

# Section 3: Job Training, Employment, and Business Opportunities Related to HUD Funding

Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, titled "Economic Opportunities for Low and Very Low Income Persons," requires recipients of HUD housing and community development funding to provide "to the greatest extent feasible" job training, employment, and contracting opportunities for low and very low income residents and eligible businesses.

The Section 3 obligation is too often ignored by the recipients of HUD funds and not enforced by HUD or the local recipients; therefore, the potential of the program is unrecognized or underused by low and very low income people and qualified businesses and their advocates. However in recent years, both lawmakers and current HUD officials have expressed interest in strengthening the program.

## ADMINISTRATION

Oversight responsibility for Section 3 rests with HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO). HUD is charged with monitoring and determining if local recipients of HUD housing and community development funds are meeting their obligations. In addition, those local recipients have the responsibility to ensure that the obligations and goals of Section 3 are met by local contractors.

## HISTORY

The Section 3 obligation was created as part of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, which at the time was described as "the most farsighted, the most comprehensive, and the most massive housing program in all American history." Section 3 was a component of that act which strove to improve the quality of life of all Americans. The Section 3 statute has been amended four times; each time the amendments primarily sought to expand the reach of Section 3 and to benefit low income families. Nevertheless, the potential of this program has largely been ignored throughout its history.

## SUMMARY

Section 3 is a federal obligation that is tied to HUD funding. It applies to all HUD funding for public housing and Indian housing, such as the public housing operating fund and capital fund, Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) grants, Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) grants, HOPE VI, and the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. Section 3 also applies to other housing and community development funding including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds. Section 3 states that recipients of HUD housing and community development funding must provide "to the greatest extent feasible" job training, employment, and contracting opportunities for low and very low income residents and Section 3 businesses.

HUD regulations set numerical goals for all entities subject to Section 3. Low and very low income individuals should be given a preference for at least 30% of all new hires that arise from the HUD funding. At least 10% of the total dollar amount of all Section 3 contracts for building trades work and 3% of all other contracts, should be for Section 3 businesses. A Section 3 business is defined as a business: owned by low income individuals; or which hires a substantial number of low income individuals; or which commits to contract at least 25% of the dollars