



Senior Housing Weekly Update

May 28, 2021

No Housing Advisory Group Monday, May 31. We will not have our regular Housing Advisory Group call on Monday in observance of the Memorial Day holiday. Join us for our next call on Monday, June 7 at 12:30pm ET. Any member can join the Housing Advisory Group by adding it to their account's Online Subscriptions or by emailing [Linda](#) or [Juliana](#).

Upcoming Update Calls – LeadingAge's COVID-19 update calls for the continuum of aging services continue with more creative member solutions and a member of Congress on tap. On Wednesday, June 2, Sharon Wilson Geno of Volunteers of America will talk about handling updated guidance in housing settings across multiple states. Representative Tom Suozzi (D-NY-3) will be our guest on Thursday, June 3, discussing his WISH Act proposal, a public-private catastrophic long-term care benefit. If you haven't signed up yet for our calls on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 3:30pm ET, you can register [here](#).

HUD Requests More & Better Housing from Congress. On May 28, the White House sent its full fiscal year 2022 budget request to Congress. Overall, the request seeks a 15.1%, or \$9 billion, increase for HUD. The fiscal year 2022 request is *in addition to* the resources the Biden Administration is seeking as part of the American Jobs Plan infrastructure proposal. The request expands funding for new Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly homes, seeks new grant- and budget-based Service Coordinators, and would make improvements to RAD while also expanding it to the Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities program. More in this [article](#).

Save the Date: Pre-1974 Section 202 Preservation. Please join LeadingAge on Thursday, June 10 at 2pm ET for a conversation about preserving pre-1974 Section 202 Direct Loan affordable senior housing communities. Nationally, there are more than 10,000 pre-1974 Section 202 Direct Loan apartments. LeadingAge is working to promote preservation strategies for these homes. [Register](#) for this June 10, 2pm ET, Zoom call. Speakers on the June 10 call will be John Ardovini, HUD Office of Recapitalization, to discuss preservation options, and Naren Dhamodharan and Mark Oswanski, Hampden Park, to discuss the process for nonprofits to preserve this housing. For more about pre-1974 Section 202 Direct Loan housing, see this [HUD resource](#). To submit questions in advance of the June 10 event, please email Linda (lcouch@leadingage.org.) Please feel free to share this invitation with others.

White House Seeks \$2 Billion for New Section 202 Housing. The White House is seeking \$2 billion for HUD's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program as part of its American Jobs Plan infrastructure proposal to Congress, according to a [May 26 fact sheet](#) on the American Jobs Plan issued by the White House. Previous White House and HUD descriptions of the broad housing-related funds included in the American Jobs Plan proposal did not provide a lot of detail beyond funding for public housing, the housing trust fund, the HOME program, and a few others. The May 26 announcement is a clear acknowledgement of the White House and HUD's support for the Section 202 program and its role

as a key piece of any infrastructure package. During a call with White House and HUD staff, LeadingAge confirmed that the investment would be targeted toward developing new units, while other parts of the American Jobs Plan could address other LeadingAge priorities, like expanding internet access throughout the affordable housing portfolio. LeadingAge has been working hard to educate the White House, HUD, and Congress about the need to not overlook the nation's flagship affordable senior housing program as part of infrastructure investments and we are very pleased to see the Section 202 program included in HUD's new fact sheet. More information in this [article](#).

Act Now: Affordable Housing Action Alert to Congress. Congress is considering hundreds of billions for affordable housing as part of an infrastructure package. This package must include affordable housing for older adults. [ACT NOW by contacting your U.S. Representative and Senators and urging them to invest in our affordable senior housing infrastructure.](#)

Tell Congress to:

- **Expand the supply.** Invest at least \$2.5 billion in HUD's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program to build 27,000 affordable senior homes. This \$2.5 billion proposal is consistent with the 116th Congress's S. 2951, H.R. 5187, and H.R. 2 (the House-passed Moving Forward Act).
- **Fund more Service Coordinators.** Invest \$1 billion for 3,867 three-year Service Coordinator contracts for the HUD-assisted senior communities currently without one. Only half of HUD-assisted senior housing has a service coordinator, the mainstay between residents and home and community-based services.
- **Provide internet access in affordable housing.** Ensure that the more than 2.2 million older adults in federally-subsidized affordable housing buildings have basic internet access. We urge any package to include the Broadband Justice Act (H.R. 1904), which authorizes \$5 billion for broadband as a utility and such sums as may be necessary for wiring and installation for all HUD, USDA, and Housing Credit homes.
- **Establish a capital pool for age-friendly retrofits to meet building design needs in the HUD-subsidized housing stock.** LeadingAge supports a \$1 billion pool of capital funds, administered by HUD under a new Age-Friendly Retrofit Program, to help current and future older adult households live in independent housing for as long as they choose to do so. Funds can be used for COVID-responsive ventilation systems, to make more federally-subsidized units fully accessible to meet existing and future needs, and to create and/or modernize physical spaces for services.

Emergency Rental Assistance Portal of Local Programs: The Department of Housing and Urban Development [released information on the Emergency Rental Assistance \(ERA\) Portal of local programs](#). The [ERA program](#), funded through the Department of the Treasury, makes funding available to assist households that are unable to pay rent or utilities. Two separate programs have been established: ERA1 provides up to \$25 billion and ERA2 provides up to \$21.55 billion. The funds are provided directly to states, U.S. territories, local governments, and for ERA1, Indian tribes. Grantees may use the funds to provide assistance to eligible households through existing or newly created rental assistance programs. Learn more about the ERA program in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

FEMA Funeral Benefit program changes coming? Politico reported this week that thousands of people seeking federal funeral assistance from the FEMA [funeral assistance program](#) have not been able to get that help because their death certificates do not list COVID as the cause of death. FEMA has been

advising applicants to seek changes in death certificates, but medical personnel are reluctant to amend death certificates. The program includes safeguards to prevent fraud but there are still concerns that people will try to game the program with the result that people who really need the help may not be able to get it. According to the report, FEMA officials are working with CDC to find ways to reduce the burden on applicants.

Emergency Broadband Benefit Surpasses 1M Households Enrolled. In the first week since its launch date in mid-May, the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) has enrolled more than one million households in need of internet cost support. The benefit program offers a monthly discount on internet services to assist households with low incomes stay connected throughout the pandemic. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) also announced that over 900 broadband providers have agreed to participate in the program, which is open to eligible new, prior, and existing customers of the internet service provider, including households with outstanding services fee or prior debt. HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing has emphasized to stakeholders that HUD Multifamily-assisted households are eligible to enroll in the EBB. Eligibility criteria and outreach information is available [here](#).

Republican Counter Offer on Infrastructure. Senate leaders offered an infrastructure plan today with a price tag just under \$1 trillion; the original proposal from the White House totaled \$2.3 trillion, with a compromise offered at \$1.7 trillion. More significant than the total spending, the offer described today did not include provisions to address the care infrastructure. In the compromise put forward by the White House, the President reiterated that any final agreement should include the \$400 billion for HCBS and other caregiving supports. Negotiations on infrastructure will continue.

2020 Profile of Older Americans Released. The Administration on Community Living has released the *2020 Profile of Older Americans*, a brief report full of national- and state-level data on older adults and their incomes, housing, employment, health, education, caregiving, and other characteristics. For example, according to the report, of the 14.1 million households headed by persons age 75 and older in 2019, 77% (10.8 million) owned their homes and 23% (3.3 million) rented. And, the median household income of older homeowners was \$36,200 while the median household income of older renters was \$18,280. The report includes current numbers and some projections. Read an article [here](#).

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for Health Equity. LeadingAge and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) are pleased to announce the opening of nominations for the 2021 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Award for Health Equity. The Award for Health Equity recognizes an individual or a team of two individuals who have sought ways to increase access to services, supports, and opportunities that enable vulnerable elders to lead healthy lives. The deadline to submit a nomination is midnight on Friday, June 18. [Read here](#) to find out more about the award.

NGA COVID-19 Vaccine Incentives: The National Governors Association [released a memo to provide an update on the current COVID-19 vaccine incentives](#) being utilized across the country. This memo includes information on state- and city-led incentives. Please note that vaccination incentives is a relatively novel topic in public policy and it is not known to what extent incentives like this drive increases in vaccinations, but there are some early indications that the right incentive can help.

A Long Life Isn't Necessarily a Healthy Life. The US Census released an infographic today, "[A Long Life Does Not Always Mean a Healthy Life in Old Age.](#)" The topline point is that people all around the world are living longer than in past generations but all of those extra years are not spent in good health. The United States ranked 31st in the world on life expectancy at age 60 (23.3 years) and healthy life expectancy at age 60 (17.9 years). The data make a strong case for retirement planning and long-term care planning, both for individuals and policy makers.

Monoclonal antibody treatment webinar. LeadingAge, AHCA, and AMDA are jointly collaborating with the federal COVID response team to hold a live event, "Update on the Use of Monoclonal Antibody (mAB) Therapies for COVID-19: A Review of New Treatments and At-Risk Populations." The event is set for June 15 at 3:00 PM ET, and will be available on the AHCA Education platform. Dr. Michael Anderson of the federal COVID response team will present an overview, followed by a panel with a representative from each of the three associations talking about experiences, obstacles, and opportunities with mAB. Register [here](#) for the event.

Mental Wellbeing: Regaining Confidence and Control. May is Mental Health Awareness Month, which is a timely opportunity to think about the trauma of the past year and how it has affected everyone, in ways we may not yet fully realize. This [on-demand session](#) on the LeadingAge Learning Hub explores how we all can respond to the sadness, anxiety, fear, and stress that arise when we face short and longterm crises. [Free for members to access.](#)

How Are You Supporting Your Team's Emotional Wellbeing? The last year has taken a toll on your team members, elders, and their families. Are you doing all you can to support their mental health and emotional wellbeing? Join LeadingAge's [new virtual shared learning series](#) for expert-led instruction to help you build and sustain strategies for supporting your community's mental health. Led by Kelly O'Shea Carney, PhD, ABPP and LeadingAge's Kirsten Jacobs, the series will explore why emotional wellbeing should be a top concern for your organization. Participation is limited. [Learn more and register today.](#)