

Rural Questions to Ponder

How do we maintain and replicate successes?

What is needed in rural housing programs?

What is the best balance of ownership and rental?

What can be done in the highest need areas?

**Housing Assistance Council – www.ruralhome.org
joe@ruralhome.org**

- **THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT
RURAL HOUSING AND POVERTY**

(or maybe you do)

RURAL IS WHERE?

- **Over half the US rural population lives within metro areas (but there are also more remote rural places with persistent, very high poverty).**

POOREST OF THE POOR

- **Of the 200 highest poverty counties in the US, 192 are rural. Renter households in rural areas have a higher poverty rate than renters in central cities (32% vs. 28%).**

DEPT. OF HOUSING AND URBAN (AND RURAL) DEVELOPMENT

- **HUD programs work extensively in rural areas. E.g., there are 652,000 HUD-assisted rental units in rural areas. CDBG and HOME are very important to rural. And over 200,000 Sec. 8 vouchers and 232,000 public housing units are rural.**

USDA PROGRAMS

- **USDA has extensive programs for rural multi- and single-family housing, and for home repair and other needs. USDA has funded over 400,000 apartments and 2.1 million homeownership units.**
 - Sec. 502 direct funded 9800 units in 2008 – and 133,000 in 1976.**
 - Sec. 515 funded 805 units in 2008 – and 39,000 in 1979. Much of this stock needs preservation.**

BEGGING TO DIFFER

- **Contrary to the impression left by the subprime mortgage crisis, homeownership for low-income and even very low-income families can work if such households have a fair loan and good pre- and post-purchase counseling.**

ONE IDEA

- Some of the subprime meltdown and global crisis might have been avoided with a better way of helping qualified families become successful homeowners. One solution: A robust, high volume USDA Sec. 502 homeownership mortgage program, run largely by nonprofits, AND creation of a similar program for urban and suburban areas. (HUD Sec. 235 was an attempt but died.)