

Talking Points for the 2011 Federal Initiatives

Recommended by the Housing Coordinating Team of Montana

- **Enact housing program changes to increase flexibility and efficiency.**
 - Revise how income limits are determined for several housing programs.
 - Section 8 Voucher Reform Act (SEVRA) has many changes that will help administer the program.
- **Fund Section 8 for new and existing vouchers and project-based commitments.**
 - 439 families in Montana will lose their rental assistance if the proposed cuts to the 2010 budget for Housing Choice Vouchers are implemented.
 - 795 fewer families in Montana will have an affordable place to live if the proposed cut to the 2010 budget for Project-Based Section 8 Program is implemented.
- **Maintain current HOME, CDGB and NSP funding.**
 - As communities struggle to maintain critical services and increase jobs, it is cruel timing to reduce funding for economic development, public facilities, community development planning and for housing. The cuts proposed to the CDBG programs would reduce grants by half.....from a level that is woefully short to begin with.
 - The HOME program in Montana would lose almost \$900,000 in funding that is sent to local governments and communities that need affordable housing if proposed 2010 cuts are implemented.
- **Maintain HUD funding for First-time Homebuyer Education and Homeowner Counseling**
 - We serve 4,500 Montanans annually, creating informed homeowners and strong communities.
 - Services range from First-time Homebuyer Education to Foreclosure Prevention.
 - There will be NO First-time Homebuyer Education offered to those Montanans who are seeking information about buying their first home, NO Homeowner Counseling offered for those who seek assistance, NO Foreclosure Prevention Counseling offered to homeowners who are in danger of losing their home and who need sound advice from a trusted party.
 - We assist constituents regularly that are referred by Montana's elected officials and representatives.
- **Increase Tax Credit Program authority permanently.**
 - Tax credits are the best and most efficient program for creating affordable rental housing.
 - In Montana, LIHTC requests are over-subscribed. Increase IRS allocation to small states.
- **Incentivize Capital Investment for the Tax Credit Program, especially for rural projects.**
 - Rural projects have difficulty attracting investors who wish to focus on large tax credit allocations.
 - Montana as a whole is rural, with most projects under 25 units in size.
 - Allow limited partner (investor) in small projects to claim credits over 5 years rather than 10.
 - S-Corp investments would broaden scope of investors in Montana, i.e. local community banks.
- **Fund mobile home replacement initiatives.**
 - Mobile homes are major choice of housing for families in Montana for many reasons; affordability, portability.
 - Some areas have no skilled carpenters to build homes. Transport of building materials adds to cost.
 - Energy costs make older homes very un-affordable for tenants and for energy assistance programs.
 - They can also be very hazardous if not built to current code; fires, fumes, etc.
- **Fund state-administered National Affordable Housing Trust Fund.**
 - Much needed funding that is flexible for filling the gaps in hard-to-finance projects.
- **Enhance and create new programs to preserve affordable housing.**
 - There is a supply of existing affordable housing in Montana that is 20 plus years old and is in need of updating for continued long term affordability. Once this housing is lost to the market, it will never be affordable again.
- **New state-administered funding of operating and rental assistance for multifamily housing**
 - Projects that target the lowest of incomes need additional subsidies to cover operational costs and well as those they are serving needing help covering rent.
- **Increase Public Housing Authorities' Operating funds.**
 - Sufficiently fund operating funds of public housing authorities.
- **Increase inventory of Inmate Re-entry Housing.**
 - As more and more prisoners are on early release, housing is extremely difficult to obtain considering all the issues that follow this population.