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HAPPY THANKSGIVING

The staff of the National Low Income Housing Coalition is thankful for all our members who work every day to improve the well-being of low income Americans and whose support is vital to our work.

Memo to Members will take a short break for the Thanksgiving holiday. *Memo* will return on December 7.

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Federal Budget

Senate Starts and Stops Consideration of THUD Spending Bill, Harmful Amendments Filed

The Senate started and then stopped consideration of an FY16 THUD appropriations bill during the week of November 16. With increased spending caps provided by the Bipartisan Budget Act, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) attempted to demonstrate his ability to move bills on the Senate floor by bringing the long-stalled THUD bill to a full Senate vote. However, the filing of a number of harmful amendments caused consideration of the bill to halt on Thursday, November 20.

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) and Jack Reed (D-RI), the chair and the ranking member of the Senate THUD Appropriations Subcommittee, offered the substitute bill to replace the THUD bill that had passed the subcommittee in June (see *Memo*, [6/29](#)). The substitute bill increased funding for the HOME program from \$66 million to \$900 million, the FY15 level, and provided an additional \$100 million for Community Development Block Grants. To the disappointment of many advocates, the bill did not provide needed funding for vouchers, public housing, nor homeless assistance.

Majority Leader McConnell's efforts to move the bill on the floor were thwarted by fellow Kentucky Senator Rand Paul (R). Senator Paul blocked consideration of the bill after Senator Collins objected to allowing a vote on his amendment to prohibit resources provided by the bill to assist refugees or asylees from 34 countries. Senator Paul said he would use any procedural move at his disposal to stop the Senate from considering the THUD bill, promising he "will not back down."

This FY16 THUD bill is unlikely to come back up as a stand-alone measure. When Congress returns from Thanksgiving recess on November 30, the Members will focus on finalizing an omnibus spending package before the current continuing resolution expires on December 11.

The THUD bill blocked by Senator Paul is different from the THUD bill that the Senate and House THUD subcommittees are negotiating in conference committee for inclusion in the omnibus spending bill. What the next iteration of the FY16 THUD appropriations bill will include remains to be seen.

In the hours prior to the THUD substitute bill stalling on the Senate floor, numerous amendments were filed, but none were voted on. Many of them would do damage to HUD programs.

Senator Jeff Flake (R-AZ) offered an amendment to fund HOME at \$66 million, returning it to the level of the original Senate THUD bill that the Appropriations Committee passed in June, which would effectively end the HOME program.

Senators Mike Lee (R-UT) and Tom Cotton (R-AR) each filed amendments to prohibit HUD from implementing the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule and its assessment tool.

Senator Flake also wanted to amend the bill to require HUD to cease payments to properties deemed troubled for life-threatening deficiencies or poor physical conditions. The bill already includes a long list of remedies the HUD Secretary must take for troubled properties. Similar provisions have been in previous THUD bills and have been HUD policy since former Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) offered a similar amendment to Senator Flake's in 2013.

Senator Flake also offered an amendment to prohibit the use of any HUD grants for the repayment of HUD loans. This amendment could seriously hurt HUD grantees who also have HUD-insured loans.

Senator Flake's amendment to prohibit HUD assistance to households with incomes over \$100,000 for any two-year period would usurp the power of the authorizers on the House Committee in Financial Services that is working on a solution to the problem of over-income households in public housing.

Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) offered an amendment to prohibit any HUD assistance to individuals who have been convicted of aggregated assault, sexual abuse, murder, or any federal state offense involving domestic violence or child abuse. The amendment is duplicative of current HUD rules barring some of these populations from assistance and would work against recent efforts by the Obama Administration to expand housing opportunities for other returning prisoners.

NLIHC FY16 priorities are at: http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/FactSheet_FY16-Budget_2015.pdf

NLIHC budget chart are at: http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/FY16HUD-USDA_Budget-Chart.pdf

Congress

Bipartisan Bill Introduced to Improve Family Unification Program

On November 17, Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Patty Murray (D-WA), and Brian Schatz (D-HI) introduced legislation that would ensure that families and youth who are at risk of becoming homeless have better access to housing resources and supportive services. The Family Unification, Preservation, and Modernization Act (S. 2289) seeks to improve the Family Unification Program (FUP), which provides housing vouchers to families and youth involved in the child welfare system. The bill would help families facing homelessness stay together and help youth aging out of foster care transition to adulthood.

The bill would:

- Require that HUD and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) work together to improve coordination and implementation of the FUP program;
- Replace the 18-month timeline for youth vouchers with a more administratively manageable 36-month timeline;
- Expand youth eligibility to individuals 18 to 24 years of age who either left foster care at age 14 or older or will leave foster care within 90 days, and who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
- Promote self-sufficiency programs by providing incentive payments to successful, data-driven interventions that improve outcomes;
- Provide competitive grants for supportive services that are specifically targeted to FUP recipients; and
- Strengthen the connections between local public housing agencies and child welfare agencies to promote family stabilization and reunification, and ensure that resources are identified for both youth and families to assist in their housing searches

“Throughout my years in public service and as a lawyer fighting housing discrimination, I’ve seen the tremendous impact that access to stable housing and support services can have on families and communities,” Senator Kaine said. “Unfortunately, many children who age out of the foster care system are left with few

places to turn for assistance and end up on the wrong life track. This is an issue my wife Anne and I are very passionate about and I'm proud to partner with Senators Collins, Murray and Schatz to introduce this bill to help keep families together, reduce youth homelessness and ensure we're meeting the needs of children transitioning out of foster care."

In a statement in support of S. 2289, NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley said "No child should ever have to go into foster care solely because his or her parents cannot find housing they can afford. And no child who has been in foster care should ever be consigned to homelessness when he or she becomes an adult. Senator Kaine's bill will help ensure that families and foster youth who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness have access to the housing and supportive services they need. If enacted, this bill will go a long way toward removing homelessness as a barrier to keeping families together. In addition, it will keep children aging out of the foster care system from ending up on the street."

Read Senator Kaine's press release here: <http://www.kaine.senate.gov/press-releases/kaine-collins-murray-schatz-introduce-bill-to-help-prevent-youth-homelessness-and-keep-struggling-families-together>

Learn more about S. 2289 here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2289>

HUD

FHA Reports Strong Financials

On November 16, HUD announced that the Federal Housing Administration's Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund (MMI Fund) achieved a capital reserve ratio of 2.07% in FY15, surpassing the required 2%. In FY14, the MMI fund had a capital reserve ratio of just 0.41%, raising concerns about the fund's health on Capitol Hill. FHA receipts are applied to annual appropriations for all of HUD's other programs. When FHA receipts are down, as they were for the FY16 budget cycle by \$1.1 billion, appropriators must fill the hole before HUD's other programs can be funded.

According to HUD's November 16 announcement, the economic health of the MMI Fund improved significantly in FY15 with a net value of nearly \$24 billion, an increase of \$19 billion over FY14.

HUD's press release is at:

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2015/HUDNo_15-146

From The Field

NLIHC Welcomes New State Partner in Mississippi

NLIHC is pleased to announce the addition of a new State Coalition Partner to the Coalition. Housing Mississippi was approved as a State Coalition Partner by the NLIHC Board of Directors on November 14, expanding our network to 67 NLIHC State Partners in 43 states and the District of Columbia.

Housing Mississippi is a nonprofit coalition of affordable housing leaders, housing providers, community based organizations, and financial institutions dedicated to preserving and expanding access to safe, accessible, and affordable homes across the state. The coalition came together informally in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and was officially incorporated in 2013.

Housing Mississippi currently is focused on establishing the Mississippi Housing Opportunity Fund, a proposed statewide housing trust fund with a dedicated source of revenue. Recently, Housing Mississippi was involved in

the creation of the Jackson Housing Trust Fund (JHTF) (see *Memo 5/4/15*), the first housing trust fund ever established in Mississippi.

Housing Mississippi Board President Hynethia Richards states, “We are excited to become a partner with NLIHC. This relationship will strengthen Housing Mississippi’s capacity to address the housing needs of our lowest income families. Our mission is to ensure that all Mississippians have ‘A Place to Call Home.’ Housing Mississippi is elated to join forces in this national collaboration.”

For more information about Housing Mississippi visit <http://www.housingmississippi.org/> or contact Hynethia Richards at hynethia@comcast.net.

A list of NLIHC’s State Coalition Partners and more information about the State Coalition project is at www.nlihc.org/partners/state.

Research

Point-in-Time Shows Homelessness Declines but Remains High

HUD released *The 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress* on November 19. A total of 564,708 individuals were homeless on a single night in January 2015, representing a 2% decline in homelessness since January 2014 and a 13% decline since 2007. The report is based on the annual Point-in-Time count.

Sixty-nine percent of the homeless individuals counted were staying in sheltered locations, such as emergency shelters, transitional housing, or safe havens. Thirty-one percent were unsheltered, living in places not meant for human habitation, such as streets, parks, vehicles, or abandoned buildings. More than one in five homeless people were located in either New York City or Los Angeles.

Thirty-six percent (206,286) of the homeless population in January 2015 were in families with children. Ninety percent of homeless people in families were sheltered and 10% were unsheltered. The number of homeless people in families with children declined by 5% since January 2014 and by 12% since January 2007.

Sixty-four percent (358,422) of the homeless population were living individually (not in families), and 43% of these individuals were unsheltered. The number of homeless individuals not in families declined by 0.5% since 2014 and 13% since 2007.

Thirty-two percent (180,760) of the homeless population were youths under the age of 25, 20% of whom were not accompanied by a parent or guardian and were not a parent sleeping in the same place as their children. Individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 accounted for 87% of the homeless youth population. Fifty-four percent of unaccompanied homeless youth were sheltered and 46% were unsheltered. There were 9,901 homeless parenting youths under the age of 25, 4% of whom were unsheltered.

More than one in ten homeless adults were veterans, representing 47,725 homeless people. Sixty-six percent of homeless veterans were sheltered and 34% were unsheltered. Most homeless veterans were experiencing homelessness as individuals rather than as members of families with children. Veteran homelessness declined by 35% since 2009.

More than half of the homeless population were located in five states: California (21%), New York (16%), Florida (6%), Texas (4%), and Massachusetts (4%). Between 2014 and 2015, 17 states experienced an increase in their homeless population. The two states with the largest increases in homelessness from 2014 were New

York and California. Homelessness declined in the District of Columbia and 33 states. The states with the steepest decreases in homelessness from the previous year were Florida and Texas.

From 2007 to 2015, the homeless population increased in 18 states and the District of Columbia. The five states with the largest increases were New York, Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, and Mississippi. The homeless population declined in 32 states. The five states with the largest declines since 2007 were California, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and Georgia.

The AHAR summarizes estimates of homelessness at the national, state, and Continuum of Care (CoC) levels based on data from the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) counts of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. Continuum of Care are local planning bodies responsible for coordinating homelessness services. The PIT counts, conducted by local volunteers, are a “snapshot” of homelessness.

The 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress is available at <http://bit.ly/1lwHVZx>.

Small Area FMRs Improve Housing and Neighborhood Quality for Voucher Holders

Robert Collison and Peter Ganong conclude in a study, *The Incidence of Housing Voucher Generosity*, that Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs) allow voucher recipients to live in higher quality housing and better neighborhoods with less poverty and crime, with little change in overall costs to the voucher program. SAFMRs allow voucher payment standards to be higher in high cost, high opportunity neighborhoods and lower in low cost, low opportunity neighborhoods.

Fair Market Rents (FMRs) established by HUD are used to calculate the maximum allowable monthly subsidy for a voucher holder. An FMR with adjustments by apartment size is normally applied across an entire metropolitan area or county, with no variations for smaller, more localized geographies. There have long been concerns that a single FMR for a metropolitan area or county concentrates voucher holders in low cost, low opportunity neighborhoods where rents are more likely to be below the maximum subsidy. Rents in high opportunity areas are more likely to be above the maximum subsidy.

In response to these concerns, HUD announced in 2010 a SAFMR Demonstration Program in the Dallas Metropolitan Area. Five other Public Housing Authorities in Chattanooga, TN, Laredo, TX, Long Beach, CA, Cook County, IL and Mamaroneck, NY were added to the demonstration in 2012. SAFMRs are set for zip codes within a metropolitan area, allowing higher rent subsidies in higher cost neighborhoods and lower rent subsidies in less costly neighborhoods.

The researchers tested the impact of SAFMRs on neighborhood quality in the Dallas metropolitan area by comparing the change in neighborhood quality among voucher holders in Dallas to those in Fort Worth, TX. Fort Worth served as a “control case” with a single FMR for the entire metropolitan area. Dallas voucher holders, on average, experienced greater declines in neighborhood poverty, unemployment, and violent crime rates compared to those experienced by voucher holders in Fort Worth. The improvements in neighborhood quality came without any increase in average rents in the voucher program.

When they evaluated rents paid by voucher holders in the Dallas area who moved, the researchers found that rents increased in zip codes with higher SAFMRs but that those increases could be attributed in part to higher housing quality. For every \$1 increase in a SAFMR, rents increased by an average of 57¢ from 2010 to 2013; 19¢ could be attributed to the voucher holders moving to higher quality housing.

The researchers also evaluated two previous across-the-board metropolitan area FMR increases. In 2001, HUD increased FMRs to the 50th percentile of local rents in select metropolitan areas (FMRs are normally set at the 40th percentile) where voucher holders were highly concentrated in low cost areas. The 50th percentile FMRs,

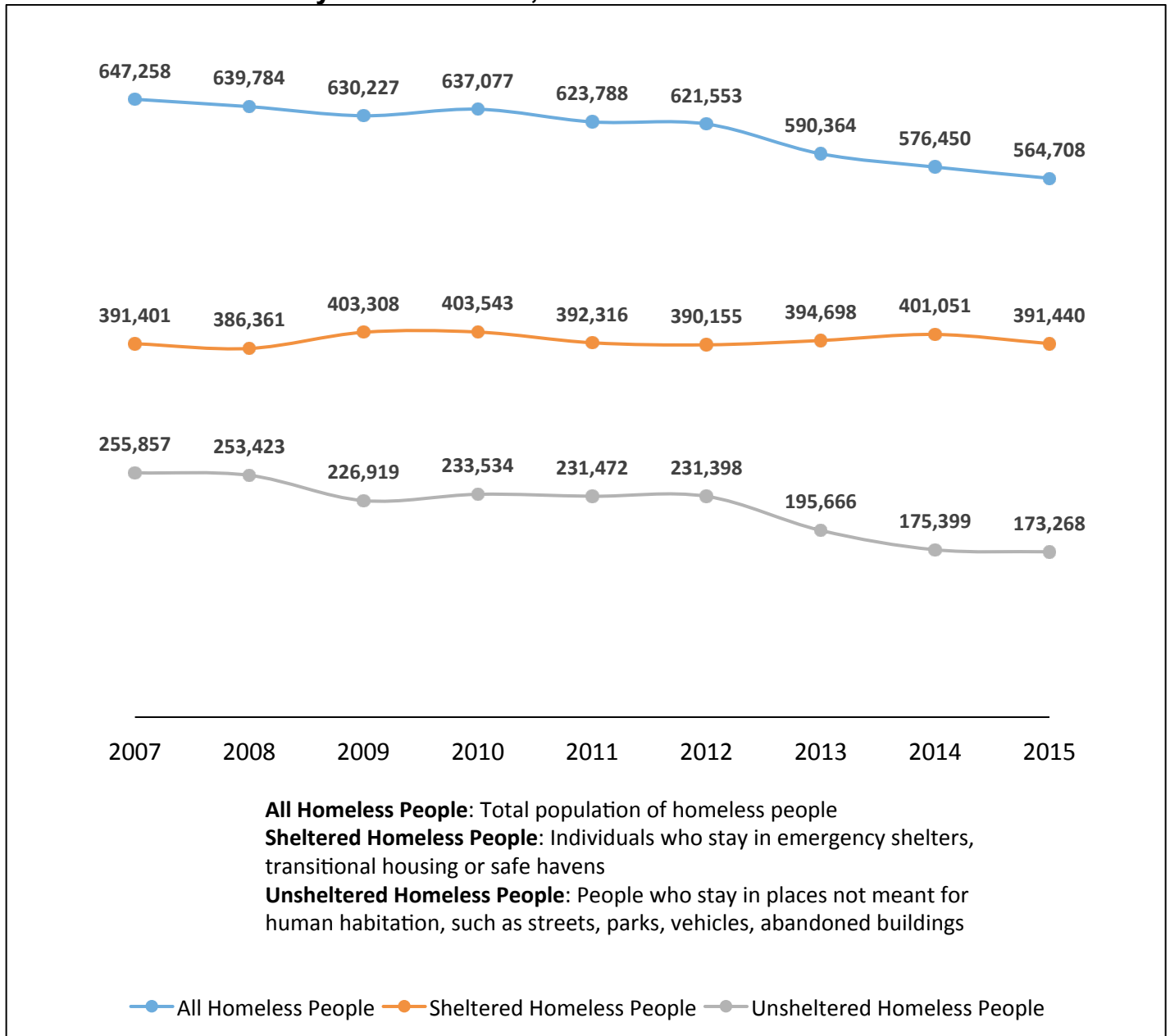
adjusted for apartment size, were applied to the entire metropolitan areas. The higher maximum rent subsidy was intended to enable voucher holders to move to higher cost, high opportunity neighborhoods. In both cases, landlords benefitted from across-the-board FMR increases by collecting higher rents but voucher holders realized little, if any, improvement in housing or neighborhood quality. For every \$1 increase in FMRs, rents rose by 47%, but there was no significant change in housing quality among voucher holders.

The authors also evaluated the impact of FMR readjustments HUD made in 2005 to better align them with 2000 Census data. The readjustment resulted in significant across-the-board FMR changes in many counties. The authors found that for every \$1 increase in FMR, average rents increased by 41%. Only 5% could be attributed to tenants living in higher quality housing or better neighborhoods.

The Incidence of Housing Voucher Generosity is available at <http://bit.ly/1kFwu1C>.

Fact of The Week

Number of Homeless by Shelter Status, 2007-2015



Source: Henry, M., et al. (2015). *The 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: November 2015*. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Resources

New Guide for Increasing Member Engagement

CQ Roll Call released a new guide for nonprofit membership organizations and associations titled, *Increasing Engagement: How to Keep Members Active When Your Issues Aren't Hot*. Asserting that “keeping members engaged is the single largest challenge that associations face,” the ten-page guide is an informative resource on campaign branding, creating an infrastructure for engagement, identifying issues, leveraging peer-to-peer outreach, reengaging your advocacy team, and other strategies for increasing member engagement.

Increasing Engagement reviews the results of a recent *CQ Roll Call* survey about the challenges and opportunities nonprofit associations face. Thirty-six percent of nonprofit associations indicated that engaging members is the greatest challenge their organizations face, a higher percentage than any other issue, including securing sufficient “budget/financial resources” for their work. Forty-four percent of the respondents said they thought their members and supporters could be more active, and 75% said that it is difficult or very difficult to involve members and supporters in their advocacy campaigns.

The guide warns that calls to action and regular newsletters “only go so far” and that nonprofits must deploy multiple additional strategies to keep members actively engaged, particularly when the organizations’ issues are not perceived to be “hot.” *Increasing Engagement* provides an array of recommendations to engage members more effectively, including tips related to:

- Getting “local” to tell your story
- Using gamification to improve member retention and satisfaction
- Encouraging leadership participation
- Celebrating wins, affirming and appreciating members’ involvement
- Creating “cultural change”

Increasing Engagement can be found at: <http://connectivity.cqrollcall.com/survey-results-engagement-is-a-major-problem/>

NLIHC NEWS

December 11 Deadline for Applications for NLIHC President and CEO Position

The Search Committee of the NLIHC Board of Directors has set December 11 as the deadline for applications from candidates for the position of NLIHC President and Chief Executive Officer. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and writing samples. The cover letter must address the candidate’s experience and qualifications. Send materials to execsearch@nonprofithr.com or mail or fax to Nonprofit HR, Attn: NLIHC-CEO Search, 1400 I Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005, Fax: 202.785.2064. Electronic submissions are highly preferred. Application deadline is December 11, 2015. Interested individuals are encouraged to apply immediately.

Please visit <http://nlihc.org/about/opportunities> for more details.

NLIHC’s 2016 Housing Policy Forum To Offer Special Session for Low Income Residents

Register today for NLIHC’s 2016 Policy Forum: *Overcoming Housing Poverty, Achieving Housing Justice*. The Forum will take place in Washington D.C. on April 3-5, 2016. This is NLIHC’s annual policy event that brings together housing and homeless advocates and policy analysts from across the nation to discuss the challenges of ending housing poverty and homelessness. This year’s Forum will offer a special session for low income residents on Sunday, April 3. A limited number of hotel scholarships for low income residents are available.

Confirmed speakers for the Forum include:

- **Barney Frank**, Former U.S. Congressman, Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, author of *Frank. A Life in Politics from the Great Society to Same-Sex Marriage*;
- **Kathryn Edin**, co-author of *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*;

- **Marybeth Shinn**, lead researcher on the *Family Options Study: Short-Term Impacts of Housing and Service Interventions for Homeless Families*; and
- **Emily Badger**, Washington Post reporter in affordable housing and urban policy.

Special Session for Low Income Residents: This year's Forum will feature a special 4-hour session for low income residents to address issues of greatest concern to residents of public and assisted housing on Sunday, April 3 from 9 am to 1 pm. If you are a low income resident planning to attend the Forum, please plan on arriving on Saturday night, April 2 to take advantage of this session!

Special Hotel Scholarships Available: A limited number of shared-lodging hotel scholarships (covering 3-4 nights at the Washington Court Hotel) are available for NLIHC low income members who are self-paying on a first-come, first serve basis. Contact Renee Willis 202-662-1530 x247 or rwillis@nlich.org.

For more information about the Forum, go to <http://nlihc.org/events/forum>

Registration for the Forum is available at: <http://nlihc.org/events/forum/registration>

NLIHC is Looking for Interns

NLIHC is accepting resumes for winter/spring 2016 internship positions. Interns are highly valued and fully integrated into our staff work. We seek students passionate about social justice issues, with excellent writing and interpersonal skills.

The available positions are:

Policy Intern. Tracks new legislation, attends and summarizes Congressional hearings for *Memo to Members*, participates in visits to Congressional offices, develops materials for use in lobbying the House and Senate to achieve NLIHC's policy agenda, and updates the NLIHC Congressional database.

Organizing Intern. Assists with grassroots organizing efforts for the United for Homes campaign and other legislative efforts. Assists with membership recruitment/retention efforts and internal database upkeep.

Research Intern. Assists in ongoing quantitative and qualitative research projects, writes weekly articles on current research for *Memo to Members*, attends briefings, and responds to research inquiries.

Communications/Media Intern. Prepares and distributes press materials, assists with media research and outreach for publication releases, and works on social media projects. Maintains the media database and tracks press hits.

Graphic Design Intern. Assists with sending out e-communications using MailChimp; revising collateral print material such as brochures, flyers, factsheets; updating content on the NLIHC website; and posting information on the Coalition's social media sites and blog. *Please provide 3-5 design samples and/or link to online portfolio for consideration.*

These positions begin in January and run until May and are at least 30 hours a week. Two semester placements are possible. NLIHC provides modest stipends.

A cover letter, resume, and writing sample are required for consideration. In your cover letter, please specify the position(s) for which you are applying and that you are interested in a winter/spring 2016 internship.

Interested students should send their materials to: Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005 via email to pkealey@nlich.org.

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