



NAVAJO HOUSING AUTHORITY

Navajo Housing Authority

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Omnibus spending bill released with increased funding to the IHBG

WASHINGTON – Early Friday, Mar. 23, the Senate passed a House of Representatives fiscal 2018 omnibus spending bill to avoid a government shutdown. The \$1.3 trillion-dollar spending bill includes budgets for all administrative agencies including the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) program, which provides federal funding to tribal communities for their housing programs.

Overall the Bill allocates \$755 million to the IHBG program, of which \$100 million is to be distributed on a competitive basis for new construction and rehabilitation of housing units. The competitive funding has not been included in any appropriations bill since the enactment of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA), which created the IHBG program. The last large infusion of funds to the IHBG program was with the allocation made along with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

“NHA will immediately look at construction ready and rehabilitation proposals in preparation for this competitive process,” said Navajo Housing Authority (NHA) Interim CEO Roberta Roberts. “NHA has a long list of new construction and rehabilitation projects, and should we secure this targeted funding then we can focus on providing more housing units in our Navajo communities.”

“We are extremely pleased that Congress has included additional funding to the IHBG program,” said Roberts. “This is very good news and we should immediately send our gratitude to Congress and congratulate the hard work of all the tribes across the country for advocating for an increase in funding—Indian Country has continually made requests to Congress for increased IHBG funding.”

“We also want to express our gratitude to our leadership through the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice-President, Navajo Nation Council, Speaker’s Office, and Navajo Nation Washington Office for their tireless efforts in advocating on behalf of the NHA,” Roberts added.

Surprisingly the Bill decreases funding for the HUD 184 Loan Program to \$1 million, down from \$7 million that was allocated in the year prior. Tribal citizens from Alaska and Oklahoma have been the largest beneficiaries of HUD 184 loans with very few loans provided on tribal trust lands. HUD is currently undergoing a consultation process to develop regulations around this program.

Other allocations impacting tribal housing include the following: \$5 million for the Tribal HUD-VASH program, \$2 million for the Title VI Loan Guarantee program, and \$65 million for the Indian Community Development Block Grant (a cut of \$35 million from the previous year's allocation).

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