



## Senior Housing Weekly

January 21, 2021

**LeadingAge Housing Advisory Group Call.** Join us on Monday, January 24, at 12:30 PM ET for our regular Housing Advisory Group call. We'll check in on testing access at housing communities, the rise in cases and how to navigate staffing shortages and in-person activities, and timing for COVID-19 Supplemental Payments (CSP) pay-outs from HUD. We'll also check in on news from HUD and the Hill and hear from Cory on staff vaccine requirements. Any LeadingAge member can join the Housing Advisory Group or submit advance questions by emailing Linda ([lcouch@leadingage.org](mailto:lcouch@leadingage.org)) or Juliana ([jbilowich@leadingage.org](mailto:jbilowich@leadingage.org)).

**LeadingAge COVID-19 Update Calls for the Continuum of Aging Services.** Join LeadingAge Coronavirus Update Calls next week to learn more about these and other COVID issues. The calls cover the entire continuum of aging services, including a brief housing update and a member/expert interview. If you haven't registered for LeadingAge Update Calls (held on 3:30pm ET on Mondays and Wednesdays), [you can do so here](#).

**Historic Broadband Investment Begins as Federal, State Governments Develop Plans.** Following billions in nationwide broadband investment approved by Congress in the fall of 2021, federal and state governments have begun making plans to distribute funds and increase connectivity – including potentially for affordable housing communities. Funds from the November 2021 Investment in Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA) will flow from the federal government to state broadband offices, which will then set up mechanisms to distribute the investment throughout their jurisdictions. In total, more than \$46 billion were approved for broadband construction, digital literacy programming, equitable access mapping, internet service adoption projects, and more. Multifamily residential housing, households with low incomes, and older adults are each highlighted among the law's intended beneficiaries. As the federal government and then state governments develop plans for the allocation of the broadband funds, LeadingAge is weighing in at every level to ensure the funds create new opportunities for connectivity for HUD-assisted and other un- and underserved older adult households. More information is available [here](#).

**Phone Number for Test Kit Ordering.** As a follow up to the federal government's [website to order at-home testing kits](#), there is also now a phone number to do so. People who do not have Internet access or who need additional assistance with ordering can call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489) to place their orders. The [Eldercare Locator](#) and the [Disability Information and Assistance Line \(DIAL\)](#) also can assist older adults and people with disabilities with placing orders if they need additional help, connect people to accessible instructions, and help with administering the tests. Both phone lines are staffed Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Eastern). Older adults can call the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116 Monday-Friday or [visit the website](#) to chat live or browse resources. People with disabilities can contact DIAL by calling 888-677-1199 or by emailing [DIAL@usaginganddisability.org](mailto:DIAL@usaginganddisability.org). The DIAL information specialists are trained to work with people of various communications abilities, including spending as much time as needed to understand callers. Deaf and hard-of-hearing people can reach

DIAL using the 711/Video Relay Service (VRS). To use this free service, simply dial 711 to be connected via text with a communications assistant. (For people who do not communicate through speech, sign language or VRS, email is the best option to communicate with DIAL.)

**HUD Expected to Release Fifth Round of COVID-19 Supplemental Payments.** HUD has said that Multifamily Housing providers can reasonably expect a fifth round of COVID-19 Supplemental Payments (CSPs) to offset COVID-19 costs at properties. The timing is unclear, but the new round is expected to include similar reimbursement categories as the fourth round, including capital cost reimbursements for internet, generators, and air system improvements. Stay tuned for more information as LeadingAge receives it. Fourth round CSPs are being formally approved at the Headquarters level and are on track to be paid on time. HUD will also issue guidance next month on how to certify project completion for owners requesting reimbursement under the capital expense category.

**Two Sessions Feature Housing and Services Partnerships.** Join the [Housing and Services Resource Center](#) (HSRC), coordinated by the Administration on Community Living and HUD, for webinars on Service Coordination Models and Sustainability (January 25) and Cross-Sector Partnerships to Expand Options for Affordable, Accessible Housing (February 10) featuring partnerships in Ohio between the housing sector and aging and disability networks. These collaborations are expanding options for older adults and people with disabilities to live in their communities with access to supportive services they may need. [Learn more and register for the second and third sessions.](#)

**New Rental Housing Report: “The Challenge is Enormous.”** On January 21, the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University released *America’s Rental Housing 2022*. This year’s annual scan of the state of America’s rental housing returns again and again to the legacy of structural racism has on the nation’s poorest renter, renters who pay more than 30% and 50% of their incomes for rent, renters who live in high-poverty neighborhoods, renters who have little household wealth compared to homeowner counterparts, cost-burdened renters who sacrifice other necessities like food and healthcare to pay the rent. Today’s rental market is defined by soaring rents (rents in 77 of 150 markets analyzed increased by double digits in the third quarter of 2021, compared to a year earlier), historically low vacancy rates (the vacancy rate for all rental units was at only 5.8% in the third quarter of 2021), loss of low-cost units (between 2011 and 2019, the share of overall rental stock renting for less than \$600/month fell from 32% to 22%), and other factors, according to the report. Read a LeadingAge article on the report [here](#).

**Materials from HUD Omicron Webinar.** On Wednesday, January 19, 2022 HUD hosted a webinar about the latest Omicron guidance from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and more. Topics included:

- Boosters and additional doses
- Tests (PCR, Rapid, and at-home)
- Masks and social distancing
- Quarantine and isolation
- Preventing a “Flurona Twindemic”

The webinar was for all public housing agencies, housing providers, community partners, faith-based organizations, and federal, state, and local staff, and quickly reached capacity. Our amazing LeadingAge colleague Eram Abbasi attended today’s webinar and [captured the screenshots from it](#).

**HUD Shares First Year Accomplishments.** On the first anniversary of the Biden Administration, January 20, HUD shared a list of accomplishments, including: launching a whole-of-government effort to ensure all Americans are treated fairly in the home appraisals process; launching all-hands-on-deck effort to address homelessness crisis; preventing evictions and foreclosures; standing up a new \$5 billion HOME-ARP program to assist some of the country's most vulnerable populations; providing emergency housing vouchers; removing barriers to homeownership for those with student loan debt; setting the stage for increased fair housing and lending enforcement and access; taking action to increase housing supply and access to affordable housing; restoring the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing requirement; strengthening the FHA's mutual mortgage insurance fund; protecting the LGBTQ+ community from housing discrimination; and, providing housing assistance and supportive services for Native Americans. In a January 20 call with LeadingAge, HUD Chief of Staff Jenn Jones also celebrated HUD's work to protect staff, grantees, and residents from COVID and to ensure impacted families could stay in their homes. See HUD's press release [here](#).

**Rural Housing Service Plans Regular Stakeholder Calls.** The Rural Housing Service this week invited stakeholders to join USDA Rural Development Multifamily Housing (MFH) leadership to receive updates on MFH programs. USDA Rural Development MFH Field Operations staff plans to hold these meetings periodically to provide updates to our customers. According to RHS, if you are looking for the servicing specialist for a specific property, you will find a complete and sortable list [here](#). RHS also reminds stakeholders of regional office directors: Regional Director: **Western Region** (AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY): Becki Meyer, Regional Director, [MFHFODWest@usda.gov](mailto:MFHFODWest@usda.gov); **Southern Region** (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, PR, SC, TN, TX, VI): Byron Waters, Regional Director, [MFHFODSouth@usda.gov](mailto:MFHFODSouth@usda.gov); **Midwest Region** (IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI): Karissa Stiers, Regional Director, [MFHFODMidwest@usda.gov](mailto:MFHFODMidwest@usda.gov); and, **Northeast Region** (CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, VT, WV): Laurie Warzinski, Regional Director, [MFHFODNortheast@usda.gov](mailto:MFHFODNortheast@usda.gov). USDA RHS multifamily programs serve more than 222,000 older adult households. All are encouraged to [join a mailing list to receive future updates via GovDelivery](#) from Rural Development Multifamily Housing.

**Public Health Emergency Renewed for Another 90 Days.** As expected HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra announced that the [Public Health Emergency \(PHE\) would be renewed](#) for another 90 days, until April 16; this is the eighth time it has been extended since the original declaration in the beginning of 2020. The new 90 day clock starts today. There was no doubt it would be renewed as the Biden Administration had promised earlier that it would not end the PHE without giving at least 60 days notice. As a reminder, 90 days is the maximum length of time the PHE can be extended at one time.

**Booster Requirements by State.** We've updated our [Vaccine Mandates by State article](#) to include those states now requiring boosters and/or "up to date status" on vaccines. So far, there are six states that have implanted such mandates, or will soon: California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, and New York.