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HUD Veteran Leads Transition

A former HUD executive in the Bush administration has been tapped to be HUD Secretary-Designate Ben Carson's principal deputy to serve temporarily as designer of the new department leadership lineup. William Russell previously served as HUD deputy assistant secretary for public housing.

Russell, tapped to lead the troubled Sarasota Housing Authority in 2005, will lead the four-member HUD transition team in compiling a list of candidates for the positions of deputy secretary and seven assistant secretaries, all of whom must face Senate confirmation.

While the Russell-led team is likely to remain in place for a few months until a permanent team is established, Russell could be a candidate for deputy secretary, the executive who leads the department's day-to-day operations and its 8,250 employees.

Another HUD veteran, Pamela Patenaude, tops the list of candidates for deputy HUD secretary. Known for her administrative efficiencies, Patenaude is credited with streamlining HUD field offices and cutting its workforce by 40% when she served in the Bush administration as assistant deputy secretary. Patenaude is now president of the J. Ronald Terwilliger Foundation for Housing America's Families.

Russell likely will be the top candidate to be assistant secretary for public housing. He served as deputy assistant secretary for public housing under Assistant Secretary Michael Liu in the Bush administration.

Russell is credited with pulling the SHA out of receivership in a three year turnaround following the agency's "massive mismanagement and financial insolvency" problems according to HUD. The SHA board granted Russell a six-month leave of absence.

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