

Background

The RHS offers a variety of programs to build or improve housing and essential community facilities in rural areas. The Agency offers loans, grants, and loan guarantees for single- and multifamily housing, community facilities, such as, child-care centers, fire and police stations, hospitals, libraries, nursing homes, schools, first responder vehicles and equipment, multifamily housing for farm laborers, and much more. RHS also provides technical assistance loans and grants in partnership with non-profit organizations, Indian tribes, state and federal government agencies, and local communities.

The RHS administers the Section 502 program with the objective to assist very-low and low-income applicants obtain decent, safe and sanitary housing in eligible rural areas by providing payment assistance to increase an applicant's repayment ability. The purpose of this pilot program is to evaluate the impact of authorizing the value of properties constructed through the Section 502 self-help program to exceed the maximum area loan limit at 7 CFR 3550.63(a)(1); and permitting grants and other affordable housing products to exceed the area loan limit for all Section 502 direct loans. This pilot program is necessary to ensure that any new area loan limits do not prohibit new construction under the self-help housing method and allows for other affordable housing financing products to successfully supplement gaps in financing.

The following twenty-four (24) States are selected to participate in the pilot based on program usage, the wide geographic variation, historic loan levels, and variety of construction and affordable housing partners: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Washington, Utah, and Virginia.

Maximum Loan Limit Pilot Program

The implementation of the Maximum Loan Limit Pilot Program is an alternative approach to underwriting self help loans and all Section 502 direct loans with additional affordable housing financing from third parties. Agency staff will indicate in each individual Section 502 borrower file, that one or more of the approaches below were used in approval of the loan.

1. The first approach is to remove the maximum loan limit for self-help housing found at 7 CFR. 3550.63(a)(3). The purpose of this pilot is to demonstrate the viability of allowing self-help loan amounts to align with market realities, particularly in higher cost areas where market values often exceed total financial assistance plus sweat equity needed to complete the home's construction. The Agency's security interest will still be protected as the maximum self-help loan amount must still not exceed the area loan limit established in 7 CFR 3550.63(a)(1). Additionally, the appraised value will continue to be used to determine the value of sweaty equity as it relates to the original equity amount shown on Form RD 3550-12, Subsidy Repayment Agreement.

2. The second approach will address situations when an applicant is receiving a housing grant or other form of affordable housing assistance from a third party for purposes other than closing costs. In these situations, the maximum loan limit may be exceeded by the third party financing amount(s), as long as the agency loan itself remains at or below the maximum loan limit. Using this process deviates from the requirements set forth in 7 CFR 3550.63(a)(2)(ii) but is needed to establish whether or not other affordable housing financial products supplement gaps in financing. The Agency will not subordinate its first lien position in these situations.

Paperwork Reduction Act

The regulatory exceptions for this pilot contain no new reporting or recordkeeping burdens under OMB control number 0575-0179 that would require approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-assistant-secretary-civil-rights/how-file-program-discrimination-complaint> and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) *Mail*: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410; or

(2) *Fax*: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) *Email*: Program.Intake@usda.gov.

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Anthony Priest,

Chief of Staff, Rural Housing Service.

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ARCTIC RESEARCH COMMISSION

Notice of Vacancy

AGENCY: Arctic Research Commission.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the Arctic Research and Policy Act Amendments of 1990, which states that any vacancy occurring in the membership of the Commission shall be filled, after notice of the vacancy is published in the **Federal Register**, in the manner in which the original appointment was made, for the remainder of the unexpired term. This notice is published to comply with the aforesaid requirement. The Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 and the Presidential Executive Order on Arctic Research (Executive Order 12501) dated January 28, 1985, established the United States Arctic Research Commission and provides the authority for this notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Debra Dickson, Administrative Officer,

Arctic Research Commission, 703–235–1040.

Debra L. Dickson.

Administrative Officer.

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COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Closing the Gap: Addressing Declining Black Male Enrollment at HBCUs and Other Colleges

AGENCY: Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys (CSSBMB), U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

ACTION: Notice of CSSBMB FY26 Q1 public business meeting.

DATES: Tuesday, March 24, 1:00 p.m. EDT.

ADDRESSES: Meeting to take place virtually and is open to the public via livestream on the Commission's YouTube page: www.youtube.com/usccr.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diamond Newman, 202–339–2371, dnewman@usccr.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with Public Law 116–156, 1134 Stat. 700 (2020), the U.S. Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys (CSSBMB) will hold its FY26 First Quarter Business Meeting exploring CSSBMB business items, operations, and next steps. This business meeting is open to the public via livestream on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' YouTube page at: <https://youtube.com/live/9wG-TeEBNIE>. (*Streaming information subject to change.*) Public participation is available for the event with view access, along with an audio option for listening. Computer-assisted real-time transcription (CART) will be provided. (*Date and meeting details are subject to change.*) For more information on the CSSBMB or the upcoming public briefing, please visit www.usccr.gov/CSSBMB and CSSBMB's Instagram, Facebook, and X.

Meeting Agenda

I. Call to Order & Opening Remarks (5 Minutes)

Chair Wilson

- Call meeting to order
- Welcome Commissioners, staff, and attendees
- Opening remarks on meeting theme

II. Roll Call & Adoption of Agenda (2 Minutes)

Chair Wilson

- Roll call of Commissioners
- Presentation and adoption of agenda
- Motion and vote

III. Framing the Theme: “Closing the Gap” (10 Minutes)

Chair Wilson

- Historical significance of HBCUs for Black male achievement
- Overview of enrollment decline trends and contributing factors
- Setting the framework for discussion and action

IV. Director's Report: Findings & Operations Update (10 Minutes)

Director Brier

- Preliminary findings: enrollment decline, gender gap, financial barriers
- K–12 pipeline failures and college readiness disparities
- HBCU institutional challenges and competition from PWIs
- Workforce and cultural pressures on Black male enrollment
- Preliminary recommendations: targeted financial aid, HBCU capital investment, pipeline programs, policy reforms, national awareness campaign
- Operations and dissemination update

V. Commissioners' Clarifying Questions on Report (5 Minutes)

All Commissioners

- Clarifying questions on Director's Report findings and recommendations

VI. Focused Discussion: Reversing the Decline in Black Male Enrollment (10 minutes)

Director Brier (Staff Data Overview—5 min)/Commissioners (Targeted Discussion—5 min)

- Staff data overview: enrollment crisis, gender disparity, HBCU financial vulnerability, completion rates, cost of inaction, state disinvestment
- Targeted Commissioner discussion on systemic implications and intervention strategies

VII. Open Floor for Commissioners (5 Minutes)

All Commissioners

- Additional comments, initiatives, and policy recommendations
- Discussion of report

recommendations and implementation strategies

VIII. Next Steps & Action Items (10 Minutes)

Chair Wilson

- Dissemination of findings to Congress, Department of Education, and stakeholders
- Identification of legislative actions: HBCU appropriations, Pell Grant expansion, scholarship programs
- Engagement with HBCU leadership and regional roundtables
- Partnerships with TMCF, UNCF, National Urban League, and My Brother's Keeper Alliance
- National public awareness campaign planning
- Commissioner advocacy assignments

IX. Adjournment (3 Minutes)

Chair Wilson

- Final comments
- Closing remarks and adjournment

Zakee Martin,

U.S. CSSBMB Deputy Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Foreign-Trade Zones Board

[S–147–2026]

Foreign-Trade Zone 27; Application for Subzone; Methods Machine Tools, Inc.; Acton and Sudbury, Massachusetts

An application has been submitted to the Foreign-Trade Zones (FTZ) Board by the Massachusetts Port Authority, grantee of FTZ 27, requesting subzone status for the facilities of Methods Machine Tools, Inc., located in Acton and Sudbury, Massachusetts. The application was submitted pursuant to the provisions of the Foreign-Trade Zones Act, as amended (19 U.S.C. 81a–81u), and the regulations of the FTZ Board (15 CFR part 400). It was formally docketed on March 18, 2026.

The proposed subzone would consist of the following sites: *Site 1* (2.5 acres) 976 Main Street, Acton; and *Site 2* (1.38 acres) 65 Union Avenue, Sudbury. No authorization for production activity has been requested at this time. The proposed subzone would be subject to the existing activation limit of FTZ 27.

In accordance with the FTZ Board's regulations, Juanita Chen of the FTZ Staff is designated examiner to review the application and make