

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development — Region IX



November 2013

Notes from the Regional Administrator

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Wishing you all a safe and happy Thanksgiving Day.

Homelessness in the United States is simply not acceptable. In fact, the Obama Administration has made ending homelessness a priority target. The fallout of the Great Recession and the effects of the housing crisis have exacerbated the issue. HUD is working closely with communities, nonprofit organizations and other stakeholders to address this important community issue.

Assemblymember Toni Atkins, a leader in the California State Assembly, invited me to speak at the Tuesday, November 12 joint hearing of the California State Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee and the Assembly Select Committee on Homelessness. It was an excellent opportunity for me to give information about the HUD-required annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count, which provides national, state and local governments a snapshot of the scope of homelessness in their jurisdictions.

The 2013 PIT Count in time was released on November 21 and gives us an overview of how we're doing in the region. For California, the data shows that homelessness has increased nearly 3 percent to 136,826 homeless persons; a 23 percent decrease in Arizona to 10,562; in Nevada a decrease of 42 percent to 8,443 and more than an 8.5 percent increase in Hawaii to 6,335. We are making some gains, but there is still much more to do.

There are a number of key national strategies and local initiatives being implemented across our region's four states. The first is the California Policy Academy, which is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services aimed at reducing chronic homelessness. Second is Home Matters in San Francisco which aims to link health and housing. Other local initiatives are the HUD-funded Rapid Results Boot Camps in Las Vegas, Phoenix and Tucson, among other communities, where they focused on strategies for increasing housing placement and accelerated progress towards ending

chronic and veteran homelessness. Another successful program is Home for Good in Los Angeles and there are ongoing programs in Fresno, San Diego and other communities. A national program called 100,000 Homes promotes local communities to work together to find permanent housing for the country's most vulnerable and has sponsored campaigns in Clark County, Nevada; Maricopa County, Arizona; and in Honolulu, Hilo and Kauai, Hawaii.

On November 5, HUD Deputy Secretary Maurice Jones was the invited keynote speaker at a conference in San Francisco called "Home Matters for Health." He spoke inspiring words with a personal touch on the value of permanent housing on the health of a family. I was the moderator of an expert panel on the nexus between affordable and stable housing and health services. It was fascinating to hear the panelists reinforce the concept that good housing equates to better health. The revitalization of communities through stable and affordable housing with supportive services is an integral tool to ending homelessness.

HUD and our other Federal, state and local partners are committed to continuing to make progress in ending homelessness.

HUD Introduces "Promise Zones"

A child's zip code should never determine her destiny; but today, the neighborhood she grows up in impacts her odds of graduating high school, her health outcomes, and her lifetime economic opportunities. For kids who don't get an equal start in life, the President is committed to partnering with local leaders to give them proven tools to rebuild and put people back to work. It will take a collaborative effort—between private business and federal, state, and local officials; faith-based and non-profit organizations; striving kids and parents—to ensure that hard work leads to a decent living for every American and in every community.



Since 2009, the President has provided proven tools to combat poverty, investing more than \$350 million in 100 of the nation's persistent pockets of poverty.

Building on those efforts, in his 2012 State of the Union Address, the President laid out an initiative to designate a number of high-poverty communities as Promise Zones, where the federal government will partner with and invest in communities to create jobs, leverage private investment, increase economic activity, expand educational opportunities, and improve public safety.



Communities eligible to apply have been identified and will be required to demonstrate the strength and effectiveness of their local commitment to become Promise Zones. Each designated Promise Zone will also be asked to identify a set of outcomes they will pursue to revitalize their

communities, develop a strategy supporting those outcomes, and realign resources accordingly. For communities selected, the federal government will partner to help the Promise Zones access the resources and expertise they need. Applications were due November 26, 2013.

The Obama Administration will designate 20 communities over the next four years – including up to five this year – with an intensive and layered approach to revitalizing communities. The approach includes working with local leadership, and bringing to bear the resources of a number of the President’s signature revitalization initiatives from the Department of Education, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Agriculture to ensure that federal programs and resources support the efforts to turn around 20 of the highest poverty urban, rural and tribal communities across the country.

HUD and Department of Transportation Present New Transportation Cost Calculator

Choosing where to live is one of the most important decisions a family or individual makes.



When families relocate, they’re choosing more than just a house or apartment: they are also selecting the schools, job opportunities, green spaces and other characteristics that come with that community. And, at the center of it all is a community’s transportation network because people need to get to work, kids need to get to school, and families need to get to critical services.

What’s the bottom line? That housing and transportation are intimately linked, and they represent the two biggest expenses for most families. In fact, the average family spends close to 50 percent of their income on both housing and transportation costs.

Unfortunately, it’s often difficult for families to accurately predict the combined cost of housing and transportation in advance of relocating or moving. This can make a big difference in a family’s budget.

That’s why HUD and DOT developed the My Transportation Cost Calculator, part of the recently launched Location Affordability Portal at <http://www.locationaffordability.info/>. The calculator is a user-friendly tool that allows consumers to enter basic information about their household characteristics and travel patterns and produces precise estimates of their transportation cost in one or more locations. Combined with other

tools available on the Portal and elsewhere on the web, the calculator can help consumers make more informed decisions about where to live and work.

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