



Senior Housing Weekly

April 22, 2022

LeadingAge Housing Network Call. Join us on Monday, April 25, at 12:30pm ET, for our weekly Housing Network call. On April 25, we will discuss HUD's proposed changes to the Section 8 Renewal Guide on Rent Comparability Studies, insights from the most recent LeadingAge quarterly survey of affordable housing members, the April 26 housing call-in day to Congress, and other updates. Any LeadingAge member can join the Housing Network or submit advance questions by emailing Linda (lcouch@leadingage.org) or Juliana (jbilowich@leadingage.org). Read more about all LeadingAge member groups [here](#).

LeadingAge Coronavirus Call April 25. Questions abound with CDC mask requirement changes, all while staff and residents are getting ready for summer travel with the current variant still looming. Join us for some important answers on the Monday, April 25, LeadingAge Coronavirus Update Call at 3:30pm ET. We will welcome back leading infectious disease expert Dr. Ghinwa Dumyati from the University of Rochester. She will talk about the importance of managing COVID-19 risk and also provide insights on what the new variant means for our upcoming summer plans. If you haven't registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here](#). You can also find previous call recordings [here](#). Note that to access recordings of the calls you need a LeadingAge password. Any staff member of any LeadingAge member organization can set up a password to access previous calls and other "members only" content.

Ask Senators to Support Senate Section 202 Funding Letter. Once again, Senator Menendez (D-NJ) is leading a letter to Senate appropriators in support of robust funding for HUD's Section 202 and Section 811 programs. Importantly, the letter asks appropriators for \$600 million for capital and operating subsidies for new Section 202 homes. This is LeadingAge's bold ask for new Section 202 homes! The letter is [here](#). Advocates should reach out to their senate offices and ask them to "Please join Senator Menendez's Dear Colleague letter in support of HUD's Section 202 senior housing program." Senate offices can join the letter by contacting Alfie Feder, alfie_feder@menendez.senate.gov, by May 10. Every Senate office can be reached via the Capitol switchboard at 202/ 224 – 3121. You can also go to www.senate.gov. Of course, if Senator Menendez is your senator, please thank him.

HUD Anticipates, Navigates Service Coordinator Grant Delays. HUD had previously announced to LeadingAge that CY2022 Service Coordinator grant payments would be delayed again this year. Grantees can anticipate Notices of Awards sent in mid-June, with grant funding posted as late as August. In response, LeadingAge has worked with HUD to create a streamlined option for housing providers to draw from Reserve for Replacement accounts to cover the Service Coordination costs in the meantime. Each HUD Multifamily Housing Region is being encouraged to offer the streamlined option to grantees in their jurisdictions with a pre-calculated loan amount of 70% of the grant amount, as long as the reserve balance does not drop below \$300 per unit. The funds are to be repaid by October using RSC grant funds. Several HUD Offices have sent out official communications to housing providers about this option; all grantees, regardless of HUD region, can work with their HUD counterparts to make use of this option. Reach out to Juliana (jbilowich@leadingage.org) for assistance. LeadingAge is also working on longer-term strategies to improve HUD's grant administration process.

HUD Proposes Renewal Guide Changes to Rent Comp Study Policy. Today, HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs proposed a set of revisions to HUD's Rent Comparability Study (RCS) guidance. Chapter 9 of the Section 8 Renewal Policy Guidebook establishes how a rent comparability study is prepared, submitted, reviewed, and appealed. The studies are used to establish comparable market rents for some HAP contracts, including an appraised value for both shelter and non-shelter services. Stakeholders are invited to submit feedback by May 23, 2022. Earlier this year, LeadingAge [pushed back strongly](#) in response to a previous memo issued by HUD in November adjusting the agency's Rent Comparability Study policy. LeadingAge argued that the new policy, which did not go through public comment or review, would limit HUD investment in services at Section 8 properties; in March, HUD withdrew the memo. A full analysis from LeadingAge about the proposed changes is forthcoming. LeadingAge will work with our members to submit feedback that improve the RCS process and safeguards services in HUD-assisted senior housing properties. More information from HUD is available [here](#); please reach out to Juliana (jbilowich@leadingage.org) to provide feedback to LeadingAge on this issue.

Lowest Income Renters Shoulder Most Housing Cost Burdens. Research released April 21 highlights the systemic shortage of affordable rental homes for households with the lowest incomes. *The Gap*, from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, describes the lack of affordable housing for renters, a shortage that falls particularly hard on the nation's 11 million extremely low income renters (with incomes below 30% of Area Median Income). Extremely low income renter households account for 25% of all renter households, and 9% of all U.S. households. The report compares the number of U.S. renter households in various income groups, including extremely low income, very low income, and low income. Then, the report documents how many rental units are not only affordable but available to each of the income groups. The report concludes that there is an absolute shortage of approximately seven million affordable and available rental homes for extremely low income renter households. "Only 36 affordable and available homes exist for every 100 extremely low income renter households," the report says. This difference between 36 and 100 is "the gap." Seventy-one percent (7.8 million) of the nation's 11 million extremely low income renter households are severely housing cost-burdened, spending more than half of their incomes on rent and utilities. They account for 72% of all severely rent-burdened renter households. Extremely low income renters are more likely than those in the general renter population to be at least 62 years old or to have a disability, the report says. Here's an article about the [new research](#).

Presentation on HUD FY22 and FY23 Funding. On April 21, LeadingAge presented on a Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding webinar on HUD FY22 and FY23 funding for programs across HUD and the Rural Housing Service. A recording of the webinar will soon be available. For now, see the webinar's slides [here](#). LeadingAge's FY23 affordable housing policy platform is [here](#).

Hearing on Fires, Safety & NSPIRE in HUD Housing. On April 20, the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development and Insurance held a Bronx field hearing, "A Matter of Life and Death: Improving Fire Safety in Federally Assisted Housing." The hearing followed fires in the Bronx and Philadelphia at HUD-subsidized housing communities. HUD testified that its NSPIRE demonstration includes several new and more stringent health and safety requirements for

smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, fire doors, electrical systems, dryer exhausts, infestation, guardrails and handrails. See this article on the [hearing](#).

LeadingAge Housing Survey Shows Less COVID, More Workforce Challenges. The results are in! The latest LeadingAge quarterly survey of affordable housing providers shows lower COVID-19 cases among residents at Senior Housing communities across the country, but higher rates of COVID-19 among staff and persistent challenges in hiring and retaining Service Coordinators and other staff. Workforce challenges, resident mental health, and property insurance rates remain among the top concerns for housing providers. The survey was opened in late March and captured insight dating back to December 2021. The survey, which LeadingAge opens to federally-assisted senior housing provider members nationwide each quarter, provides an informal pulse-check on topics ranging from the physical and mental wellbeing of residents; property financials and contract renewals; HUD compliance and oversight; and staffing challenges among housing providers. View a full analysis of the results [here](#).

HHS policy briefs on strategic approaches to social determinants of health (SDOH). The HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation posted [three policy papers](#) that: explain why HHS has identified addressing SDOH as a major priority; describe HHS’s strategic approach and specific actions the Department is taking to address SDOH; and link how these actions build on evidence in the field on what works. Social determinants of health (SDOH) include factors such as housing, food and nutrition, transportation, social mobility, and environmental conditions as having significant impact on health outcomes. The policy briefs also present successful examples of current federal programs.

Upcoming Webinar Series: Engaging the Disability Community in Fair Housing Planning. The Administration for Community Living’s new [Housing and Services Resource Center](#) is hosting an upcoming webinar series on “Engaging the Disability Community in Fair Housing Planning.” This two-part series is scheduled for April 27th and 28th. The webinars were created through a partnership between ACL and HUD’s Office of Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity (FHEO) for individuals with disabilities, their caregivers, other disability stakeholders, HUD grantees, representatives of communities and public housing authorities. Both webinars offer an opportunity for you to learn more about the Fair Housing Act and to discover how you can engage with your local partners in fair housing planning.

- **Part I: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing for Individuals with Disabilities**
April 27, 2022 at 3:30 – 4:30 PM ET
- **Part II: Best Practices for Engaging the Disability Community in Fair Housing Planning**
April 28, 2022 at 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM ET