MTW Expansion

In its FY 2016 Appropriations Act, Congress directed HUD to expand the Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration to include one-hundred additional high-performing PHAs over the next seven years. Congress also called on HUD to establish a federal research advisory committee that includes program and research experts from HUD agencies with an MTW designation and independent subject matter experts in housing policy research. NAHRO has long called for meaningful expansion of the MTW Demonstration and is deeply supportive of the Congress’s efforts.

Over the course of 2016, HUD met with the MTW Research Advisory Committee. The committee discussed potential policy proposals for each of the three statutory MTW objectives. The Advisory Committee also discussed methods that could properly evaluate policy interventions, while simultaneously maintaining the flexibilities and local discretion that are inherent to the MTW program. The Advisory Committee focused on research evaluation methods for a variety of policy interventions that included general MTW flexibilities, rent reform, project-based voucher caps, sponsor-based housing, landlord incentives, and place-based models.

On January 23, HUD published in the Federal Register a notice titled “Operations Notice for the Expansion of the Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration Program Solicitation of Comment.” The draft notice establishes the requirements for the implementation and continued operations of the MTW Demonstration program pursuant to the MTW Expansion Statute. The notice discusses three categories of waivers and the associated activities that MTW agencies may pursue. The expansion will grant general waivers, conditional waivers, and cohort-specific waivers. General waivers would be available to MTW expansion agencies without HUD review, conditional waivers would require HUD review and approval. Cohort-specific waivers would be defined in a series of notices soliciting applications for participation in the MTW expansion. HUD will also operationalize the regionalization provision included in the FY 2016 Appropriations Act through the same terms and conditions as the notice. NAHRO’s comments on the draft Operations Notice stress our concerns that the new Operations Notice does not provide the same flexibility as the current MTW Standard Agreement, which may prohibit PHAs in the Expansion from being able to easily craft policies that meet the needs of their communities.

In response to the comments it received, HUD hosted four listening sessions on the MTW Expansion Operations Notice. Through the listening sessions, HUD gathered additional feedback the Operations Notice, most of which mirrored NAHRO’s comments. HUD then reopened the comment period for the MTW expansion operations notice on May 4 to receive additional written feedback.

HUD has yet to finalize the Operations Notice for the MTW Expansion. HUD has also yet to release a request for applications for the MTW expansion, nor has it announced the policies the expansion will evaluate. HUD has scheduled an additional meeting with the Research Advisory Committee for early 2018.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:
For up-to-date information on this issue and other affordable housing issues go to www.nahro.org/resource-center and follow the NAHRO blog at www.nahroblog.org