



RPC Rural Delivery

New York State Rural Housing Coalition, Inc.

March, 2015

Now Is The Time

The state budget negotiation season is in full swing and the Capitol is a very busy place. It is a critical time for all of us to reach out to our legislators and remind them of the importance in investing in the state's housing stock, and in the delivery system that we have in place for ensuring that the precious housing dollars coming into the state are efficiently spent.

Last year, the legislature added funds to the Executive Budget as proposed for the Preservation Program. The Governor has proposed the same funding for preservation as he did last year, and so without a legislative add, the RPC/NPC funding will actually suffer a cut in the next Fiscal Year.

This year's budget appears to offer great opportunities, thanks to the windfall received by the state in the JP Morgan Chase settlement. The settlement requires the proceeds be directed to affordable housing and community development programs to redress the foreclosure and other problems created by the recent housing crisis, and to assist families that were displaced thanks to lending practices during that period.

However, the JP Morgan Chase settlement is being viewed by many as the solution to a number of the state's other housing challenges. The resources proposed are hardly

enough, though, when compared to the magnitude of the housing problems found across the state. This one-shot windfall could be creatively used to invest in the future of the state, by improving rural infrastructure, capitalizing a real housing trust fund, or a significant revolving loan fund pool. Of course, increasing the amount of capital available in the state's current housing programs will enable local housing agencies to make a serious dent in the existing problems.

This also raises the issue of capacity, both within the state agencies administering housing programs, and in our local communities. After so many years of declining federal and state investment in housing and community development, we have lost a great deal of expertise through attrition. One-shot funds could be made available to help non-profit and municipal and State agencies to rebuild staff capacity to increase production capability and develop new program activities to respond to new dynamics in local real estate markets.

NYS Rural Advocates is turning up the lobbying activity this month to make sure that the needs of rural New York are not lost in the clamor for the settlement funds.

The Advocates are convening in Albany starting on March 2nd.

The push to contact Assembly representatives and state Senators on the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th of the month will help generate buzz at this critical time.

Even if you have never reached out to your legislators before, this is an especially important time to do so. You can visit your legislator in their Albany or district offices, or call, or email them with your concerns about the budget. Legislators often count how many calls or letters they receive on an issue, so every contact you can make will help. Rural Advocates can help you to reach out. Please also provide feedback from your conversations with your legislators. The Rural Advocates can be reached at ruraladvocates@gmail.com. This is not the year to remain silent about the resources your community needs.

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Rural Delivery

Rural Delivery is published by the
New York State Rural Housing Coalition, Inc.

The Coalition is a non-profit statewide membership organization dedicated to strengthening and revitalizing rural New York by assisting housing and community development providers.

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For information on advertising in Rural Delivery and to receive a copy of our advertising rate sheet, please contact the Coalition at:
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Bits and Pieces...

CAPER Available For Review

NYS HCR has published the 2014 CAPER in draft form for public review and comment. The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report summarizes state activities under the CDBG, HOME, ESG and HOPWA programs. Comments are due by March 4th. The draft report is available at www.nyshcr.org/AboutUs/Publications/2014-CAPER-Published-for-Public-Comment.pdf.

Main St. Forum

The NY Main Street Alliance is sponsoring a Main Street Forum at the NY Institute of Technology on Thursday, March 5th at 16 W. 61st Street in Manhattan. The forum will take place in the 11th floor auditorium. Speakers include Crystal Loffler, NYS Main St. Director, Larisa Ortiz, NYC Planning Commissioner, and Michael Swarting, Director of Urban and Regional Design at NYIT.

This one day event will offer informative sessions on urban design, architecture, and downtown revitalization. Registration is \$45 and pre-registration is required. To RSVP, please email nymainstreetalliance@gmail.com or call (845) 423-7114.

Save The Date!

HUD Buffalo's next Rehab Rap training for Rehabilitation Coordinators will take place on March 18th. The topic will be **Minimizing Change Orders**. The session will cover the need for good initial inspections; comprehensive work write ups & specs; RFPs/Bids and communication with homeowners. Change orders can dramatically complicate the administration of housing rehab programs, and in most cases can be avoided with thorough inspections and careful crafting of work writeups and development of specifications. This session is a must-attend for Rehab Coordinator staff.

Federal and U.S. military employees can support the Rural Housing Coalition through the annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). If you are a federal government or military employee and would like to donate through the CFC, please enter CFC code #9614 on your pledge card during the next fund drive.

Water/Wastewater Loan Application Window Open

USDA has issued a NOFA for the water and wastewater revolving loan program. Applications are due by April 13th.

The Revolving Fund Program (RFP) has been established to assist communities with water or wastewater systems. Qualified private, non-profit organizations, who are selected for funding, will receive RFP grant funds to establish a lending program for eligible entities. Eligible entities for the revolving loan fund will be the same entities eligible to obtain a loan, loan guarantee, or grant from the Water and Waste Disposal loan and grant programs administered by RUS, under 7 U.S.C.1926(a)(1) and (2). As grant recipients, the non-profit organizations will set up a revolving loan fund to provide loans to finance predevelopment costs of water or wastewater projects, or short-term small capital projects not part of the regular operation and maintenance of current water and wastewater systems. The amount of financing to an eligible entity shall not exceed \$100,000.00 and shall be repaid in a term not to exceed 10 years. The rate shall be determined in the approved grant work plan.

For more information, visit www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=274685.

NHTF Rules Released

In February, HUD released new rules for the National Housing Trust Fund, which was created by Congress in the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA) to finance the construction, operation, and preservation of affordable housing for our nation's most vulnerable families.

HUD referred to these changes as "Interim Rules" because the Department will reconsider provisions once the initial round of funding is made available. This could be as early as January, 2016.

While HERA directs NHTF monies to be distributed to each state using a needs-based formula, the Interim Rule provides further details on what factors will be considered. Unfortunately, the Interim Rule does not provide a minimum allocation for rural housing and does not adopt a broader definition of "rural." According to the Interim Rule, some commenters recommended that the Department provide an adequate allocation of NHTF resources to rural areas. In response, HUD argued that the statute grants authority to each state to create a consolidated plan by assessing the state's housing needs and that each plan must describe priority housing areas, including rural housing. The Interim Rule also defines "rural" as all areas outside of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), even though half of all rural residents live in communities within MSAs.

Navigating New York's Brownfield Funding Resources

A workshop on Brownfield Funding resources will be held on March 18th Workshop in Rochester, NY.

The session will cover funding and managing projects to redevelop previously-used sites, including brownfields, into housing, parks, trails, and job-creating businesses. This free, half-day workshop is designed for local governments, economic and community development departments, councils of government, nonprofits, and any other organizations interested in sustainable development. The workshop brings together each of the major providers of funding for environmentally-challenged property to discuss eligibility requirements, application procedures, and best practices.

Federal and state experts and seasoned brownfield redevelopment practitioners will be on-hand to discuss leveraging and layering state and federal funding sources, and to give you the advice you need to move your project forward. The workshop will be held on Wednesday, March 18th, from 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM at the Staybridge Suites, 1000 Genesee Street, Rochester, NY 14611. Early registration is recommended. To register, visit http://cclr.org/civircrm/event/info?reset=1&id=163&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Meet+Your+Federal+%26+State+Brownfield+...&utm_source=YMLP&utm_term=Register.

Main Street Boot Camp Coming To Margaretville

The M-ARK Project and NYS HCR will bring a regional Main Street Boot Camp to the Catskills on March 23rd and 24th. The first day of Boot Camp will feature a series of workshops on Main Street revitalization theory. Day Two will cover regional issues focussed on the revitalization of downtowns in the area. To register, call (845) 586-3500.

Non-profit Helps Increase Rural Multifamily Affordable Housing Stock

It comes as no surprise to those working in the affordable housing arena that people in rural America struggle to find safe, affordable housing. There are only a handful of government programs for building and rehabilitating properties and the money available continues to shrink, leaving housing agencies, particularly those serving rural areas, with a need to be creative.

When an East Coast housing agency wanted to expand its rural Multi-family Affordable Housing program, it found itself limited by its balance sheet. They were looking for a capital partner. One of the transactions with which it needed help was a mixed income development affordable housing apartment project with 120 units. The project consisted of 61 affordable rental units – 33 for households under 50% AMI, 13 for under 60% AMI and the balance untargeted- and 44 ownership units. The project has a future phase with 15 affordable units planned.

While the rental units were successful, the ownership units were impacted by poor market conditions in 2008 and 2009. The structure of the construction loan was complicated and tied both the rental development and the for-sale units into one development loan. The development team was unable to satisfy their obligations on the construction financing and the lender wanted out.

The housing agency was looking for a \$2.1 million loan to refinance the portion of the debt associated with the rental units thus preserving the affordable rental development. With that issue resolved the development



team would be able to work with the original lender to finish the for-sale portion of the development.

The housing agency learned about Community Reinvestment Fund, USA (CRF), a national non-profit and certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that is a leader in bringing capital to underserved rural and urban communities. CRF has helped provide more than \$300 million in funding for multi-family affordable housing since 1989.

“The project is critical to the community and the housing agency needed resources to transform a financial dilemma into an affordable housing dream” says Colleen Schwarz, Vice President of Affordable Housing. “

CRF looked at the analysis from the housing agency and conducted their own due diligence. Despite the failure of the for-sale units, the rental portion of the property was managed by a well-respected, experienced organization and the occupancy rate was 98.5% over the past four years. In addition, CRF was able to mitigate the risk by working with the housing agency to structure a federally guaranteed loan under the 542 (c) program administered by the Federal Housing Agency. CRF was able to provide loan terms that included a

fixed interest rate and a 30-year fully amortizing loan. (loans can amortize up to 40 years).

“This is a good example of a partnership that respects the housing agency’s local knowledge with CRF’s national resources,” says Schwarz. “And, the local community comes out the winner!”

CRF’s suite of multi-family affordable housing products include:

- LIHTC mortgages - for forward commitments, new and seasoned loans
- Risk share 542b/c - for new originations and forward commitments
- Naturally affordable housing – new originations.

To learn more, please contact: Colleen Schwarz at (720)289-2439.

Cocktails On The Hudson

CPC, The Columbia County Chamber of Commerce, and Hudson Community Development and Planning Agency, are hosting a cocktail reception to learn about The Community Preservation Corporation (CPC)’s history, experience & expertise in financing multi-family housing and how they can help finance your next project! CPC is a not-for-profit mortgage finance company that specializes in lending for the preservation & construction of multi-family housing in NY State. The event will be held on Thursday, March 5, 2015 at Hudson Development Corporation, 1 North Front Street, Hudson, from 5:30 - 7:30 PM. RSVP to Lisa Hickman, hickman@community.com or call (518) 463-1776.

Program Assistant

New York State Homes and Community Renewal seeks a Program Assistant in the Office of Community Renewal in Albany. The Office of Community Renewal (OCR) is one of four program offices within HCR. The OCR's mission is to administer a combination of State and Federal funding resources to develop or support programs that provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities for low and moderate income persons. This includes working with other government agencies, local governments and not-for-profits in the administration of a variety of grant programs.

Under the general direction of the Program Director, the Program Assistant provides administrative assistance and clerical support for the Program Director and other staff at the OCR as follows:

- Researching and analyzing federal program regulatory requirements such as the federal regulations governing program administration, fiscal management, labor standards, lead-based paint, etc. to determine fiscal and program impact;
- Interacting with grant recipients;
- Preparing draft correspondence, reports, instructions or other documents as needed;
- Data collection, reporting, project tracking;
- Maintaining electronic filing systems;
- Routine office activities;

Qualifications: Associates degree in humanities or business field plus two (2) years related varied clerical/administrative work experience. Bachelor's degree, knowledge of OCR programs preferred. Experience using Microsoft Office suite, Adobe Professional experience, database management experience, conference call coordination experience, travel coordination experience, effective communication skills, required; efficient, organized, self starter, analytical and problem solving skills.

We provide a workplace environment that is productive, flexible, accountable, ethical and caring. What we offer: exciting opportunity to be part of New York's resurgence to greatness; extensive benefits package including paid leave, excellent health, dental, vision and retirement bene-

fits; promotional opportunity for dedicated professionals. To apply, please send resume and cover letter to: jobopportunities@nyshcr.org.

(EOE)

Career Opportunities

Lending Officer

The Community Loan Fund is seeking an exceptionally organized individual who possesses a passionate commitment to our mission, is very detail oriented, and who has excellent analytical, financial and administrative skills. Primarily, the Lending Officer will solicit, accept, underwrite, close and manage loans to locally-based businesses and organizations.

If you are interested in applying, please email your letter of interest and resume to info@mycommunityloanfund.org, or send to: Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region, 255 Orange Street, Albany NY 12210.

REO/Foreclosure Specialist

The REO/Foreclosure Specialist at NYSHCR will work with the Agency's servicers to facilitate more timely processing of loans in foreclosure. In addition, once properties have been foreclosed and the selling price has been approved by the pool insurer, work with servicers to process the necessary paperwork to sell the properties.

Responsibilities include working with servicers and their attorneys to expedite loans through the foreclosure process, as well as working in coordination with the AVP/Mortgage Servicing, the Agency's legal department and the servicer to facilitate the sale and closing of all Real Estate Owned properties (REO) by processing contracts and all other required documentation.

Requirements/Qualifications: 3+ years successful experience in real estate and foreclosure; possess a thorough knowledge with the New York State foreclosure and REO processes; familiarity of New York State real estate contracts and closing documentation; proficient in MS Excel and MS Word; excellent verbal and written communication skills; strong analytical skills and attention to detail; Bachelor's Degree strongly preferred. To apply, please send resume and cover letter to: jobopportunities@nyshcr.org. New York State is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE)

The New York State Rural Housing Coalition is happy to be able to provide help wanted advertising opportunities for our members and non-profit community development agencies. Ad copy must be provided in Microsoft Word format, and may be transmitted by email to rhc@ruralhousing.org. Ad copy must comply with federal and state equal opportunity requirements to be published, and must be received by the 25th of the month to ensure placement in the succeeding issue of *Rural Delivery*. Ads provided in this fashion will also be posted in the Career Opportunities page of the Coalition's website, unless a request is specifically made not to place the advertisement on-line.

Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Public Comments Sought

On January 30, 2015, President Obama signed Executive Order 13690: Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input requiring federal agencies to take the appropriate actions to reduce risk to federal investments, specifically to “update their flood-risk reduction standards.” The Executive Order was released with Draft Implementing Guidelines and a document describing the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) in more detail.

Ogdensburg Gets Street Policies Nod

The City of Ogdensburg, in St. Lawrence County was recently rated as Number 1 nationally in the 2014 analysis of the best complete streets policies by Smart Growth America.

Complete streets are intended to assist in the revitalization of communities through traffic improvements that make it safer for pedestrians, cyclists, autos and truck traffic to coexist. In 2014, 70 communities across the country adopted policies for complete streets.

Ogdensburg was up against some tough competition, including Austin, Texas (tied for 3rd place), Troy, New York (2nd), and Los Angeles (tied for 10th).

Smart Growth America notes that over the years that they have been evaluating the policies going into effect, they have seen a significant improvement in the quality and sophistication of the enacted policies. For more information, visit www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets-2014-analysis.

The Draft Implementing Guidelines are currently subject to a public comment period until April 6th. Draft Implementing Guidelines guide Federal agencies in executing the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, which they will do through agency-specific guidelines and procedures. Comments may be submitted through the two options listed below. FEMA, through a collection of agencies with authorities and programs designed to mitigate the impacts of disasters on communities, will host listening sessions to ensure input is gathered on the implementation of the Standard. Listening session locations and times will be announced in the near future and will be held in locations across the country. The FEMA website will be updated with listening session locations and times, as details are announced. Here are the initial dates and locations:

- Sacramento, California – March 11th
- Biloxi, Mississippi – March 5th
- Ames, Iowa – March 3rd
- Hampton Roads, VA – March 11th
- New York City Metro Area – TBD
- National Capital Region – TBD

The FFRMS builds on work done by the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force, which was chaired by former HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. HUD and Sandy Recovery grantees have successfully im-

plemented a similar standard, and lessons learned were applied to the FFRMS development. The Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy recommended that the federal government create a national flood risk standard for Federally-funded projects beyond the Sandy-affected region. This recommendation resulted in the FFRMS.

HUD’s implementation of the FFRMS will require a public rulemaking process. Following the review of public comments on the Draft Implementing Guidelines and FFRMS, HUD will release a proposed rule for public comment. The rulemaking process will ultimately determine how HUD specifically implements the FFRMS.

FEMA is interested in getting input from all stakeholders regarding implementation of the Standard.

Comments on the Draft Guidelines for Implementing Executive Order, Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input, may be submitted by April 6, 2015 by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: www.regulations.gov. Search for the notice in docket ID FEMA-2015-0006
- Mail/Hand Delivery/Courier: Regulatory Affairs Division, Office of Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, 8NE, 500 C Street, SW, Washington, DC 20472-3100.



NCRC Conference Slated In DC

NCRC's Annual Conference is one of the nation's largest gatherings of community nonprofits, policymakers, government officials, small businesses, banks, and academia, all coming together to create a just economy. It will be held



March 25-28 in Washington, DC. The conference will feature:

- A wide range of cutting-edge workshops on community organizing and advocacy, housing, access to capital and credit, workforce and community development, fair lending, and business development
- The foremost experts and advocates sharing new developments,

best practices, and innovative ideas for community reinvestment

- Keynote addresses from prominent officials and leaders in the field
- NCRC's Hill Day and Congressional Luncheon
- The NCRC National Achievement Awards Dinner

NCRC is pleased to announce the first confirmed keynote speakers at our 2015 Annual Conference, "Creating a Just Economy." Keynoters include Thomas Curry of the Comptroller of the Currency, and Maria Contreras Sweet, Administrator of the Small Business Administration. To register, visit www.ncrc.org/conference/.

CHW Scholarships

Help a student who lives in an affordable housing development further his or her educational training by helping spread the word about the Cannon Heyman & Weiss Scholarship Fund.

Scholarships will be awarded to successful, qualified applicants and will offer financial aid for full- and part-time study at approved colleges, junior colleges, technical schools, and other post-secondary institutions leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate. Graduate studies are not included.

This year's awards are expected in amounts of \$10,000, \$5,000, or \$2,000. The Scholarship Fund is an extension of the CHW mission and reflective of the firm's commitment to the affordable housing industry and community development.

The Scholarship Fund is entirely underwritten by CHW. For additional information, visit www.chwattys.com. The application deadline is May 20, 2015.

Development Finance Training

The National Development Council 2015 Training Academy will be held from May 12-14th in Washington, DC. This is the perfect opportunity for continuing education or recertification as a Development Finance Professional. Trainings include financing methods for Land Banks and Brownfields Redevelopment; and basics of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit.

Academy tuition is \$825. Discounts are available for registration prior to April 11th.

For more information or to register, visit: http://ndcademy.org/register/?utm_source=Academy&utm_campaign=023360eddb-Call+for+Projects+Deadline+Extended&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_191bc6850a-023360eddb-219443753-&mc_cid=023360eddb&mc_eid=507bbdale5.

AHC Awards Announced

On February 10th, Governor Cuomo announced the award of AHC housing program grants totalling \$7.3 million. Rural grant awards include:

- Albany County Rural Housing Alliance received \$400,000 for an acquisition/rehab program;
- Catskill Mountain Housing received \$300,000 for a mobile home replacement program;
- Clayton Improvement Association, Ltd. received \$275,000 for housing rehabilitation;
- Fulton County Community Heritage received \$341,000 for housing rehabilitation;
- Genesee Valley Rural Preservation Corp. received \$400,000 for housing rehabilitation;
- Rennelaer County Housing Resources received \$250,000 for housing rehabilitation;
- Southern Hills Preservation Corp. received \$300,000 for housing rehabilitation.

Congratulations to all of the winners!

We've Gone Social!

The Coalition has taken our annual appeal to a new level - we are giving crowd funding a try. In addition to our print appeal mailings, we have created a fundraising appeal on the GoFundMe.com website. This site relies on friend networks to spread the word about our appeal. We're pleased to announce that we've already met some new supporters through this effort. You can find a link to our GoFundMe campaign on our facebook page at www.facebook.com/pages/New-York-State-Rural-Housing-Coalition/333134857189. Feel free to share the link with your friends!

LIHTC Year 15: Options and Opportunities

LISC will hold a training on Year 15 exits from LIHTC projects on March 31st in New Haven, CT. The free training will run from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

This workshop on Low Income Housing Tax Credit financed housing will provide detailed training on the nuts and bolts of the Year-15 exit process, a “how to” and “how not to” session with insight provided by practitioners who have been through the process, information on sources of financing, and a panel of experts who will address your questions and concerns. The trainer will be Lisa Deller from LISC. Pre-registration is required.

Who should attend? Organizations that own Low Income Housing Tax Credit financed properties.

The training will be held at Anthony’s Ocean View, 450 Light-house Road, New Haven, CT. Registration opens at 8:30 AM.

To register, visit https://chc.memberclicks.net/index.php?option=com_mc&view=form-login&form=188356&return=L2-luZGV4LnBocD9vcHRpb249Y29tX21jJnZpZXc9bWMmbWNpZD1mb3JtXzE4ODM1Nj9zZXJ2SWQ9MTYwMCZvcHRpb249Y29tX21jJnZpZXc9bWMmbWNpZD1mb3JtXzE4ODM1Ng==.

HUD Issues Guidance On Home Lending

On February 23rd, HUD issued guidance on home lending for LGBT persons. The guidance also covers appropriate placement of transgender persons in shelters. The Equal Access Rule ensures that housing across HUD programs is open to all eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or marital status. The guidance addresses appropriate placement of transgender individuals in single sex facilities, but it also guides providers on how best to address privacy and safety concerns within the facilities in ways that do not segregate or isolate transgender individuals. The guidance can be found at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2015/HUDNo_15-023.

Visit our website at www.ruralhousing.org
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Illegitimi Non Carborundum