



Rural Delivery

New York State Rural Housing Coalition, Inc.

May, 2014

State Approves Small Cities Housing Grants

On April 16th, the Office of Community Renewal announced the award of 59 Small Cities CDBG grants worth \$23,030,300. At the time of the NOFA announcement last October, OCR anticipated a total of \$12 million to be available in this round. \$12 Million more was identified as being available for this round in the interim.

Seventy-two applications for CDBG funding were received in this round, totalling \$27,865,300. The grant awards cover housing rehabilitation activities, well and septic replacement programs, as well as home ownership assistance for first time home buyers. Several grantees will rehabilitate multi-family housing within their grant programs. The North Country region received the greatest number of individual grants, 14, followed by the Southern Tier at 13.

Although the North Country received the highest number of grants, it was the region with the lowest number of awards that actually had the highest average grant award. With only 2 grants awarded, the mid- Hudson Valley had an average award of \$450,000. Second highest average award was in the Finger Lakes, with average grants of \$443,162.

In addition to the Small Cities awards, OCR announced the RE-

STORE awards to: Stoneleigh Housing; Community Action of Orleans-Genesee Counties; Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation, for Ontario and Wayne Counties; Richmond Senior Services, for Staten Island; Cayuga-Seneca Community Action, for Cayuga County; PRIDE of Ticonderoga; Housing Assistance Program of Essex County; Homsite Fund, for Cayuga County; West Side NHS in Buffalo; Otsego Rural Housing Assistance; and Fulton County Community Heritage Corporation, in Fulton County. The 2014 RESTORE grants awarded totalled \$500,000.

In addition to the CDBG and RESTORE awards, the HTFC approved \$1.4 million in Access to Home grants. \$1 million of this funding was from the 2013 state appropriation, and \$455,000 was recaptured prior year funding. Based on the funding available, 10 of the 49 grant applications were funded. The Access to Home awardees are: Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation, Rebuilding Together NYC, Access to Independence of Cortland County, Richmond Senior Services, Inc., Family Service Society of Yonkers, RECAP, Genesee Valley RPC, Resource Center for Independent Living, and Albany County Opportunity, Inc. All Ac-

cess awards were \$150,000, with the exception of Resource Center for Independent Living (\$130,000) and Albany County Opportunity, Inc. (\$125,000).

The geographic spread on the Access to Home awards was heavily weighted to upstate counties, with 70 per cent of the awards going to communities north of Westchester County. Three of the awardees are Rural Preservation Companies. No awards were granted on Long Island.

In addition to the above housing grants, the State approved a \$196,000 CDBG award to the Town of Oakfield for the expansion of United States Gypsum, creating 12 new jobs.

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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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Rural Delivery is published monthly and delivered electronically to a mailing list of 200 community development professionals and policy makers.

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...

Section 8 Comments Sought

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs has extended to May 14th the deadline for submitting comments regarding a draft revised Section 8 Renewal Policy Guide. HUD posted the draft for public comment on February 28th. Comments were originally due by April 30th. The transmittal memorandum summarizes 90 proposed changes. The Renewal Guide provides comprehensive guidance for renewing expiring Section 8 project-based contracts.

The draft revised Section 8 Renewal Policy Guide is at: <http://1.usa.gov/NRtJJC>.

Comment Period For State Action Plan Ends May 8th

NYSHCR is seeking public comments on the State Action Plan for use of \$68 million in federal community development funds. The comment period closes on May 8th. Comments should be mailed to: NYS HCR, Attention: Alison Russell, 38-40 State Street, Albany, NY 12207 or e-mailed to HCRConPln@nyshcr.org. To review a copy of the 2014 Action Plan, visit www.nyshcr.org/Publications/ActionPlan14/ActionPlan2014-PublicComment.pdf.

Benchmarking For Multifamily Owners And Managers

A webinar is archived on the LISC website for multifamily rental property managers that offers guidance on tracking the energy use of your properties, and comparing properties to others in your portfolio and in the marketplace. Use benchmarking to weave energy considerations into portfolio capital planning. To view the webinar, visit www.lisc.org/content/publications/detail/21509.

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.

CHDO Workshops Announced By HUD

HUD will hold workshops for Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) to orient them to changes in the 2013 final rule for the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program. The sessions will focus on the final rule's CHDO-specific provisions, and offer strategies to build and demonstrate the capacity an organization needs in order to receive CHDO set-aside funds. The HOME statute requires that 15% of a participating jurisdiction's HOME allocation be set aside for use by organizations

that meet CHDO criteria.

Two and one-half-day trainings are planned for 24 cities. Dates are set for 19 of the 24 cities, beginning May 13th in Boston, MA. HUD will offer travel and lodging scholarships for CHDOs with budget limitations.

CHDOs can register for May and June workshops at the CHDO Workshop News page at: <http://bit.ly/ljXTiTd>. Get more information about the final HOME rule on OneCPD at: www.onecpd.info/home.

Herkimer County Rejects CDBG Award

The *Little Falls Times* recently reported that the Herkimer County Legislature declined the acceptance of \$600,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds on April 23rd.

The award from the state Office of Community Renewal was to be used to establish a rehabilitation and replacement program for 20 manufactured housing units occupied by low- to moderate-income households in Herkimer. The grant was declined after the Legislature was unable to obtain a performance bond from the contractor that was being contemplated to perform the grant tasks, county Administrator James Wallace said. Mr. Wallace added it has been the county's re-

cent experience that federal and state entities are aggressively seeking the return of government funding due to technical objections, which is why the county asked the contractor to secure a performance bond.

"Grant programs of this kind result in the county acting as a pass through for the funds, with outside contractors performing the services funded by the grant," Wallace was quoted by the *Little Falls Times*. "If there was a claim by the government for the return of grant funds because of a problem in the way the services were performed, the county would remain liable." The resolution was unanimously adopted by all legislators present.

Air Conditioner Assistance Available

Governor Cuomo announced on April 28th that \$3 million is being made available to provide air conditioners to low-income New Yorkers with documented medical conditions that are exacerbated by extreme heat. To qualify, households must meet 2013-14 HEAP income guidelines and have a household member that suffers from a documented medical condition with written documentation from a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner indicating the need for an air conditioner, and must be dated within the previous 12 months. HEAP cooling assistance is provided on a first-come, first-served basis beginning May 1st. Local departments of social services will be accepting applications for assistance.

NY Rising Launches Rental Property Recovery Program

The NY Rising Rental Properties Recovery Program started accepting applications on April 4th for all single-family and multi-family rental properties with priority given to properties that offer affordable units—serving renters with income levels that fall below 80 percent of the area's median income. Property owners who have not begun any repairs will also be given preference. All other applications will be processed beginning in June, 2014. The program expands existing housing recovery efforts that have already distributed more than \$295 million to more than 6,700 eligible homeowners for damages caused by Superstorm Sandy, Tropical Storm Lee and Hurricane Irene.

Rental properties of all types and sizes that were being utilized for full-time, year-round use at the time of the storm(s) will be eligible. These include single-family homes, townhouses, apartment buildings or any other legal dwelling. NY Rising funding may be used to finance repairs to real property (excluding landscaping or anything that is not part of the building). The funds for the initiative are made available through State's Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery program, funded by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development.

Landlords or property owners who are interested in applying for the Rental Properties Recovery Program may do so by calling (855)697-7263 or visiting www.stormrecovery.ny.gov.

Project Profile: The French Sawmill

PRIDE of Ticonderoga

In our regular feature, Rural Delivery invites members of the Rural Housing Coalition to highlight their community development projects and programs in the pages of this newsletter. This month, we are pleased to present background on the proposed reconstruction of a historic sawmill by PRIDE of Ticonderoga. In their own words, here is their story:

PRIDE of Ticonderoga is in its 30th year as a NYS Rural Preservation Company and we've learned some things along the way. We've learned that change is a good thing, respond quickly to pending funding downfalls, and we have learned that to be successful means to have the ability to recognize a need in your community and work to make it happen.

The idea to recreate the 18th century French sawmill that was built in 1756 along the north bank of the LaChute River in Ticonderoga to cut timbers needed for the construction of Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga), was a concept first discussed in the early 1980's. The vision of recreating the sawmill appears in the Lane/Frenchman conceptual drawings in the '80's and resurfaced in 2009 through the work of Egret Communications and the Ticonderoga Quality Destination group formed by the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism in Essex County. Upon the approval of the Ticonderoga Tourism Destination Master Plan that included the sawmill project by the Ticonderoga Town Board, the reconstruction of the 18th Century French Sawmill took on new life with broad support from among others, the Town, PRIDE of Ticonderoga, and the Chamber of Commerce.

So, great, we have a project, now who is going to take this on? "A bit out of our usual menu of programs, PRIDE was the only organization around the table that even came close to having the ability to conduct the historical research needed and to identify the experts in the field and the scope of the reconstruction project", says Sharon Reynolds, Executive Director of PRIDE.

Rural Preservation Companies just by their expertise in proposal writing and administrative capabilities and coupled with their ability to complete projects on deadline, are the logical resource for most community development projects. "PRIDE has had to use our administrative talents to form new partnerships and strengthen our existing partnerships in the communities we serve and to open our doors as a true service organization", Reynolds stated. "Though it is the housing rehabilitation work we are most proud of, our community and revitalization projects allow us to contribute to the greater vision of a vital and rich quality of life for all".

Ticonderoga plans to use the Sawmill to leverage other activities through the Timber Framers Guild and both traditional and contemporary artists. The project will enhance the telling of the story of Ticonderoga's industrial history

along the LaChute River, its historic downtown and the connection with Fort Ticonderoga. The Fort's over 80,000 visitors will be drawn to this downtown destination and will generate more demand for lodging, dining, and retail, resulting in increased revenues for existing businesses. The Sawmill will generate 10 new jobs and will foster new tourism-related investment.

So far, the Phase I and II archeology is complete and the initial approval before construction from SHPO has been received. A feasibility study and operations plan have been completed and currently the research and design stages are underway, funded by a North Country Regional Economic Development Grant. This year another Consolidated Funding Application will be submitted to the Council for the production of construction drawings. Then we submit the applications for approvals from the Adirondack Park Agency, DEC and ACE and the actual construction.

"A project like the Reconstruction of the 18th Century French Sawmill requires many partners and without strong partners and support from the municipality, this effort would remain in a filing cabinet and become a lost opportunity for the region", says Reynolds. "I believe Rural Preservation Companies have a huge role to play in both local and regional revitalization efforts across New York State."



Artist's Rendering: The French Sawmill



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Career Opportunities

Chief Operating Officer

The COO oversees the day-to-day functioning of NLIHC. The COO ensures that the financial, development, field, communication, and administrative functions of NLIHC support NLIHC policies and achieve the goals and objectives established by the Board of Directors. Working with the President/Chief Executive Officer and the Senior Vice President for Policy, the COO manages the achievement of the annual operating plan, on time and within the approved budget. The COO has substantial interaction with the NLIHC Board and represents NLIHC to many stakeholders. The COO directly supervises four positions.

Qualified candidates must have a minimum of ten years of management experience and highly developed management skills. Demonstrated skills in non-profit financial management and fund development, an advanced degree in related field, and commitment to social justice are required. Experience in housing or homeless advocacy is a plus.

To apply for the COO position, send a cover letter with salary requirement, resume, and two writing samples to President, National Low Income Housing Coalition, 727 15th Street, NW, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20005 or email to Christina Reyes at creyes@nlihc.org. 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.

Next Generation Impact Measurement

Philanthropists have long sought the measurement and reporting of social outcomes. Specifically, they continue to struggle with determining and gathering the right data; rigorously evaluating if a program made a difference; conducting meaningful analyses of data; and getting data-driven answers when needed.

Grantmakers Forum of New York, the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley and the Dyson Foundation will host nonprofits and funders for a special workshop on

how data, analytics and technology are becoming game changers for achieving outcomes on Friday May 23rd from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

Peter York, national evaluation expert, author and speaker, and founder and CEO of a next-generation data science company, *Algorhythm*, will share how big(ger) data, cutting edge analytics and technology can revolutionize the way we measure and create impact.

This workshop is recommended for Executive Directors, program/evaluation staff, development staff,

board members, volunteers, and anyone involved in assessing and communicating impact of an organization's programs and services.

The workshop will be held at Locust Grove Estate, 2683 South Rd. (Route 9), Poughkeepsie. Registration is \$45 for the first registrant; \$25 each additional (up to 3) from the same organization.

To register, visit <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e8ywyu57a123478e&llr=td919gjab>.

HUD's Multifamily Asset Management Offices Remain At Current Locations

An April 1st letter signed by the Chairs and Ranking Members of both the Senate and House Appropriations Committees endorsed four of the five components of HUD's April 24, 2013, proposed Multifamily Transformation plan. The component that was rejected would have consolidated Asset Management field employees. As a result, HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs has announced that staff performing asset management functions will remain in their current locations for the time being. HUD states that as part of the FY15 budget process, the agency will continue to work with Congress to gain approval to consolidate Asset Management staff.

The Appropriators did endorse streamlining the Office of Multifamily Housing Program's production and operations field staff by moving to a five-region field structure, with each region having one hub office and one or two core satellite offices. They also endorsed HUD's proposals to undertake workload

sharing, use an Underwriter Model in production functions, and adopt an Account Executive Model in asset management.

The future hub and core satellite locations will be:

- Central Region: Fort Worth hub office with Kansas City, MO core satellite office;
- Midwest Region: Chicago hub office with Detroit and Minneapolis core satellite offices;
- Southeast Region: Atlanta hub office with Jacksonville core satellite office;
- Northeast Region: New York hub office with Boston and Baltimore core satellite offices; and,
- Western Region: San Francisco hub office with Denver core satellite office.

View HUD's announcement about the Congressional action at: <http://bit.ly/1hEBr6I>.

View "Moving Forward with Multifamily Transformation" and "Multifamily Q&A" at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/transforming_hud.

CFA NOFA To Be Released May 1st

The 2014 Consolidated Funding Application is expected to be released by the state on May 1st. The application deadline is Monday, June 16th at 4:00 PM. NYS Homes & Community Renewal will offer Community Development Block Grant and New York Main Street program funds for several activities in this 2014 CFA Round. The CFA process will cover many different community development programs, including:

- community and economic development
- water and wastewater systems
- planning and zoning
- parks, recreation and environmental protection
- Main Street revitalization
- Waterfront development

The 2014 REDC Guidebook and list of available resources will be accessible at www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov. For applicants, the CFA is available at <https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/>. Please contact HCR_CFA@nyshcr.org with application and program questions.

BEA NOFA Issued

The US Treasury Department issued a NOFA for the 2014 round of Bank Enterprise Award funding on April 24th. The NOFA makes up to \$18 million available in awards to eligible Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation-insured banks and thrifts, to provide equity investments, grants, loans or provide technical assistance to community Development Financial Institution partners.

The BEA program complements the community development activities of FDIC-insured depository institutions by providing financial incentives to expand investments in CDFIs and to increase qualified lending, investment, and service activities within economically distressed communities. Activities that qualify depository institutions for BEA program awards occur in census tracts where at least 30 percent of the population lives at or below the national poverty level and where the unemployment rate is 1.5 times above the national average. Since inception, the CDFI Fund has awarded approximately \$393 million through the BEA program.

Application webinars on the BEA application process was held on April 29th and will be repeated on May 6th (starting at 2:00 PM). A webinar on the mapping system used to identify eligible census tracts was held on April 29th.

The application deadlines are June 2nd for Part 1 of the application, and June 4th for Part 2. Funding awards are expected this coming Fall. For more information, visit www.cdfifund.gov/what_we_do/programs_id.asp?programID=1.

Rangel Proposes Renter Tax Credit

On April 10th, Congressman Charles Rangel introduced HR 4479, the “Renters’ Tax Credit Act of 2014.”

HR 4479 would create a Renters’ Tax Credit that would enable qualified renters to spend no more than 30% of their income on rent, with the remainder of their rent paid by the credit, which would go directly to a landlord or lenders of loans to landlords who rent to qualified renters. Renters would be eligible to benefit from the proposal if their income does not exceed 60% of area median income or 150% of the poverty line, whichever is higher.

“Federal housing spending is unbalanced -- it favors homeownership over renting, and it targets a larger share of the subsidies toward higher-income households. Today, 35% of households are renters, so this would offer a relief to the working families that are burdened by rents,” said Mr. Rangel in a press release upon the bill’s introduction.

The bill is based on a proposal from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. HR 4479 has been referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means. Read the CBPP proposal at: www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=3802. Read HR 4479 at: <http://beta.congress.gov/113/bills/hr4479/BILLS-113-hr4479ih.pdf>.

Minimum Rent Proposal Stirs Controversy

On April 24th, more than 100 national and state organizations sent a letter to the Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies opposing USDA’s proposal to impose \$50 minimum rents on its lowest income tenants.

In its FY15 budget request, USDA seeks authority from Congress to impose minimum rents on tenants receiving Section 521 rental assistance, a program of the USDA’s Rural Development arm meant to provide affordable housing to very low income tenants.

“The undersigned organizations want to express our opposition to the US Department of Agriculture’s FY15 proposal to impose \$50 minimum rents on the very poorest households it serves through Rural Development (RD) Section 521 rental assistance program. Today, these RD rental housing residents pay 30% of their adjusted income for rent, the federal standard for affordability. The mandatory minimum rent proposal would affect the 42,000 households whose incomes

are so low that they currently pay less than \$50 a month in rent. These households have adjusted annual incomes of less than \$2,000. For these households, RD housing assistance is often the last barrier between having a home and being homeless,” the letter states.

It is not clear how this issue will shake out. Housing advocacy groups have come out on all sides of this issue. A major related concern for supporters of the minimum rent proposal is that limited federal funding levels have forced USDA administrators to choose between rapidly-expanding rental assistance rolls and other capital funding programs, such as Section 515 or Section 502. Holding existing tenants harmless has taken precedence over other production programs, but USDA administrators are scrambling for ways to put the brakes on the continued expansion of the rental assistance budget.

However, one analysis indicates that if the \$50 minimum rent standard is implemented nationwide, the total impact will be to decrease rental assistance expenses by just \$5 million per year.

Advertising In RD

Members of the Rural Housing Coalition can now take advantage of display advertising in the monthly newsletter. This is a member-only benefit. Quarter page ads are available for \$50 per issue. Discounts apply for longer-term commitments. *Rural Delivery* reaches a circulation of 200 community development professionals and policy makers each month. To obtain a copy of the advertising rate sheet, please call (518) 458-8696, extension 14.

Peer to Peer Trainings

The 2014 series of Rural Preservation Company Peer To Peer trainings will be held this month. The sessions this year will include a benchmark analysis of agency capacity, a discussion of mobile/manufactured home issues, an overview of the recently-completed state budget cycle, and other issues of regional concern. All sessions will begin at 10:00 AM and conclude by 3:00 PM. The sessions will be held on May 1st in Schoharie, on May 7th in Mahopac, on May 8th in Ballston Spa, on May 13th in Perry, and on May 21st in Clayton. Please RSVP to colin@ruralhousing.org, and to obtain directions.

Schoharie Volunteers Still Needed

The devastating flooding from Hurricane Irene of the Schoharie Creek left behind countless ruined homes and businesses in rural villages and hamlets. Perhaps one of the worst things to then happen to Schoharie was to have Superstorm Sandy hit New York City and Long Island. That immense natural disaster redirected attention and resources from the ongoing needs in the Schoharie Valley.

Several years later, Schoharie still needs our help. Families are still working to try to return to their homes. Local organizations are still raising funds through church suppers and other small fundraisers to 'fix' these communities. Schoharie Area Long-Term has been formed to help create sustainable communities that will grow and thrive in

the future. SALT envisions a vibrant community. To support that vision, SALT has many different kinds of volunteer opportunities. There's a lot more to "rebuilding" than a building. Check out the SALT Volunteer Page for the many ways you can help!

- Be a Constructive Volunteer - SALT's biggest need is skilled volunteers to complete houses and make the Valley feel whole again. You can help further projects to completion. Carpentry, electrical, plumbing, roofing, excavation. You name it, they can use it.

- Be a Resilient Volunteer - by being a member on the Volunteer Resilience Committee or Preparedness Committee. There is opportunity to get disaster training now and be on staff for the Volunteer Recep-

tion Center, a central area set up to intake volunteers after a disaster.

- Be a Wild Volunteer - by being on the Schoharie Area Wild Committee or helping with clean-up activities.

- Be a Supportive Volunteer - by bringing your professional experience to the Fund Development, Grant Writing, or Special Events Committees, or helping with office administration, data entry, Internet Technology, or public relations.

If you have professional experience in one of these areas and a passion for the Schoharie Valley, contact SALT today by email to: volunteer@saltrecovery.org or call the office at (518) 702-5017. Check out the SALT Volunteer Page at www.saltrecovery.org/volunteer.

Visit our website at www.ruralhousing.org

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