#### Covering the States of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas





Tammye H. Treviño Regional

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Fair Housing: It's the LAW

#### **Grant Opportunities**

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#### Southwest News Fall 2015

#### Message from the Regional Administrator



Regional Administrator Tammye H. Treviño

NEW ORLEANS AND HOUSTON DID IT!
ENDING CHRONIC VETERAN HOMELESSNESS IS NOT JUST AN IDEAL, BUT AN
ACHIEVABLE AND NOBLE AIM.

Region VI is proud to have two victorious cities in the fight against veteran homelessness. This year, both New Orleans and Houston achieved the goal of virtually eliminating veteran homelessness in their communities. New Orleans was the first major city in the United States to reach that distinction, while Houston is now the largest city in America to do so. Both communities embraced the Mayors Challenge to End Chronic Veteran Homelessness and through

hard work, excellent program operations, committed providers, and unyielding compassion did something remarkable, something many said was impossible, in ending veteran homelessness.

That doesn't mean there will never ever be another homeless veteran. What it does mean is that an effective system has been placed in these two communities to account for, react to, treat, and house homeless veterans and their families. So if the need does arise, Houston and New Orleans can now rapidly fill that need. While the Obama Administration, HUD, and the VA are all proud partners in the effort, it is the providers on the ground and dedicated city governments that actually did the hard fighting. Mayor Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans and Mayor Annise Parker of Houston each showed great leadership in martialing those local efforts into effective actions plan that made a tremendous impact.

New Orleans has received 1,266 VASH Vouchers, while the Houston has administered 2,004. First Lady Michelle Obama has said for those that serve and return home and kiss the ground, it is unacceptable that they should have to sleep there. So those vouchers aren't just numbers. They stand for 3,270 veterans and their families that do NOT sleep on the ground, that today live with dignity and the support they need and have earned defending our great nation. And that is something special. Congratulations to those communities and to the dedicated HUD employees in each that successfully supported these efforts to end veteran homelessness. If we did it here, we can do it everywhere!

#### HUD ASKS FOR COMMENT ON FINAL RULE ON HARRASSMENT IN HUD PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced on October 21st that it is issuing a proposed rule that would formalize standards for victims of harassment in housing to bring claims under the Fair Housing Act. The proposed rule, "Quid Pro Quo and Hostile Environment Harassment and Liability for Discriminatory Housing Practices under the Fair Housing Act," was published in the Federal Register today for public comment. The proposed rule specifies how claims of "hostile environment" and "quid pro quo" harassment would be evaluated in both private and publicly assisted housing.

"A home should be a refuge where every woman and man deserves to live without the threat of violence or harassment. The rule HUD is proposing is designed to better protect victims of harassment by offering greater clarity for how to handle a claim against an abuser," said HUD Secretary Julián Castro.

Sexual harassment is the most common form of harassment complaint received by HUD. Harassment in housing threatens a resident's sense of safety and privacy in their own home, and there can be little opportunity to escape such harassment unless the individual or family moves. In HUD's experience enforcing the Fair Housing Act, low-income women, often racial and ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities, may be particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment in housing.

The Department continues to aggressively pursue claims of harassment in housing. For example, <u>HUD recently filed a charge of discrimination against a Wisconsin landlord</u> who failed to take action to stop tenants from harassing other tenants, a mother and daughter with disabilities. HUD also <u>charged a South Dakota property manager</u> with sexually harassing a female tenant with two children. In addition, the Department of Justice recently agreed on a consent decree resolving a case investigated and <u>charged by HUD</u> involving sexual harassment by employees of a West Virginia property management firm.

HUD's proposed rule will:

Formalize uniform standards for evaluating claims of hostile environment and quid pro quo harassment in the housing context:

<u>Hostile Environment Harassment</u> involves subjecting a person to unwelcome conduct that is sufficiently severe or pervasive such that it interferes with or deprives the person the right to use and enjoy the housing.

Quid Pro Quo Harassment involves subjecting a person to an unwelcome request or demand and making submission to the request or demand a condition related to the person's housing.

Clarify when housing providers and other covered entities or individuals may be held directly or vicariously liable under the Fair Housing Act for illegal harassment or other discriminatory housing practices.

HUD has submitted its proposed rule for publication in the Federal Register. The general public will have sixty (60) days from the date of publication to submit comments on the proposed rule. HUD encourages interested persons to submit comments electronically through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <a href="https://www.regulations.gov">www.regulations.gov</a> during the public comment period. The complete proposed rule can be viewed here.

# TO ALL HUD EMPLOYEES FROM THE PRESIDENT ON HUD AT 50 AND ITS IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR COUNTRY

THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

September 1, 2015

I am pleased to join in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and to extend my deepest gratitude to the dedicated professionals at HUD who work to lift up their fellow Americans.

On September 9, 1965, President Lyndon. B. Johnson signed a bill that established HUD, paving the way for millions of Americans to live in safe, stable, affordable housing and reach for greater opportunity for themselves and for their families. Created in the midst of the fight for civil rights, HUD has helped ensure our Nation's founding ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are real for all people.

For the last half-century, committed public servants at HUD have worked to provide Americans with essential and often life-saving services, always seeking to carry our economy and society toward a better day. By building inclusive and sustainable communities, HUD leverages the comfort and security that a home provides to help improve lives in every corner of our country.

As you reflect on the last 50 years of progress and celebrate the tremendous difference HUD has made for generations of Americans, and particularly for those who have worn our Nation's uniform, please know how much I appreciate your service. I wish you the very best for the years to come.



#### REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR TAMMYE H. TREVIÑO TO OUR PARTNERS

HUD and the Obama Administration recognize that our 50 years of progress would not have been possible without the strong partnerships we maintain with dedicated providers in the industry, state, and local governments. The commitment of service by our partners is not only necessary, but vital in a coordinated effort to aid those less fortunate, assure affordable housing, to house those who have no roof, to help first time homebuyers live the American Dream, and to protect Americans against discrimination. So to our fellow providers and to all those who share our determination to help those in need, thanks so much for all your good works, then, now, and in the future.

#### Region VI State News Releases (click release to read full text)

Wednesday, July 15, 2015

President Obama and Secretary Castro Announce Initiative to Extend High Speed Broadband Access for Students in HUD-Assisted Housing

Monday, August 24, 2015

**HUD Provides Clarity for Louisiana's Road Home Elevation Incentive Program** 

Tuesday, September 29, 2015

HUD Awards Bartlesville, Oklahoma \$500,000 "Main Street" Grant

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

HUD Awards Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center Grants Totaling \$805,670 to Fight Housing Discrimination

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

HUD Awards the Metropolitan Fair Housing Council of Oklahoma Over \$300,000 to Fight Housing Discrimination

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

**HUD Proposes Rule to Clarify Protections for Victims of Harassment in Housing** 

Friday, October 23, 2015

HUD Charges Texas Landlords with Discrimination for Imposing Overly Restrictive Rules on Families with Children

Monday, October 26, 2015

**HUD and Census Bureau Report New Residential Sales in September** 

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HUD Policy Development and Research

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# REGION VI RECEIVES "DISABILITY EMPOWERMENT AWARD" FROM THE CITY OF FORT WORTH

On October 20, 2015, Region VI FHEO Director Garry Sweeney accepted the City of Fort Worth's Disability Empowerment Award on behalf of the entire Region at the city's Disability Awareness Celebration, which honored the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. HUD was cited for being "the agency that has had the greatest impact in the housing area for persons with disabilities."

Sponsored by the Mayor's and Texas Governor's Committees on Persons with Disabilities, more than 200 persons attended the conference, which included employment, housing and access fairs, as well as the awards ceremony. Region VI FHEO's Deputy Director Thurman Miles spoke at the opening session and discussed housing opportunities available for persons with disabilities and the role HUD plays in that process. Region VI RA Tammye Treviño said, "We were very honored to be recognized by the City of Fort Worth for the role Region VI has taken to ensure that those with disabilities receive equal access to all of HUD's programs."



(Garry L. Sweeney, FHEO Director, accepts award on behalf of HUD from the City of Fort Worth Disability Committee. Presenting the award were Gwen Morrison (Board of Trustees, Tarrant County College District) and Shirley Spears (Chairman of the City of Fort Worth Committee on Disabilities)



(Field Office Director Wanda Merritt and Little Rock staff pose with a small portion of donated items...the rest wouldn't fit in the picture!)

# FEDS FEED FAMILIES: LITTLE ROCK FIELD OFFICE EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (AND THEN SOME!)

The Little Rock Field Office donated a record breaking 658 pounds of food items during the Feds Feed Families (FFF) Campaign this year. The office surpassed their goal by 483 pounds. To create some healthy competition within the office, incentives were offered to the individuals who donated the most pounds.

As food items were donated, FFF coordinators Constance Williams of PIH and Lateefah Milton of CPD, weighed, logged, and tracked individual items donated by employees. Periodically, the rankings were revealed to encourage more participation. In the end, gift cards were awarded to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. All food

and non-perishable items collected were donated to the Arkansas Food Bank in Little Rock.

"I am proud of our staff members who demonstrate compassion and participate in this annual food drive. I know our efforts will make a difference in the lives of those families who benefit from the local food bank," said Field Office Director, Wanda C. Merritt. And many families, those less fortunate, the homeless, and those in need have been fed thanks to the HUD employees of the Little Rock Office. Great job for a great cause!



(Amber Petty from EveryoneOn (Center) and FOD Sharon Gordon-Ribeiro (Right) meet with representatives of Best Buy and other stakeholders)

# CHOCTAW NATION CONNECTHOME CONVENING WORKS TO BRIDGE THE "DIGITAL DIVIDE" FOR HUD-ASSISTED FAMILIES IN OKLAHOMA

Secretary Castro often calls HUD "The Department of Opportunity," and that message was clear on October 22, 2015, when the Choctaw Nation in Oklahoma held a ConnectHome Convening in Hugo, where 30 community participants discussed how they could work together to bridge the digital divide and bring the Internet to all children, regardless of their parents' income.

A Presidential Initiative, Connect Home calls for collaboration among local governments, public housing agencies, Internet Service Providers,

philanthropic foundations, non-profit organizations, and other relevant stakeholders that will narrow the digital divide for children living in HUD-assisted communities. The Choctaw Nation is one of 28 communities selected from 40 communities across the country that applied to participate in the ConnectHome demonstration pilot.

HUD Tulsa Field Office Director Sharon Gordon-Ribeiro, who gave opening remarks, quoted President Obama in saying, "In the 21st century global economy, access to high-speed Internet access is no longer a luxury. It's a necessity. "Statistics show that families with lower incomes and lower educations have lower broadband usage, placing their children at a digital disadvantage. For example, only 47% of families with incomes under \$25,000 have broadband access, in contrast to families with incomes over \$100,000, where 92% of families have broadband.

The Convening was organized by Fred Logan of the Choctaw Nation and Ms. Amber Perry, National Program Coordinator from EveryoneOn in Washington, D.C., and by the end of it, stakeholder commitments were received from Best Buy; USDA; Boys & Girls Club; Suddenlink; Pine-Net; Cherokee Telecommunications; Vyve, and others. A representative from the Boys & Girls Club shared what the opportunity to have broadband access would mean to the 110 children that she serves each day, when she said, "ConnectHome promises hope for a brighter future for all of them."

Other cities in Region VI that accepted the ConnectHome demonstration challenge include Baton Rouge and New Orleans in Louisiana, San Antonio, Texas, and Little Rock Arkansas. For more information on ConnectHome, go to <a href="https://connecthome.hud.gov">https://connecthome.hud.gov</a>.

### PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATON ON NOVEMBER AS NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH, 2015

American Indians and Alaska Natives enrich every aspect of our country. As the first to live on this land, Native Americans and their traditions and values inspired -- and continue to inspire -- the ideals of self-governance and determination that are the framework of our Nation. This month, we recognize the contributions made by Native Americans since long before our founding, and we resolve to continue the work of strengthening government-to-government ties with tribal nations and expanding possibility for all. Full Text Here



#### **DONNA WICKES RETURNS TO REGION VI**

Region VI is pleased to welcome Donna Wickes who has returned to join our team as the new Southwest Regional Public Housing Director in PIH's Office of Field Operations, based in the Houston Office.

Donna has over 23 years of professional experience as an industry expert in strategic planning with a focus on increasing jobs and affordable housing through targeted economic development programs. She has direct experience bringing together public and private partnerships and working with all levels of elected officials to encourage the level of economic development needed to increase the resiliency and sustainability of our communities.

Donna has been at Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for over four years. During her tenure at HUD, she was a Director for Community Planning and Development (CPD)

for the Oklahoma City Field Office in Region 6 and the Jackson Field Office in Region 4. As CPD Director, she was responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the HUD entitlement programs and was a prime mover in HUD's response when tornadoes devastated the Moore, Oklahoma area.

Prior to working for HUD, Donna worked in Community, Planning and Development for the City of Amarillo, TX and the City of Augusta, GA, implementing the HUD CPD Programs for those entitlement communities. She was awarded a Region VI Regional Administrator Outstanding Award in 2013 for her work with the Chronically Homeless and was a Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Nominee in 2015 for her work in Disaster Recovery. Donna received her MBA from Albany State University and is a Ph.D. Candidate in Public Policy, with her dissertation topic on "Can Social Integration be a Predictor of Housing Retention". Welcome back to Region VI Donna.



Students at Eugene Field Elementary, part of a HUD Choice Neighborhood, enjoy ArtCar activities

#### **ARTCARS HIT THE ROAD IN TULSA**

From butterflies to proverbial little yellow duckies and Buck Rogers rocket motorcycles, ArtCars are contemporary art at its most free because ArtCars are literally art that moves you. ArtCar artists take all sorts of vehicles and turn them into mobile pieces of art for the road. The ArtCar artists range from the head OBGYN doctor at one of Tulsa's premiere hospitals to one of our own, HUD FPM Senior Management Analyst C. Lyn Larson. Ms. Larson is a Sociologist and aside from a myriad of HUD duties, she is also an active member of the contemporary arts scene in Tulsa and serves as a liaison between the arts and HUD's emphasis on place-based healthy communities.

Tulsa ArtCar Weekend 2015 kicked off when the ArtCars rolled out to tour elementary schools and HUD properties to the absolute delight of the communities. FPM coordinated with the Tulsa Housing Authority (THA), which opened three of its properties to the traveling exhibit. Murdock Manor, James Inhofe Plaza and LaFortune Tower are properties that low-income Tulsa residents who are elderly and/or disabled call home. When the ArtCars arrive, residents come outside, some in wheel chairs and with walkers, visit with the artists, one another, dance, and admire the ArtCars. To meet the Operating Plan goal for Green and Healthy activities, ArtCars played a role in the Food Glorious Food event in October 2014, participated in the MLK Parade in January 2015, and were present at a huge neighborhood festival in a heavily-dense Section 8 area of Tulsa to further the goals of place-based community development and healthy, happy communities in and near HUD properties.

#### **News from the Inspector General**

This past quarter, the OIG has been busy combating fraud, waste, and abuse in HUD's programs. The OIG's special agents and auditors work closely with various program staff to conduct audits and work criminal/civil investigations within HUD and its programs. In FY 2015, OIG Region 6 investigations resulted in 23 arrest, 25 indictments/criminal complaints, and 31 individuals convicted for defrauding HUD. The criminal courts ordered that these defendants repay a combined \$7.2 million to HUD. Below are some of the highlights of these investigations and audits.



Recently, HUD-OIG Region 6 special agents conducted an investigation into a FHA Direct Endorsement mort-gage company based in Colleyville, Texas. Through witness interviews and subpoenas of various documents, the investigation revealed that the attorney for the mortgage company created and submitted a false affidavit to the Mortgagee Review Board. This document falsely representing that the owner of the owner of the mortgage company did not have an interest in an entity which received direct payments on the HUD-1s of FHA insured purchases. Special agents discovered that the owner of the mortgage company was also the full shareholder, director, president, chief executive officer, and secretary of this entity that received over \$12 million in payments on FHA transactions originated by his mortgage company. As a result of the OIG investigation, on July 23, 2015 the attorney pled guilty to a one count Bill of Information charging lying to HUD in U.S. District Court, Fort Worth, Texas. He was later sentenced to 60 months' probation and ordered to pay over \$1.3 million in restitution to HUD.

The Region 6 OIG Office of Audit and Investigations conducted a joint review of the former Executive Director (ED) of the Hot Springs Housing Authority (HSHA). The audit review and investigation found that the ED participated in a fraudulent scheme by submitting multiple vehicle mileage vouchers for reimbursement even though she had charged the fuel to the HSHA credit card. As a result, the ED fraudulently received \$5,543.90 in federal funds. On May 22, 2015 the former ED pled guilty to a one count Bill of Information charging embezzlement and theft of public money. The defendant was released on a \$5,000 bond and will be sentenced in the upcoming weeks.

Another recent OIG investigation revealed that from January 2010 through April 2015, a mortgage broker from Dallas, Texas orchestrated a foreclosure rescue scheme. The broker worked with homeowners to obtain extensions and renewals of FHA mortgage loans while charging fees for loan modification services and received mortgage payments from the borrowers and renters that were never forwarded to the lenders. Additionally, HUD OIG special agents found that the defendant falsified documents that were forwarded to the lenders. On July 22, 2015, the former mortgage broker was sentenced to 24 months in prison and ordered to pay \$997,712.77 in restitution for his earlier plea of guilty to lying to HUD and the FHA, in U.S. District Court, Sherman, Texas.

To report fraud, waste, or abuse within HUD or HUD-funded program you can e-mail <a href="mailto:hotline@hudoig.gov">hotline@hudoig.gov</a> or visit our website at <a href="mailto:www.hudoig.gov/hotline">www.hudoig.gov/hotline</a>.

## MULTIFAMILY SOUTHWEST REGION CONTINUES TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN MULTIFAMILY FOR TOMORROW

The Multifamily Southwest Region (MSWR) was the first of five waves to undergo a major reorganization of the Multifamily division of the Federal Housing Administration, better known as the Multifamily For Tomorrow (MFT) Transformation. Wave 1 kicked off its transformation in October 2014 and integrated the states of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and lowa into what is now called the Multifamily Southwest Region. Now, more than a year later, the MSWR is still leading the way by providing future waves with guidance and best practices learned from their experiences during the period leading up to the implementation of MFT and after.

The MSWR continuously strives to provide better service to its customers, partners, and stakeholders. One of the Region's most successful initiatives has been the formation of a Customer Service Desk. Located at the entrance of the Fort Worth Regional Center, the Customer Service Desk is used for the sole purpose of handling customer calls, complaints, and inquiries. The desk is staffed by Multifamily Program Support employees during regular business hours, and the Region has been praised for offering a live representative. In fiscal year 2015, the MSWR Customer Service Desk received more than 4,800 calls, 70% of which were requests for information on affordable housing. Future MFT Waves plan to establish a similar method for achieving improved customer service and communication.

The MSWR Asset Management Division has enhanced its customer service by adding a new feature on the Regional website that allows owners and management agents to locate the specific Account Executive assigned to their property. The website contains the most recent property assignment information, regardless of whether an asset is serviced by a HUD Account Executive or contractor.

Since MFT, the MSWR has increased efforts to become paperless by implementing the Asset Management Processing System (AMPS), an electronic intake database for all incoming Asset Management work. AMPS was originally developed by the Detroit HUD Office to use as a local workload management tool. The primary goal of the system is to manage the correspondence workload of Account Executives who are out stationed, teleworking, or local. At present, the intent is to implement this tool nationwide as the transformation waves are completed.

On the Production side, the success of Wave 1 has been tremendously evident in terms of the reaction by stakeholders who are experiencing significantly shorter turnaround times in processing of FHA mortgage insurance applications, along with a more efficient and effective organizational structure. During FY2015, the MSWR issued firm commitments on 190 loans with mortgages totaling \$2.34 billion, and 30,994 units. Furthermore, since MFT, the Region's firm commitments have increased by an astounding 24%, from \$1.89 billion in FY2014 to \$2.34 billion in FY2015.

The push for continuous improvement has been a major focus of the Region since its completion of MFT. As a way to develop and seek opportunities to create standard work locally, separate from the national effort, the MSWR established a Regional Playbook that includes a training curriculum. This curriculum is led by Multifamily staff and is targeted toward the newer team members in order to bring them up to speed on the new MF operating model. These trainings have been very successful in transferring knowledge amongst the Asset Management and Production Divisions.

In short, the MSWR is still leading the way in MFT.

Monday, October 26, 2015

#### HUD AND CENSUS BUREAU REPORT NEW RESIDENTIAL SALES IN SEPTEMBER

Friday, October 23, 2015

#### HUD CHARGES TEXAS LANDLORDS WITH DISCRIMINATION FOR IMPOSING OVERLY RESTRICTIVE RULES ON FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

#### HUD AND VA LAUNCH NEW DEMONSTRATION TO PROVIDE PERMANENT HOMES FOR NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Tuesday, October 20, 2015

#### HUD ANNOUNCES CLINTON GLOBAL INITIATIVE COMMITMENT TO ACTION PROMOTING SCIENCE ORIENTED JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday, October 20, 2015

#### HUD AND CENSUS BUREAU ANNOUNCE NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY IN SEPTEMBER

Tuesday, October 20, 2015

#### HUD MARKS A MAJOR SHARED SERVICES MILESTONE WITH FINANCIAL SERVICES MIGRATION

Thursday, October 15, 2015

#### BILL BLOCK STEPS DOWN AS HUD'S NORTHWEST REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR, TRANSITIONS TO ADVISOR ON HOMELESSNESS

Thursday, October 15, 2015

#### NEW YORK CITY LANDLORDS CHARGED WITH DISCRIMINATING AGAINST RESIDENT WITH DISABILITIES

#### Region VI HUD Field Office/Field Office Director Contact List

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HUD?src=/states/oklahoma

Call or email a HUD Office near you! We welcome your questions, comments, suggestions and concerns. As always, we thank you for your partnership!

#### <u>Texas</u>

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