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## Point of View

### When the Cruelty is the Point – by Diane Yentel, NLIHC President and CEO

I've never before called policy proposals hateful, but Secretary Carson's latest series of them are just that. He proposes policies designed to increase homelessness and suffering, and even the risk of violence or death, for some of our country's most vulnerable people. The cruelty, it seems, is the point.

First came the proposal to [evict "mixed-status" households](#) from subsidized housing. These are immigrant families living with family members who are undocumented or otherwise ineligible for housing assistance. Subsidies for these families are strictly prorated to ensure the ineligible member of the household receives none of the subsidy. Each of these mixed-status families waited for months or years for housing assistance, just like every other family in public or other subsidized homes. And each of these families pays higher rents than families in which all household members are eligible.

Over 100,000 people are put at risk of eviction from Secretary Carson's proposal; included among them are over 55,000 children, all deeply poor, eligible and in need of housing assistance. If Secretary Carson's proposal were put into effect, these American children would be evicted and put at high risk of homelessness.

Then came Secretary Carson's proposal to [reverse protections for transgender people](#) experiencing homelessness. One in every three transgender people will experience homelessness in their lifetime. Seventy percent of trans people who attempt to enter shelters face discrimination. Transgender people, especially trans women and trans people of color, are at extraordinarily high risk of violence.

Secretary Carson proposes allowing federally funded shelters to discriminate against trans people seeking shelter. Some evangelical Christian shelter providers have [sought and sued for](#) the right to turn away transgender people in their moment of greatest need; Secretary Carson would now give them free reign to use tax-payer dollars to do just that. Turning transgender people away from shelter and forcing them to instead sleep on the street puts them at [high risk of violence and even death](#).

And fifteen months after Congress approved \$16 billion in disaster mitigation funds for areas devastated by 2017 hurricanes, Secretary Carson has yet to provide those resources to impacted communities to allow them to rebuild stronger to withstand the next storm. Secretary Carson is slow-walking the provision of funding to where it is most needed, as President Trump [repeatedly lies](#) about recovery efforts in Puerto Rico and prevents more money from going to the island. Through [some combination of ignorance and racism](#), President Trump won't acknowledge that Puerto Ricans are Americans.

Thirty-three thousand deeply poor Puerto Rican families still sleep in homes that had roofs blown off by Hurricane Maria and never replaced, and the next hurricane season rapidly approaches. Each day of Secretary Carson's inexcusable inaction in getting money to Puerto Rico [puts American lives at risk](#).

Through these actions [and more](#), Secretary Carson has chosen to use his power and position at HUD to advance policies to increase homelessness for some of the most vulnerable people in our country, and to extend and exacerbate the suffering of the lowest-income and most vulnerable people impacted by disasters. To advance such policies, he lies about both [his intentions](#) and the policies' [impacts](#).

So how do we fight cruelty that is advanced and perpetuated with lies? With truth and compassion.

Hundreds of dedicated HUD career employees are leading the way. With their brave and good work, [HUD officials publicly exposed Secretary Carson's lies](#) and his true intentions in advancing the mixed-status rule. This extraordinary rebuke follows dozens of less public but no less powerful internal efforts to push back

against some of Secretary Carson's and the White House's more harmful proposals. Each of these acts of resistance is brave, patriotic and needed to combat the cruelty.

Public housing authority (PHA) directors and other city and state officials are speaking out as well. The [Houston Housing Authority \(HHA\) responded](#) to Secretary Carson's feigned concern with the hundreds of thousands of families on HHA's waiting list by noting that "less than 1% of HHA households have undocumented family members living with them...and they do not take up spots on the waiting list." HHA further stated: "HHA does not act as an extension of immigration enforcement." Earlier this month, Doug Guthrie, president and CEO of the Housing Authority of the City of LA, [told his members of Congress](#) that the proposed rule, "poses a devastating threat to the housing status of our most vulnerable residents and their families... The net effect of the proposed rule is to throw 11,000 of our neediest residents out of their homes and, more than likely, onto the street." He notes that the proposed rule runs counter to HUD's mission by "inflicting fear, stress and harm on our most vulnerable populations. The rule changes are unnecessary, untimely and mean-spirited." He urges that the rule be withdrawn. I hope many more PHAs and public officials follow suit in countering the lies and opposing the cruelty.

This week's [Our Homes, Our Voices National Housing Week of Action](#) is an ideal opportunity for you to plan or attend an event to raise your voice in opposition to these cruel proposals and in support of true solutions to America's housing crisis. For example, the [Arizona Housing Coalition](#) is holding an *Our Homes, Our Voices* press event and postcard writing campaign for members to register opposition to the proposed mixed-status rule. *Our Homes, Our Voices* Week of Action begins on Thursday, with over 70 events so far planned throughout the country.

[Join these events](#), plan your own, go to [www.keep-families-together.org](http://www.keep-families-together.org) for more information on opposing the mixed-status rule, and stay tuned to NLIHC for more ways to oppose all of these and the next harmful proposals from Secretary Carson. And **keep speaking out**, using whatever outlets you have: publish opinion pieces and submit letters to the editor; talk to the media about local impacts; call and meet with your members of Congress; expose the lies and tell the truth whenever and wherever you can.

How do we fight this administration's cruelty and deception? We combat the lies with truth. We counter the ignorance with facts. We call out and refute racism and homophobia. We partner with and amplify the leadership of impacted people. We speak up and speak out and - in the end - we will prevail. Because love trumps hate.

In solidarity,

*Diane*

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## **Our Homes, Our Voices**

### **National Housing Week of Action Starts This Thursday, May 30! Get the Word Out through the Media and Social Media!**

*Our Homes, Our Voices* National Housing Week of Action starts this coming Thursday, May 30, and runs until June 5! It is time to get the word out to the media and through social media! NLIHC's newly released [Media Toolkit](#) provides helpful tips for getting media attention and effectively using social media.



Some of the tips included in the [Media Toolkit](#) are:

1. Working with the Media - suggestions for contacting media members in a pithy, precise and honest manner.
2. Tips for communicating and fostering relationships with the media and for preparing for phone or in-person interviews.
3. Templates and drafts for op-eds and media advisories.
4. Social media posts with a zip file of images to help your National Housing Week of Action posts stand out.

If you have questions as you contact the media about your event, or you would like additional assistance, please contact NLIHC at: [ourhomes@nlihc.org](mailto:ourhomes@nlihc.org)

If you have not already done so, register your event at [www.ourhomes-ourvoices/current-events](http://www.ourhomes-ourvoices/current-events) or email [ourhomes@nlihc.org](mailto:ourhomes@nlihc.org) to let us know what type of event you're working on and how we can help.

And stay tuned for information on how you can participate in a national *Our Homes, Our Voices* tweetstorm and call-in day!

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## Take Action

### Register for Webinar to Learn More About HUD's "Mixed-Status" Immigrant-Family Rule

Join NLIHC, the National Housing Law Project, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities for a [webinar](#) on HUD's proposed "mixed-status" immigrant-family rule. The webinar will provide an overview of the rule and its implications, review HUD data on mixed-status immigrant families, and share resources to help advocates oppose the rule. The webinar will be held on **June 5 at 3:00 p.m. ET**. Register for this webinar at: <https://www.keep-families-together.org/events>

NLIHC and the National Housing Law Project will continue to lead efforts to oppose HUD's proposed rule. The two organizations recently published an [op-ed](#) in *City Limits* condemning the rule. The op-ed is available at: <http://bit.ly/2QjQ8Rw>

For more information about HUD's proposed "mixed-status" immigrant-families rule and how you can submit comments in opposition, visit: [www.keep-families-together.org](http://www.keep-families-together.org)

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## HUD

### HUD Proposes to Weaken Equal Access Rule Protections for LGBTQ People Experiencing Homelessness

HUD announced on May 22 that the agency will propose a [forthcoming rule](#) to weaken the enforcement of its Equal Access rule that provides important protections to LGBTQ people experiencing homelessness and seeking emergency shelter. The announcement came just one day after HUD Secretary Ben Carson testified before Congress that HUD had [no intention](#) of changing the rule.

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel and 12 other civil and LGBTQ rights leaders strongly condemned the proposal in a [press statement](#). Representative Jennifer Wexton (D-VA) introduced the [Ensuring Equal Access to Shelter Act](#) (HR 3018) on May 23 to prevent HUD from amending the Equal Access rule to allow homeless shelters to deny transgender people equal access to services.

Weakening the Equal Access rule and its enforcement mechanisms is unacceptable. Access to shelter is a basic, fundamental necessity. LGBTQ youth are more than twice as likely to experience homelessness than their non-LGBTQ peers, and black LGBTQ youth have the highest rates of youth homelessness. One in three transgender people will experience homelessness in their lifetime, and 70% of trans people who have used a shelter have experienced harassment.

Coming on the heels of HUD's proposed "mixed-status" rule to evict 55,000 American children from subsidized housing, this is another unconscionable HUD proposal to increase homelessness for some of our country's most vulnerable people.

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### HUD's Proposed Section 3 Rule Comment Period Deadline is June 3

NLIHC has prepared a [sample comment letter](#) about HUD's proposed Section 3 rule that organizations can adapt to their priorities. NLIHC urges residents and advocates to submit comments before the **June 3 deadline**.

The sample letter provides more than you may want to include in your own letter; just pare it back to suit your needs. The sample also has notes highlighted in yellow to give you context relating to some of the comments. (Be sure to delete the yellow highlighted text before sending your own letter.) To the extent you can, put your comment letter in your own words – HUD may discount comments that look mass-produced.

Some of the concepts referred to toward the end of the comment letter – e.g., "Section 3 worker," "Section 3 business," "Targeted Section 3 worker," and "Benchmark" – may seem confusing. It might help you understand them better by reading NLIHC's revised "Summary and Analysis: Proposed Section 3 Regulation" or "Public Housing Parts of the Proposed Section 3 Regulation" (both modified May 13).

NLIHC's sample comment letter is [here](#).

Not sure how to submit a comment letter to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)? Here is a handy "[how-to](#)."

"Summary and Analysis: Proposed Section 3 Regulation" (Modified May 13, 2019) is [here](#).

"Public Housing Parts of the Proposed Section 3 Regulation" (Modified May 13, 2019) is [here](#).

NLIHC's draft comment letter is [here](#).

An easy-to-read version of the proposed rule is [here](#).

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## Congress

### HUD Secretary Carson Testifies at House Oversight Hearing

HUD Secretary Ben Carson testified on May 21 at a House Financial Services Committee oversight hearing. Secretary Carson was pressed by lawmakers on HUD's recent actions to roll back fair housing protections, cut housing benefits, eliminate programs, delay disaster recovery funds, and prohibit mixed-status immigrant families from living in public and other subsidized housing. Lawmakers repeatedly pointed out these actions are inconsistent with HUD's mission to end homelessness and ensure vulnerable people have decent, safe, affordable homes.

House Financial Services Committee Chair Maxine Waters (D-CA) asked Secretary Carson about HUD's proposals to significantly raise rents on low-income families receiving housing assistance, including seniors and people with disabilities. She cited data from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities showing the administration's proposal would on average increase rents for seniors by 30%. While Secretary Carson said that people could get a hardship exemptions, [HUD's own data show](#) that very few people receiving housing assistance have been granted one. Secretary Carson inaccurately stated that seniors would be protected under the proposal, when in fact currently assisted seniors would see their rents increased over a 6-year period, while seniors receiving assistance for the first time would pay higher rents.

Several members of Congress asked questions about HUD's proposed rule to prohibit mixed-status immigrant families from living in public or other subsidized housing. Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Nydia Velazquez (D-NY) and Sylvia Garcia (D-TX) asked Secretary Carson what would happen to the more than 55,000 American children and children with legal status who would face eviction under HUD's policy. Representative Maloney asked what other resources would be needed in the homeless and foster system to take care of these children.

Secretary Carson stated that there are many other children on waitlists for housing assistance and that HUD proposed the rule to come into compliance with the law. Lawmakers responded that the 55,000 children were all eligible to receive housing assistance and that currently public housing authorities prorate rents for mixed-status families so that ineligible members are not subsidized. Representative Velazquez also pointed to the fact that HUD proposed huge cuts to its budget that, if enacted, would have exacerbated housing waitlists.

Representatives Ann Wagner (R-MO) and Al Green (D-TX) both spoke about their efforts to permanently authorize the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery program. Secretary Carson stated that codifying the program could be helpful to ensure communities receive disaster aid more quickly and to streamline the coordination between FEMA and HUD.

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) discussed how current HUD policies allow families to be evicted from subsidized housing for a single incident of criminal activity, no matter how minor, without a holistic review of the circumstances. To address this problem, she said she would introduce the "[Fair Chance at Housing Act](#)," which NLIHC supports.

Representatives Ocasio-Cortez and Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) both condemned the substandard living conditions in public housing due to insufficient government funding. Representative Pressley asked Secretary Carson what the health consequences of living in poor housing conditions are. After some hesitation, Secretary Carson tersely responded that "housing is a part of health." When he refused to respond to further questioning on the matter, Representative Pressley stated, "The evidence is clear that if we do not invest in necessary funds today, we will pay the price in people's health tomorrow. And what is this administration's response? Cuts."

Representative Jennifer Wexton (D-VA) pressed Secretary Carson on whether HUD would attempt to make changes to its Equal Access rule, which provides protections to LBGTQ people experiencing homelessness and seeking emergency shelter. Secretary Carson stated that HUD was “not currently anticipating changing the rule.” The next day, however, the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) posted a notice that it is currently reviewing a HUD proposal to amend the rule. (See related article in this *Memo to Members and Partners*.)

Representative Chuy Garcia (D-IL) spoke about his “Safe Housing for Families Act,” which would require carbon monoxide detectors to be installed in HUD-assisted housing. The bill would provide \$10 million in funding over 10 years to install the detectors. Since 2003, 13 people have died in subsidized housing due to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Watch the archived webcast at: <https://bit.ly/2ZshusV>

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## **Bipartisan Legislation Introduced to Protect Children from Lead Poisoning**

The “Lead-Safe Housing for Kids Act of 2019” was introduced on May 21 by a bipartisan group of senators, including Dick Durbin (D-IL), Tim Scott (R-SC), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Todd Young (R-IN), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Rob Portman (R-OH), and Tina Smith (D-MN). NLIHC supports the legislation, which would require HUD to update its lead-poisoning prevention measures to reflect modern science and ensure that families and children living in federally assisted housing are protected from the devastating consequences of lead poisoning.

According to HUD, lead-based paint is present in roughly 37 million U.S. homes, posing serious health and safety risks, including long-term and irreversible health, neurological, and behavioral problems in children. While the available science for detecting and remediating lead hazards in a home has evolved significantly in the last two decades, federal laws and regulations continue to lag far behind, putting children at the risk of being exposed lead before any intervention is triggered.

Specifically, the “Lead-Safe Housing for Kids Act of 2019” would require more stringent risk assessments and more accurate evaluation tools to identify lead hazards before a family moves into a home, provide opportunities for families to relocate on an emergency basis if a lead hazard is not abated within 30 days, and require landlords to disclose the presence of lead if lead hazards are found in the home.

For more information on the bill, see Senator Durbin’s press release at: <https://bit.ly/2WikRnh>

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## **New Democrat Coalition Releases Housing Task Force Goals**

The New Democrat Coalition Housing Task Force, led by Representatives Denny Heck (D-WA), Katie Hill (D-CA), and Ben McAdams (D-UT), announced on May 22 its goals for the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. According to their [press release](#), “the Task Force will act to address the housing shortage and pursue solutions that address housing insecurity. These include investing in housing stock as well as addressing land use, inadequate construction financing, and the mismatch of labor supply for the demand.”

NLIHC looks forward to working with the New Democrat Coalition Housing Task Force to identify solutions to the affordable housing crisis.

Other members of the task force include Representatives Charlie Crist (D-FL), Al Lawson (D-FL), Stephanie Murphy (D-FL), Ed Perlmutter (D-CO), Scott Peters (D-CA), Kathleen Rice (D-NY), Harley Rouda (D-CA), David Scott (D-GA), and Norma Torres (D-CA).



See the Housing Task Force’s full press release at: <https://bit.ly/2M01njs>

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## **Budget and Appropriations**

### **House Subcommittee Approves FY20 THUD Funding Bill**

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (THUD) voted to approve its [FY20 spending bill](#) on May 23. Members did not submit any amendments during the vote but may do so when the bill goes to the full House Appropriations Committee following the Memorial Day recess.

Thanks to the leadership of House Subcommittee Chair David Price (D-NC) and Ranking Member Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), the House bill is a clear rejection of President Trump’s position on affordable housing investments and policy. The bill provides HUD programs with more than \$13.4 billion above the president’s FY20 request and at least \$5.9 billion above FY19 enacted levels. It also clearly rebukes the harmful rent increases, rigid work requirements, and de facto time limits proposed by the president in his past budget requests and in subsequent legislation. Moreover, the subcommittee included legislative language to halt cruel proposals from the president to evict mixed-status immigrant families from assisted housing and to roll back LGBT protections. Overall, the House subcommittee bill builds on the funding increases and policy wins advocates and congressional champions secured in recent years.

Subcommittee Chair Price outlined the bill’s priorities for improving infrastructure – including housing – and safety while protecting vulnerable populations by increasing funding for public housing repairs and maintenance, HOME dollars, and lead and carbon monoxide remediation. Ranking Member Diaz-Balart called the proposal “the real infrastructure bill,” but stated that until Congress reaches a budget deal, the committee was working with “fake numbers.” House Appropriations Committee Chair Nita Lowey praised the subcommittee for a bill that acknowledges that “housing is the foundation in which lives are built” and protects vulnerable populations from eviction.

Read the text of the proposed bill at: <https://bit.ly/2YGNmZr>

Watch the archived webcast of the subcommittee vote at: <https://bit.ly/2HNqiBr>

Read NLIHC’s analysis of the bill at: <https://bit.ly/2HwEvnC>

Review NLIHC’s budget chart at: <https://bit.ly/2rl7MZC>

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## **Disaster Housing Recovery**

### **Disaster Aid Package Delayed**

After months of delays, the timeline for passage of a disaster aid package for communities impacted by recent disasters has been pushed back.

While the Senate approved the \$19.1 billion [disaster supplemental](#) on May 23 by a vote of 85-8, the House was unable to pass the measure before the start of the Memorial Day congressional recess. A lone lawmaker – Representative Chip Roy (R-TX) – threatened to oppose the measure, preventing it from moving forward quickly by unanimous consent. Although members are gone for recess, the House plans to vote on the bill again on May 28 during a “pro forma” session. The package would again have to pass by unanimous consent. If this vote is unsuccessful, the House will hold a roll call vote when they return June 3.

The bill would provide \$2.431 billion in Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds for areas impacted by disasters in 2017, 2018, and 2019, including \$304 million to help Puerto Rico meet FEMA match requirements.

The bill also requires HUD to publish guidelines for CDBG-DR mitigation funds within 90 days. Although Congress approved the mitigation funds over 15 months ago, HUD has not made the funds available to impacted areas. Many advocates feared the mitigation funds had been held back because President Trump had stated that he did not want Puerto Rico to receive any additional resources.

Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Richard Shelby (R-AL) said the president has expressed support for the package and is expected to sign the legislation once he receives it.

Read the full bill at: <https://bit.ly/2W11jio>

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## **Lawmakers Reintroduce Bill to Activate Disaster Housing Assistance Program**

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Representative Adriano Espaillat (D-NY) together with 10 of their Senate and House colleagues reintroduced the "Housing Survivors of Major Disasters Act of 2019" ([S 1605](#) and [HR 2914](#)) on May 22. This bill would require FEMA to enter into an interagency agreement with HUD to implement the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP), providing temporary rental assistance and wrap-around counseling services for individuals affected by recent and future disasters. The proposal also aims to address barriers low-income survivors face when applying for FEMA assistance.

The bill builds on a proposal introduced during the previous Congress by including language that will help ensure all disaster survivors receive FEMA assistance, even if they do not have documentation related to their residences. This provision would make applying for aid easier for renters without leases, unsheltered individuals, people experiencing homelessness, and homeowners without formal titles. After every disaster, local advocates find these survivors are often denied assistance even when otherwise eligible.

Joining Senator Warren and Representative Espaillat on the bicameral bill were Representative Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR) and Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Kamala D. Harris (D-CA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), and Tim Kaine (D-VA).

In a [press release](#), NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel offered strong support for the bill: "On behalf of the National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition, I applaud Senator Elizabeth Warren and Congressman Adriano Espaillat for introducing legislation to enact critically needed reforms to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure that the lowest-income survivors - including seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, people experiencing homelessness, and other individuals - receive the housing assistance they need to rebuild their lives. Congress should immediately enact this legislation and hold FEMA accountable for its continued failure to address the housing needs of the most vulnerable survivors, which has forced thousands of families to return to uninhabitable homes, sleep in cars or shelters, double- or triple-up with other low-income families, or pay far too much of their incomes on rent, putting them at higher risk of evictions and, in worst cases, homelessness."

In the same press release, Representative Espaillat called the lack of adequate and timely disaster relief "a slap in the face and blatant disregard of the lives of thousands of individuals and families in need." Senator Warren stated: "The Housing Survivors of Major Disasters Act would push the Federal government to step up for these families and make it easier for them to access the help they are entitled to and desperately need."

Read text of the bill at: <https://bit.ly/2Et9NKb>

Read the press release at: <https://bit.ly/30HxIPA>

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## **Senator Harris Sends Letter to FEMA on Slow Housing Response Following Camp Fire**

Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) sent a [letter](#) on May 22 to Acting FEMA Administrator Peter Gaynor urging his agency to take further action to address the housing needs of Camp Fire survivors. Although the wildfire occurred in November 2018, many survivors are still living in tents or cars, doubling- or tripling-up with other low-income households, or paying more than half of their incomes on rent while waiting for FEMA temporary housing assistance.

Senator Harris notes that FEMA has only approved a small percentage of aid applications and has been slow to provide temporary manufactured homes. Despite the massive displacement and difficulties placing trailers, the agency has not utilized the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP), a proven housing solution used after Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy. The letter includes several questions for FEMA regarding the slow housing response, requesting answers by the end of May.

Read the full letter at: <https://bit.ly/2K0jlzI>

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## **NLIHC and Partners Call for Media for Film on Disaster Preparedness, Recovery, and Resilience**

NLIHC is partnering with [Working Films](#) — a production company that works with grassroots groups and non-profit organizations to visually enhance their programs — to curate a compilation of short stories and documentaries that highlight the current injustices, systems, and solutions needed to prepare and respond to climate disasters. The compilation will bring overlooked stories into the light and expose the historical inequities that are exacerbated when disasters hit. Filmmakers are invited to [submit](#) short documentaries or excerpts of feature-length documentaries for this compilation.

Working Films is partnering on this effort with NLIHC, California Rural Legal Assistance, the Houston Organizing Movement for Equity (HOME) Coalition, the North Carolina Environmental Justice Network, the North Carolina Justice Center, and the National Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies. The series will be designed to catalyze community conversations and action for just, inclusive disaster preparedness, recovery and community resilience. The deadline for all submissions is **June 25**.

Read the full “Call for Media “at: <https://bit.ly/30AhrHj>

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## **Additional Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – May 28, 2019**

The following is a review of additional disaster housing recovery developments since the last edition of *Memo to Members and Partners* (for the article in the previous *Memo*, see [5/20](#)).

### **Midwest Flooding**

#### **Nebraska**

FEMA extended the deadlines to apply for [Individual Assistance](#) to June 19 and [Public Assistance](#) to June 20. All Disaster Recovery Centers [closed](#) on May 17.

## 2018 California Wildfires

Construction on the Gridley Industrial Park, which is expected to accommodate 400 manufactured homes for Camp Fire survivors, will [begin](#) the week of May 20. The park is expected to open in July. An update from the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) [reports](#) that more than 300 households have received manufactured or temporary housing units across eight counties.

## Hurricane Michael

### Florida

Governor Ron DeSantis [announced](#) two new homeownership loan programs targeted to survivors of Hurricane Michael. The Florida Housing Finance Corporation expects to launch both programs in June.

## Hurricane Florence

### North Carolina

The North Carolina Department of Public Safety [reports](#) that 549 households are living in FEMA temporary housing units.

## 2017 Disasters

The [Rebuild Florida](#) program, which is funded with Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding, [completed](#) its first home repair on May 21. The program assists low-income homeowners, prioritizing seniors, people with disabilities, and families with children whose homes were damaged during Hurricane Irma.

The delay in a disaster aid package has left more than a million Americans in Puerto Rico without health and food aid. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) published a [blog post](#) about how the continued inaction is impacting low-income individuals. CBPP also created a [series of videos](#) sharing survivors' stories.

The Texas state legislature recently [passed](#) a bill that would help ensure homeowners who receive disaster recovery assistance are protected from an increased tax liability after their homes are rebuilt.

CDBG-DR funds have been [slow to reach survivors](#) of the 2017 disasters. In Puerto Rico, communities are still waiting for programs to release information about eligibility, so survivors can submit applications. The delays with this round of funding underscore the issues with the current CDBG-DR program and the need for congressional authorization.

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## United States Department of Agriculture

### USDA to Publish its Own Rule Prohibiting “Mixed-Status” Immigrant Families from Living in Assisted Housing

The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) is currently reviewing a [proposed rule](#) on the Rural Housing Service's citizenship requirements for the agency's multifamily housing programs. The proposed rule will likely prohibit mixed-status immigrant families from living in RHS programs covered by Section 214 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980. The notice of proposed rulemaking is projected to be published in August 2019. HUD earlier published a rule prohibiting mixed-status families from living in public and other subsidized housing.

Section 214 covers several RHS programs, including the Rural Development (RD) Voucher program, Section 514 Farm Labor Housing, and Section 515 and Section 514/516 developments that receive RD Rental Assistance. The proposed RHS rule could lead to families splitting up, forgoing assistance, or being evicted from their homes.

Under Section 214 undocumented immigrants cannot receive federal housing assistance, but families of mixed-immigration status can live in subsidized housing if at least one member of the household is eligible to receive assistance. U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, refugees and asylum seekers are eligible to receive housing assistance. Residents can declare themselves ineligible and are not required to reveal their immigration status. When a family of mixed-immigration status receives housing assistance, the family's subsidy is pro-rated to account for only legally eligible residents.

NLIHC and the National Housing Law Project are leading the effort to oppose both the HUD and the USDA rules. For more information about the rules and how to submit comments in opposition, visit: [www.keep-families-together.org](http://www.keep-families-together.org)

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## Research

### Research Explores Perceptions and Experiences of LIHTC Residents

A study in *Housing Policy Debate*, "[Rethinking Opportunity in the Siting of Affordable Housing in California](#)," found that residents' perspectives on housing affordability, neighborhood conditions, and access to educational and economic opportunity can differ from commonly used measures.

The study's findings suggest Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) residents' perceptions of their neighborhoods and opportunities do not necessarily align with standard metrics often used in "opportunity maps." Residents in the study shared that barriers to opportunity might not be driven by neighborhood factors as much as by larger issues in education and the labor and housing markets.

Efforts have been made in recent years to encourage more affordable housing in "high-opportunity" neighborhoods to improve residents' economic mobility. Little research, however, has examined LIHTC residents' neighborhood preferences or their own perceptions of barriers to economic mobility. The author explored resident perspectives through interviews and surveys with 251 residents from 18 LIHTC properties owned and managed by non-profits across California. The properties were sited in neighborhoods that varied in neighborhood quality, but they tended to be in neighborhoods with poverty rates more than 20%.

Many residents learned about their property through a local connection. Nearly one-third of participants had a friend or family member living at the property or another property managed by the same company. Approximately 28% of participants learned about their property simply by walking by it during construction, and another 10% were referred by a social service or non-profit agency. These findings suggest social connections play a key role in steering residents to LIHTC properties, which may result in the clustering of demographics.

Nearly 50% of participants lived in the same ZIP code prior to moving into their current LIHTC home. Seventy percent of residents had moved from a neighborhood with a similar level of poverty, 20% had moved from a lower-poverty neighborhood, and 10% had moved from a higher-poverty neighborhood.

Residents reported significant challenges prior to becoming LIHTC residents. Fifty percent of participants worried about paying for rent prior to moving into their LIHTC home, 40% reported previous food insecurity, 20% moved as the result of an eviction or rent increase, and 20% were previously homeless. Participants commonly cited the affordability and quality of their unit as their primary motivation for moving, eclipsing

concerns about neighborhood quality. Another theme that emerged from resident interviews was the lack of social stigma associated with living in a LIHTC home, especially compared to other forms of housing assistance such as public housing or Section 8 assistance.

Participants shared how their LIHTC home afforded them economic stability. Over one-third of participants reported activities typically associated with economic mobility, such as learning English or pursuing a high school or college degree. Participants also, however, highlighted significant barriers to economic security and mobility inherent in the low-wage and low-skill labor market. Participants did not appear to struggle with finding work, but they struggled with low wages, poor benefits, and job insecurity.

Many participants viewed the housing stability provided by their LIHTC rental unit as a buffer to the precariousness of the low-wage, low-skill labor market. Residents also cited issues of educational opportunity that were more closely related to city-wide or school-district-wide issues than to their neighborhood. In terms of economic mobility, respondents tended to focus on these larger issues in the labor market and on education instead of their neighborhoods.

Overall, LIHTC residents' perceptions of a positive neighborhood environment can differ from empirical measures of neighborhood opportunity. The author makes clear, however, that these findings should not be used to undermine current efforts to promote more affordable housing in neighborhoods of higher opportunity to provide low-income households with more residential choice.

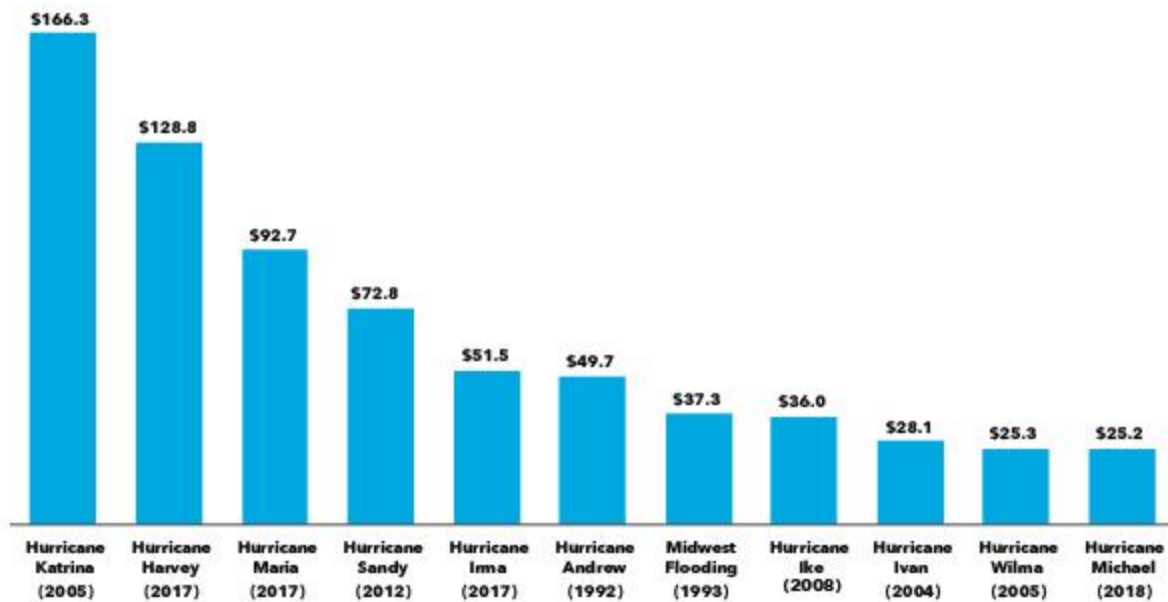
“Rethinking Opportunity in the Siting of Affordable Housing in California: Resident Perspectives on the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit” is available at: <https://bit.ly/2QgoAwe>

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## **Fact of the Week**

**Four of the Most Expensive Natural Disasters in the U.S. Occurred within the Last Two Years**

## U.S. Disasters with More than \$25 Billion in Damage Since 1980



Note: Costs as of May 2019 in CPI-adjusted dollars. Does not include droughts.

Source: NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information. (2019) U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters.

Source: NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information. (2019). U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters.

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## Opportunity Starts at Home

Latest Campaign Podcast Explores How Housing Policy is Climate Policy

The [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) multisector affordable homes campaign released its latest [podcast episode](#) with Dr. Daniel Kammen, one of the world's leading energy experts, on the intersections between housing policy and climate policy. He discusses how the lack of housing affordability significantly contributes to transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. He also addresses policy solutions, the Green New Deal, the urgency of the situation, and how housing and climate advocates can better partner together.

Dr. Kammen is a distinguished professor of energy at UC Berkeley, where he holds appointments in the Energy and Resources Group, the Goldman School of Public Policy, and the Department of Nuclear Engineering. He is a former science envoy for the U.S. State Department, appointed during the Obama administration. Dr. Kammen was a coordinating lead author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for its report on man-made global warming. He was a chief specialist for renewable energy and energy efficiency at the World Bank and served in a variety of roles on global energy and other initiatives, including at the Energy Department and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Listen to the full conversation [here](#).

Follow the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign on all social media platforms: [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Be sure to [sign up](#) for our e-newsletter to get the latest updates about the campaign, including new multi-sector partners, [calls to action](#), events, and [research](#).

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## From the Field

### Montana Housing Coalition Builds Momentum in 2019 Legislative Session

Housing advocacy in the Montana legislature was more robust and successful in 2019 than ever before. The increased activity is due both to the decreasing affordability of homes in Montana and the increasing clout of the Montana Housing Coalition. Advocates held their largest Housing Day in the Rotunda on February 12, with Montana Housing Coalition members and supporters rallying around their legislative agenda.

The Montana Housing Coalition succeeded in creating a new workforce housing loan program, House Bill 16 (HB16), signed into law by Governor Steve Bullock on May 10. Other items on their agenda, notably the creation of a statewide affordable housing tax credit, fell short of passage, but the conversations and committee votes progressed further than ever before. Montana Housing Coalition leaders are enthusiastic about what might be possible with the next legislature.

HB16 establishes a \$15 million loan fund for the production and preservation of “workforce housing” for low-income households earning 80% of area median income (AMI) or below and moderate-income households earning 95% of AMI or below. The new loan program is to be used only for multi-family developments. According to advocates, the fund is important for communities having difficulty housing essential municipal employees such as teachers and service workers such as bank tellers or retail workers. The \$15 million will be drawn from the permanent coal tax trust fund which was used previously to create Montana's Veteran's Home Loan Program. HB16 sets an interest rate 0.5% below what is currently available through the existing Montana Housing Fund; loan repayments are intended to ensure the long-term vitality of the coal tax trust fund. HB16 was introduced by Representative Dave Fern (D).

Another legislative victory was the passage of Senate Bill 204 (SB204) which provides tax relief to Montana homeowners who lost their homes at auction due to tax debts as low as \$150. Local governments often expend more resources to seize the homes and render the occupants homeless than the tax arrearages. Many of these impacted homeowners are very low-income owners of aging manufactured homes, often seniors living on fixed incomes. SB204 exempts the oldest and lowest-value mobile homes from personal property taxes, reducing the



loss of such homes at auction. Mobile homes older than 28 years and valued at less than \$10,000 will be exempt from taxes.

Other proposals fell short of passage, including one for a state-funded study of affordable housing challenges in Montana and one to create a state-level workforce housing tax credit program. The proposed tax credit program was modeled largely after the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit, but it would have been able to serve higher income- households. The proposal emerged from the Montana Board of Housing's ability to fund only approximately 25% of multifamily rental home development applications. The proposed cap on the annual value of tax credits was \$6.4 million. Montana Housing Coalition will continue to work to create the workforce housing tax credit in the next legislature.

A notable strategy deployed by Montana Housing Coalition in their 2019 efforts was a deliberate focus on effective messaging. In addition to using compelling personal stories and compelling data – including NLIHC state-level data on housing wages and cost burdens – Montana Housing Coalition trained advocates to avoid common housing industry jargon and buzzwords that carry negative connotations. They produced a “messaging matters” packet for their Housing Day which provided alternatives to terms such “area median income” and “housing units.” Advocates focused their messaging on the economic benefits of investing in housing programs, sharing that the Montana Department of Commerce's Census and Economic Information Center estimates 13 new jobs are created with each \$1 million invested in the construction of new homes. Advocates believe the new messaging was an important component of their successes and the growing momentum.

“We are pleased by the passage of helpful legislation like HB16 and SB204, even though our most ambitious proposal for a state workforce housing task credit fell short,” said Maureen Rude, executive director of NeighborWorks Montana and acting chair of the Montana Housing Coalition. “The energy and effort present in this year's legislative session was unprecedented, and we are anxious to build on this groundswell of support and win on more of our key priorities in the next legislature.”

For more information about the Montana Housing Coalition and legislative efforts in 2019, contact Maureen Rude at: [mrude@nwmt.org](mailto:mrude@nwmt.org)

Learn more about the Montana Housing Coalition at: [www.mthousingcoalition.org](http://www.mthousingcoalition.org)

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## **NLIHC in the News**

### **NLIHC in the News for the Week of May 19**

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of May 19.

- “Opinion: Trump Admin's Latest Anti-Immigrant Proposal Would Harm Thousands of Legal Residents,” *City Limits*, May 23 at: <http://bit.ly/2QjQ8Rw>
- “Our View: Affordable-housing development is an economic development strategy,” *The Portland Press Herald*, May 23 at: <http://bit.ly/2EwnFmI>
- “Will housing issues be a focus of 2020 race?,” *American Banker*, May 22 at: <http://bit.ly/2X3OzcV>
- “Here's the backstory behind Ayanna Pressley's contentious exchange with Ben Carson,” *Boston.com*, May 22 at: <http://bit.ly/2HAqBRe>

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## **NLIHC News**

### **NLIHC Seeks Housing Policy Analyst/Senior Housing Policy Analyst**

NLIHC seeks a housing policy analyst/senior housing policy analyst (depending on experience) responsible for identifying, analyzing, advocating, and engaging the Coalition's membership and network in action on federal policy and regulatory activities related to the Coalition's mission and priorities. The policy analyst will report to the NLIHC senior director for public policy.

The policy analyst/senior analyst will:

1. Monitor legislative, regulatory, and administrative developments, as well as other activities or events of interest on Capitol Hill and at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other relevant agencies.
2. Help develop policy strategies and advocate Coalition positions before members of Congress and the Administration by drafting letters, scheduling and participating in meetings, and leading coalitions, and preparing and sending communications to Congress, Administration officials, and their staff.
3. Develop advocacy materials that translate pending proposals and actions into an accessible and understandable format, including factsheets, briefs, white papers, testimony, and other resources.
4. Complete other policy projects, as assigned.
5. Represent the Coalition before selected national partners.
6. Coordinate and facilitate working group and coalition meetings, prepare materials, and make presentations. Attend meetings and events of other coalitions.
7. Work together with NLIHC field staff and NLIHC partners and allies in impacted communities to stay abreast of housing concerns.
8. Research and prepare articles for NLIHC's *Memo to Members and Partners* e-newsletter, including updates on Capitol Hill, HUD, and other federal agencies, through web-based and other research and attendance at hearings and briefings.
9. Develop advocacy communications for a wide variety of Coalition members and partners.
10. Plan and implement briefings, dialogues, and other informational forums on issues related to Coalition priorities and initiatives.
11. Monitor, and provide updates for, the Coalition website.
12. Participate in the planning and implementation of all aspects of Coalition's annual policy conference, including speaker recruitment.
13. Attend and report at all meetings of Board of Directors; participate in staff meetings, trainings, and all Coalition events. Other duties as assigned.

## **QUALIFICATIONS:**

A bachelor's degree (master's degree or law degree preferred). A degree in Public Policy, Public Administration, Humanitarian Emergency Management or related area is a plus. Applicants should have at least two years of experience in public policy or legislative affairs for the policy analyst position and at least five years of experience for the senior policy analyst position. Applicants should have a commitment to social justice and knowledge of affordable housing, homelessness, or social service delivery. Candidates should be able to work in a diverse, high-paced environment and have strong writing and editing skills, oral and interpersonal communications, organizational skills, and attention to detail. Applicants should also be proficient in the Microsoft Office suite and social media platforms.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. This is a full-time position located in Washington, DC.

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, and two writing samples to Paul Kealey, chief operating officer, and Sarah Mickelson, senior director of public policy, at: [pkealey@nlihc.org](mailto:pkealey@nlihc.org) and [smickelson@nlihc.org](mailto:smickelson@nlihc.org)

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## **NLIHC Welcomes New Housing Policy Analyst**

NLIHC is pleased to welcome Noah Patton as its newest housing policy analyst.

In this position, Noah will be responsible for identifying, analyzing, advocating, and engaging the Coalition's membership and network in action on federal policy and regulatory activities related to NLIHC's mission and priorities, including disaster housing recovery. A member of the NLIHC policy team, Noah will report to NLIHC Senior Director for Public Policy Sarah Mickelson.

Born and raised in the Washington, DC area, Noah comes to NLIHC from Baltimore, MD, where he worked at the Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc. (HPRP), helping to advocate for policies to expand public-benefit programs and protecting Housing Choice Voucher holders. After working as a campaign and state house staffer in Maryland, Noah received a JD from the University of Baltimore School of Law. While in law school, Noah was heavily involved in coordinating Legal Observers of the National Lawyers Guild to protect the legal rights of Baltimore-area political protestors and served as a Kellogg's Law Fellow at the NAACP Office of the General Counsel working on transit equity and educational policy. Noah received his B.A. in Political Science from McDaniel College in Westminster, MD. He has been a member of the Maryland bar since 2018.

Please join us in welcoming Noah to the NLIHC team.

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## **NLIHC Welcomes New Summer Field Intern**

NLIHC is pleased to welcome Taylor Washington as a summer field intern.

Taylor studies industrial engineering and political science at the University of Miami. Taylor's passion for affordable housing advocacy stemmed from seeing her family struggle with bouts of homelessness with little access to housing resources. Prior to her engagement with NLIHC, she worked closely with the University of Miami Habitat for Humanity team to construct homes for low-income families. While working on-site with Habitat families, she saw the negative impacts of housing instability on the children. Taylor hopes her advocacy work at NLIHC creates opportunities for the lowest-income families, including access to S.T.E.M. programs and better academic achievement.

Please join us in welcoming Taylor to the NLIHC team.

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## **Where to Find Us – May 28**

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel and other NLIHC staff will be speaking at the following events in the coming months:

- [MARC/MAHRA Conference](#), Oxon Hill, MD, May 30
- National Alliance of HUD Tenants Conference, Alexandria, VA, June 9
- Supportive Housing Network of New York Conference, New York, NY, June 13
- [Mental Health America, Annual Conference: Dueling Diagnoses](#), Washington, DC, June 14
- [National Symposium on Solutions to End Youth Homelessness](#), New York, NY, June 18
- RESULTS 2019 International Conference, Washington, DC, July 15
- [Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development Home for Everyone Conference](#), Eau Claire, WI, July 18-19

- [Utah Housing Coalition Conference](#), Park City, UT, August 27–28
- [Housing & Community Development Network of NJ Annual Conference](#), New Brunswick, NJ, October 18
- New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness Conference, Albuquerque, NM, October 24
- Rural Housing Summit, San Jose, CA, November 7

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## **NLIHC Staff**

Sonya Acosta, Policy Analyst, x231  
 Kyle Arbuckle, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x227  
 Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245  
 Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244  
 Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226  
 Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316  
 Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314  
 Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232  
 Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317  
 Joseph Lindstrom, Manager, Field Organizing, x222  
 Lisa Marlow, Communications Coordinator, x239  
 Sarah Mickelson, Senior Director of Public Policy, x228  
 Khara Norris, Director of Administration, x242  
 Noah Patton, Housing Policy Analyst, x227  
 Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Specialist, x246  
 Catherine Reeves, Development Coordinator, x234  
 Brooke Schipporeit, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233  
 Nayasia Thomas, Graphic Design Intern, [GDintern@nlihc.org](mailto:GDintern@nlihc.org)  
 Taylor Washington, Field Intern, x252  
 Elayne Weiss, Senior Policy Analyst, x243  
 Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Coordinator, x230  
 Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247  
 Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225