibrand (NY)
- Sen. Tester (MT)
- Sen. Franken (MN)
- Sen. Sanders (VT)
- Sen. Coons (DE)
- Sen. Durbin (IL)
- Sen. Harkin (IA)
- Sen. Boxer (CA)
- Sen. Bennet (CO)
- Sen. Merkley (OR)
- Sen. Johnson (SD)
- Sen. Carper (DE)
- Sen. Conrad (ND)

The 4 Senators who will submit a personal appropriations request include:

- Sen. Kerry (MA)
- Sen. Pryor (AR)

- Sen. Feinstein (CA)
- Sen. Boozman (AR)

White House Rural Council

Yesterday, Doug McKalip, Rural Advisor on the White House Domestic Policy Council, spoke at USDA's monthly stakeholders briefing. He reviewed the [Administration's rural policy initiatives](#). Additional initiatives will be released in the coming months.

Currently, there are three "subcommittees" on the White House Rural Council. The first focuses on issues impacted "Quality of Life" for those living in rural America. McKalip noted that this subcommittee will address various issues including healthcare, education, and Veterans Affairs. He did not, however, specifically identify housing as a area of focus. The White House, however, plans to focus primarily on the two other subcommittees--"Jobs and Economic Investment" and "Conservation"--for the time being; longer term priorities will be addressed down the road.

House Agriculture Hearing on Duplicative Rural Development Programs

Last week, the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Rural Development held a hearing on "[Duplicative Federal Rural Development Programs](#)." Witnesses included [Dallas Tonsager](#), Under Secretary for Rural Development at the USDA and William Shear, author of the [GAO's recent report](#) on duplicative federal programs. The GAO is schedule to release a follow up report with their recommendations in late July, 2012.

Overall, Tonsager defended the agency's rural development programs, and their progress in responding to the GAO's recommendations. He highlighted how USDA has worked with other federal agencies, such as the Small Business Administration, to coordinate efforts, including the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding, trainings on each agency's loan programs, and cross-promotion.

When asked to identify areas of potential consolidation, however, Tonsager noted that the USDA currently has 4 revolving loan funds for small business lending. As evidence of his commitment to avoiding duplication, Dallas said that the USDA is considering a proposal to combine the IRP and microloan loan programs.

Subcommittee members generally seemed to ask Mr. Tonsager softball questions about the GAO report. Instead, the harshest questions focused on accountability issues and USDA's failure to develop a single "rural" definition, as required under the 2008 Farm Bill. Rep. Costa said that it was "baffling"

that the USDA had not yet issued the definition, and both he and Rep. Hultgren, expressed concern about how the 2010 Census data will impact eligibility for a number of communities. Notably, the room cleared out—with the exception of Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Costa, and Rep. Scott—when Mr. Shear testified on his report.

HUD's Proposed CDFI Multi-Family Initiative

Last week, HUD held a roundtable event to get feedback on their [proposed Multi-Family initiative](#). Specifically, HUD proposes to adapt the [Section 542 \(b\) Risk Sharing Program](#) to help repair, rehabilitate, and recapitalize small affordable housing projects, by:

- Opening the program up to well-capitalized, mission-based lenders, including CDFIs and HFAs with experience financing small multi-family projects. Currently the program is only available to the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac;
- Allowing CDFIs and HFAs to securitize these loans through Freddie Mac; and
- Carving out an exception to mandated rent restrictions for these transactions.

In the discussion, CDFIs, HFAs, advocates, and experts shared their concerns about the initiative and offered their own recommendations. There are many details to be worked out, including the types of lenders that can participate, loan limits, and how to divide the risk between the lender and HUD. Many were concerned about well CDFIs could adapt to this program, in light of limitations on lending and personnel capacity. Housing advocates were alarmed by the exception to mandated rent restrictions. Rural advocates encouraged HUD to reach out to USDA Rural Development for feedback and coordination. Please contact Neal Allen at Neal.F.Allen@hud.gov if you have any comments or questions.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Update: FY13 Rural Housing Appropriations Requests

Two more Senators submitted FY13 appropriations requests for rural housing programs, bringing our grand total to **38 Representatives** and **26 Senators**. This is a significant increase from the 16 Senators that signed on last year! You can check out the final [House](#) and [Senate Appropriation Request](#) letters on our website.

This year, 20 Senators signed onto a joint letter sponsored by Sen. Schumer (NY) and Sen. Snowe (ME), and 6 others, including Sen. Murray (WA), Sen. Boozman (AR), Sen. Feinstein (CA), Sen. Hagan (NC), Sen. Kerry (MA), and Sen. Pryor (AR)—submitted personal requests.

The final list includes:

- Sen. Schumer (NY)
- Sen. Snowe (ME)
- Sen. Leahy (VT)
- Sen. Akaka (HI)
- Sen. Levin (MI)
- Sen. Wyden (OR)
- Sen. Gillibrand (NY)
- Sen. Tester (MT)
- Sen. Franken (MN)
- Sen. Sanders (VT)
- Sen. Coons (DE)
- Sen. Durbin (IL)
- Sen. Harkin (IA)
- Sen. Boxer (CA)
- Sen. Bennet (CO)
- Sen. Merkley (OR)
- Sen. Johnson (SD)
- Sen. Carper (DE)
- Sen. Conrad (ND)
- Sen. Shaheen (NH)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Ask Your Representatives to Cosponsor HR 273

Today, Rep. Fortenberry (R-NE) and Rep. Hinojosa (D-TX) have issued a [Dear Colleague letter](#), urging Members of Congress to co-sponsors their bill, [H.R. 273, the Rural Housing Preservation Act](#). This bill would extend the grandfathering clause until the 2020 Census. Under this legislation, communities currently eligible under Section 520 of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, will remain eligible, provided their population does not exceed 25,000.

Fortenberry and Hinojosa hope that strong Congressional support—**especially from Members of the House Financial Services Committee**—will push Committee Chairman Spencer Bachus into moving this legislation ahead! Please, call your Representatives and ask them to co-sponsor this legislation!

You can find more information about the likely impact of the “rural” definition issue—and a list of [communities that will likely no longer be eligible](#) for USDA Rural Development funding—in a recent report by the Housing Assistance Council. In addition, please feel free to use these [District Maps](#) for Members of the House Financial Services Committee in your advocacy.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Senate THUD Appropriations Markup

Today, April 17, 2012, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) marked up FY13 appropriation legislation, and voted 15-1 to send the bill to the full Appropriations Committee. You can read a [summary of the bill here](#). The full committee will consider amendments and mark up the bill this Thursday, April 19th.

Chairwoman Murray (D-WA) and Ranking Member Collins (R-ME) both held that this bill reflected a difficult balance between “building a strong foundation for long-term economic growth, protecting the most vulnerable among us, and working to reduce spending in a responsible way.”

The FY13 THUD allocation was \$53.4 billion, 21 percent—or \$14 billion—less than FY10, and \$3.8 billion less than in FY12. The bill includes:

- \$3.1 billion for Community Development Block Grants, or \$152 million more than FY12;
- \$1 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership program, equal to FY12.
- \$19.4 billion for housing vouchers, or \$482 million more than FY12;
- \$1.99 billion for public housing, or \$110 million more than FY12;
- \$9.8 billion for project-based rental assistance, or \$536 million more than FY12;
- No details were shared on the Section 108 program.

The only Senator to vote against the bill was Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), who cited the need for more fiscal responsibility.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Senate Appropriations Passes THUD Bill

Full Committee Passes 302(b) Allocations and THUD Appropriations Bill

Last Thursday, April 19, 2012, the full Senate Appropriations Committee passed [302\(b\) allocations](#) for each of its 12 subcommittees and the FY13 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriation legislation. USDA's 302(b) allocation is \$23.357 billion, with a Budget Authority of \$20.785 billion--in line with our expectations from the Budget Control Act.

Chairwoman Murray (D-WA) and Ranking Member Collins (R-ME) reiterated their two priorities in drafting HUD's budget: (1) preventing homelessness, and in particular, veteran homelessness; and (2) restoring some funding to CDBG. They also directly took aim at Sen. Ron Johnson (the lone Subcommittee vote against the bill), by arguing that this "is NOT business as usual."

HUD (\$ in millions)	FY 12 Final	FY 13 President's Budget	FY13 Senate
Neighborhood Reinvestment	135	127.1	135.3
Mortgage Foreclosure Mitigation	80	86	80
HOME	1,000	996	1,000
Capacity Building	0	35	0
Transformation Initiative	0	16	43
Housing Counseling	45	55	55
Community Development Fund	3,408	3,143	3,210
CDBG Formula funding	2,948	2,932	3,100
Catalytic Investment Competition Grants	0	0	0
Sustainable Communities	0	100	50
Regional Planning Grants	0	46	0
Community Challenge Grants	0	46	0

HUD-DOT research	0	8	0
Rural Innovation Fund	0	0	0
University Community Fund	0	0	0
Choice Neighborhoods Initiative	120	150	120
Housing Trust Fund	0	1,000	0
SHOP	53.5	0	53.5*
Section 108	240	240	500
Budget Authority	5.9	offset	offset**
Section 202 Housing for Elderly	374.6	475	375

*SHOP funds include \$13.5 million for the SHOP program, and \$35.5 million for capacity building. Of that, \$5 million is for rural capacity building.

**This budget proposes fees on Section 108 borrowers to offset the costs, bringing the Budget Authority to \$0.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Protect CDBG and HOME for Rural Communities

Right now, the House of Representatives is drafting the FY13 budget for two of HUD's most critical programs operating in rural communities across the nation: the Community Development Block Grant and the HOME Investment Partnerships program.

Please, [sign this petition TODAY](#) and tell Congress just how important the CDBG and HOME programs are to rural communities. Ask them to fully fund CDBG at \$3.1 billion and HOME at \$1 billion in FY13.

CDBG supports critical economic development projects, helps provide clean, decent, and safe housing opportunities, and expands basic public services in rural America. Since 2004, CDBG has invested more than \$840 million in rural communities, supporting more than 8,500 rural jobs. CDBG funds have been used in rural communities to build vital water and sewer services, wells and septic systems, hospitals, and community centers.

More than \$500 million of HOME funds has been invested in rural communities, supporting another 4,300 rural jobs. HOME provides affordable loans to buy and build affordable rental housing, supports Self-Help Housing and other rural homeownership programs, and provides rental assistance low-income families and down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers.

Remember to send [our petition](#) to as many family, friends, and colleagues as possible before it closes on Monday, April 30th. This is our chance to have our voices be heard!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Did You Sign Our Petition to Protect CDBG and HOME Yet?

Are you up for a challenge?

In the next couple of weeks, Congress will draft the FY13 budget for two of HUD's most critical programs operating in rural communities across the nation: the Community Development Block Grant and the HOME Investment Partnerships program. In the past few years, their budgets have been cut significantly. Simply put, rural communities cannot afford for these programs to be cut again!

That's why we're challenging you to [sign our petition TODAY](#) and send it to at least 10 family members, friends, and colleagues before the **Monday, April 30th deadline.** Every signature raises our voices in telling Congress to fully fund CDBG at \$3.1 billion and HOME at \$1 billion in FY13.

Since 2004, CDBG has invested more than \$840 million in rural communities to build vital water and sewer services, wells and septic systems, hospitals, and community centers, supporting more than 8,500 rural jobs. And, more than \$500 million of HOME funds has been used in rural areas to support affordable loans to buy and build affordable rental housing, Self-Help Housing and other rural homeownership programs, rental assistance for low-income families, and down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Early, Partial Returns

The Senate Appropriations Committee today marked up the FY 13 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. A summary of the bill can be found [here](#).

While more details are not yet available, NRHC has learned that the Committee has rejected the administration's proposals to cut rural housing programs. Most programs are recommended at the higher of the FY 12 rate or the budget request, including \$900 million for section 502 direct loans and \$30 million for Self-Help housing. Rental housing funding includes \$28 million for section 515, \$11 million for preservation vouchers, \$28.8 million for budget authority for revitalization of section 515 projects and the budget request for rental assistance. Farm labor housing was increased to the budget request, funding for Housing Preservation Grants was restored and RCDI received \$6.12 million. The bill also includes language that extends for one year eligibility for rural housing programs for all communities currently in the program.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Senate FY13 Agriculture Budget

Last Thursday, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted 28-to-1 to send the FY13 Agriculture budget to the Senate floor. Although the full Senate vote is not yet scheduled, it could happen as soon as this week. We do not expect the House Appropriations Subcommittee to schedule a markup of its FY13 Agriculture bill until early June.

The [Senate Committee's report](#) and a [summary](#) can be found here.

Contrary to the President’s proposals to cut USDA Rural Housing program, the Senate Committee instead funded most of the programs at or above FY12 levels. The only programs that would experience cuts from FY12 levels are: Section 515 Rural Rental Housing, the Community Facility Guarantee, and the Water-Wastewater Guarantee.

While the President’s Request had zeroed out funding for Section 515 Rural Rental Housing, the Senate Committee approved funding at \$28.4 million. This is a decrease of \$36.1 million from \$64.5 million in FY12. Likewise, the Senate Committee voted to zero out the Budget Authority for the Community Facilities program, from \$105.7 million in FY12. The Water-Wastewater Guarantee was cut to \$60 million. This is a decrease of \$10 million from FY12’s \$70 million Budget Authority.

Below is a chart comparing the Senate Committee's levels to FY12 and the President's FY13 Request.

Agriculture Appropriations – Selected Programs
\$ In millions

RHS/RUS Programs	FY 12 Final	FY 13 Budget	FY 13 Senate
502 Single Family Direct	900	653	900
502 Single Family Guaranteed	24,000	24,000	24,000
504 Loans	10	28	28
504 Grants	29.5	28.2	29.5
514 Farm Labor Housing Loans	20.8	26	26

515 Rural Rental Housing	64.5	0	28.4
516 Farm Labor Housing Grants	7.1	9	9
521 Rural Rental Assistance	904	907	907
523 Self-Help TA	30	10	30
533 Housing Preservation Grants	3.6	0	3.64
538 Rental Housing Guaranteed	130	150	150
Multi-Family Restructuring (BA)	2	46.9	27.7
Housing Preservation Demonstration	0	(34.4)	(16.7)
Voucher Demonstration	11	(12.5)	(11)
Supervisory TA Grants	0	0	0
Community Facility Loans	1300	2,000	2,000
Community Facility Grants	11.36	13	13
Community Facility Guarantee	105.7	0	0
Water-Wastewater Loans	730	1,000	1,000
Water-Wastewater Grants	351	411	425.7
Water-Wastewater Guarantee	70	0	60
Solid Waste Grants	3.4	4	3.4
Small Systems Revolver	0.5	0.5	1
Rural Business Enterprise Grants	24.3	34	24
Intermediary Re-lending	17	19	19
RCDI	3.6	(13)	6.121
Rural Microenterprise Investment Program	0	3.4	0

The bill also includes language that extends for one year eligibility for rural housing programs for all communities currently eligible in the program.

Rural CDBG/HOME Petition

Thank you for [signing our petition](#) asking Congress to fully fund the CDBG and HOME programs. To make sure that we get as many signatures as possible, we've decided to **extend the deadline to next Monday, May 7th**. Remember, every signature counts, so please remember to send it to your family, friends, staff, and colleagues, post it on Facebook, or retweet!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Update on House FY13 Appropriations

Stay Tuned: The House Moves On FY 13 Agriculture and THUD Budgets This Week

This week, two House Appropriations Subcommittees--one on Agriculture, Rural Development, and FDA and the other on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD)--will be marking up their FY13 appropriations bills. The Agriculture mark-up is scheduled for the morning of [Wednesday, June 6th](#), and the THUD mark-up will be on the morning of [Thursday, June 7th](#).

Right now, there are few details to share. Stay tuned for more details later this week.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Update on FY13 Appropriations

House THUD Subcommittee Markup

The House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Subcommittee [released their draft FY13 bill](#) today, with the markup scheduled for tomorrow morning.

Despite a lower 302(b) allocation, the THUD Subcommittee increased funding for several programs above FY12 levels, and in many cases, increased funding above the President's Request and the Senate. Our work supporting CDBG and HOME translated into some modest gains. The CDBG program was funded at about the FY12 levels, with an increase in funding for the block grant of nearly \$400 million. Funding for HOME came in at \$1.2 billion, or \$200 million more than in FY12, the Senate level, and the President's Request.

Of course, these gains come at the expense of other programs. Namely, Project-Based Rental Assistance was cut from \$9.34 billion in FY12 to \$8.7 billion.

Below is our updated chart comparing FY12 levels to the FY13 President's Request, and Senate and House bills.

Select HUD Programs (\$ in millions)	FY 12 Final	FY 13 Request	FY 13 Senate	FY 13 House
Neighborhood Reinvestment	135	127.1	135.3	145.3
Mortgage Foreclosure Mitigation	80	86	80	80
HOME	1000	996	1000	1,200
Capacity Building	0	35	0	0
Transformation Initiative	0	16	43	50
Housing Counseling	45	55	55	45
Community Development Fund	3,408	3,143	3,210	3,404
CDBG Formula funding	2,948	2932	3,100	3,344
Catalytic Investment Competition Grants	0	0	0	0

Sustainable Communities	0	100	50	0
Regional Planning Grants	0	46	0	0
Community Challenge Grants	0	46	0	0
HUD-DOT research	0	8	0	0
Rural Innovation Fund	0	0	0	0
University Community Fund	0	0	0	0
Choice Neighborhoods Initiative	120	150	120	0
Housing Trust Fund	0	1000	0	0
SHOP	53.5	0	53.5*	60
Section 108	240	240	500	244
Budget Authority	5.9	offset	offset	6
Section 202				
Housing for Elderly	374.6	475	375	425

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

House Committee Passes Ag and THUD Budgets

This morning, the full House Appropriations Committee [voted to approve](#) the FY13 Agriculture and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) budgets. The Agriculture Appropriations bill could go to the House floor as early as next week.

Despite a long markup session, only a few relevant amendments were offered and passed by the Committee. In fact, only one amendment--offered by Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID)--will impact rural housing programs. This amendment transferred \$1.5 million in funding for the U.S. Forest Service to Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance program. Other than that, the Agriculture bill that will be sent to the House floor will largely be identical to the bill drafted by the Subcommittee.

As for the [THUD bill](#), an amendment by Rep. Flake (R-AZ) to cut the HOME program by \$200 million dollars was defeated on a voice vote.

Petition Supporting Rural Housing Programs

Before the House votes on the Agriculture Appropriations bill, [PLEASE SEND NRHC'S PETITION](#) to as many rural organizations and advocates as possible. Please consider forwarding it to Board Members of your own organizations and other state and local coalitions. As with our previous petition, I will automatically add each NRHC Board Member's organization, unless I you contact me to let me know otherwise.

The deadline to sign the petition is Friday, June 22nd.

Rural Definition

Because an amendment to extend the "rural" definition was not included in the Manager's Mark for the full Appropriations Committee, we will continue to seek opportunities on the House floor. In the meantime, check out the NRHC's letter [urging Secretary Vilsack to take immediate action](#) to ensure that rural communities will not be cut off from what is often their ONLY source of federal housing funds.

Finally, Sen. Nelson's amendment to the Farm Bill--which would extend the definition of "rural" and increase the population limit to 35,000--has been cleared and is included in a limited list of 73 amendments that will be considered for a voice vote. As of now, the amendment has not yet been voted

on by the Committee. Votes are expected for the rest of today, tomorrow, and possibly Thursday.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Nelson Amendment Approved

By a voice vote the US Senate just approved an amendment by Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE) and others to extend the so-called grandfather clause under section 520 of the Housing Act of 1949. The Nelson amendment extends through the 2020 eligibility for communities for federal rural housing assistance and raises the population cap for currently eligible communities from 25,000 to 35,000.

Unless Congress acts, USDA will implement the 2010 census at end of FY 12. At that time so-called grandfathering provision will lapse. The statute will revert to a much narrower rural definition – communities with populations of up to 10,000 that are rural character and 10-20,000 that are rural in character, lack mortgage credit and are located outside of metro areas. Without an extension of current law or eligibility some 900 communities will be excluded including over 300 currently located in metro areas. According to a 2007 USDA Economic Research Service report over 50 % of all rural residents now live in metro counties, so without this amendment a significant number of rural communities – and their residents-- will no longer be able to access USDA housing assistance

The Nelson amendment is now included in the Senate farm bill, S. 3240. A copy of the amendment is [here](#). The Senate is expected to complete consideration of farm bill this week. The outlook in the House is unclear.

In May, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the FY 13 Agriculture spending bill that includes a one year extension for all communities currently eligible for rural housing assistance. The FY 13 House bill, reported to the floor this week, does not contain language on the rural definition for housing. The House bill comes to the floor next week and NRHC is exploring the possibility of an amendment to address the expiration of the grandfather provision under Section 520.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Ask Your Representative to Become a Cosponsor

Today, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) agreed to offer an [amendment to to the House Agriculture Appropriations bill on the "rural" definition](#), which will preserve eligibility for ALL communities for 1 year! The House is set to begin to debate and vote on the legislation on Tuesday night, so we need you to **call your Representatives TODAY, MONDAY, and TUESDAY and ask them to co-sponsor Rep. Fortenberry's amendment!**

Members of Congress can reach out to Alan Feyerherm at alan.feyerherm@mail.house.gov or 202-225-4806 to co-sponsor. If they have any questions about [the impact of this amendment](#), or about the "rural" definition issue in general, they should feel free to contact us directly.

This is one of our best chances of changing the "rural" definition. Don't let this opportunity pass us by. Call TODAY!

Without Congressional action, 923 communities will no longer be eligible for funding under critical Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development programs, including certain communities in your congressional district. By October 1, 2012, the USDA must revise its definition of "rural" with data from the 2010 Census. As a result of this new definition, many communities that are currently eligible for USDA Rural Development programs will be cut off from what is often their *only* source of federal housing funding. The proposed amendment would provide more time for Congress to consider the best way to define rural in the future and provide certainty to housing developers on where they can build using USDA rural housing programs.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

House Votes Tomorrow: Ask Your Representative to Become a Cosponsor

This week, the House of Representatives is scheduled to start debating the FY13 Agriculture Appropriations budget, and with it, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's (R-NE) [amendment on the "rural" definition](#). This amendment would preserve eligibility for USDA Rural Development funding for ALL rural communities for 1 year. It will prevent 923 communities from being cut off from what is often their only source of federal housing funding. Because it is unclear when the House will vote on the bill, we need to quickly build support for the amendment.

Here the **three best ways** you can help garner support for this amendment:

1. **Call your Representatives TODAY and ask them to co-sponsor Rep. Fortenberry's amendment.**
2. **Ask 10 colleagues to call their Representatives and ask them to co-sponsor Rep. Fortenberry's amendment; and**
3. **Use social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to spread the word!**

As constituents serving their districts, your advocacy is critical. Tell your Member of Congress how the "rural" definition--and losing eligibility for USDA Rural Development funding--would impact your organization, your community, or your state. Explain to them how you use this funding to help provide decent, healthy, and affordable housing for lower-income voters in their district, [how successful these programs are](#), and [the impact of this amendment!](#)

Members of Congress can reach out to Alan Feyerherm at alan.feyerherm@mail.house.gov or 202-225-4806 to co-sponsor. If they have any questions about or about the "rural" definition issue in general, they should feel free to contact us directly.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

House Postpones Agriculture Appropriations Vote

Although it is officially on the schedule, it now appears unlikely that the House will debate the FY13 Agriculture Appropriations bill this week. The Transportation-HUD Appropriations bill, conference reports on Surface Transportation legislation, and student loan rates, as well as a contempt citation for Attorney General Eric Holder are likely to eat up all the floor time available.

It is unclear when the House will return to consider the Agriculture Appropriations bill. The House Agriculture Committee mark-up of the Farm Bill--originally scheduled for this week--was delayed to allow Members of that Committee to participate in the debate on the Appropriations bill. Now, the Farm Bill mark-up is scheduled for the week of July 11, and it seems likely that the Agriculture Appropriations bill will slip further.

Regardless, the Coalition continues to urge its members to contact their Representatives to urge them to cosponsor Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's (R-NE) [amendment on the "rural" definition](#). When the House finally turns to the FY13 Agriculture Appropriations bill, Rep. Fortenberry will still have the opportunity to offer his amendment.

Thankfully, this gives rural housing advocates more time to garner as many co-sponsors to Rep. Fortenberry's amendment as possible before the House takes the issue up. We'll keep you updated with more details as we get them.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

USDA's List: Will Your Community Be Impacted?

The wait is finally over. We now have [USDA's list of communities that will be impacted by the new "rural" definition!](#) Follow the link to NRHC's website to find out whether the communities you serve will be cut off from USDA Rural Development funding on October 1st.

Please, share this list with your Representatives and ask them to cosponsor Rep. Fortenberry's (R-NE) [amendment to the Agriculture Appropriations bill on the "rural" definition.](#) Tell them that without Congressional action, more than 900 communities--including those in their district--will no longer be eligible for funding under critical Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development programs. These programs provide affordable housing opportunities, community facilities, and water and waste-water systems in rural areas across the nation, and is often their *only* source of federal housing funding.

By October 1, 2012, USDA must revise its definition of "rural" with data from the 2010 Census, causing an existing grandfathering clause to expire. To be eligible after that date, these communities must fall within the original—and very restrictive—definition. This standard limits eligibility to only those communities (1) with a population less than 20,000, and (2) that are *not* located in a metropolitan statistical area (MSA). Because half of the entire rural population lives in an MSA, and because the 20,000 population limit is far too restrictive, the expiration of this grandfathering clause will have a significant impact on the lives of rural families.

Rep. Fortenberry's [amendment to the Agriculture Appropriations bill](#) will provide Congress with more time consider the best way to define rural in the future and provide certainty to housing developers on where they can build using USDA rural housing programs.

So far, **3 Representatives** have decided to join Rep. Fortenberry by co-sponsoring this amendment: Reps. Hinojosa (D-TX), Grijalva (D-AZ), and Manzullo (R-IL). This is a good start, but we have a long way to go! Please, call your Representatives TODAY!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Ask Your Representative to Cosponsor Fortenberry's Amendment on the Rural Definition

NRHC is building support for the "rural" definition issue. Thanks to your outreach, we now have **13 Cosponsors** to Rep. Fortenberry's amendment to the FY13 Agriculture Appropriation bill, including: Reps. Andrews (NJ), Capps (CA), Costa (CA), Courtney (CT), Gosar (AZ), Grijalva (AZ), Hinojosa (TX), LoBiondo (NJ), Manzullo (IL), Paul (TX), Pearce (NM), and Young (AK)! This is a great start, but we have a long way to go!

The Agriculture Appropriations bill will be on the House floor as soon as next week, so we need your help TODAY. Here are three (3) easy steps you can take!

1. **Ask your Representatives to cosponsor [Rep. Fortenberry's amendment](#) to the Agriculture Appropriations bill.**
2. **Check out [USDA's list](#) to see if any communities in your district will lose eligibility for Rural Development funding, and share the list with your Representatives.**
3. **Use NRHC's [Fact Sheet](#) to educate your Representatives about the issue.**

On October 1, 2012, more than 900 communities--including those in your district--will no longer be eligible for funding under critical Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development programs. These programs provide affordable housing opportunities, community facilities, and water and waste-water systems in rural areas across the nation, and is often their *only* source of federal housing funding.

At that time, USDA must revise its definition of "rural" with data from the 2010 Census, causing an existing grandfathering clause to expire. To be eligible after that date, these communities must fall within the original—and very restrictive—definition. This standard limits eligibility to only those communities (1) with a population less than 20,000, and (2) that are *not* located in a metropolitan statistical area (MSA). Because half of the entire rural population lives in an MSA, and because the 20,000 population limit is far too restrictive, the expiration of this grandfathering clause will have a significant impact on the lives of rural families.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Sign Our Petition on Fortenberry's Rural Definition Amendment

Before the House of Representatives votes on the Agriculture Appropriations bill, [PLEASE FORWARD NRHC'S PETITION](#) urging Members of Congress to support Rep. Fortenberry's "rural" definition amendment to as many rural organizations and advocates as possible. Please also consider forwarding it to Board Members of your own organizations and other state and local coalitions. As with our previous petition, I will automatically add each NRHC Board Member's organization, unless I you contact me to let me know otherwise.

The Agriculture Appropriations bill may come to the House floor before the August recess. **The deadline to sign the petition is Wednesday, July 18th. We need your help TODAY.**

As you know, on October 1, 2012, more than 900 communities will no longer be eligible for funding under critical Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development programs. These programs provide affordable housing opportunities in rural communities across the nation, and is often their *only* source of federal housing funding.

Update on Cosponsors

A total of 14 Members of Congress have signed on to cosponsor Rep. Fortenberry's amendment, including: Reps. Andrews (NJ), Capps (CA), Costa (CA), Courtney (CT), Gosar (AZ), Grijalva (AZ), Hinojosa (TX), LoBiondo (NJ), Manzullo (IL), Paul (TX), Pearce (NM), Ryan (OH), Thompson (MS), and Young (AK)!

If you haven't done so already, **please call your Representatives and ask them to cosponsor [Rep. Fortenberry's amendment](#)**. Tell them that without Congressional action, [more than 900 rural communities](#) will lose their eligibility for USDA Rural Housing programs.

Update on House Farm Bill

Later today, Rep. Fortenberry plans to offer a "rural" definition amendment to the Farm Bill at the House Agriculture Committee markup. Unfortunately, because the amendment is not germane to the Agriculture Committee's jurisdiction, he will have to withdraw it before a vote can be taken. Regardless, Fortenberry hopes to use this as an opportunity to raise the profile of the issue

and to encourage his colleagues to become cosponsors on the Agriculture Appropriations amendment.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

It's Time To Keep The Pressure On!

If we don't, who will?

As we've said before, this year's Agriculture Appropriations bill is still our best opportunity to protect our communities from losing their eligibility for USDA Rural Housing funding. With only 4 weeks left before the August Recess, we need EVERYONE--our members, our colleagues, our neighbors--to help build enough support for Rep. Fortenberry's amendment in order to successfully push House leadership into bringing it to the floor for a vote. Have you:

- **ASKED ALL OF THE RURAL REPRESENTATIVES IN YOUR STATE TO COSPONSOR REP. FORTENBERRY'S AMEDNMENT?**
- **SIGNED OUR PETITION AND SENT IT TO AT LEAST 10 OTHER RURAL ORGANIZATIONS?**
- **ASKED YOUR MEMBERS, CLIENTS, COMMUNITIES, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO CALL THEIR REPRESENTATIVE TOO?**

We need your help TODAY!

When you ask your Representatives to cosponsor Rep. Fortenberry's amendment, tell them that:

- Without Congressional action, **more than 900 communities**--including **those in their district**--will lose their eligibility for USDA Rural Housing programs.
- **If the House does not bring this amendment to the floor, USDA will move forward with these changes on October 1st.** There is a strong indication that USDA will not delay implementation of the 2010 Census, unless there is a clear indication that both Houses of Congress intend to act to modify or delay current law. The Senate already has a provision in their appropriations bill. Now, we need the House to act. At this moment, the best opportunity appears to be the House Agriculture Appropriations bill.
- The House Appropriations Committee has said that this bill **could be brought to the floor any time** before the August recess.
- **The amendment has strong bipartisan support** with sponsorship equally divided between the two political parties.

Are you ready?

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Call Your Representatives TODAY and TOMORROW!

Yesterday, Congress and the White House reached a deal to pass a 6-month Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the government through March 2013, avoiding a messy fight over the FY13 Appropriations bills. At this time, the CR is our best opportunity to enact a solution to USDA's "rural" definition issue before the October 1, 2012 deadline. But, it will be a challenge.

PLEASE CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES TODAY AND TOMORROW and ask them to sign onto Rep. Fortenberry's letter to Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers, urging the Committee to address the "rural" definition issue in the Continuing Resolution.

By the time Congress leaves for the Summer Recess on August 6, most deals will be made. So, we need EVERYONE to call as soon as possible! When you ask your Representatives to sign onto Rep. Fortenberry's letter, tell them that:

- Without Congressional action, [more than 900 communities](#)--including **those in their district**--will lose their eligibility for USDA Rural Housing programs.
- **The CR is our best opportunity to address these issues before the October 1 deadline.** While Rep. Fortenberry plans to offer an amendment to the FY13 Agriculture Appropriations bill, it won't get to the floor before the October 1 deadline.
- **If the House does not enact a solution to the "rural" definition issue, USDA will move forward with these changes on October 1st.** There is a strong indication that USDA will not delay implementation of the 2010 Census, unless there is a clear indication that both Houses of Congress intend to act to modify or delay current law. The Senate already has a provision in their appropriations bill. Now, we need the House to act. At this moment, the best opportunity appears to be the CR.
- **Rep. Fortenberry's letter has strong bipartisan support** with cosigners equally divided between the two political parties.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

August 16th Deadline For Rural Definition Letter

My, have we been busy!

In the past week, we've contacted more than 230 Congressional offices about the "rural" definition issue. So far, **8 Representatives** have signed onto Rep. Fortenberry's letter to House Leadership, asking them to address the "rural" definition in the 6-month Continuing Resolution (CR) that Congress will likely vote on in September. Those that have already signed on include: Rep. Boustany (LA), Capito (WV), Costa (CA), Filner (CA), Hinojosa (TX), Langevin (RI), LoBiondo (NJ), Michaud (ME), and Ryan (OH)!

But our hard work isn't over yet. Please call your Representatives and ask them to sign onto Rep. Fortenberry's letter! The deadline is Thursday, August 16th!

Not sure who to call? Check out [NRHC's List of Congressional Targets](#).

Be sure to share these resources with your Representative:

- [Rep. Fortenberry's Draft Letter to House Leadership](#)
- [Rep. Fortenberry's Proposed Amendment](#)
- [USDA's List of Impacted Communities](#)
- A letter--signed by the [National Rural Housing Coalition, the National Association of REALTORS, the National Association of Home Builders, and the Mortgage Bankers Association](#), urging House Leadership to enact a solution to the "rural" definition issue.

And, remind them that:

- Without Congressional action, more than 900 communities--including those in their district--will lose their eligibility for USDA Rural Housing programs.
- The CR is our best opportunity to address these issues before the October 1 deadline. While Rep. Fortenberry plans to offer an amendment to the FY13 Agriculture Appropriations bill, it won't get to the floor before the October 1 deadline.
- If the House does not enact a solution to the "rural" definition issue, USDA will move forward with these changes on October 1st. There is a strong indication that USDA will not delay implementation of the 2010 Census, unless there is a clear indication that both Houses of Congress intend to act to modify or delay current law. The Senate already has a

provision in their appropriations bill. Now, we need the House to act. At this moment, the best opportunity appears to be the CR.

- Rep. Fortenberry's letter has strong bipartisan support with cosigners equally divided between the two political parties.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

24 Cosigners! Keep Up the Great Work!

Our hard work is starting to pay off! We now have 24 cosigners to [Rep. Fortenberry's letter to House Leadership](#), urging them to address the "rural" definition issue in the Continuing Resolution. Those that have already signed on include: Reps. Boren (OK), Boustany (LA), Canseco (TX), Capito (WV), Capps (CA), Cassidy (LA), Castor (FL), Cicilline (RI), Costa (CA), Filner (CA), Grijalva (AZ), Guinta (NH), Hinojosa (TX), Keating (MA), Langevin (RI), LoBiondo (NJ), Luetkemeyer (MO), Manzullo (IL), Matheson (UT), McIntyre (NC), Michaud (ME), Pingree (ME), Ryan (OH), and Thompson (MS)!

The deadline for Representatives to sign on is Thursday, August 16th, so call your Representatives today!

Notice of Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars for NRHC's Annual Business Meeting, Board of Directors Meeting, and Task Force Meetings. [For the complete schedule of meetings, click here!](#)

As discussed at our May meeting, the next Board of Directors Meeting will take place on **Tuesday, December 4, 2012, from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.** at Rapoza Associates, located at 1331 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Task Force Meetings will be held throughout the day on **Wednesday, December 5, 2012** at HAC's conference in Columbia B Room at the Hyatt Regency hotel on New Jersey Avenue in Washington, DC.

At our Annual Business Meeting, members will elect the Board of Directors and Executive Officers for the coming year, and review annual financial and legislative reports. The meeting will be held on **Wednesday, December 5, 2012 from 4:15 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.** at HAC's conference in Columbia B Room at the Hyatt Regency hotel on New Jersey Avenue in Washington, DC. Remember to send me your [nominations for Board of Directors by November 2, 2012](#). All current Board Members that want to continue to serve in that capacity must also send me your nominations.

It's August!

We've just completed Week 1 of Congress's August Recess. How do you plan to use this time--when your Senators and Representatives are in their districts--to continue to [build relationships with your Members of Congress?](#)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

49 Cosigners!

In less than one week, we doubled the number of cosigners to [Rep. Fortenberry's letter to House Leadership](#), urging them to address the "rural" definition issue in the Continuing Resolution. And, now that Rep. Fortenberry has decided to **extend the deadline for Representatives to sign on to August 31**, we have even more time to build Congressional support for this issue.

Please, continue to call your Representatives and ask them to cosign Rep. Fortenberry's letter! Not sure who to call? Check out our [list of Congressional targets!](#)

Those that have already signed on include:

Reps. Amodei (NV), Baca (CA), Bonamici (OR), Boren (OK), Boustany (LA), Canseco (TX), Capito (WV), Capps (CA), Carney (DE), Cassidy (LA), Castor (FL), Cicilline (RI), Costa (CA), Courtney (CT), Crawford (AR), DeFazio (OR), Filner (CA), Garamendi (CA), Gosar (AZ), Griffith (VA), Grijalva (AZ), Guinta (NH), Hinojosa (TX), Hirono (HI), Hochul (NY), Holt (NJ), Keating (MA), Langevin (RI), Larsen (WA), LoBiondo (NJ), Luetkemeyer (MO), Manzullo (IL), Matheson (UT), McGovern (MA), McIntyre (NC), McNerney (CA), Michaud (ME), Pearce (NM), Pingree (ME), Platts (PA), Reyes (TX), Ross (AR), Runyan (NJ), Ryan (OH), Schilling (IL), Shuster (PA), Thompson (CA), Thompson (MS), and Young (AK)!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Monday, September 10th is National Call-In Day!

Congress returns to Washington next week and will be in session only a few weeks before adjourning for the campaign. Within this short time, we need to press our Representatives and Senators to act on legislation to extend eligibility for rural communities to access USDA Rural Housing programs.

That's why on **Monday, September 10th**, the National Rural Housing Coalition is holding a **National Call-In Day** to urge Congress to protect rural communities by including the "rural" definition issue on the FY13 Continuing Resolution or finding another way to get this done!

You can help us raise the profile of this critical issue by calling your Senators and Representatives:

In the Senate

On Monday, please **ask your Senators to reach out to the Banking Committee and the Appropriations Committee, urging them to include a 1-year extension of current law in the FY13 CR or in a stand-alone bill.**

Earlier this year, the Senate passed similar rural definition language in their Farm Bill and the FY13 Agriculture Appropriations bill. The Farm Bill included a ten-year extension of the 'grandfather' clause and raised the population limit for these communities to 35,000. And, the Appropriations bill included a one-year extension for all communities.

In the House

On Monday, please call your Representatives! **If they haven't signed onto Rep. Fortenberry's [Letter to House Leadership](#), it's not too late! And, if they have, thank them for their support and ask them to raise the issue directly with Rep. Boehner!**

- Not sure who is your Representative? Dial the House switchboard number (202-224-3121), or look up his/her phone number on the [House website](#).
- Not sure who to call? Check out our updated [List of Congressional Targets!](#)
- Not sure what to say? Check out our [Sample Script!](#)

- How else can you help? Forward information about the National Call-In Day to colleagues, family, and friends far and wide! Share information on Twitter or Facebook!

So far, **89 Representatives have signed on**, but we need more!

Reps. Amodei (NV), Baca (CA), Bishop (NY), Bonamici (OR), Boren (OK), Boswell (IA), Boustany (LA), Braley (IA), Canseco (TX), Capito (WV), Capps (CA), Carney (DE), Cassidy (LA), Castor (FL), Cicilline (RI), Cleaver (MO), Coble (NC), Costa (CA), Costello (IL), Courtney (CT), Crawford (AR), Cuellar (TX), DeFazio (OR), Denham (CA), Engel (CA), Farr (CA), Filner (CA), Fortenberry (NE), Gallegly (CA), Garamendi (CA), Gosar (AZ), Griffin (AR), Griffith (VA), Grijalva (AZ), Guinta (NH), Guthrie (KY), Hanabusa (HI), Harper (MS), Hartzler (MO), Heck (NV), Hinojosa (TX), Hirono (HI), Hochul (NY), Holt (NJ), Johnson (IL), Johnson (OH), Jones (NC), Keating (MA), Kinzinger (IL), Kissel (NC), Lance (NJ), Langevin (RI), Larsen (WA), LoBiondo (NJ), Loeb (IA), Long (MO), Luetkemeyer (MO), Lummis (WY), Manzullo (IL), Matheson (UT), McGovern (MA), McIntyre (NC), McNerney (CA), Michaud (ME), Miller (FL), Nugent (FL), Nunes (CA), Owens (NY), Pearce (NM), Pingree (ME), Platts (PA), Reyes (TX), Ross (AR), Runyan (NJ), Ryan (OH), Schilling (IL), Shuster (PA), Smith (NY), Stivers (OH), Terry (NE), Thompson (CA), Thompson (MS), Tierney (MA), Walden (OR), Walz (MN), Welch (VT), and Young (AK)! Reps. Gibson (NY) and Hayworth (NY) have agreed to send their own letters.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Today is National Call-In Day!

Thank you for participating in today's **National Call-In Day!** By calling your Senators and Representatives, you can help persuade Congress to protect rural communities by addressing the "rural" definition issue!

In the Senate

TODAY, please **ask your Senators to reach out to the Banking Committee and the Appropriations Committee, urging them to include a 1-year extension of current law in the FY13 CR or in a stand-alone bill.**

Earlier this year, the Senate passed similar rural definition language in their Farm Bill and the FY13 Agriculture Appropriations bill. The Farm Bill included a ten-year extension of the 'grandfather' clause and raised the population limit for these communities to 35,000. And, the Appropriations bill included a one-year extension for all communities.

In the House

TODAY, please call your Representatives! **If they signed onto Rep. Fortenberry's [Letter to House Leadership](#), thank them for their support and ask them to raise the issue directly with Rep. Boehner! If they haven't, you should still call them, and ask them to call Rep. Boehner!**

- Not sure who is your Representative? Dial the House switchboard number (202-224-3121), or look up his/her phone number on the [House website](#).
- Not sure who to call? Check out our updated [List of Congressional Targets!](#)
- Not sure what to say? Check out our [Sample Script!](#)
- How else can you help? Forward information about the National Call-In Day to colleagues, family, and friends far and wide! Share information on Twitter or Facebook!

So far, **94 Representatives have signed on**, but we need more!

Reps. Amodei (NV), Andrews (NJ), Baca (CA), Barletta (PA), Bishop (NY), Bonamici (OR), Boren (OK), Boswell (IA), Boustany (LA), Braley (IA), Canseco (TX), Capito (WV), Capps (CA), Carney (DE), Cassidy (LA), Castor (FL), Cicilline (RI), Cleaver (MO), Coble (NC), Costa (CA), Costello (IL), Courtney (CT), Crawford (AR), Cuellar (TX), DeFazio (OR), Denham (CA), Ellmers (NC),

Engel (CA), Farr (CA), Filner (CA), Fortenberry (NE), Gallegly (CA), Garamendi (CA), Gosar (AZ), Griffin (AR), Griffith (VA), Grijalva (AZ), Guinta (NH), Guthrie (KY), Hanabusa (HI), Harper (MS), Hartzler (MO), Heck (NV), Heger (CA), Hinojosa (TX), Hirono (HI), Hochul (NY), Holt (NJ), Johnson (IL), Johnson (OH), Jones (NC), Keating (MA), Kinzinger (IL), Kissel (NC), Lance (NJ), Langevin (RI), Larsen (WA), LoBiondo (NJ), Loeb sack (IA), Long (MO), Luetkemeyer (MO), Lummis (WY), Manzullo (IL), Matheson (UT), McGovern (MA), McIntyre (NC), McNerney (CA), Michaud (ME), Miller (FL), Nugent (FL), Nunes (CA), Owens (NY), Pearce (NM), Pingree (ME), Platts (PA), Reyes (TX), Ross (AR), Runyan (NJ), Ryan (OH), Schilling (IL), Shuster (PA), Smith (NY), Stivers (OH), Terry (NE), Thompson (CA), Thompson (MS), Tierney (MA), Tipton (CO), Walden (OR), Walz (MN), Welch (VT), and Young (AK)! Reps. Gibson (NY) and Hayworth (NY) have agreed to send their own letters.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Over 100 Representatives!

Thanks to our hard work, we have reach our goal to get [over 100 Representatives](#) to sign onto Rep. Fortenberry's letter to House Leadership, urging them to address the "rural" definition before USDA's October 1st deadline. That's a remarkable achievement! And, it that will help us continue to build momentum on the Hill.

While the Rural Definition issue was not included in the FY13 Continuing Resolution, we are making some important headway. Right now, Senate leaders are preparing an amendment that they may be able to pass with Unanimous Consent on the Senate floor. And in the House--for the first time--the Financial Services Committee and Leadership offices seem to be more open to finding a solution.

That means, there's still a lot of work ahead of us. **If you haven't already, please call your Representatives to (1) thank them for signing onto Fortenberry's letter and (2) ask them to raise the issue directly with Rep. Boehner.**

A grand total of **101 Representatives signed on!**

Reps. Alexander (LA), Amodei (NV), Andrews (NJ), Baca (CA), Barletta (PA), Bass (NH), Bishop (NY), Bonamici (OR), Bono Mack (CA), Boren (OK), Boswell (IA), Boustany (LA), Braley (IA), Canseco (TX), Capito (WV), Capps (CA), Carney (DE), Cassidy (LA), Castor (FL), Chandler (KY), Cicilline (RI), Cleaver (MO), Coble (NC), Costa (CA), Costello (IL), Courtney (CT), Crawford (AR), Cuellar (TX), DeFazio (OR), DeLauro (CT), Denham (CA), Ellmers (NC), Engel (CA), Farr (CA), Filner (CA), Fortenberry (NE), Gallegly (CA), Garamendi (CA), Gosar (AZ), Griffin (AR), Griffith (VA), Grijalva (AZ), Guinta (NH), Guthrie (KY), Hanabusa (HI), Harper (MS), Hartzler (MO), Heck (NV), Heger (CA), Hinojosa (TX), Hirono (HI), Hochul (NY), Holt (NJ), Johnson (IL), Johnson (OH), Jones (NC), Keating (MA), Kinzinger (IL), Kissel (NC), Lance (NJ), Langevin (RI), Larsen (WA), LoBiondo (NJ), Loeb sack (IA), Long (MO), Luetkemeyer (MO), Lummis (WY), Manzullo (IL), Matheson (UT), McGovern (MA), McIntyre (NC), McNERNEY (CA), Michaud (ME), Miller (FL), Miller (NC), Nugent (FL), Nunes (CA), Owens (NY), Pearce (NM), Pingree (ME), Platts (PA), Reyes (TX), Ross (AR), Runyan (NJ), Ryan (OH), Schilling (IL), Schrader (OR), Shuster (PA), Smith (NY), Stivers (OH), Terry (NE), Thompson (CA), Thompson (MS), Tierney (MA), Tipton (CO), Walden (OR), Walz (MN), Welch

(VT), and Young (AK)! Reps. Gibson (NY) and Hayworth (NY) have agreed to send their own letters.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Update on Energy Plus Program

Earlier this month, USDA issued an unnumbered memo announcing that USDA was discontinuing the Rural Energy Plus Program (REPP) for Section 502 Direct Loan borrowers. According to USDA, the program was discontinued because it relied on outdated energy standards that were nearly 7 years old.

We have learned, however, that USDA plans to move forward with **a new pilot program based on updated energy standards and higher qualifying ratios for participants**. USDA plans to begin implementing this new pilot program in the beginning of FY13, and is open to our recommendations and suggestions on how this new pilot program should operate.

Both the REPP program and the new pilot program will be designed to encourage homeowners to buy or build energy-efficient homes. By allowing higher qualifying ratios, USDA can help match energy-efficient homes with very low- and low-income families who benefit the most from monthly utility savings.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Congress Adjourns for November Elections

As of this past Saturday, Congress has adjourned until the November elections, leaving the "rural" definition issue--and many others--unresolved until the lame duck session. Not only is this earliest that Congress has adjourned before an election since 1960, but this Congress has been the one least productive ones since WWII. In fact, this Congress has enacted less than 29 percent of the laws passed by the [infamous "do-nothing" Congress](#) of 1947-48.

Despite our best efforts to encourage House Leadership to move Rep. Fortenberry's proposed language forward, the Financial Services Committee was simply unwilling to approve of the legislation. Instead, the Committee held that they would not act on the "rural" definition issue unless the Senate votes for the FHA Fiscal Solvency Act, which was approved by the House earlier this month.

Over its 30-year history, the rural definition was never a controversial issue. That makes inaction in the House even more significant. In some respects, it reflects a new, broader resistance to enacting longstanding provisions that were previously viewed as merely housekeeping issues. We saw this with even basic provisions of the Farm Bill, and today we see it with the definition of "rural" under Section 520 of the Housing Act of 1949.

Even if November's election results in a split-decision – with Democrats retaining control of the Presidency and the Senate – it is likely that we will face continued reluctance by the Republican-led House to simply extend current law or to use the existing grandfathering clause template. Some in the House will see this as an opportunity to develop a new rural definition that will almost certainly limit the number and size of communities eligible for Rural Housing programs. After all, the fewer communities that are eligible, the stronger the rationale is for reducing appropriations.

Of course, none of this is preordained. [Over 100 Representatives](#) signed onto Fortenberry's letter seeking to extend current law. These Members of Congress– who are equally divided between the two political parties – represent an important source of political support for Rural Housing programs going forward. But it will not be easy.

Until then, NRHC will continue to work with USDA to try to postpone implementation of the "rural" definition changes so that we can resume our efforts with Congress in November.

Continuing Resolution

Before Congress left town, it did manage to pass a Continuing Resolution that set federal spending for the first months of FY13 at the current rate. The CR extends through March 27, 2012, which, in theory, gives the new Congress and the President the time to enact spending bills for the balance of the fiscal year. The spending levels for those bills will almost certainly be a function of the elections. The annualized top-line amount of discretionary spending in the CR is in line with the Budget Request. Governor Romney has called for a 5 percent reduction in discretionary spending, with most cuts coming from the domestic side. Rep. Paul Ryan has an even tougher target of a 20 percent cut in domestic appropriations.

Sequestration

Earlier this month, the White House released its [sequestration report](#), outlining its impact on discretionary spending. The sequestration was agreed to under the Budget Control Act of 2011, and was only to go into effect if Congress failed to pass a deficit-reduction bill with at least \$1.2 trillion in cuts. Because negotiations fell apart, sequestration cuts are scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 2013, unless Congress can agree on a deal to avoid them. The total of the sequester is \$108 billion, with half coming from the CR. In the White House report, each federal agency approaches the required 8.2 percent cut to non-defense discretionary spending differently. USDA has proposed line-by-line cuts to each program, while other agencies will cut only the top-line number by 8.2 percent, leaving decisions about where the cuts should come from to another day.

When Congress returns for a lame duck session, Congress faces a mountain of fiscal issues. The expiration of the Bush Tax Cuts, a patch for the Alternative Minimum Tax, over 50 expiring or expired tax credits or tax preferences, and the sequester. The price tag of this so-called "Fiscal Cliff"--the total of the tax increases and spending cuts that will result from inaction--is some \$660 billion in FY13 alone. There is some expectation that if the election results in a split-decision, the Administration and Congress will come to an agreement to defer the sequester and extend some tax provisions in return for a binding table of action in 2013 that would almost certainly include entitlement reform (read: reductions) and revenue increases, first secured through shearing the tax code of many targeted provisions.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

USDA Extends Rural Definition Until March 27, 2013

Yesterday, USDA issued a notice to all local, state, and national Rural Development staff instructing them to [continue to use the current "rural" definition until March 27, 2013](#), and postponing implementation of data from the 2010 Census data until that time. This notice applies to all Rural Development programs, including those administered by the Rural Housing Service, the Rural Utilities Service, and Rural Business Service.

The new deadline--March 27, 2013--coincides with the expiration of the FY13 Continuing Resolution.

This is an important victory for the National Rural Housing Coalition and our members, who have led this effort over the past last year. This allows us to continue to work with Rep. Fortenberry to find a long-term solution to this issue when Congress returns to Capitol Hill after the November elections.

The notice also includes changes to the data USDA will use to verify income eligibility. Because the 2010 Census--and future Censuses--does not ask participants about their incomes, USDA will begin to use the 5-year American Community Survey estimates to determine income eligibility standards.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

**Clarification: USDA Extends Rural Definition Until
March 27, 2013**

Today, USDA revised its notice to local and state USDA offices on the "rural" definition issue. The revision clarifies that any community currently eligible for rural development assistance, including those that gained eligibility through appropriations law, will [remain eligible through the term of the FY 13 Continuing Resolution \(March 27, 2013\)](#).

The intent of this notice is to continue eligibility for all communities until the expiration of the FY13 Continuing Resolution.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Ask Congress to Include the “Rural Definition” Language in the Appropriations Bill

Call Your Senators and Representatives: Protect Funding and Access to Rural Housing Programs

Late last week, NRHC learned that Congress has accelerated its schedule to complete the FY13 Appropriations bills -- including Agriculture Appropriations. This week, we expect negotiators on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to work quickly to prepare the all the necessary paperwork in order to hold a vote on the bills some time during the lame duck session, which officially starts today.

Call your Representatives and Senators this week and urge them to (1) include Rep. Fortenberry's [proposed Rural Definition language](#) in the final FY13 Appropriations bill and (2) to [protect full-funding](#) for USDA Rural Housing programs.

Rural Definition:

- Unless Congress acts, [923 rural communities](#) -- including communities in your district -- will lose eligibility for USDA Rural Housing programs on March 27, 2013. This means that low-income families in these communities will no longer have access to low-cost loans, grants, and other assistance to access safe, decent, and affordable housing.
- With broad bipartisan support, [over 100 Representatives](#) signed onto Rep. Fortenberry's letter, urging House Leadership to address the issue. If your Representatives signed on, remember to thank them for their support!
- The CBO has scored Rep. Fortenberry's proposed legislative language and agreed that it would impose NO COST to taxpayers. The bill only addresses eligibility requirements, not funding levels.
- Other national organizations -- including the [National Association of Realtors, the Mortgage Bankers Association, and the National Association of Homebuilders](#) -- support Rep. Fortenberry's language.

Rural Housing Funding:

- USDA's Rural Housing programs overwhelmingly serve some of rural America's most vulnerable families -- including low-income households, the elderly, and persons with disabilities -- at a very low-cost to the government.

- Share a copy of NRHC's Fact Sheets on [Section 502 Direct](#), [Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Housing](#), [Section 515 Rural Rental Housing](#), and [Section 514/516 Farm Labor Housing](#).

RSVP to NRHC's Board of Directors Meeting

[Please RSVP to NRHC's Board of Directors meeting](#) on December 4, 2012 from 1pm to 3pm at the Rapoza Associates offices at 1331 G. Street NW, Washington DC, 20005. Please be sure to let us know which Congressional offices you will be meeting with, so that we can prepare enough materials for your Hill visits.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Rep. Fortenberry Joins House Appropriations Committee

Rep. Fortenberry (NE-1) Joins The House Appropriations Committee

Yesterday, the House Republican Steering Committee approved [six new Representatives](#) to the House Appropriations Committee, including [long-time rural housing supporter](#), Rep. Jeff Fortenberry. Given his background and interests, there is a good possibility that Rep. Fortenberry will serve on the Agriculture, Rural Development, and FDA Appropriations Subcommittee -- which determines funding levels for USDA's Rural Housing Service.

As one of the leading voices on the "rural" definition issue, Rep. Fortenberry is a welcome addition to the Committee.

The other five Members include Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA-3), Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (TN-3), Rep. David Joyce (OH-14), Rep. Thomas Rooney (FL-16), and Rep. David Valadao (CA-21).

NRHC Board of Directors Meeting and Annual Business Meeting

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at next week's NRHC Board of Director Meeting and Annual Business Meeting. For the dates, times, and locations of all meetings, please check our updated [schedule](#), located on the NRHC website.

Also, please remember to [RSVP](#) and let us know which Congressional offices you will be meeting with, so that we can prepare materials for your Hill visits.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

