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## Spartan HUD Budget Continues

While the FY 2019 spending blueprint gives HUD \$3 billion more than the department requested, it is still about \$3 billion less than authorized in the current continuing resolution's annualized amount for FY 2018.

The conference report lawmakers settled on after months of dickering over funding for a United States-Mexico border wall actually provides HUD enough cash to barely make ends meet even though some programs have been awarded increased funding to account for inflation costs -- effectively keeping them running in place.

And, in a key move, lawmakers effectively shut down enforcement of HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule.

That rule, a centerpiece of the Obama administration's effort to desegregate single-family zoned neighborhoods, calls for use of a funding cudgel to forcing communities to revise their zoning codes to allow universal high-density construction of low-income housing or face a cut-off of their federal funding assistance.

The deal reached this week says, "Section 232 prohibits HUD from directing a grantee to undertake a zoning law change as part of the AFFH rule."

Despite the president's request to eliminate the Public Housing Capital Fund, lawmakers provide \$2.8 billion to keep the nation's remaining public housing stock in at least minimal physical repair, although it is less than half the annual amount public housing authorities contend is necessary to accomplish minimal physical repairs in a housing portfolio that now is estimated to need nearly \$50 billion to bring it up to par to conform with HUD's safety and sanitary regimen.

Overall, HUD would receive \$44.2 billion, including \$8 billion for new housing and public infrastructure. Public & Indian Housing would receive the lion's share at \$31 billion, a \$716.6 million increase from the FY 2018 enacted level and \$6.4 billion more than HUD requested.

Tenant-based Rental Assistance, the Section 8 housing voucher program, would receive \$20.3 billion, a status quo amount intended only to renew existing vouchers but unable to expand the program. A separate voucher mobility demonstration program, intended to test the theory that adding value to vouchers will allow poor families to compete for rentals in more affluent, higher-

opportunity neighborhoods.

The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is funded at \$150 million. Community Planning & Development gets an extra \$29 million this year in its \$7.7 billion budget, \$5 billion more than requested. Homeless Assistance Grants -- distributed through HUD's Continuum of Care network -- would receive \$2.6 billion.

Community Development Block grants, a program the Trump administration continues to resist and wants eliminated, would receive \$3.4 billion.

Project-based rental assistance -- contract obligations to Section 8 landlords -- would receive \$11.7 billion to fulfill all existing contracts but there is no room to expand the program despite HUD's initiative to add more private landlords under the Rental Assistance Demonstration program conversion of public housing to a public-private program.

Taking into account the surge of seniors from the Baby Boom generation, lawmakers provide \$61 million for renovation and construction of housing units for the elderly and \$30 million for new housing for the disabled.

The consensus agreement cleared the House and Senate in time to avert another government shutdown. President Trump signed the legislation immediately.

**Info:** See the Conference Report summary at [www.cdpublications.com/docs/9622](http://www.cdpublications.com/docs/9622)

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