



MEMO OF MEMBERS

The Weekly Newsletter of the National Low Income Housing Coalition

FEDERAL BUDGET

House Democrats Release Sequestration Estimates; Some Senators Move Forward with Replacement Proposal

Though Congress is in recess until after the 2012 election, some Members of the House and Senate are working on averting the approaching sequester of discretionary funds while Congress is in recess. The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) requires the Administration to sequester FY13 discretionary funds, which means making across-the-board cuts to achieve a \$1.2 trillion reduction in the deficit over a 10-year period beginning January 2, 2013 (see *Memo*, 10/5).

Representative Norm Dicks (D-WA), Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations, sent a letter to his colleagues on October 9 in which he reported on the consequences of sequestration. He estimates the impact that sequestration would have on multiple programs, including affordable housing programs. The report says that sequestration would result in 200,000 fewer participants receiving Tenant-Based Rental Assistance and would result in evictions of current tenants. The report also estimates that 100,000 fewer people would be served by HUD's Homeless Assistance funds, causing formerly homeless people to return to homelessness (see *Memo*, 9/14).

Meanwhile, the bipartisan group of Senators now known as the "Gang of Eight" (previously, the "Gang of Six") met for three days during the week of October 8 to work on their proposal to replace the sequester with a more tenable deficit reduction strategy and deal with the tax cuts set to expire at the end of the calendar year (see *Memo*, 10/5). The members of this group are Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO), Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Tom Coburn (R-OK), Kent Conrad (D-ND), Michael D. Crapo (R-ID), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Mike Johanns (R-NE), and Mark Warner (D-VA). The group's proposal may influence a Senate leadership bill to replace sequestration and address the deficit during the post-November election "lame duck" session of Congress.

Advocates continued to call on Members of Congress to prevent deep cuts to resources for vulnerable households. NLIHC joined more than 1,900 national, state and local organizations in signing an October 9 letter to Congress calling for Members to "protect low-income and vulnerable people; promote job creation to strengthen the economy; increase revenues from fair sources; and seek responsible savings by targeting wasteful spending in the Pentagon and in other areas that do not serve the public interest."

The organizations wrote, "A balanced approach that raises revenues, promotes tax fairness, and seeks responsible Pentagon and other savings will allow us to achieve national goals of economic growth, economic security for our people, and fiscal stability."

View the House report at <http://1.usa.gov/WdukVR>.

View the CHN letter at <http://bit.ly/SAVE2012LetterSigners>.

HUD

NLIHC Signs Comment Letter on \$10 Million Tenant Protection Voucher Set-Aside

NLIHC signed a letter from the National Preservation Working Group (PWG) to HUD commenting on HUD notices Housing 2012-15 and PIH 2012-39, which revise withdrawn Notice PIH 2012-19. The notices implement a provision of the FY12 Appropriations Act that sets aside \$10 million of tenant protection vouchers for previously ineligible low income households in low-vacancy areas that may have to pay more than 30% of their income for rent at three types of HUD-assisted multifamily properties (see *Memo*, 9/28).

PWG is a coalition of tenants, nonprofit owners, advocates and state and local housing agencies including NLIHC dedicated to the preservation of existing federally assisted multifamily affordable housing.

While endorsing the improvements made by the revised notices, in order to ensure that the maximum number of rent-burdened tenants are helped with tenant protection assistance, PWG offered suggestions regarding three issues: the artificial 40% rent burden eligibility threshold, inadequate notice to tenants, and the need for a back-up to relying on owners to apply.

HUD intends to limit tenant protections to those paying more than 40% of their income for rent and utilities. PWG commented that this high eligibility threshold is inappropriate because it means these tenants are subject to more onerous eligibility criteria than that of tenants who go through other housing conversion actions triggering enhanced voucher eligibility, such as prepayments or opt-outs. PWG noted that if HUD is concerned about a possible shortage of funds and is using the 40% threshold to limit eligibility, then such a high rent burden should be used only for an initial eligibility determination. There should be some method to provide lower rent burdens (down to 35% and then to 30%) for these families if

funds intended for this purpose remain available after the initial determination using any higher threshold until the full \$10 million is obligated.

The notices would require owners to inform tenants at least 30 days prior to applying for tenant protections. PWG commented that if owners know affordability restrictions are expiring, HUD should require them to notify tenants at least 12 months in advance, as occurs under an expiring Section 8 contract. The failure to require accurate informational notices will be disruptive and may deprive some tenants of affordable housing because they move when the termination threatens and they do not have accurate information.

PWG stated its concern about leaving the process for applying for tenant protections up to owners. PWG urges HUD to create a back-up mechanism for delivering tenant protections. As is done in the case of HUD-subsidized mortgage prepayments or opt-outs of Project-Based Section 8 contracts, after an owner files a conversion notice, HUD should work with PHAs to ensure that eligible tenants receive the appropriate tenant protection assistance.

The comment letter is at <http://bit.ly/V1RA5S>.

FROM THE FIELD

North Dakota Advocates Applaud Governor's Support of Housing Incentive Fund

North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple (R) recently announced plans to support increased affordable housing development, including an additional \$20 million in tax credits for the Housing Incentive Fund (HIF), North Dakota's housing trust fund. Advocates like the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People (NDCHP), an NLIHC state partner, are encouraged by this proposed investment in the HIF, which has nearly doubled affordable housing production in their state since its establishment in 2011.

Advocates have worked to gain Governor Dalrymple's support for the HIF, which is scheduled to sunset in December, and strengthened their efforts in the past several months. They highlighted HIF's progress toward addressing the state's housing crisis, which was exacerbated by population growth resulting from an increase of oil industry jobs and by a 2011 flood that displaced more than 10,000 people (see *Memo*, 2/17). Thanks to HIF financing, the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency (NDHFA) has led the development of nearly 1,300 low income housing units throughout the state. Advocates are pleased with HIF's success to date, but believe additional funds are needed to address the continued crisis. Advocates expect the legislature will extend the fund when it convenes in January.

At NDHFA's request, the Center for Social Research at North Dakota State University updated its Statewide Housing Assessment Report to inform the state's short- and long-term housing strategy. The

center projects that North Dakota's population will increase 25% by 2025, and that housing demand will increase nearly 30% in the same period. To emphasize the specific needs of the state's homeless population, NDCHP worked with the Rural Community Assistance Corporation to conduct a State Homeless Analysis, which drew on more than 170 interviews with homeless providers and data from a July 2011 survey of homeless people in the state. NDHFA's director requested that a summary of this analysis be included in the Statewide Housing Assessment Report.

During the upcoming legislative session, NDCHP will urge that homeless assistance provisions, similar to the federal Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program, be implemented in the next biennium. Included in the HIF statute, these provisions were downplayed in the fund's allocation plan to allow for a greater focus on housing development in oil-producing counties and disaster-affected areas. Now that funding is likely to increase, NDCHP will push for some HIF funds to be used for homeless assistance and prevention.

The Housing Alliance of North Dakota (HAND), a statewide housing network in which NDCHP plays a key role, will continue its efforts to encourage Governor Dalrymple to adopt a statewide policy that incorporates a balanced approach to housing development. The local chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Organizations (NAHRO) contacted the governor in support of extending and expanding the HIF, and NDCHP, HAND and NAHRO continue to collaborate in these efforts.

"The answer to homelessness is homes," said Michael Carbone, NDCHP's executive director. "The HIF is creating sorely needed affordable housing in North Dakota, but still is not keeping pace with demand. We must continue the fight to house North Dakota's most vulnerable people."

For more information, contact Michael Carbone at director@ndhomelesscoalition.org

EVENTS

Briefing for Congressional Staff on Housing Programs and Sequestration

On October 18, NLIHC and the National Housing Trust, in cooperation with the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF), will host two briefings for congressional staff about the impact of sequestration on affordable housing and community development programs.

The briefings will feature a panel of national policy experts and local housing practitioners, including Bill Faith, Executive Director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio and NLIHC board member; Regina Mitchell, Executive Director of the College Park, MD Housing Authority; Hilary Saunders, Tenant Advocate

and Board Member of New York State Tenants and Neighbors; and Diane Sterner, Executive Director of the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey.

The Senate briefing will be at 11am in Room 562 of the Dirksen Senate office building. The House briefing will be at 2pm in Room 441 of the Cannon House office building. Congressional staff may R.S.V.P. to policyintern@nlihc.org.

NLIHC encourages advocates to invite the housing staffers for their Representative and Senators to attend.

View the Senate briefing invitation at <http://bit.ly/V1RHhK>.

View the House briefing invitation at <http://bit.ly/V1RFqb>.

Forum Scheduled on Measuring Child Well-Being at Community Level

Chapin Hall, a policy research center at the University of Chicago, will hold a forum, "Measuring Child Well-Being at the Neighborhood Level," on October 17. The forum will begin at 9 am CT and will provide information on different data sources and strategies to assess outcomes of policies intended to improve child well-being at the community level.

Panelists include Robert George of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, Alaina Harkness of the MacArthur Foundation, Chris Brown of LISC Chicago, Nancy Ronquillo of Children's Home + Aid and Matthew Stanger of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Readers can either attend in person in Chicago or watch the forum as a webcast.

Register to attend in person at <http://bit.ly/WdnRdy>.

Register for the webcast at <http://bit.ly/WdnYGd>.

RESOURCES

Questions and Answers from Renters in Foreclosure Webinar Now Available

NLIHC and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) held a webinar on issues facing renters in foreclosure on September 26. The webinar in part featured findings from NLIHC's new report, *Renters in Foreclosure: A Fresh Look at an Ongoing Problem*. Questions and answers submitted by webinar attendees are now available on NLIHC's website at <http://bit.ly/PNFyNu>. [to be posted folder]

Slides from the webinar are also available at <http://bit.ly/PNFyNu>.

Renters in Foreclosure: A Fresh Look at an Ongoing Problem is available at <http://bit.ly/Six1Aq>.

Census Report Provides Insight into U.S. Emergency and Transitional Shelter Population

A report from the U.S. Census Bureau examines the demographic characteristics of the population counted in emergency and transitional shelters as part of the 2010 Census. The Census Bureau counted 209,325 individuals in emergency and transitional shelters, which the bureau defines as "places where people experiencing homelessness stay overnight." Data were collected on the emergency and transitional shelter population using a Service-Based Enumeration (SBE) operation. Over three days in March 2010, census takers surveyed people at shelters, soup kitchens and regularly scheduled mobile food vans, as well as visiting outdoor locations. While this report gives valuable information about who makes up the shelter population in the United States, the authors note that the people counted should not be considered representative of the homeless population overall.

The report found that, in the total emergency and transitional shelter population, individuals between the ages of 18 and 64 make up 77% of the population. The next largest age group was children (under 18), who made up 20% of population. Those over 65 years old made up only 3% of the population. The median age for the total emergency and transitional shelter population was 39.2 years old, about two years higher than the median age for the overall U.S. population, which was 37.2 years old.

The report also found that there were nearly twice as many men in emergency and transitional shelters than women, with 62% of the total population male and 38% female. However, the population of girls under the age of 18 in emergency and transitional shelters was disproportionately large, compared to the boys of the same age group. Twenty-six percent of females in emergency and transitional shelters were under the age of 18, compared to 16% of males.

In terms of racial characteristics, 45% of those counted in emergency and transitional shelters reported being white only, and 41% reported black only. Eighteen percent of the shelter population reported being of Hispanic or Latino origin. Those who reported two or more races made up 4% of the population, and American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, each accounted for 2% of the population.

The report also examined the geographic distribution of the emergency and transitional shelter population. Thirty percent of the population was in the Northeast, which had the largest concentration of any region in the United States. The Midwest had the smallest proportion of the emergency and transitional shelter population at 17%. New York State had the largest share of the emergency and transitional shelter population at 36,000, followed by California at 28,000. Together they accounted for almost a third of the total emergency and transitional shelter population.

State to state, there was significant variation in sex and age demographics, but no state had a higher number of females in emergency and transitional shelter than males. Still, there was some variation: Nevada's population was 74% male while New York and Hawaii's were both 53% male. Age distribution varied as well. In Hawaii, 37% of the emergency and transitional shelter population was under 18 years old, while only 10% of the population in New Mexico was in the same age group. The report also goes into county-level data, noting that counties with large emergency and transitional shelter populations were generally located in metropolitan areas.

Download a PDF of the report at <http://1.usa.gov/QiksqK>.

FACT OF THE WEEK

Ten U.S. Places with the Largest Population in Emergency and Transitional Shelters, 2010

| Place | Number | % of US Emergency & Transitional Shelter Population |
|-------------------|--------|---|
| New York, NY | 29,562 | 14.1% |
| Los Angeles, CA | 6,069 | 2.9% |
| Chicago, IL | 3,915 | 1.9% |
| Philadelphia, PA | 3,750 | 1.8% |
| Boston, MA | 2,952 | 1.4% |
| Atlanta, GA | 2,577 | 1.2% |
| Seattle, WA | 2,550 | 1.2% |
| San Francisco, CA | 2,303 | 1.1% |
| Houston, TX | 2,213 | 1.1% |
| Washington, D.C. | 2,211 | 1.1% |

NOTE: The 'Places' subsection only includes places in the United States that have a population of 100,000 or more, which is a total of 282 places.

Source: Smith, Amy Symens, Charles Holmberg, and Marcella Jones-Puthoff (2012). Table 5. The Emergency and Transitional Shelter Population: 2010. United States Census Bureau. Washington, D.C.

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ABOUT NLIHC

The National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated solely to achieving equitable federal policy that assures affordable, accessible, and healthy homes for the people with the lowest incomes in the United States.

Established in 1974 by Cushing N. Dolbeare, NLIHC educates, organizes, and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing within healthy neighborhoods for everyone.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

NLIHC membership is the best way to stay informed about affordable housing issues, keep in touch with advocates around the country, and support NLIHC's work.

NLIHC membership information is available at www.nlihc.org/join. You can also e-mail us at outreach@nlihc.org or call 202-662-1530 to request membership materials to distribute at meetings and conferences.



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