



## Senior Housing Weekly

February 25, 2022

**LeadingAge Housing Advisory Group Call.** Join us on Monday, February 28, at 12:30pm ET. We'll be joined by staff from UsAgainstAlzheimer's to talk about their Healthy Brain Initiative, and will of course have updates from HUD and Congress. 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)).

**Coronavirus Update Call Next Week.** On Monday, February 28 at 3:30 PM ET we will be back to talk about the importance of preparing for future COVID-19 surges and also how providers can best protect and advocate for your employees. Research is showing that the Omicron surge had an unequal toll on workers and stretched families as they balanced work with family responsibilities. On Monday's call we will hear from Dr. Julia Raifman, a leading professor from Boston University School of Public Health who will share her research on building trust with employees around vaccines and preparing for what can come next. If you haven't registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here](#).

**New Action Alert – Tell Congress to Fund Vital Aging Programs and Services.** Congress Needs To Pass Funding Bills to Sustain and Expand Aging Programs: It is time for Congress to pass a long-term government funding bill that sustains and expands investments in home and community-based services, affordable housing for low income older adults, and measures that address the aging services sector's severe workforce challenges. Continuing resolutions do not allow for increases to key federal programs that sustain or aging services infrastructure—and that hurt older adults and families across the country.

Send a message to your members of Congress and let them know they need to act now: <https://mobilize4change.org/NVSDoWd>

Right now congressional leaders are negotiating federal investments in aging services programs for next year and we need your help! Too many older adults are struggling to access the essential services they need and funding levels must increase. Senators and Representatives must hear from constituents like you that they can't leave older adults behind.

Americans overwhelmingly support increased investments in aging services. Nothing should disrupt Congress from delivering funding increases to help older adults and their families. Send a message to your elected leaders in Congress today by visiting here <https://mobilize4change.org/NVSDoWd>

**HUD Funding Chart.** LeadingAge has created an [appropriations chart](#) to help advocates better understand the differences between the House and Senate HUD appropriations bills for HUD multifamily senior housing funding. For key multifamily senior housing programs, the chart compares FY21 enacted HUD funding levels with FY22 levels in the President's request, the House bill, and the Senate bill. Congress is currently negotiating the differences in all appropriations bills, including those of the HUD

programs in this chart, as it works to enact final FY22 bills by March 11. President Biden is expected to release his budget request for FY23 as soon as the first week of March.

**More than Half of Emergency Rental Assistance Funds Remain.** Of the \$46.5 billion provided for the Emergency Rental Assistance program, just 44% (\$20.6 billion) was used to help renters with payments and arrears for rent and utility bills through December 2022, according to data released on February 24 by the Treasury. Congress provided the \$46.5 billion through two large COVID relief bills in 2020 and 2021. Of the expended funds, more than 60% went to extremely low income households (households with incomes less than 30% of area median income) according to new Treasury data on the ERA program. About two-thirds of ERA recipient households were headed by women. The first tranche of ERA funding (for “ERA1”) of \$25 billion was provided in the FY21 omnibus appropriations bill; these ERA1 Funds generally expire on September 30, 2022. The second tranche of ERA funding (for “ERA2”) of \$21.55 billion was provided in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; ERA2 funds generally expire on September 30, 2025. The funds were distributed by formula allocation to states and to local governments with populations greater than 100,000. For more about the ERA program, including the new data, go [here](#).

**HUD Posts Updated Flyer on Resident, Owner Rights for REAC.** HUD posted an updated flyer with information on physical inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic, replacing an earlier version posted in 2021 by HUD. The new flyer provides additional detail on both owner and resident rights before, during, and after an inspection, and reiterates existing HUD policy that residents can opt out of a unit inspection. The new flyer also outlines how to postpone or adjust an inspection because of pandemic-related issues. Additionally, HUD is providing clarification on some frequently asked questions regarding how to inform HUD of COVID-19 cases at properties, how to request a deferral, and what criteria HUD uses in determining whether to grant a deferral. More info is available [here](#).

**New March Sessions from Housing and Services Resource Center.** The HUD/ACL [Housing and Services Resource Center](#) will host two sessions in March related to cross-sector partnerships that create housing stability.

- *March 7, 3:00 - 4:30 PM ET - Expanded Opportunities with Federal Funding for Housing and Services.* [Register for the webinar](#). Federal agency leaders will highlight major funding streams for affordable, accessible housing, home and community-based services, and behavioral and mental health services. In particular, the American Rescue Plan provides new opportunities to address disparities among people with disabilities, older adults, and people experiencing homelessness. Presenters will offer models that braid federal funding so all can live successfully and stably in the community. Featured agencies include the Administration for Community Living, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- *March 15, 2:30 – 4:00 PM ET - State and Local Partnerships for Housing Stability.* [Register for the webinar](#). States and communities have created cross-sector partnerships that improve housing stability by connecting people to housing and making it easier to obtain supportive services. Presenters from housing, home- and community-based services, and health services will feature

their successful approaches. After a showcase of innovative collaborations that braid funding for housing and services, webinar participants will have time to ask questions.

**First-Ever Data on LGBTQI+ Households and HUD Housing.** HUD-assisted renter households are about as likely as all U.S. renter households to comprise LGBTQI+ households while housing insecurity metrics were higher for LGBTQI+ Black and Hispanic renter households than for their non-LGBTQI+ Black and Hispanic counterparts. HUD researchers used the Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey, which had already included data on race, ethnicity, and housing status, but recently added data on sexual orientation and gender identity, to examine the intersection of these four characteristics. For the first time, HUD researchers were able to successfully link Household Pulse Survey SOGI data with data from HUD’s three largest programs (public housing, vouchers, and project-based multifamily housing). “[T]his analysis provides the Department’s first estimate of LGBTQI+ households receiving HUD assistance,” the PD&R researchers say. Read more about the report [here](#).

**New Brief on Affordable and Quality Housing.** RRF Foundation for Aging released a new Issue Brief on February 23, *Home Front and Center: Supporting Access to Affordable and Quality Housing*. The nation’s lack of affordable and appropriate housing is “particularly acute for older people—those with low or fixed incomes may forgo adequate nutrition, medications, and other essentials in order to keep a roof over their heads. The reason is captured in a saying cited often by affordable housing advocates: The rent eats first,” the brief says. The brief outlines three strategies that will improve housing for older people, especially those whose access to safe and affordable places to live has been limited by economic inequities or discrimination. The three strategies, promoting safe and supportive housing, addressing inequities and preventing homelessness, and enabling affordable housing, are reviewed. The new Issue Brief includes data on housing and homelessness among older adults, points to the RRF Foundation’s commitment to projects, education, and advocacy to address this issue, and describes how affordable housing is central to the Foundation’s work toward improving the quality of life for older people. The Issue Brief is [here](#).

**Publication of HUD Median Rents by ZIP Code Has Been Delayed.** The publication of Median Rents by ZIP Code has been delayed due to the effects of COVID. Specifically, the Census Bureau will be unable to release the underlying dataset until March. HUD will publish the revised Median Rents by ZIP Code as soon as possible after the underlying dataset has been released. Until that time, stakeholders should continue to rely upon the figures published on February 11, 2021.

**Monthly Internet Discount Program to Transition March 1.** The FCC’s Affordable Connectivity Program has replaced the Emergency Broadband Benefit. On March 1, 2022, most legacy Emergency Broadband Benefit households should be automatically transitioned to the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Households that need to take action to remain enrolled in the ACP will have been contacted by USAC, the program administrator, or their provider. After the transition period ends on March 1, 2022, the monthly discount for all legacy EBB participants not located on qualifying Tribal lands will be reduced to \$30. Consumers should contact their provider if they are concerned about a possible increase in their monthly service bill or are interested in changing to a different service plan. More information is available [here](#).

**Unique Entity Identifier Replacing DUNS for LOCCS Users.** For HUD Line of Credit Control System (LOCCS) users, please note that by April 4, 2022, the federal government will transition away from using the Dun & Bradstreet data universal numbering system (DUNS) to the new Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) for identification for federal awards. Entities must be registered in SAM.gov to qualify for federal awards that are reported to the public through USASpending.gov. If you have not already registered or if your registration has expired, please register immediately. The General Services Administration (GSA) has provided tools that will assist you in registering your entity and obtaining a DUNS/UEI. Visit the GSA SAM web site that contains a number of resources related to the [UEI implementation](#). Stakeholders can also watch a [webinar](#) from November 3, 2021, concerning the changes.

**Proposed Public Charge Rule Moves Away from Considering Housing Benefits.** The Department of Homeland Security released a proposed rule titled "[Public Charge Ground of inadmissibility](#)", this rescinds the Trump Administration's interpretation of the term "public charge" and the type of public benefits considered when making a public charge admissibility determination. DHS proposes to consider the following public benefits when making a public charge inadmissibility determination:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
- Cash assistance for income maintenance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program;
- State, Tribal, territorial, and local cash assistance for income maintenance; and
- Long-term institutionalization at government expense.

DHS proposes that it will not consider non-cash benefits such as food and nutrition assistance programs including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Children's Health Insurance Program, most Medicaid benefits (except for long-term institutionalization at government expense), housing benefits, and transportation vouchers. DHS would also not consider disaster assistance received under the Stafford Act; pandemic assistance; benefits received via a tax credit or deduction; or Social Security, government pensions, or other earned benefits.

By law, many categories of noncitizens are exempt from the public charge ground of inadmissibility and would not be subject to the proposed rule. Some of these categories are refugees, asylees, noncitizens applying for or re-registering for temporary protected status (TPS), special immigration juveniles, T and U nonimmigrants, and self-petitioner under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Under the proposed rule, if a noncitizen received public benefits while in an immigration category that is exempt from the public charge ground of inadmissibility, DHS would not consider the noncitizen's past receipt of such benefits as part of any future public charge determination. **The comments for the proposed rule are due on 4/25/2022**

**Mental health and older adults: a multi-agency federal discussion.** On Tuesday, March 1 at 2:30 PM ET, the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute on Aging, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (all components of the US Department of Health and Human Services) will collaborate on a Facebook Live event to discuss mental health and older adults. The session will include live Q&A, highlight relevant research, and share resources for older adults who may be struggling with their mental health. Visit the [Facebook Event Page](#) for more information and to RSVP.

**New Senate Bill Seeks \$2.5B for HUD’s Section 202 Program.** On February 25, Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) announced a new bill, the Housing for All Act of 2022. The bill would make significant investments in an array of HUD affordable housing programs to address the nation’s housing shortage, prevent and end homelessness, and support community-driven affordable housing solutions. The bill would provide \$2.5 billion for HUD’s Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program. This funding level was in early House iterations of the now-paused Build Back Better Act. Of these funds, the bill would direct \$15 million for technical assistance to support State-level efforts to improve the design and delivery of voluntary supportive services. “LeadingAge applauds the introduction of the Housing for All Act. Housing cost burdens and homelessness are rising steeply for older adults. Because of longstanding underinvestment in critical housing resources, our country’s supply of affordable housing for older adults is simply insufficient. This bill is a much needed and long overdue response to address significant needs. For example, the bill’s \$2.5 billion investment in HUD’s Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program would result in about 37,000 new homes as well as new Service Coordinators who help older adult residents age in community in affordable, quality housing. We look forward to doing all we can to secure enactment of Senator Padilla’s new bill,” Katie Smith Sloan, LeadingAge President & CEO, said in a statement. The bill would also provide \$14.5 billion for new Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance homes, \$45 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund, \$900 million for the Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities program, and \$40 billion for the HOME program among many other investments. A section-by-section summary of the bill is [here](#).

**Educate Staff on the Earned Income Tax Credit.** LeadingAge has compiled a toolkit for aging services providers on the Earned Income Tax Credit. Providers can help educate staff on the Earned Income Tax Credit and put more money in their pockets! Changes Congress made last year to the Earned Income Tax Credit make it more valuable than ever to workers with relatively low earnings. Aging services staff who qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit should not leave these checks unclaimed. Aging services providers can help educate staff about this potentially valuable tax benefit. If your eligible staff aren’t claiming it, they are leaving money on the table. For example, the estimated Earned Income Tax Credit for a single person with no children and earnings of \$17,000 is \$674; for a single person with two children and earnings of \$30,000 it is \$3,768; and for a married couple with one child and earnings totaling \$40,000 it is \$1,292. The tool kit includes quick facts on the EITC, an EITC calculator, links to basic and detailed EITC overviews, including from the Internal Revenue Service, as well as a short YouTube video, and flyers to help raise awareness among staff. Access the toolkit [here](#).