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Fitch Ratings Updates U.S. Housing Loan Program Rating Criteria.

Fitch Ratings-New York/San Francisco-05 November 2026: Fitch Ratings has updated its "U.S. Housing and Community Development Loan Program Rating Criteria," replacing the "U.S. Housing Finance Agency Loan Program Rating Criteria" dated May 1, 2026. The revisions expand the scope of covered loan programs and refine Fitch's analytical framework; Fitch does not expect the revisions to affect existing ratings.

The criteria apply to obligation-specific ratings for debt issued by or on behalf of U.S. mission-driven lenders such as community development financial institutions, housing finance agencies and other public-purpose financing entities. They cover programs backed by single-family and multifamily mortgages, small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) loans, mortgage-backed securities, and other community or economic development loans.

Fitch evaluates an issuer's structure, public-purpose mission and involvement in managing the loan program when assigning issue ratings under these criteria. Program management may be assessed as weaker where the issuer has limited experience, limited evidence of mission commitment, or weak oversight or accountability.

The criteria also incorporate guaranteed and non-guaranteed SME whole loans. Fitch will assess these loans under its whole loan program methodology, using the SME or Consumer ABS criteria, as applicable, to derive default and loss-severity assumptions. The analysis reflects the extent of guarantee coverage and resources available to absorb losses on unguaranteed loan balances.

Fitch will assess securitizations backed solely by stripped SBA-guaranteed loan portions under its loan guarantee program methodology. Ratings on debt secured by SBA guarantees, Ginnie Mae securities, or Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac securities remain linked to the U.S. sovereign rating or, where applicable, the guarantor's rating.

Fitch assesses loan programs through four key rating drivers: asset quality, program management, financial profile and asymmetric risk factors. The revisions consolidate financial factors under the financial profile, treat program management as a scaled rating factor, and include legal and program-structure considerations within asymmetric risk factors.

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