

# research works

A bridge linking housing research and practice

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## The Importance of Program Evaluation: A Look Back at the 2001 HOPWA Evaluation and its Effects on the Program Since its Release

**B**eing homeless, having inadequate or unstable housing, or being severely cost burdened for housing is hard, but when you're diagnosed with HIV or sick with illnesses associated with AIDS, the mental, physical, financial, and emotional strain of these problems may be overwhelming and the consequences are most dire. The National AIDS Housing Coalition (NAHC) reports that an estimated one-third to one-half of the 387,000 persons living with AIDS in the United States are either homeless or in imminent danger of losing their homes. Nationally, 65 percent of people living with HIV/AIDS cite stable housing as their greatest need next to health care.

According to the NAHC, recent studies confirm that people living with HIV/AIDS must have stable housing to



*The Jack Plimpton New Hope Courtyard Apartments in Los Angeles, California provides fully accessible supportive housing for people living with HIV/AIDS.*

access comprehensive healthcare and adhere to complex HIV/AIDS drug therapies. For some people with AIDS, stable housing allows a return to productive work and social activities.

In 1990, Congress enacted the AIDS Housing Opportunities Act to address the special housing needs of persons with HIV/AIDS. HUD issued the program regulations in 1992 as the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program (HOPWA). HOPWA is the only federal housing program that funds comprehensive, community-based HIV-specific housing programs. HOPWA is administered by HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing, which was created in 1995 within HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development. While other HUD programs (such as Shelter Plus Care, the Supportive Housing Program, and Section 8 Rental Assistance) support housing for people with HIV/AIDS, HOPWA's funding is specifically targeted to this population. The HOPWA program appropriation was \$294 million for fiscal year 2004.

HOPWA funding provides housing assistance and related supportive services as part of HUD's Consolidated Planning initiative, which works in partnership with

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U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development  
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## NAHASDA: New Strategies and New Programs to Help House Native American Families

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition's (NLIHC) 2004 *Advocates' Guide To Housing and Community Development Policy*, Native Americans and Alaska Natives currently experience some of the most substandard housing conditions of any group in the United States. Chronic problems include overcrowding, substandard conditions, lack of infrastructure, and a shortage of financing options.

In September 2004, the Native American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) conducted a survey of Indian housing authorities. The results of this survey are presented in *The Effect of Substandard and Overcrowded Housing Conditions on Native Americans and Their Children*, which confirms the consequences of these conditions: significant increases in health, family, and societal problems among Native people. The results of the survey show an increased incidence of communicable diseases such as colds, flu, and skin outbreaks, with 77 percent of respondents linking these health outcomes to overcrowded or substandard housing on their reservation. Even more—89 percent—said such conditions have led to greater societal problems such as family stress, alcoholism, and abuse. The survey made it clear that poor housing and associated conditions, such as black mold, are causing health problems to the extent that some children are wearing respirators to bed at night.

Until the mid-1990s, Native Americans received HUD funding under the 1937 Housing Act. In 1996, Congress passed the Native American Housing and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA), which provides federal housing assistance to tribes in a manner that recognizes the right of tribal self-governance. NAHASDA provides

assistance in the form of a block grant (Native American Housing Block Grant, or NAHBG) made available on an annual basis using an allocation formula for tribes with approved Indian Housing Plans (IHPs). For FY 2004, \$654 million in NAHASDA funding has been allocated. The Administration's FY 2005 request is for \$647 million.

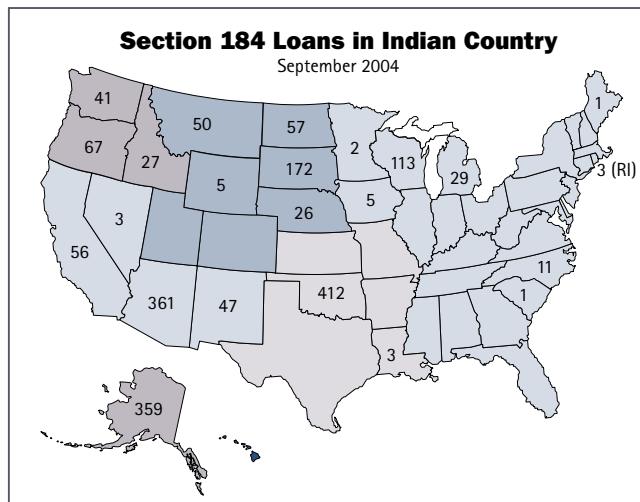
The Office of Native American Programs (ONAP), based in HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing, administers NAHASDA. ONAP consists of six area offices, in addition to dual headquarters offices located in Washington, DC and Denver, CO.

HUD awards grants to tribes and other Indian entities through either a competitive process (discretionary grants), or on a formula basis. The competitions for discretionary grant programs are announced in the HUD SuperNOFA, which is published once during each federal fiscal year. The Indian Community Development Block Grant Program (ICDBG) provides tribes with direct grants for use in developing viable Indian and Alaska Native communities, including decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunities. The Program is primarily targeted to low- and moderate-income persons. The Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) Program is a formula grant that allows tribes to provide a range of affordable housing activities on a reservation or Indian area. These activities are identified and described in the Indian Housing Plan, which is prepared each year and submitted to HUD for review and compliance with NAHASDA.

In addition to grants, HUD offers two homeownership programs to Native Americans. Homeownership in Indian Country has historically faced a number of barriers, many of which arise out of the fact that Native Americans residing on reservations in the United States are American citizens, but their tribes are recognized as domestic sovereign nations with treaty relationships with the U.S. government. This relationship gives tribes limited sovereignty over their lands, while the government holds their land and its natural resources in trust.

This trust status limits the type of economic activity for which Indian trust lands can be used. Generally, trust lands cannot be leased without the approval of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); a process that, despite some recent improvements, can still take months or years. Tribes or individuals are also prevented from selling trust land, because BIA is the titleholder.

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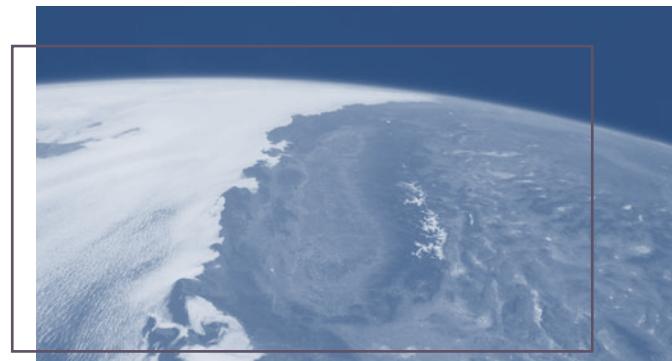
## Interagency Task Force Builds Model for Federal/Local Collaboration in San Joaquin Valley, California

Persistent poverty, unemployment, and a general lack of economic opportunity characterize some low-density regions of the United States. Although most people are familiar with Appalachia, the Delta Region, and the Southwest Border, few are aware of conditions in California's San Joaquin Valley. Despite being one of the largest and most productive agricultural regions in the world—and its proximity to both San Francisco and Los Angeles—the San Joaquin Valley is often characterized as the "Appalachia of the West." This less-than-complimentary designation has been earned through three decades' worth of chronic double-digit unemployment and correspondingly high poverty rates. There's hope, however, that even a 30-year trend of hard times can be turned around.

A new study comparing the regions has been ordered by the Congressional Research Office, and according to Valley advocates, it should confirm that the San Joaquin has far more negative conditions than either the Appalachian or Mississippi Delta regions. Low educational and workforce preparation levels, poor environmental and health indicators, high rates of population growth, increased demand for new and affordable housing, and growing conflicts between farm preservation advocates and those in favor of development make this region particularly vulnerable. The severity and chronic nature of the conditions facing the Valley make it a region in need of coordinated action on the part of federal, state, and local entities, working in tandem with innovative public/private partnerships.

### The Benefits of Federal Agency Collaboration

The Valley today is at an historic turning point. The consequences of today's economic, land use, and other regional policies and decisions (or lack thereof) will shape tomorrow's potential for stability and growth. Over the past year, HUD has led the Interagency Task Force for the Economic Development of the San Joaquin Valley, which is responsible for implementation of Executive Order 13173. Recently amended to ensure that HUD will maintain a leadership role through 2006, this Executive Order calls for the Task Force to coordinate and improve upon existing federal efforts aimed at increasing the region's living standards and economic vitality. Additionally, these efforts are to be coordinated with locally led activities and initiatives. HUD has taken the lead in bringing together federal, state, and local partners, as well as private-sector representatives, faith-



*The San Joaquin Valley, as seen from space. GIS capabilities are expected to yield a very different—and potentially more informative—view of the region.*

and community-based organizations, and concerned citizens who are determined to rewrite the Valley's story to include more favorable outcomes for the local population.

During the past year, the Task Force has served as an agent for change in the region by facilitating partnership building and results-oriented planning. To date, three initiatives have taken shape: employment and workforce readiness through the Regional Jobs Initiative; asset development among the poorest residents through the Financial Education Initiative; and environmental support to economic development through the Clean Air and Clean Energy Initiative. These initiatives are part of an overall, integrated strategy—called the Central Valley Initiative—designed to promote economic development in the Valley region. The initiatives—run by public-private steering committees, led by different federal agencies, and staffed by nonprofit organizations—have established specific goals and measurable actions. For example, under the Regional Jobs Initiative, the Task Force supports a pre-apprenticeship on-site training program that will promote jobs in the construction industry for local residents. The first phase of implementation will take place during construction of a HOPE 6 project in Fresno. More specific goals and actions are highlighted in a recent report sent to the White House, which can be accessed on HUD USER at <http://www.huduser.org/publications/econdev/SanJoaquinTaskForce.html>.

In its efforts to build effective partnerships and engage the community, the Task Force will be working with the Great Valley Center to develop a regional Geographic Information System (GIS) capability that will facilitate data sharing, communication, and visualization throughout

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## Accessibility Study Measures Multifamily Conformance

The *Multifamily Building Conformance with the Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines* report was issued in 2003. This study examines the extent to which multifamily housing conforms to the *Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines* published by HUD in 1991. The *Guidelines* are intended to provide a safe harbor for compliance with the accessibility requirements of the Fair Housing Act. Although these *Guidelines* are not the only method of complying with the Act, they are the most commonly known and widely used by the industry.

The Fair Housing Act requires that "covered multifamily dwellings" built for first occupancy after March 13, 1991 be designed and constructed to include certain features of accessible design. Multifamily dwellings covered by the Act are those consisting of four or more units (if the structure has one or more elevator), and ground floor units in other buildings consisting of four or more units. The Act's design and construction requirements apply to privately owned housing, federally or publicly assisted housing, and to all types of housing when the housing is located in buildings containing four or more dwelling units.

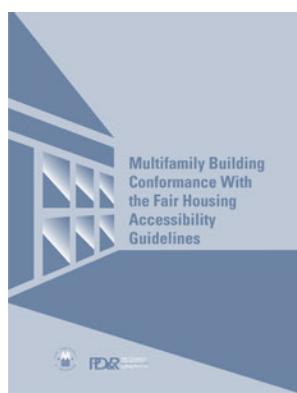
The data gathered and analyzed for this report doesn't attempt to answer the question of *why* housing either meets or does not meet the *Guidelines*. Instead, the survey simply gathered responses to 291 questions about the design elements of multifamily housing. It also measured and recorded levels of nonconformance, some of which might not warrant enforcement action in the field. The final report describes the rates of conformance for multifamily housing in meeting the standards set forth in the *Guidelines*.

The project team gathered conformance data by conducting a survey of a nationally representative sample of multifamily developments. A total of 397 multifamily housing projects across the country, completed for first occupancy between April 1, 1991 and March 31, 1997, were visited. Most projects contained several buildings, and a total of 981 individual housing units were included in the sample. When available, the architectural plans were also analyzed.

In order to make sense of the large amount of data collected, statistical analysis was used to construct summary clusters of elements that showed similar patterns of conformance. The Act's seven design and construction requirements were used to form 16 "composite conformance measures" from the clustered data (see the table on page 5 for a list of the requirements and composite measures). In fact, two sets of measures were constructed: one for units visited in the field (field) and

one for architectural plans (plan). The score reflects the proportion of individual items in a measure that were in conformance with the *Guidelines*.

In most cases, plans have higher conformance scores than were found in the field. At first blush, it would appear that builders do not always properly execute architectural plans. However, the plan and field scores are close, which suggests that the builders usually do execute the plans, and that if elements are included in plans, builders will follow them. The only measure for which conformance was higher in the field than in the plans was the measure for elevators (#2). The explanation in this instance is most likely that elevators are delivered from the manufacturer built to determined standards.



In summary, levels of conformance with accessibility requirements on the 16 composite measures were relatively high. Still, a broad range of conformance levels on the individual level were observed among the sample of completed dwelling units surveyed in this study, with reported levels ranging from 0 to 100. Further examination of the underlying reasons for nonconformance with accessibility regulations should include a consideration of the particular disincentives and challenges to conformance behavior that may operate in different regions of the country.

HUD has recently begun work on a study to design a new methodology for gathering information on conformance among multifamily buildings. Eventually, this work is intended to produce a replication of and improvement upon the work done in the original report, *Multifamily Building Conformance with the Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines*. The intent is to go beyond the original study and take advantage of improvements in technology, such as handheld devices, for recording information about buildings. The findings from the new study should be available in a little over a year.

The *Multifamily Building Conformance with the Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines* can be found online at <http://www.huduser.org/publications/fairhsg/multifamily.html> and is available in printed form for a nominal charge by calling the HUD USER Clearinghouse at 1-800-245-2691.

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## San Joaquin Valley, California *cont. from page 3*

the policy development process. The GIS platform is also being designed to support coordinated local and regional planning and decisionmaking, while providing a means of measuring—and visually depicting—the results.

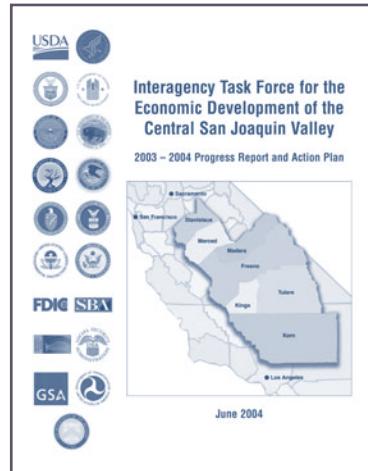
### A Model for Regional Collaboration

The Task Force is comprised of regional representatives from 20 participating federal agencies. It regularly meets with local stakeholders to craft viable strategies and solutions. Allowing local governments to present critical issues to representatives of multiple federal agencies results in a collaborative approach to problem-solving, while helping to break down many of the institutional barriers that separate federal and local agencies. This approach also ensures that the participants remain grounded in the issues that affect the local people and their communities.

Will the Task Force, as a vehicle for cross-agency coordination, local engagement, and results-oriented planning, lead to measurable improvements in the quality of life in the San Joaquin Valley? Can the structure developed by the Task Force serve as a model for

federal agencies in other parts of the country to work with one another and with local partners to efficiently and effectively address regional needs? Can federal agencies based in Washington, D.C. and state agencies centered in their respective capitals work with

local governments and community-based organizations through innovative research, planning, and action that can be responsive to regional needs and opportunities? We'd like to think the answer is a resounding yes. Realistically, there's much more to be done, but from what we've seen thus far, the story of the San Joaquin Valley is far from written, and some very promising developments are just over the next rise.



## Accessibility Study Measures Multifamily Conformance *cont. from page 4*

**Table A: Composite conformance measures by requirement**

Requirement	Composite measure (Number of survey items used to form measure)	Average Score	
		Plan	Field
1: Accessible Building Entrance on an Accessible Route	1. Building Entrance (2)	94.0	92.0
2: Accessible and Usable Public and Common Use Areas	2. Elevators (31)	76.6	91.3
	3. Public Accessible Routes (27)	95.5	89.5
	4. Safety Features of Accessible Routes (6)	97.2	91.2
	5. Public Facilities (18)	97.6	93.1
	6. Ramps and Obstructions (19)	96.9	93.8
	7. Curb Ramps (6)	96.4	92.3
	8. Clearance and Reach (5)	98.4	93.7
	9. Usable Doors (37)	96.0	90.0
4: Accessible Route Into and Through the Dwelling Unit	10. Accessible Route (5)	98.0	95.0
5: Light Switches, Electrical Outlets, Thermostats, and Environmental Controls in Accessible Locations	11. Access to Obstructed Switches (5)	97.4	88.7
	12. Height of Switches and Controls (3)	87.5	72.3
6: Reinforced Walls for Grab Bars	13. Reinforced Walls for Grab Bars (5)	85.0	73.0
7: Usable Kitchens and Bathrooms	14. Wheelchair Mobility in Bathrooms (15)	81.2	79.3
	15. Usability of Kitchen Appliances and Fixtures (6)	92.4	92.5
	16. Clear Spaces in Bath and Kitchen (7)	88.8	84.1

## NAHASDA: New Strategies *cont. from page 2*

Tribal jurisdiction issues also create barriers to economic activity, as non-Indian entities often hesitate to enter into contracts on land where local and state courts have no jurisdiction. Consequently, private-sector housing development is rare on tribal lands.

HUD's Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program (Section 184) gives Native Americans access to sources of private mortgage financing by providing loan guarantees to lenders. The federal government backing of the loan has encouraged many lenders to begin lending on Indian land. Section 184 covers one- to four-family homes located in an Indian or Alaska Native area where the land may be tribal trust, allotted individual trust, or fee simple. There are currently over 1,000 homeownership loans in Indian Country.

Some examples include the White Mountain Apache Tribe, which used Section 184 to build a 250-unit single-family housing development. The Bay Mills Tribe in Michigan has a tri-party agreement with Central Savings Bank through which the bank can offer HUD 184, Rural Development, or conventional loans to members of the tribe. The Grand Ronde Tribe in Oregon used the Section 184 program to fund one of the first manufactured home subdivisions on trust land.

Another loan guarantee program, the Tribal Housing Activities Loan Guarantee Program (Title VI), provides loan guarantees for Indian Housing Block Grant recipients

who need additional funds to engage in NAHASDA-eligible affordable housing activities, but are unable to borrow from other sources without a guarantee of payment by the federal government.

Under Title VI, the Cherokee Nation, for example, has borrowed \$50 million from Bank One Oklahoma and HUD guarantees 95 percent of the loan. This is by far the largest Title VI loan to a tribe since NAHASDA was passed



A home on the White Mountain Apache reservation made possible with a Section 184 loan guarantee.

into law in 1996. More than 500 single-family homes will be built over the next few years, with selected families receiving low-interest, 30-year mortgages.

Through NAHASDA, HUD honors the right of tribal self-governance while still providing the assistance and funding needed to help house Native American and Alaska Native families.

## HOPWA Evaluation *cont. from page 1*

communities and neighborhoods to manage federal funds appropriated for HIV/AIDS programs. HOPWA grantees are encouraged to develop community-wide strategies and form partnerships with area nonprofit organizations. HOPWA funds are awarded as grants from one of three programs:

- The **HOPWA Formula Program** uses a statutory method of allocating HOPWA funds to eligible states and cities on behalf of their metropolitan areas.
- The **HOPWA Competitive Program** is a national competition to select model projects or programs.
- The **HOPWA National Technical Assistance Funding** awards are provided to strengthen the management, operation, and capacity of HOPWA grantees, project sponsors, and potential applicants of HOPWA funding.

HOPWA funds may be used for a range of housing, social services, program planning, and development costs. HOPWA funds may also be used for mental health

services, chemical dependency treatment, nutritional services, case management, assistance with daily living, and other supportive services.

In 2000, HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research initiated an evaluation of the HOPWA program. The study was based on the following three research questions:

- How are the housing needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS being met through the HOPWA program, and what barriers exist to addressing those needs?
- Is the HOPWA program well coordinated with other community programs, including health care and supportive services that assist persons living with HIV/AIDS, and how has that coordination occurred?
- To what degree have the programs awarded by competition accomplished their goals by using innovative ideas or techniques, and how applicable are these innovations to other programs?

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## HOPWA Evaluation *cont. from page 6*

Researchers reviewed existing data sources, interviewed local program personnel and clients and conducted three surveys. Two of the survey instruments, the *Formula Grantee Questionnaire* and the *Housing Assistance Provider Questionnaire*, were distributed to the universe of funding recipients. The third survey instrument, the Client Questionnaire, was used in anonymous phone interviews with 36 HOPWA clients. These multiple data sources were used to obtain the most accurate possible picture of HOPWA from the perspectives of various stakeholders. The findings were presented in a final report titled the National Evaluation of the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA), which was published in January 2001.

The report concluded that, as intended, HOPWA predominantly serves extremely low-income and very low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS, including many people facing additional life barriers. The findings also show that program flexibility helps meet clients' housing needs and preferences. Overall, HOPWA appears to enhance clients' housing stability, and clients report a high level of satisfaction with the housing that they receive. Local providers work hard to coordinate with other federal programs, especially healthcare-related programs. They also form local partnerships to enhance program operations.

Over the past four years, this important study has provided HUD with valuable information that has helped them target technical assistance efforts, document program success with solid facts and statistics, and make informed public policy decisions. David Vos, the director of HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing, recently called the evaluation "an important study that has helped document the results of the program." He went on to say that, "Many federal programs are under scrutiny to show results... this report helped demonstrate the benefits and cost-effectiveness of the HOPWA program along with some insight into how clients benefit from this assistance."

In September 2003, the Office of AIDS Housing used the evaluation report to prepare its Report to Congress, and in the past, they have used the information contained in the report to prepare budget recommendations to Congress. The report has also been used to inform changes to program guidance and operations. According to Vos, the National Evaluation was a "building block" in developing a new performance measure for client

outcomes that will help gauge the success of these housing projects. Based on the informative findings of the national client survey, the new HOPWA outcome measure will focus on how recipients establish or maintain stable housing for this special needs population. In 2005, HUD will begin requiring updated reporting forms to better capture information on client benefits from permanent housing.



AIDS Housing of Washington used \$957,389 in HOPWA funds to renovate the Lyon Building in downtown Seattle. Sixty-four efficiency apartments provide supportive housing for homeless, single adults who are disabled with AIDS, chronic mental illness, and/or chemical abuse.

Third-party program evaluations, such as the HOPWA evaluation, are important tools for policymakers, researchers, and staff working in the field. Positive findings can help inform community planning processes and help direct limited public resources to maximize their effectiveness. Such results also help policymakers consider program funding levels, boost morale for those working with and within the program, and raise awareness of the program or cause. There is also a benefit to uncovering negative findings, in that this allows for corrective actions or sanctions, as necessary. When properly addressed, initial negative results can be turned into positive program changes that ultimately benefit those most in need of a given program or service.

The National Evaluation of the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA) is available on HUD USER at [http://www.huduser.org/publications/hsgspec/hopwa\\_0101.html](http://www.huduser.org/publications/hsgspec/hopwa_0101.html) or by calling 1-800-245-2691.

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In the Next Issue of research **works**

- Weatherization is an important part of responsible – and cost-effective – homeownership. For many new and existing homeowners on a tight budget, the cost of weatherization can be daunting... but the cost of a drafty, leaky house can be even more so. This article will review basic home weatherization practices that can be applied both inside and outside a home or apartment. Readers will learn about new technologies that can help save energy and reduce costs, as well as some creative ways that local governments are funding weatherization programs using HUD dollars.
- One week before Hurricane Charley slammed into Florida's Gulf Coast, three homeless families in Port Charlotte moved into new homes. Built with PATH technologies, including structural insulated panels faced with fiber-cement siding, the homes were designed to resist storm damage. With the exception of minor damage caused by falling trees, all three homes survived Charley intact and were immediately reoccupied following the hurricane. Many other homes in the area were seriously damaged. This article will look at how advanced building technologies can help create safer, more durable, more energy-efficient housing.
- One cold February morning, 75 homeless advocates from HUD-supported groups stood roadside with signs to raise awareness and remind commuters of the problems that homeless individuals and families face every day – particularly in the long, cold winter months. Pay it Forward, a local group that raises money and donates it anonymously, sponsored the event last year, which they called HOME: Homeless Outreach Morning Exercise. Pay It Forward is part of the Sioux Falls Homeless Coalition, which receives Community Development Block Grant funds through the city. HUD also funds transitional housing in Sioux Falls through Heartland House, the American Indian Services, and the Sioux Falls Housing Authority. As another winter is upon us, this article will highlight the efforts of Pay it Forward, which is working with other South Dakotan non-profits to prepare for an influx of homeless citizens this season.
- Through a memorandum of understanding, HUD works with EPA and DOE to expand the use of ENERGY STAR® products in assisted and public housing, and in projects financed through other HUD programs, such as CDBG and HOME. ENERGY STAR is a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy efficient products and appliances. This article will profile the three key ENERGY STAR applications: ENERGY STAR Products and Appliances; ENERGY STAR for New Homes; and ENERGY STAR for Existing Homes. The article will discuss the benefits as well as ideas on how to incorporate ENERGY STAR into CDBG, HOME, PIH, and HOPE VI programs.



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