



HUD Great Plains Region VII News



Bi-Monthly Newsletter

February 2014

IN THIS ISSUE •

A Message from the Regional Administrator • HUD News • News & Events from around the Region • Kansas • Iowa • Missouri • Nebraska • What's New • Quick Resources • Stay Connected

MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR



It is a tremendous honor for me to serve as Regional Administrator for HUD in Region VII. For the past 20 years, I have been committed to affordable housing policy and more importantly, the preservation of affordable housing. The federal government has been a valued and essential partner, and I believe the best way to ensure access to safe, decent, and affordable housing is through strong partnerships among the government, private and non-profit sectors.

Developing affordable housing is about opportunity. As Regional Administrator, I'm excited for the opportunity to accomplish some great things together. It is HUD's mission to "create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all." This is a goal I believe we all share, with the potential of great success stories.

Thank you for the work you do every day. You make a difference for the individuals and families we serve across the region. I look forward to working with all of you in continued partnership. Continue your good work!!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Tidwell

NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY and NEW RESIDENTIAL SALES

Each month, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Census Bureau jointly announce the new residential construction statistics and sales of new single family houses. Read the most current new residential construction data available at <http://www.census.gov/construction/nrc/>. For the most current monthly report for sales of new single family homes, please visit <http://www.census.gov/construction/nrs/>.

NEW FHA LOAN LIMITS EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2014

New FHA single family loan limits were implemented on January 1, 2014, as specified by the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA). Read [HUD press release](#) for information detailing the agency's new loan limits and FHA mortgage limits for your area.

FHA TO ACCEPT MORE DOCUMENTS WITH ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

January 30, 2014 – The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) announced that it is granting expanded authority to lenders to accept electronic signatures (e-Signatures) on documents associated with mortgage loans. The new policy allows e-Signatures on origination, servicing, and loss mitigation documents, as well as FHA insurance claims, real-estate owned (REO) sales contracts and related addenda. Current FHA policy allows for electronic signatures only on third party documents such as sales contracts and other documents not controlled by the lender. [Read FHA's Mortgagee Letter](#).

HUD RELEASES 'QUALIFIED MORTGAGE' DEFINITION

HUD released its final rule which defines a 'Qualified Mortgage (QM)' that is insured, guaranteed or administered by HUD. The final rule became effective on January 10, 2014 and will apply to mortgages with a case number assignment on or after that date. [Read HUD's final rule](#).

Housing Scorecard

Each month, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of the Treasury produce a monthly scorecard on the health of the nation's housing market. The scorecard incorporates key housing market indicators and highlights the impact of the Administration's unprecedented housing recovery efforts, including assistance to homeowners through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP). [Monthly Scorecards](#)

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Funding helps gain critical employment/life skills to compete for decent jobs

HUD recently awarded Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency Program (HCV-FSS) and Public Housing Family Self Sufficiency Program (PH-FSS) grants to public housing authorities to hire or retain respective service and program coordinators who will work directly with families to connect them to the supportive services that meet their individual needs and to become gainfully employed. See local funding in Region VII for the [HCV-FSS Program](#) and [PH-FSS Program](#).

HUD in Kansas



Jennifer Tidwell Appointed as Regional Administrator for Region VII

Kansas City Regional Field Office Hosts Welcome Reception

On November 19, 2013, Jennifer Tidwell was sworn in as HUD Regional Administrator for Region VII. Ms. Tidwell has worked extensively in the housing and real estate industry for over 20 years.

Prior to her appointment, Ms. Tidwell was the Deputy Director of Public Policy for the Missouri Housing Development Commission where she led the Tax Credit Administration Department, MBE/WBE (Minority Business Enterprise/Women Business Enterprise) Initiative/Section 3, and the Government Affairs/Budget Division for both the Federal and State Legislatures.

Ms. Tidwell was appointed by the Governor of Missouri in 2001, and served as one of the three commissioners on the Missouri State Tax Commission supervising 115 county assessors across the state of Missouri regarding property taxes. The Missouri Tax Commission, also, has supervisory authority over utility companies, telecommunications, electric, pipelines, and railroad



L-R: Tom Coleman, Regional Counsel; Jennifer Tidwell, Regional Administrator; Terri Porter, Deputy Regional Administrator.



On Monday, February 10, 2014, Kansas City Regional Field Office staff hosted a welcome reception for Ms. Tidwell. Almost 100 representatives from federal, state, and local governments, elected officials, and private and non-profit sectors came to meet and welcome her to her new post.

Ms. Tidwell will serve as HUD's liaison to mayors, city managers, elected representatives, state and local officials, members of Congress, private and non-profit developers, and other community stakeholders.

2014 Point-in-Time Count



Kansas City, Kansas Community College Nursing Students

Kansas City, KS – On January 30th, nursing students from Kansas City Community College volunteered to assist with the Wyandotte Homeless Services Coalition (WHSC) point-in-time count conducted at the Wilhelmina Gill Center. During the count, the students conducted health screenings, and in one case, may have prevented life-threatening issues. At the end of the count, Ondra Penn, Wilhelmina Gill Facility Manager, thanked the nurses for their genuine interest in serving the homeless and for recognizing their value as an individual and asked for comments regarding their own experience. Students echoed that the experience helped them to better understand homelessness, and many made a commitment to continue volunteering to help with homeless services at the center.

Upcoming Events

April 7-9, 2014 – Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition – 15th Annual Statewide Summit on Homelessness & Housing – Salina, KS – Registration now open [click here](#)

April 9-10, 2014 – Kansas Rural Opportunities Conference (Kansas Dept. of Commerce) – Dodge City, KS Register online at <http://www.kansascommerce.com/index.aspx?NID=597> or for more information, contact Susan NeuPoth Cadoret at scadoret@kansascommerce.com or (785) 296-7198.

May 20-23, 2014 – Save the Date – Kansas (NAHRO National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials) Spring Conference - Wichita, KS – Registration information not available at this time.



HUD in Iowa

Polk County Continuum of Care Opening Doors Awards Ceremony

On November 20, 2013, the Polk County Continuum of Care Opening Doors Awards Ceremony took place in Des Moines, IA. Opening Doors is an opportunity for the community to celebrate the achievements of those experiencing homelessness in the Des Moines metro area. This year's event was the second year with over 150 people in attendance. Opening Doors is central to the Polk County Housing Continuum's efforts. Awards were given to five deserving individuals who have overcome barriers in areas such as education, employment/income, housing, and positive community engagement. Des Moines Field Office Management Analyst, Julie Sleeper participated as a member of the selection committee for the awardees as well as a member of the Opening Doors event planning committee.



Awardees from left: Anthony Fields, Adult Award; Christina Rogers, Youth Award; Barbara Mallett, Compelling Life Story; Glenda Brown, Veteran Award; Lauri Auxier, Family Award.



NO COST WEB SITE LINKS RENTERS AND LANDLORDS IN IOWA

Jan. 7, 2014 - The Iowa Finance Authority announced the launch of IowaHousingSearch.org, a no cost housing locator website that gives renters, landlords, housing professionals, and social service providers access to real-time rental housing information.

Currently the website has approximately 20,000 rental units listed representing 250 Iowa landlords and is growing. The project is powered by Socialserve.com, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to increasing access to affordable housing across the nation.

IowaHousingSearch.org offers landlords no cost advertising for their properties, including critically needed affordable and accessible units, while helping renters find housing to fit their specific needs.

Some listings are linked to interactive maps and include pictures and information about nearby amenities such as parks, schools, and hospitals. Special features for renters include quick links to housing resources as well as rent-affordability and moving-cost calculators.

The website will be a valuable resource during a disaster situation to quickly help displaced individuals to find emergency rental housing and available replacement housing throughout the state.

Upcoming Events

March 4, 2014 – 8th Annual Region 7 EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)/State Radon Stakeholders' Meeting – West Des Moines, IA - No cost to attend & registration not required, but **space is limited**. To reserve a space and for additional meeting/hotel information [click here](#).

April 29 – May 2, 2014 – NCRC NAHRO/IA NAHRO (NAHRO National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials) Annual Conference and Exhibition – Des Moines, IA - Iowa NAHRO will host the 2014 Spring Conference for the North Central Regional Council (NCRC) of NAHRO. [Conference Registration](#).



HUD in Western Missouri

NeighborWorks America Training Institute - Kansas City, MO

December 9-13, 2013 – Kansas City, MO was the host city for NeighborWorks' last training institute in 2013. The event offered several courses including Affordable Housing Development, Asset Management, Community and Neighborhood Revitalization, Community Economic Development, Homeownership and Community Lending, and Rural Development. Highlights of the conference agenda included panel discussions that offered ways to develop deeper community partnerships that forge a shared vision and frameworks for structuring cross-sector community transformation efforts.



Kansas City, MO Mayor, Sly James, and former Kansas City, KS Mayor, Joe Reardon shared the podium as key-note speakers for the Real-World Solutions for Community Transformation Symposium luncheon on Wednesday, December 11th. In 2011, Google chose Kansas City, KS and Kansas City, MO for its first ultra-high-speed fiber networks. The two cities have, since then, collaborated in unparalleled ways to ensure that the "Google Fiber" project has benefitted citizens and neighborhoods across the Kansas City metro area. Mayor James and Mayor Reardon are co-chairs of the Mayors' Bi-State Innovation Team and authors of *Playing to Win in America's Digital Crossroads - A playbook for capitalizing on ultra-high-speed fiber in Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri*. (Photo – L: Mayor Sly James; R: Former Mayor Joe Reardon)

Symposium participants selected from among several tours and workshops that highlighted how collaborations are transforming communities in Kansas City which featured the Beacon Hill and Manheim Park neighborhoods, Kansas City's Transit Corridor, Kansas City's Westside, a visit to the Upper Room, a neighborhood-based nonprofit organization which provides high-quality, out-of-school education programs, and a walking tour of downtown Kansas City, highlighting several projects that demonstrate how the arts provide valuable creative, social and economic resource to Kansas City and its neighborhoods.

(Photo: Bancroft Apartments – Manheim Park)



2014 Point-in-Time Count

On January 29-30, 2014, over 100 volunteers took to the streets, shelters, and prearranged sites in Kansas City, MO to conduct the annual point-in-time (PIT) count of homeless individuals. The Homeless Services Coalition of Greater Kansas City (HSCGKC) has gained support over the years from hundreds of individuals, community and faith-based organizations, as well as government agencies in addressing homelessness. Staff from the Veteran's Administration indicated that the yearly outreach is vital to identifying and connecting with at-risk and chronically homeless veterans to prevent and end the cycle of homelessness by providing safe, stable housing options

Episcopal Community Services' Kitchen (ESC) provided breakfast and lunch for homeless individuals during the count, in the basement of the reStart Housing Solutions Center.

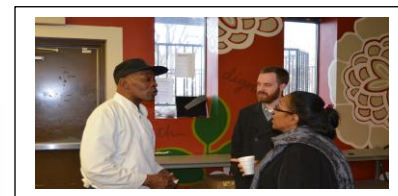


Photo: ((Pictured L-R: Kenneth Cabean, ESC, Jennifer Tidwell, HUD Regional Administrator, Bob McCormack, HUD Management Analyst.

Mid-America Regional Council Celebrates Successes

Dec. 6, 2014 - Mid-America Regional Council 's (MARC) Creating Sustainable Places partners celebrated the completion of its three-year *Creating Sustainable Places* funded by a Sustainable Communities Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. A key factor in developing a successful plan was the input from residents and stakeholders across the region. In particular, the Creating Sustainable Places initiative created new partnerships and developed new planning tools and resources which were instrumental in a creating a vision for a more livable, walkable, and environmentally sustainable region.

Upcoming Events

March 19-21, 2014 – MO NAHRO (National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials) Spring Conference - St. Louis, MO – Register [here](#).

April 2-4, 2014 – MHDC (Missouri Housing Development Commission) Property Management Conference - Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach, MO –Conference will include experts in curb appeal, maintenance information for handling rodents & pests, PBCA (Project-Based Contract Administrators), HOME (HOME Investment Partnership Program) & Compliance training, HUD updates, and more. [Registration Information](#)



HUD in Eastern Missouri

Net zero affordable housing coming to Columbia, MO

A public/private partnership between the City of Columbia, Missouri and Habitat for Humanity is developing an innovative “net-zero” home that will be affordable and very energy efficient. The home will have solar panels on the roof, low-flow plumbing fixtures, a solar-powered water heater, and one hundred percent LED lighting.

A Net Zero energy home is capable of producing renewable energy equal to the amount it consumes. While it doesn't take your home off the local utility grid, it will offset the cost of energy a typical family consumes over the course of a year.

The total cost to construct the house is slightly more than \$110,000, according to the design proposal. The city donated \$65,000 to the project using HUD's Community Development Block Grant funds for demolition of the blighted house on the property, and HOME funds for the new construction with Habitat for Humanity, a HUD community housing development organization (CHDO). Another \$18,000 came from the City's Water and Light Department, and Habitat for Humanity provided the rest.

“This is the first time the Show-Me Habitat for Humanity has built a house like this,” said volunteer supervisor Erv Mertzluff, “and everything about building the house seems different.” “It has 45 percent more insulation in the walls and ceiling, and we normally don't put four inches of insulation under the (floor) slab,” added Bill View, Executive Director of the Show-Me Central Habitat for Humanity.

The home also will be 100 percent accessible to people with disabilities. “We are going to incorporate universal design elements, which includes a zero step entrance, wider hallways and doors, and extra turnaround space in bathrooms,” said Columbia Housing Program Supervisor Randy Cole. City staff first floated the idea for a low-cost, energy-efficient home about a year ago. The city asked non-profit organizations to submit designs for a self-sufficient home that low-income families could afford. Habitat for Humanity's proposal stood out because it included solar panels, Cole said.

Habitat for Humanity will sell the house through a real estate company for \$107,000. To be eligible to buy the house, a person or family must earn less than 80 percent of the average income for Boone County — for example, the annual income for a family of four must be below \$52,800. View said Habitat for Humanity hopes to complete the home between late-spring and midsummer of 2014.

St. Louis, MO chosen to participate in Strong Cities Strong Communities Initiative

On January 16, 2014, the Obama Administration announced it is expanding the Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Initiative to include Brownsville, TX; Flint, MI; Gary, IN; Macon, GA; Rockford, IL; St. Louis, MO; and Rocky Mount, NC. SC2 was established in 2011 as an innovative and flexible program designed to strengthen local capacity, coordinate federal investments, and spark growth in economically distressed communities. The SC2 Initiative was developed through engagement with mayors, Members of Congress, foundations, nonprofits, and other community partners who are committed to addressing the challenges facing local governments as they work to create economic opportunity for all residents.

Federal inter-agency expert teams will be deployed to work alongside city leadership, community organizations, local businesses, and philanthropic foundations to support the cities' visions for economic growth and development. The primary goal is to help these cities more effectively invest existing resources, provide advice and expertise in support of local priorities, better align federal programs and investments, and facilitate new partnerships and peer learning opportunities wherever possible. In addition, AmeriCorps VISTA members will aid this effort as on-the-ground liaisons with local leaders and citizens to help implement the solutions that meet these communities' needs

(cont'd – page 7)

"With help from the White House and Strong Cities, the City of St. Louis will be better positioned to create a more socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable city," said Francis Slay, Mayor of St. Louis, Missouri. "Leveraged with our strong support from private and public sectors, SC2 will help us accelerate our economic and community development vision, build strategic partnerships between government and industry, and make more efficient and effective use of taxpayer-funded federal resources."

For more information about the SC2 Teams involvement and goals for the new locations please visit <http://www.huduser.org/portal/SC2/home.html>. For more information about accomplishments of the initiative in the original pilot locations and policy insights that have surfaced as a result, please review the [first SC2 Annual Report](#).

Upcoming Events

March 13, 2014 – Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis - Saving Your Small Town: Homegrown Community and Economic Development Forum – Hannibal, MO – *For small & rural communities struggling to keep their best and brightest residents from moving away to nearby cities. Space is limited; must register by March 7, 2014.* [Register Now](#)

March 19-21, 2014 – MO NAHRO ((National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials) Spring Conference - St. Louis, MO – Register [here](#).

April 2-4, 2014 – MHDC (Missouri Housing Development Commission) Property Management Conference - Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach, MO – *Conference will include experts in curb appeal, maintenance information for handling rodents & pests, PBCA (Project Based Contractor Administrators), HOME (Home Investment Partnership Program) & Compliance training, HUD updates, and more.* [Registration information](#)

May 14-16, 2014 – Missouri Council for Affordable Rental Housing (MOCARH) 2014 Annual Meeting – Lake Ozark, MO – *for more information, contact Kim Broswell or Pat Bess at 573-499-4445 or info@camcolumbia.com*



HUD in Nebraska



Veterans Stand Down



Kitty Amaya provides information for HUD Programs at the VA Stand Down).

November 2, 2013 - The Veterans Affairs (VA) Healthcare System for Nebraska/Western Iowa hosted its annual Homeless Veteran's Stand Down in Omaha, NE at the Civic Center's Exhibit Hall. Stand Downs are one of many efforts the VA has deployed to connect veterans (in particular, homeless veterans) to available services and resources in the area. The VA and its partner agencies united to provide a wide array of services including food, shelter information, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, barber services and referrals to a variety of organizations that provide housing and employment assistance and substance abuse treatment to homeless veterans.

Omaha Field Office Director, Earl Redrick, Customer Service Representative, Andrew Burgin-Anton, and Equal Opportunity Specialist, Kitty Amaya volunteered to provide information regarding HUD public housing opportunities, fair housing rights, the HUD-VASH (Veterans Affairs Assisted Housing) program and multiple HUD subsidized housing opportunities/locations. In total, 160 veterans were served during the Stand Down.

Heartland Latino Leadership Conference

On November 15, 2013 – Omaha Field Office Director Earl Redrick and field office staff attended the annual "Heartland Latino Leadership Conference" (HLLC). The HLLC is highly attended each year, and it is the largest Hispanic/Latino-focused event in the Midlands. Weeklong events included an intense youth outreach effort, involving 4,750 students from local schools; conferences were held at local schools with students, parents, and educators. A Youth Empowerment Summit was held in conjunction with the conference, with 437 students in attendance. The conference also included various workshops, almost 50 exhibitors, and a host of keynote speakers. HLLC reported that this year's event reached nearly 6,000 people.



Shila Hernandez and Andrew Burgin-Anton provide assistance at HUD exhibitor table. Shila is actively involved in HUD's outreach efforts to the Hispanic community in the Omaha area.

27th Annual Prejudice Elimination Workshop

November 20, 2013 - HUD Omaha Field Office employees participated in the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) 27th Annual Prejudice Elimination Workshop. Field Office Director Earl Redrick, Andrew Burgin-Anton, and John Jones volunteered for the event and were trained as workshop facilitators. Their participation expanded outreach efforts, "to partner and work more closely with community official and leaders to enhance awareness of HUD programs and services."

Thirty-six volunteer facilitators led almost 300 junior classmen from 30 area high school through an intensive 6.5 hour curriculum. The curriculum was designed to challenge the biases and behaviors of teens and simultaneously encourage them to be advocates and leaders at school and in their respective communities. Students who were identified as prepared and up for a challenge were chosen to participate by their respective school officials. Students also engaged in tough discussions regarding discrimination and bullying. At the event's luncheon, Gordman's (retail) presented a check for \$90,000, as part of a local anti-bullying campaign.

Region VII Regional Administrator makes big splash in Nebraska

On December 10, 2013, HUD's Region VII Regional Administrator (RA), Mrs. Jennifer Tidwell, came to Nebraska (Omaha) for the first time since her appointment. She entered with a huge splash! In one of her first official duties, Ms. Tidwell presented the City of Omaha with a check in the amount of \$313,000. HUD awarded Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) Partnership funds to the Omaha Human Rights and Relations Department (OHRRD), a Nebraska FHAP agency to assist with carrying out fair housing activities.

Field Office Director Earl Redrick and the entire Omaha FHEO staff also participated in the event.

In addition, Ms. Tidwell maximized her visit to the Cornhusker State by meeting with local housing and community development entities at Family Housing Advocacy Services. The Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) hosted a luncheon where participants were eager to meet and discuss successes and challenges in Nebraska with Ms. Tidwell.



Photo: (L-R) Omaha FOD Earl Redrick, City of Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert; HUD Regional Administrator Jennifer Tidwell, and OHRRD Director Rhonda Uher,



Upcoming Events

April 1, 2014 – Lincoln Council on Human Rights – 2014 Civil Right Conference – Lincoln , NE – For more information:
<http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/mayor/human/pdf/2014SaveTheDate.pdf>

WHAT'S NEW

HUD Publishes FY 2013 HOME (HOME Investment Partnership Program) Match Reductions - [FY 2013 HOME Match Reductions list](#)

Resources for CoC (Continuum of Care) and PHA (Public Housing Authority) Collaboration to End Homelessness - [More](#)

Announcing the Partnership for Freedom Reimagine: Opportunity Challenge - <http://www.partnershipforfreedom.org/>

PROPOSED Fair Market Rents (FMR) for 2014 – Find the FMR for your area.

Read THE EDGE e-newsletter to keep current on policy development and research (PD&R) breaking news.

HUD Issues HOMEfires Vol. 11 No. 1: Guidance on the Impact of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 on HOME-Funded Projects - Read

HUD Launches 2013 HOME Final Rule Webcasts - View the Webcasts.

HUD Launches Affordable Care Act Resource Library Page - <https://www.onecpd.info/aca/>

New Affordable Care Act Web Portal Designed for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS - Read More.

Schedule for the 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report - Homeless Data Exchange website

FY 2014 HOME Homeownership Value Limits Effective January 1, 2014 - HOME Homeownership Value Limits

HUD Releases New HOME Frequently Asked Questions – Click here

From Our Federal Partners

USDA (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture) to Provide Additional Support to Food Banks, Soup Kitchens, and Food Pantries Across the Country- More info

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Employment Toolkit - resources
for employers and veterans focused on transitioning from military service, finding employment and supporting veteran employees.

USDA Announces Energy Efficiency Loan Program to Lower Costs for Consumers, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions – the rule was published on Dec. 5, 2013 in the Federal Register

Applications now being accepted for Smart Growth America’s 2014 free technical assistance workshops - Learn More.

Government Training Institute – Introduction to Grant Writing March 5, 2014 & March 12, 2014 - *two-part workshop will cover the basics of grant writing and give you the opportunity to write a proposal and have it reviewed and discussed during the second session. Register online.*

Affordable Care Act/Health Insurance Marketplace - <https://www.healthcare.gov/>

USDA Announces Investments in Businesses and Rural Economic Development - Read More

Dept. of Labor – Prevailing Wage Seminars - Click here for dates/locations

QUICK RESOURCES

QUICK LINKS- Use our quick links directory to access HUD information from one location

FIND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES - Funds available

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We welcome your comments and feedback and invite you to share your stories and/or news with Agatha (Aggie) Gutierrez at Agatha.R.Gutierrez@hud.gov.