

OVERVIEW OF THE ROAD TO HOUSING ACT AND THE FLEXIBILITIES THAT OFFER MUCH NEEDED SOLUTIONS TO THE HOUSING MARKET

The **Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream (ROAD) to Housing Act** is comprehensive legislation designed to make targeted reforms across all segments of the U.S. housing market. Introduced during the 118th Congress by Senator Tim Scott (R-S.C.), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the bill offered a comprehensive view of Federal housing policy, introducing long-needed reforms across all segments of the U.S. housing market, centering support around families and communities.

The ROAD to Housing Act aimed to pave the way to increasing housing supply, improving quality of life for families, and more importantly, providing economic opportunity in communities across the nation. While the bill has yet to be re-introduced for consideration in the 119th Congress, the policies outlined represent positive program changes that will allow housing providers to adapt their programs to best address local needs.

The Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) is supportive of the intent of the ROAD to Housing Act and encourages further opportunities to equip Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) with the tools needed to ensure maximum administrative efficiency and participant benefit.

Section 201: Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)

Eliminates the cap on the number of public housing units that may be converted under RAD to allow for other forms of Federal assistance and private investment that is currently unavailable for public housing.

Los Angeles County Assessment: This proposal would benefit the LACDA's future RAD activities as it begins to convert its Public Housing portfolio. While the cap has increased multiple times since 2014, and currently rests at 455,000 units, the number of conversions is already more than halfway to this limit, posing future statutory barriers to agencies, such as the LACDA, wanting to participate in the program going forward.

Section 301: Authorization of Moving to Work (MTW) Program

Fully authorizes the MTW Program and requires evaluation of housing reforms undertaken by MTW participants to identify replicable program models to improve cost-efficiency and outcomes for families in U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-assisted housing.

Los Angeles County Assessment: MTW designation would provide the LACDA the flexibility to develop new policies that would allow the agency to operate more efficiently. As the agency moves toward RAD conversion, MTW status may provide the LACDA with the flexibility needed to craft program policies that would make RAD conversion from public housing to Project-Based Vouchers smoother.

Section 302: Promoting Self-Sufficiency

Directs HUD to study the impact of work requirements for HUD-assisted residents served by PHAs as part of the MTW Program, but only after determining that enough applicants would be interested in implementing work requirements so that a rigorous evaluation could be conducted and no families would be negatively impacted.

Los Angeles County Assessment: Combined with Section 301, Section 302 would provide the LACDA the ability to venture into the much-needed operational flexibility to address participant needs.

Section 401: Homelessness Reforms

Authorizes HUD to pay-for-success with a 10% set aside of funds made available for grantees of the Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Programs if they can measurably improve outcomes for the homeless individuals.

Los Angeles County Assessment: Section 401 is designed to provide incentives to grantees that have shown to measurably improve outcomes for serving homeless individuals. The proposal, while well-intended, raises concerns.

As the CoC Program currently operates, it is difficult to measure successful outcomes of serving homeless individuals because funds are often recaptured due to reasons unrelated to PHA efforts such as the funding match for the supportive services component. The regulatory and statutory requirements set in place for CoC grantees limit the scope of permissible expenditures and, therefore, limit the number of homeless individuals served. It is recommended that the regulatory and statutory requirements of the CoC Program be reassessed before providing funding incentives.

Section 501: Opportunity Zone Priority

Requires HUD to prioritize awarding of competitive grants relating to the construction or preservation of housing to recipients located in, or that primarily serve, communities designated as Opportunity Zones.

Los Angeles County Assessment: As the LACDA looks to acquire Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) properties to convert them into long-term affordable housing, this requirement would prioritize grants to entities, like the LACDA, who are operating in Opportunity Zones. Parts of unincorporated Willowbrook, where the LACDA already has public housing units and other housing properties are eligible for this type of prioritization for grants that could aid in the modification, rehabilitation, or preservation of these properties.