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# National Housing Trust Fund

## NHTF Campaign to Congress: Protect the Trust Fund

On September 30, the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) Campaign representing more than 7,000 organizations from every Congressional district sent a letter to Congressional leaders and appropriators urging them to protect the NHTF as they negotiate the final federal spending bills for FY16. Specifically, the letter calls on Congress to reject the House's proposal to divert all NHTF resources to the HOME program in FY16 and prohibit any funds from any source from going to the NHTF in the future.

In the letter, NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley states, "This proposal, in H.R. 2577, the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies FY16 appropriations bill, must be rejected. The proposal would raid funds from the only new federal program in more than 40 years designed to increase the supply of rental housing affordable to the poorest Americans. No other federal housing program that expands the supply of rental housing is targeted to extremely low income households, and the existing HUD programs that do serve this income group are shrinking due to continued cuts in funding for discretionary programs. The NHTF is the only viable option currently in law to begin to address the appalling shortage of affordable rental housing in the United States. The NHTF is poised to provide every state and the District of Columbia with its much needed resources for the first time in 2016."

The letter also urges Congress to work to reverse the sequester caps for discretionary spending that have severely restricted appropriators' ability to advance bills that adequately fund federal programs.

The letter can be found at:

[http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/NHTF\\_Campaign\\_Letter\\_to\\_Leadership\\_FY16\\_budget\\_093015.pdf](http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/NHTF_Campaign_Letter_to_Leadership_FY16_budget_093015.pdf)

## Federal Budget

### Government Shutdown Averted, Budget Talks to Begin "Soon"

With just hours to spare, on September 30, the Senate and House passed and President Barack Obama signed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the federal government funded through December 11. Now lawmakers must negotiate a budget deal that President Obama will agree to sign to keep the government operating through FY16.

The CR passed in the Senate by a vote of 78 to 20 and in the House by a vote of 277 to 151. All votes in opposition in both chambers were by Republicans. Only 91 House Republicans voted to keep the government open. Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), the frontrunner to succeed Representative John Boehner (R-OH) as Speaker of the House, voted in favor of the CR

Congressional leaders and advocates now are calling for a broader budget deal that ends the Budget Control Act sequester spending caps. "Avoiding a shutdown is just the first step. Next, we need a budget deal to cancel sequester," Senate Committee on Appropriations Vice Chair Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) said in a September 30 press release. "I challenge [Senate] leadership to work with Speaker Boehner to enact a new topline budget deal by the end of October. We can't let October brinkmanship become a Christmas crisis," she said.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) told the media on September 29 that he would begin discussions with Majority Leader Boehner and President Obama to achieve a budget agreement for FY16 and FY17 "very soon."

In his weekly radio address on October 2, President Obama called on Congress to lift the sequester and fully fund federal programs. Reiterating his pledge to veto FY16 appropriations bills that are based on the current sequester levels, he said he would not sign another “short-sighted, short-term” CR.

Congress also faces another debt ceiling vote in the coming weeks. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew notified Congress on October 1 that the U.S. will reach the current debt ceiling limit around November 5. He urged Congress to act to raise the debt ceiling as soon as possible.

Read Vice Chair Mikulski’s statement is at: <http://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/vice-chairwoman-mikulski-statement-final-passage-clean-cr>

The transcript of President Obama’s weekly address can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/03/weekly-address-congress-should-do-its-job-and-pass-serious-budget>

Secretary Lew’s letter to Congress is at <http://www.treasury.gov/connect/blog/Pages/Treasury-Sends-October-Debt-Limit-Letter-to-Congress.aspx>

## **Rally to Lift Sequester Spending Caps**

NDD United, a broad coalition of organizations representing non-defense discretionary (NDD) programs, will host a rally at the U.S. Capitol on October 7 calling on Congress to raise the federal spending caps and end sequestration through a bipartisan budget deal. House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and other Members of Congress are expected to address the rally.

NDD United was formed in response to the 2011 Budget Control Act that imposed strict sequester spending caps and a 6% across-the-board cut to NDD programs in 2013. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 negotiated by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Representative Paul Ryan (R-WI) provided partial, temporary relief from sequestration for NDD programs in FY14 and FY15. Since the Murray-Ryan deal expired on October 1, sequestration has returned in FY16 with a devastating impact on appropriations bills for NDD programs, including critical housing programs. NDD United is working diligently to get Congress to end sequestration for FY16 and beyond.

NLIHC represents affordable housing, homeless, and community development organizations on the NDD United steering committee and has worked has to get many of these organizations engaged in campaign activities.

The NDD United rally will be held at 1:30 pm ET, rain or shine, at the East Front of the U.S. Capitol (the grassy area on the House side between the Capitol and the Library of Congress). Rally participants should arrive by 1 pm.

Those who cannot attend in person are encouraged to rally online via Twitter, by following @NDDUnited and the hashtag #RaiseTheCaps.

To RSVP for the rally, visit:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1B\\_u9oR9pz6MbQuAEhxvdjekeXhY2sxVq9DQ9rEzfHHQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1B_u9oR9pz6MbQuAEhxvdjekeXhY2sxVq9DQ9rEzfHHQ/viewform)

To view NDD United’s social media toolkit, including sample tweets, visit: <http://www.nddunited.org/action/>

## **Federal Budget and Housing Webinar**

Join organizations from across the country on October 19 at 3pm ET, for a webinar on *Spending Caps, Budget Negotiations, and the Impact on Housing and Community Development in Your Community*. Offered as part of the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding’s (CHCDF) #CapsHurt Communities

campaign, the webinar will report on the current state of budget negotiations and how sequester spending caps or a year-long CR would impact affordable housing, homeless, and community development programs. The webinar also will discuss how participants can engage with elected officials and local and national media by sharing the potential impacts of cuts on communities.

CHCDF is a coalition of more than 70 national housing, homeless, and community development organizations working together to secure robust funding for these programs.

To register for the webinar, click the “Register” button at, <https://enterprisecommunity.webex.com/enterprisecommunity/onstage/g.php?MTID=e98ad3fc55909cbc2c57b4b1c16b86adf>

To learn more about CHCDF’s Caps Hurt Communities campaign, go to: [www.capshurtcommunities.org](http://www.capshurtcommunities.org).

## Other Capitol Hill

### Hearing on 50 Years of HUD

The House Financial Services Committee will hold a hearing entitled, *The Future of Housing in America: 50 Years of HUD and its Impact on Federal Housing Policy*, on October 8 at 9 am ET.

Witnesses are:

- Xavier de Sousa Briggs, Vice President of Economic Opportunity and Assets at the Ford Foundation and on leave as a Professor of Sociology at MIT,
- Orlando Cabrera, with the law firm Squire Patton Boggs and former HUD Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing under President George W. Bush,
- Renee Glover, former CEO of the Atlanta Housing Authority, and
- Howard Husock, Vice President for Policy Research at the Manhattan Institute.

The hearing will be held in room 2128 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

To learn more about the hearing, go to:

<http://financialservices.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=399732>

## From the Field

### Portland, OR in Homeless State of Emergency

On September 24, Portland, OR Mayor Charlie Hales (D) announced his request to the City Council to declare a state of emergency to address the homelessness epidemic in the city. The Mayor pledged to reduce by half the estimated 1,800 people who are homeless in Portland on any given night. Mr. Hales was joined by Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury to announce their request of \$30 million in new emergency funding to be used for eviction prevention, new affordable housing, and shelter. The formal homelessness emergency declaration and funding are expected to be approved by the City Council the week of October 5.

The Welcome Home Coalition, a partnership of more than 100 regional organizations in Portland that includes several NLIHC members and Oregon Opportunity Network, an NLIHC State Coalition Partner, will be looking to influence the use of these new resources.

Of the \$30 million overall commitment, \$20 million would come from the City of Portland and \$10 million from Multnomah County. As proposed, approximately \$15 million of the new allocation will be devoted to eviction prevention, rental assistance, and housing placement services and support. The amount is believed to be sufficient to prevent the displacement of more than 1,000 households at risk of homelessness. An additional \$10 million will be devoted to the construction of new affordable housing. The remaining \$5 million will be used to expand emergency shelter capacity by 650 beds.

Multnomah County officials have indicated that they will appeal to the State of Oregon for additional revenue support. Indeed the \$30 million allocation is only a portion of the \$50 million annual commitment that the Welcome Home Coalition estimates is necessary to address the affordable housing shortage in the Portland area over the next two decades.

A state of emergency declaration will allow the City of Portland to bypass zoning regulations and repurpose vacant municipally-owned buildings as shelter sites. There is an acute need for emergency shelters for homeless single women, which Mr. Hales is committed to addressing immediately. The City of Portland also may implement a policy to increase by more than 10% the time required for notices of no-fault evictions or rent increases. Tenant advocates believe that more advance notice of significant rent increases will reduce housing displacement by allowing renters more time to plan for a move.

In his announcement, Mr. Hales indicated that he hopes to establish Portland as a national model for how municipalities can effectively address the challenges of homelessness. Service providers and advocates are seizing the opportunity to demonstrate the significant impact that will be possible with increased funding and positive policy changes. “Housing advocates are thrilled by the collaborative actions of our local elected officials,” said Jes Larson, Welcome Home Coalition Director. “We see this additional investment of one-time resources and creative policy changes as necessary first steps in our community’s effort to end what is truly a housing state of emergency. In order to go the full distance and assure that all Portlanders can afford a place to call home, we must next invest in building back our affordable housing infrastructure.”

The announcement of Portland’s state of emergency on homelessness came one day after Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and seven members of the LA City Council announced the same for Los Angeles. Mr. Garcetti’s planned efforts will involve a commitment of \$100 million, with the specifics still to be determined. Mr. Garcetti has promised a comprehensive plan to address homelessness that is now months past its announced completion date, and the budget allocation still must be approved by the City Council. Los Angeles County has joined the effort with its own commitment of \$51.1 million.

For more information about advocacy efforts around Portland state of emergency on homelessness, contact Jes Larson, Welcome Home Coalition Director, at [jes@oregonon.org](mailto:jes@oregonon.org).

## Research

### First Evaluation of MTW Public Housing Work Requirements Calls for Caution

A study by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Center for Urban and Regional Studies, *Requirements in Public Housing: Impacts on Tenant Employment and Evictions*, reports that work requirements in the Charlotte Housing Authority’s (CHA) Moving to Work (MTW) demonstration program were associated with an increase in resident incomes. The authors also cite a number of concerns regarding public housing work requirements and caution against their widespread adoption at this time.

As part of its MTW demonstration, CHA established the requirement that work-able heads of households be employed at least 15 hours per week. Residents could participate in “work-related” activities, such as community service or job training, to meet the requirement. Case management to assist residents began in

September of 2011 and sanctions against residents who did not meet the requirement or did not have an “improvement plan” to meet the requirement began in January 2014. Non-compliant households would lose half of their rental subsidy for six months and then all of their rental subsidy for six months, after which they would be evicted.

The study is the first evaluation of public housing work requirements. It examined employment outcomes for three groups of public housing residents: those who lived in a development subject to the MTW work requirement, those who lived in a development subject to the MTW work requirement but who had earlier chosen to receive Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) case management and supportive services, and those who lived in developments not subject to the work requirement.

The study tracked changes in the percentage of households paying the minimum rent of \$75 after case management was implemented in September of 2011 and before and after the implementation of sanctions in January of 2014. A decline in the percentage would indicate an increase in households with improved incomes through employment or successful enrollment in benefit programs, such as those for individuals with disabilities. The authors also looked at changes in the number of hours worked and the number of evictions. The authors did not measure changes in income because they did not have access to income data after CHA switched to biennial income certifications in October 2013.

The study found no significant change in the percentage of residents paying minimum rent from September 2011 to December 2013, a period of time in which MTW residents were provided case management to help them meet the work requirement. A significant decline, however, was found after sanctions began in January 2014. The percentage of households paying the minimum rent declined by 17% from January 2014 to December 2014 among MTW households who had not previously participated in FSS and by 12% among MTW households who had previously participated in FSS. The authors assume that incomes for these households increased as a result of employment or successful enrollment in benefit programs. Either explanation could be attributed to successful supportive services. The percentage of households paying minimum rent increased by 4% among non-MTW households. Among working residents subject to the work requirement, the average number of hours worked (25 to 30 hours per week) did not change after sanctions began.

The authors note a number of concerns regarding public housing work requirements and the study’s limitations, and they do not support widespread adoption of public housing work requirements at this time. CHA was focused on helping residents comply with the work requirement, rather than evictions. As a result, aspects unique to the CHA may have accounted for the positive outcomes. For example, CHA delayed the enforcement of its work requirements for 15 months, from September 2012 until January 2014, because of high unemployment and staff turnover. CHA also temporarily exempted residents who might qualify for disability status, giving them an opportunity to apply. They also provided case management and supportive services for two years prior to imposing sanctions and provided a two-month probationary period for residents to achieve compliance.

The authors refer to the substantial costs associated with case management and supportive services. It is unclear how most public housing authorities would bear these costs. Given this is the first evaluation of MTW work requirements, little is known about the level of services needed to achieve positive outcomes or how they should be delivered effectively. The authors caution that work requirements without effective supportive services could lead to higher eviction rates.

The study was funded by the Charlotte Housing Authority.

*Work Requirements in Public Housing: Impacts on Tenant Employment and Evictions* is available at <http://bit.ly/1izRkhS>

## Millennials Face Housing Affordability Challenges

The National Housing Conference's Center for Housing Policy (CHP) released its 2015 edition of *Paycheck to Paycheck*. This year's report examines housing affordability for workers in five occupations that are growing sectors of the economy and that represent the kinds of jobs held by many millennials aged 18 to 33. The report finds that many millennials work in occupations that do not provide adequate wages to afford housing in their metropolitan area.

The report examines housing affordability in 208 metropolitan areas for five occupations: administrative assistants, retail cashiers, e-commerce customer service representatives, food service managers, and cardiac technicians. The table below provides the number of metropolitan areas (out of 208) where the median wage worker in each occupation could afford to rent or buy a typical two-bedroom home without spending more than 30% of his or her income on housing.

Median Wage Worker in Occupation:	# of Metropolitan Areas (n=208) where Typical Two-Bedroom Home is Affordable to Rent	# of Metropolitan Areas (n=208) where Typical Two-Bedroom Home is Affordable to Buy
Retail Cashiers	0	0
E-commerce Customer Service	85	34
Cardiac Technician	145	73
Administrative Assistant	171	90
Food Service Manager	203	159

Source: Viveiros, Ault, and Sturtevant. (2015). *Paycheck to Paycheck: A Snapshot of Affordability for Millennial Workers*. Washington, DC: National Housing Conference, Center for Housing Policy

CHP also updated the *Paycheck to Paycheck* on-line database which allows users to compare housing costs and wages for 81 occupations. These data are available for more than 200 metropolitan areas.

*Paycheck to Paycheck* draws from National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and National Association of Realtors (NAR) data on median home prices, HUD's 2015 Fair Market Rent data for rental costs, and IBM's Salary.com for wages for an intermediate-level worker, typically with two to four years of experience.

*Paycheck to Paycheck 2015: A Snapshot of Housing Affordability for Millennial Workers* is available at <http://bit.ly/1YSF2Bw>

The *Paycheck to Paycheck* database is available at <http://www2.nhc.org/chp/p2p/>

## 20.7 Million Renters Cost Burdened According to 2014 ACS

The U.S. Census Bureau released data from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) on September 17. The data show that 20.7 million U.S. renter households are cost burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing. This number represents slightly more than half of all renter households.

The percentage of cost-burdened renter households declines with income. Eighty-nine percent of renter households with annual income of less than \$20,000 and 75% of those with annual income between \$20,000 and \$34,999 are cost burdened. Only 6% of renter households with annual income of \$75,000 or more are cost burdened.

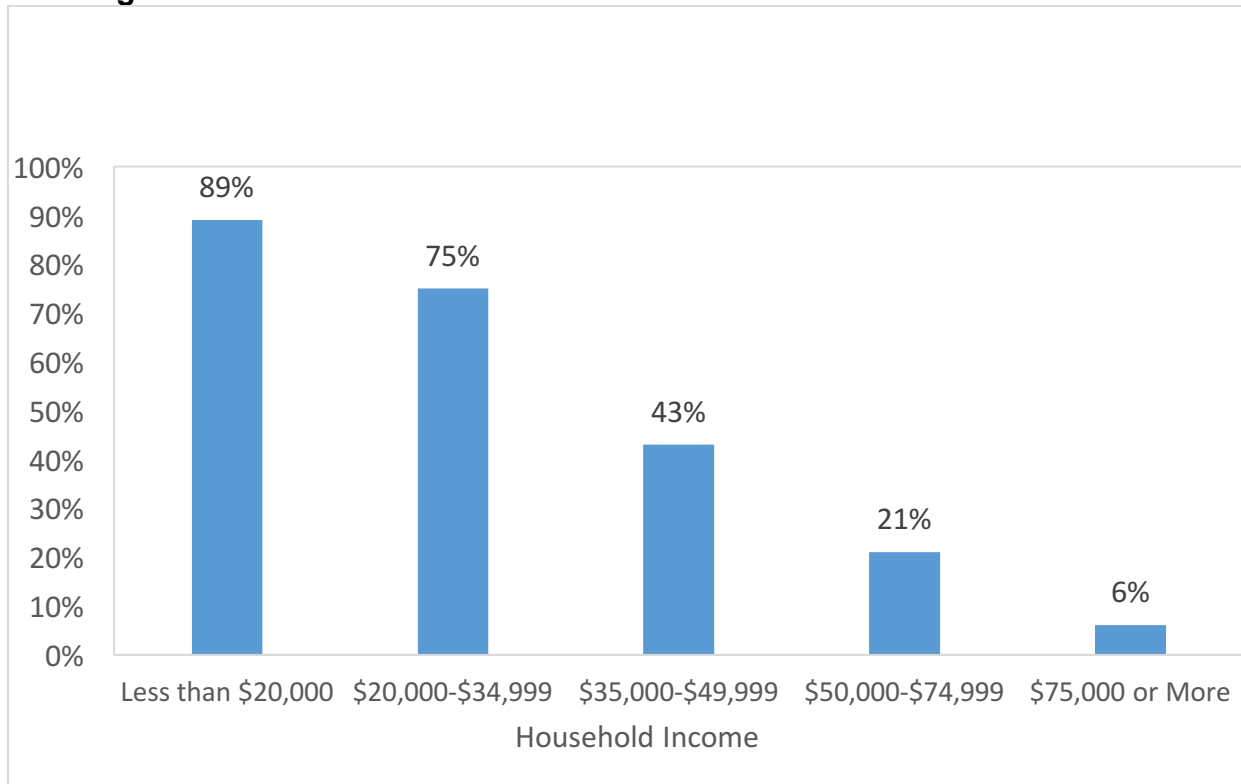
The ACS collects U.S. demographic, housing, economic, and commuting data on an annual basis. Approximately 3.5 million households are selected annually from every county in the nation to complete the survey. Annual survey results are available at the state, county, and local levels for jurisdictions with at least 65,000 residents.

More facts from the 2014 ACS are available from the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkley at <http://bit.ly/1LpXuft>

The 2014 ACS is available on American FactFinder at: <http://1.usa.gov/1vEz1wK>

## Fact of the Week

### Percentage of U.S. Renter Households by Income Spending More than 30% of Income on Housing



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Events

### NeighborWorks Training Institute in Washington, DC, December 7-11

The Washington DC NeighborWorks Training Institute will take place December 7-11, 2015, and will feature a broad array of professional development courses. Participants can choose from over 100 intensive courses in affordable housing, community development, and nonprofit management. Pre-event registration ends November 16. Visit [www.neighborworks.org/dc2015](http://www.neighborworks.org/dc2015) to register.

The NeighborWorks Training Institute focuses on practical skill building and provides participants with tools that can be used immediately. The featured Wednesday symposium, *Leading Tomorrow's High-Performing Nonprofit Organization* (ML908), will explore the latest research and provide examples of leaders dealing with current and future challenges in the nonprofit sector. The NeighborWorks Training Institute is an opportunity to connect with over 2,000 colleagues from around the country to network, learn, and share best practices.



# **NLIHC News**

## **NLIHC Welcomes New Field Intern**

Tierra Langley joins NLIHC as a fall Field Intern. She is a recent graduate of The Johns Hopkins University where she studied Sociology, Africana Studies, and Public Health. While at Johns Hopkins, Tierra was a leader and participated in several advocacy organizations, including the Black Student Union and Students Educating and Empowering for Diversity. Tierra hopes to use her skills and experiences to pursue a career in community organizing.

## **NLIHC Membership Month Comes to an End**

Thank you for supporting NLIHC's second annual Membership Month campaign in September. To our newest NLIHC members, welcome aboard! We are excited to have you join the Coalition, dedicated solely to achieving socially just public policy that assures people with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes. We'll report on the results of the campaign and introduce you to the newest NLIHC members in the next edition of *Memo to Members*.

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## **NLIHC STAFF**

Malik Siraj Akbar, Communications Specialist, x239

Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245

Elina Bravve, Senior Research Analyst, x244

Linda Couch, Senior Vice President for Policy, x228

Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226

Sheila Crowley, President and CEO, x226

Dan Emmanuel, Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy, x316

Ellen Errico, Graphic Design and Web Manager, x246

Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314

Kathryn Greenwell, Policy Intern, x249

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Khara Norris, Director of Administration, x242

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Christina Sin, Development Coordinator, x234

Elayne Weiss, Housing Policy Analyst, x243

Alexandra Williams, MSW Practicum Student, x230

Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247