



## Questions to Consider

1. As many of you know, we are in the process of amending our self-help regulations. What changes do you want us to make?
2. In the area of required family labor, do you think that the current requirement of completing 65% of the work is too great in terms of time demands in the work/life balance of things? What would be more appropriate and why?
3. How should family labor be accounted for? Do you like the current method of assigning percentages to certain major components of the home or do you think other approaches should be considered?
4. One of the challenges we've identified on some of our program reviews, is the way some organizations give credit to families for their labor contributions as far as how much of the activity they do themselves to get credit for doing it all. What do some of your organizations do to ensure that the contributions are meaningful and cost saving?
5. Regarding the use of our T&MA contractors, if you are a current grantee, do you feel that you are receiving valuable assistance from them to support your efforts? Do you have ideas about other options we might consider obtaining these services?
6. We know that some of the markets you serve have encountered depressed prices of existing housing stock and are experiencing difficulty in marketing the program because of that. Do you have any suggestions about changes we should consider in our policies that would make this easier for you?
7. Right now, the primary efficiency measure that is used in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Program Assessment Rating Tools (PART) to measure the effectiveness of the self-help program is the amount of equity achieved as compared to the amount of grant assistance per unit. Do you think that is an appropriate measure of the program's effectiveness and can you suggest other alternatives we might want to consider?



8. We've had much internal dialogue about how to define the equivalent value of a modest house. We'd be interested in your thoughts and comments on what criteria and/or parameters we should use in establishing what is meant by that terminology.
9. We've heard some concerns about going to a competitive grant application process. Up until just a couple of years ago, the self-help program was over-subscribed and we had little opportunity to encourage new applications to start self-help building programs. In view of the most recent increases of funding, what are your thoughts about requiring competition and what obstacles should we anticipate with how to balance re-funding with cycling new organizations into the program? Given current economic conditions, do you think we should open the program up to new grantee organizations?
10. As a follow up to the previous question, how would you propose funding these organizations; first come-first served, through a competitive process, or through some other process?
11. Overall, what are some of the things that you think work best with self-help and what areas are problematic that we should focus on modifying so that the program serves its intended objectives?
12. What problems do you typically encounter when trying to qualify families for the program? What programmatic changes to the 502 Direct Loan Program would you like to see to help overcome these issues?
13. Do you think the program would be better served, if we no longer had T&MA contractors and instead relied on entirely on RD staff to provide the oversight to the grantees?