

Calling your Senator / Representative:

Tell the person who answers the phone that you are a constituent of Senator / Representative _____ and would like to talk to his/her Congressional aide who works on issues related to Housing.

I am an affordable housing provider in (Representative or Senator _____'s district or state). I wanted to discuss with you the need for language in the FY 2009 Agricultural Appropriations to give the Rural Housing Service (RHS) in the Department of Agriculture (USDA) access to the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) system.

The EIV system, which belongs to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), provides housing managers and owners with access to the National Directory of New Hires and other agency data bases in order match tenant or third party provided income and employment records with Social Security (SS), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), new hires (W-4), and wage and unemployment compensation records to ensure tenants meet the requirements to reside in government assisted properties.

Because of language in the FY 2004 Appropriations bill, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gained access to the Health and Human Services and Social Security databases to verify tenant's income and employment information. The income-matching program has already demonstrated an increase in savings to the program and an improvement in rental subsidy accuracy in a short period.

However, the RHS is not a part of the computer matching agreements needed to access EIV. Our industry foresees this being an issue because HUD has indicated they will require all PHAs and private owners and agents to use the EIV system for tenant income verifications in the near future. Many of our members (like myself) use mixed-financing to fund our properties, such as rural housing subsidies from USDA and HUD housing assistance payments. Using two different methods, third-party verification for rural housing subsidy recipients and EIV for HUD subsidized tenants, to verify an individual's income and employment is confusing and time consuming. Access to the system would simplify an owner or agent's job and reduce potential verification errors if they could use EIV for income verification for all tenants in the same affordable housing communities. Furthermore, housing providers may miss unreported income due to inaccurate or incomplete information without access to this information.

Thank the aid for his or her time and provide contact information for the person receiving the call and re-emphasize the need for the inclusion of language in the 2009 Agriculture Appropriations Bill to give RHS access to the EIV system. Be sure to request a response from the Senator or Representative.