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Administration

Trump Appoints Robert Marbut as Executive Director of United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

President Trump appointed Robert Marbut as executive director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) on December 4, following the ousting of former USICH Director Matthew Doherty in November (see *Memo*, [11/25](#)). Dr. Marbut, a community college professor and consultant to cities on homelessness, is expected to be confirmed to the position by USICH during the agency's December 10 meeting. NLIHC has serious concerns with the appointment, given Dr. Marbut's dehumanizing and ineffective methods, all of which are not based on evidence or best practice.

Dr. Marbut rejects "Housing First," a proven strategy for reducing homelessness that prioritizes finding safe, stable, accessible housing for people experiencing homelessness before addressing other problems, like substance abuse or untreated mental health issues. The efficacy of the Housing First model is supported by two decades of research and has been identified by USICH as a best practice for ending homelessness.

Dr. Marbut describes his approach to combating homelessness as "Housing Fourth," calling for large-scale shelters with treatment facilities where people experiencing homelessness "earn" their right to beds within the shelter. While he says he does not support large-scale arrests of people experiencing homelessness, Dr. Marbut has called for cities to stop "enabling" homelessness by providing free meals, which he calls "street feeding," and allowing people to sleep in public spaces. He has also endorsed expanding law enforcement's authority to arrest people experiencing homelessness for violating minor ordinances.

In addition to drawing criticism from homelessness advocates, the appointment has been met with disapproval from members of Congress. In a [press statement](#), Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) stated, "It is a problem that the Trump Administration's designee to head the Interagency Council on Homelessness may believe that it's more important to stop churches from providing food to homeless people than it is to find those people homes. If true, this is yet another example of this administration obstructing efforts to end homelessness in this country."

Representatives Lacy Clay (D-MO), Gwen Moore (D-WI), and Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) are circulating a congressional [letter](#) expressing concern about President Trump's pick of Dr. Marbut to lead USICH. "We are profoundly disappointed in your decision to fire the head of [USICH], Matthew Doherty, and replace him with Robert Marbut," the representatives state. "Mr. Marbut is, among our many concerns, unqualified, unprepared, and disdainful of the mission of the critically important federal agency which he has been appointed to lead. . . . Mr. Marbut rejects over a decade of learning, research, practice, and bipartisan agreement that 'Housing First' ends homelessness. He ignores ample evidence of the underlying cause of homelessness – our country's severe shortage of homes affordable to its lowest income renters – and instead blames homelessness on what he perceives as moral failings."

Read the representatives' letter at: <https://bit.ly/2LDVoOR>

Read Senator Brown's press statement at: <https://bit.ly/2riUMqS>

Learn more about nominee Dr. Marbut's approach to addressing homelessness at: <https://bit.ly/34QAi7k>

Congress

Representative Delauro Introduces Bill to Provide Legal Representation for Households Facing Eviction

Representative Rosa Delauro (D-CT) introduced the “Eviction Prevention Act” ([H.R. 5298](#)) on December 4. If enacted, the bill would authorize the creation of a federal grant program for state and local governments to provide legal representation for households earning less than 125% of their area median income who are facing eviction proceedings. Jurisdictions that have established or are pursuing right-to-council laws, which mandate that tenants facing eviction be provided legal representation, would be given priority in receiving grants. The bill would also create a grant program for state and local governments to collect data on evictions.

Read Congresswoman Delauro’s press release at: <https://bit.ly/36a032y>

Read more about the “Eviction Prevention Act” at: <https://bit.ly/2OUK6Yl>

Native American Housing

NAHASDA Reauthorization Bill Introduced in House

Representative Denny Heck (D-WA) and seven bipartisan cosponsors introduced on December 5 the “[Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2019](#)” (H.R. 5319), which would reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) through 2024. Funding under NAHASDA programs is the main source of federal assistance to ensure American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians have access to safe, accessible, and affordable housing. Authorization for most NAHASDA programs expired in 2013 although Congress has continued to fund them.

The bill includes new provisions aimed at addressing the housing crisis in tribal areas. Native Americans living in tribal areas have some of the worst housing needs in the U.S., with exceptionally high poverty rates, low incomes, overcrowding, lack of plumbing and heat, and unique barriers to development. In addition to current NAHASDA programs, H.R. 5319 authorizes the Tribal HUD-VASH program – currently a demonstration – as well as the Native American Housing Block Grant Competitive program, which has been funded for the past two years.

The bill also creates set-asides for tribal housing within USDA programs and makes tribes eligible for HUD housing counseling grants. The NAHASDA reauthorization would also elevate the Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) within HUD to have its own assistant secretary. Currently, ONAP is housed within the Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) and is lead by a deputy assistant secretary.

Learn more about the bill at: <https://tinyurl.com/ujbjhny>

Fair Housing

House Democrats Send Letter Opposing Proposed Changes to HUD Disparate Impact Rule

House Financial Services Committee Chair Maxine Waters (D-CA) and committee Democrats sent a [letter](#) to HUD Secretary Ben Carson on November 22, expressing their concerns with the agency’s proposed changes to the Disparate Impact Rule (see *Memo*, 8/19). The representatives urge Secretary Carson to rescind this proposal that would “silence victims of housing discrimination while protecting industry profits and shielding bad actors from accountability.”

The Disparate Impact rule codified a longstanding tool for identifying and remedying housing discrimination under the Fair Housing Act. The administration’s proposed changes to the rule would make it far more difficult for people experiencing various forms of discrimination to challenge the practices of businesses, governments, and other large entities. As proposed, the current three-part “burden shifting” standard to show disparate impact would be radically changed to a five-component set of tests placing virtually all of the burden on people in “protected classes” as defined by the Fair Housing Act – people of color, women, immigrants, families with children, people with disabilities, LGBTQ persons, and people of faith – who challenge discriminatory practices.

“We remind you that HUD’s mission includes building ‘inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination’,” the representatives write. “HUD’s ability to carry out this mission will be seriously compromised if it moves forward with this proposed rule.”

Read the letter at: <https://tinyurl.com/rcrgha9>

Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020

Voter Registration Messaging, Events, and Canvassing: December 19 ‘Third-Thursdays-at-Three’ Webinar

NLIHC will offer a webinar on “**Voter Registration – Messaging, Events, and Canvassing**” on December 19 at 3:00 p.m. ET. This offering is part of a 15-month “[Third Thursdays at Three](#)” webinar and podcast series on nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement. Register for the webinar and the entire webinar series free to the public at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3t9gfr2>

The first step in expanding voter participation among low-income renters is to ensure they are registered. This webinar will provide a review of effective messaging that increases voter registration and tips on how to overcome the voter apathy that is so common in low-income communities. The session will also cover how to include voter registration at gatherings, host successful events for large-scale registration, and table at community events. It will also explore door-to-door canvassing operations to register new voters in buildings and neighborhoods with low registration rates.

NLIHC provides an array of nonpartisan resources, tools, and training on increasing voter registration and turnout among low-income renters and on engaging candidates leading up to the 2020 elections, including these webinars and podcasts covering many facets of voter and candidate engagement, featuring experts and advocates with frontline experience.

The presentations take place at 3:00 p.m. ET on the third Thursday of each month. All sessions will be recorded and posted to the *Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020* website for those who cannot attend the live broadcasts. The full list of webinar topics:

- Session 1: Legal Considerations for Election Engagement for 501 (c3) organizations, September 19. (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 2: Developing an Effective Plan for Voter Engagement Work, October 17. (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 3: Helpful Tools and Partners for Election Engagement, November 21 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- **Session 4: Voter Registration Part 1 – Messaging, Events, and Canvassing, December 19**
- Session 5: Voter Registration Part 2 – Finding and Registering Residents of Subsidized Housing, January 16
- Session 6: The Role of Housing Providers in Registering and Mobilizing Voters, February 20
- Session 7: Getting Candidates on the Record, March 19
- Session 8: Educating Voters, April 16
- Session 9: Housing Issues and Ballot Initiatives, May 21
- Session 10: Overcoming Common Obstacles to Voting, June 18
- Session 11: The Challenge of Voting While Homeless, July 16
- Session 12: Voter Mobilization Part 1 – Early Voting and Vote-by-Mail, August 20
- Session 13: Voter Mobilization Part 2 – Protecting Low Income People from Voter Intimidation and Voter Caging Tactics, September 17
- Session 14: Election Day! Getting Out the Vote, October 15
- Session 15: After the Vote – Holding Candidates to their Promises, November 19

Register once for all webinars and receive reminders at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3t9gfr2>

Watch recordings of previous webinars at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>

Disaster Housing Recovery

NLIHC Releases Report on Long-term Rental Recovery after Superstorm Sandy

NLIHC released on December 4 a [report](#) on the long-term recovery of rental housing after Superstorm Sandy in New Jersey. Based on quantitative data and interviews with key officials, program administrators, and housing advocates, the report highlights the need for post-disaster rental assistance for longer than two years, priority for displaced renters in housing developed or substantially rehabilitated with recovery money, supplemental subsidies for developments that set aside housing for extremely low-income renters, pre-disaster expansion of the subsidized affordable housing supply, and future research on the needs of small-property landlords.

LONG-TERM RECOVERY OF RENTAL HOUSING:

A Case Study of Highly Impacted
Communities in New Jersey after
Superstorm Sandy

DECEMBER 2019



New Jersey, where Sandy made landfall, was particularly hard hit by storm-surge flooding, wind damage, and power outages. The state suffered an estimate \$29 billion in damages to personal properties, businesses, and infrastructure. More than 109,000 renters applied for assistance with their housing and other needs from FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP). Approximately 39,000 renters were approved for assistance. NLIHC's report examined the recovery of rental housing in Atlantic, Monmouth, and Ocean Counties, three counties most severely impacted by Sandy. Combined, these three counties accounted for 69% of the state's damaged rental homes and 65% of the state's renters approved for IHP assistance.

Data from the American Community Survey (ACS) and New Jersey's property tax assessment system indicate a number of heavily-impacted communities in Monmouth and Ocean Counties lost low-cost rental housing while experiencing significant gentrification among properties damaged by Sandy. In some communities like Beach Haven and Belmar, properties damaged from Sandy tend to have higher tax assessments today than non-damaged properties, because they have been rebuilt into higher-cost housing. Communities like Atlantic City, with a declining local economy, did not face the same challenges. Interviews conducted by the researchers highlighted the long recovery time required for multifamily housing, the limited targeting of recovery funds for renters with the lowest incomes, and potential challenges in recovery for small landlords.

The report, *Long-Term Recovery of Rental Housing: A Case Study of Highly Impacted Communities in New Jersey after Superstorm Sandy*, is available at: <https://bit.ly/2YIRmQm>

Atlantic Hurricane Season Comes to End After Fourth Consecutive Year of Massive Storms

The 2019 Atlantic hurricane season officially came to an end on November 30, marking the fourth consecutive season of above-normal storm activity in the U.S., something not seen since 2001. The season produced 18 named storms, including six hurricanes, three of which were labeled "major." Two of those major storms achieved a category-five status, something that has not happened in twelve years.

The season began for the U.S. in early July with Hurricane Barry, a category-one storm that dropped up to twenty-three inches of rain on some parts of the Louisiana coast. The rain added to an already flooding Mississippi River, causing large-scale flooding in the New Orleans area. Hurricane Barry was followed by

Hurricane Dorian on August 24, a massive storm that barely spared Puerto Rico, still recovering from the destruction of Hurricane Maria two years before. Hurricane Dorian grew to a category-five storm and thrashed parts of the North Carolina coast. The final storm of the season to significantly impact the U.S. was Tropical Storm Imelda, which came ashore on September 17 in Southeast Texas. The storm proved to be fourth wettest storm on record in Texas, dumping more than 40 inches of rain in some parts of the southeastern part of the state. Imelda caused widespread flooding in the region, inundating homes in many of the same areas inundated during Hurricane Harvey in 2017. The 2019 Atlantic hurricane season as a whole inflicted almost \$12 billion in damages and caused over 85 deaths in the U.S. and abroad.

Hurricanes and other disasters have disproportionate negative impacts on the lowest-income individuals who are least likely to have resources to recover afterwards. With rising global temperatures due to climate change, future hurricane seasons are expected to be longer and more intense, placing vulnerable populations increasingly at risk. The [Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition](#) (DHRC) – an NLIHC-led group of over 850 local, state, and national organizations working together to achieve equitable disaster housing recovery – is advocating for disaster recovery reform legislation like the “Reforming Disaster Recovery Act of 2019,” which would ensure federal recovery and mitigation dollars reach the most vulnerable disaster survivors as expeditiously as possible. As the country recovers from the 2019 Atlantic hurricane season and begins preparations for 2020, the DHRC will continue to advocate for reforming federal disaster recovery programs to ensure the most vulnerable people receive the assistance they and their communities need to prepare and recover.

Read more about the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act of 2019 at: <https://bit.ly/2sKlrX1>

Find more information on the DHRC’s disaster recovery work at: <https://bit.ly/365uRBy>

HUD Releases New Recovery Dollars - But Continues to Illegally Withhold Funding for Puerto Rico

HUD announced in a December 3 [press release](#) that it had allocated over \$2.3 billion in federal funds to support long-term disaster recovery in fifteen states and four territories. The funding, which will support recovery from the 2017, 2018, and 2019 disasters, are allocated through HUD’s Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program, one of the most important and targeted sources of funding for long-term disaster recovery. Before each jurisdiction gains access to the funds, HUD will need to publish federal guidelines governing the funds and subsequently approve state action plans detailing how the funds will be used. California topped the list of grantees, receiving over \$525 million for wildfire recovery.

While the release of resources are welcomed for the parts of the country that will benefit, HUD’s announcement sparked outrage from both advocates and members of Congress about the agency’s continued refusal to release recovery dollars for Puerto Rico.

“More than two years after Hurricane Maria destroyed their homes, businesses, and public infrastructure, Americans in Puerto Rico are still without much-needed relief and recovery assistance because of perpetual – and illegal – stonewalling by the Trump administration,” said House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey (D-NY) at a [press conference](#). “The administration must immediately comply with the law and issue the mitigation notice needed for Puerto Rico to access critical disaster aid.”

The NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition – consisting of over 850 local, state, and national organizations working in disaster housing recover – released a [press statement](#) condemning the continued delay. “It is outrageous that Secretary Carson continues to withhold critical mitigation funding for Puerto Rico approved by Congress nearly two years ago,” NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel said in the statement.

“Secretary Carson’s decision to ignore Congress and refuse to release these funds makes it nearly impossible for Puerto Ricans to prepare for future disasters. Congress must hold him accountable – every day of inaction puts American lives at risk.”

HUD has continually pushed back the timeline for the release of funds for Puerto Rico, the only jurisdiction in the country to experience such a delay. The House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development recently held a hearing on HUD’s decision to ignore a congressional statute requiring the agency to release the funding earlier this year. Although HUD representatives blame delays on corruption in Puerto Rico, no such allegations have been levied at agencies that would handle the recovery funding. Members of Congress, advocates, and Puerto Ricans across the country continue to push for the release of these badly needed funds. It has been over two years since [Hurricane Maria](#) struck the territory.

Read the DHRC’s statement at: <https://bit.ly/2DZhB5x>

Watch the House Committee on Appropriation’s press conference at: <https://bit.ly/2E4IzNz>

Read a fact sheet on Hurricane Maria recovery at: <https://bit.ly/33ZqDKq>

Read the HUD press release at: <https://bit.ly/2DRldXt>

Additional Disaster Housing Recovery Updates - December 9, 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 [11/25](#)).

Federal Action & National News

Members of Congress from Missouri [sent a letter](#) to FEMA requesting clarification on how the agency determined disaster declarations for areas of the state that experienced flooding last spring.

Both [Texas](#) and [North Carolina](#) released state action plans detailing the use of each states’ federal mitigation funding. Each state must allow for 45 days of public comment before submitting the plan to HUD for approval.

A new [report](#) by the HUD Office of the Inspector General calls for a number of potential reforms to the agency’s disaster recovery programs, including the codification of the Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery program. The recently House-passed “[Reforming Disaster Recovery Act](#),” supported by the NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC), does just that.

Midwest Flooding

South Dakota

South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem (R) [released her state budget](#), which has special allocations of disaster relief loans and support for local governments that dealt with disastrous flooding earlier this year.

Midwest Tornadoes

FEMA [has yet to release its determination](#) as to whether the tornado outbreak that struck Dallas earlier this year will warrant a federal disaster declaration. Local officials are increasingly concerned that the state and local governments will be required to pay for the recovery on their own.

Tropical Storm Imelda & Hurricane Harvey

Texas

Governor Abbott extended the disaster declaration for Texas counties affected by Hurricane Harvey; the declaration was first issued in August 2017. The extension has the potential of aiding more low-income families where individual assistance is still being distributed.

An apartment complex in Rockport, TX, that was damaged by Hurricane Harvey has [been repaired](#). The complex will house 40 low- and moderate-income families.

FEMA [stopped accepting applications](#) for assistance from survivors of Hurricane Imelda in Montgomery County, TX.

California Wildfires

Advocates working to rebuild affordable housing after the Camp Fire originally financed with Low Income Housing Tax Credits are running into an unexpected issue: The [IRS could require repayment of the credits](#) if the homes are not rebuilt within two years.

Paradise California is looking rebuild a more [beautiful and resilient community](#).

Underinsurance, lack of qualified contractors, and a hot housing sector are combining to worsen the [affordable housing crisis](#) in Southern California in the wake of the destructive fires of 2018 and 2019.

Hurricane Michael

Florida

An editorial in the *Miami Herald* is [calling out the forced evictions carried out by landlords before past Florida hurricanes](#) and the need for the Florida legislature to protect renters against the practice. In the case of Hurricane Dorian, 470 eviction notices were filed during the state of emergency in Miami-Dade, and 421 were filed in the days leading up to the declaration.

Hurricane Florence & Hurricane Dorian

North Carolina

Nonprofits in Wilmington, NC, have [raised \\$250,000 assisting aid in affordable housing efforts on the coast post-Hurricane Florence](#). The efforts will mostly focus on people who were living in mobile home parks that got severely damaged during the storm and who do not have insurance to fall back on.

2016 and 2017 Disasters

Hurricane Maria: A [new examination of FEMA records](#) indicates that the recovery of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands from Hurricanes Maria and Irma have stalled, leaving infrastructure on both islands in limbo.

Hurricane Maria: Because of Puerto Rico's current levels of debt, the island [cannot access loans](#) to speed up recovery efforts, making them completely reliant on HUD and FEMA aid.

Hurricane Maria: Some parts of Puerto Rico are recovering from Hurricanes Maria and Irma, predominantly tourist-centered and higher-income coastal areas. Some warn that such trends will dramatically [worsen inequality](#) on the island.

Hurricane Sandy: As New Jersey continues to recover from Superstorm Sandy, some look to the lessons of [Hurricane Floyd](#) for guidance.

Hurricane Sandy: The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs is proposing a transfer of [\\$20 million](#) in federal funding to repair and replace Atlantic City infrastructure and public facilities.

NLIHC Housing Policy Forum 2020

NLIHC Housing Policy Forum 2020 to Feature Leading Researchers on Ending Homelessness in America

NLIHC’s Housing Policy Forum 2020: *Ending Homelessness and Housing Poverty* taking place in Washington, DC, March 25-27, 2020 will feature a session with leading researchers on “Ending Homelessness in America,” among many other topics. Register for the Forum today at: <https://bit.ly/2ofWibO>

More than 500,000 people in the U.S. experience homelessness on a given night as a result of an inadequate supply of affordable homes. The 2020 Policy Forum will feature a panel of leading researchers who will share what we know about the most effective means of ending and preventing homelessness and what we still need to learn. Confirmed and invited panelists include:

- Jill Khadduri, principal associate, Abt Associates, and founding director, Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness
- Margot Kushel, director, UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations & the Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative
- Joy Moses, director, National Alliance to End Homelessness Research Institute
- Bobby Watts, executive director, National Health Care for the Homeless Council



The Policy Forum will address a wide array of other topics, including the current state of affordable housing in America – the opportunities and threats; creating and sustaining multi-sector housing coalitions, racial equity in housing; the administration’s actions on homelessness; the bold policy proposals being advanced by 2020 presidential candidates and congressional leaders; the YIMBY movement; Capitol Hill insights; affordable housing messaging and narrative change; state and local housing solutions; NLIHC’s *Our Homes, Our Votes* nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement project; the latest affordable housing research; resident-led movements; attacks on housing for vulnerable populations; redesigning disaster housing recovery; healthy housing; rural and native housing; state and local organizing best practices; advancing ambitious housing bills; and more.

When: The Forum will begin for most participants (see note about special Resident sessions below) on Wednesday, March 25 at 1:00 pm, with a welcoming reception later that evening and a full day of sessions on Thursday, March 26. Capitol Hill Day will take place on Friday, March 27, and will kick off with a preparatory session and a light breakfast at a location near Capitol (for those planning to make congressional visits).

Additional Sessions for Low-Income Residents: The 2020 Housing Policy Forum will offer a special extended session for low-income residents, doubling from previous years the time for workshops geared specifically to residents – providing more time for resident-specific learning and an opportunity to interact with NLIHC state partners. NLIHC will offer additional resident sessions starting on Tuesday, March 24, at 2:00 p.m., including a dinner with state partners that evening. The special resident sessions will continue on Wednesday, March 25 at 8:30 a.m. prior to the full Forum start at 1:00 p.m.

Resident Member Scholarships: A limited number of shared-lodging hotel scholarships will be awarded on a first-come-first-served basis to low-income residents who are NLIHC members and who pay their own Forum registration fee. Scholarships will be awarded to ensure a broad geographic distribution. Apply for a scholarship online at <https://bit.ly/2pJKij6> or fill out and send a fillable PDF at: <https://bit.ly/2qGmRrj>

Housing Leadership Awards 2020: The 2020 NLIHC Housing Leadership Awards Presentations and Reception will take place on Thursday, March 26, 2020 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., also at the Washington Court Hotel. A separate registration fee is required to attend the Leadership Awards event. (See related article in this *Memo to Members and Partners.*)

Hotel Reservations: NLIHC has a room block at discounted rates at the Washington Court Hotel where the Forum will take place. Reserve a room at <https://bit.ly/32GOAXb> or call 800-321-3010 or 202-628-2100 and ask for the NLIHC rate. Rooms are limited, so register early. The cutoff is March 6, 2020.

Register for the 2020 NLIHC Housing Policy Forum [today!](#)

NLIHC Housing Leadership Awards

Jennifer Ho, Bill Faith, and Shauna Sorrells to be Honored at NLIHC 2020 Housing Leadership Awards Reception

Make a [contribution](#) to NLHC in recognition of 2020 Housing Leadership Awards honorees: **Jennifer Leimaile Ho**, commissioner of Minnesota Housing and former senior advisor at HUD and deputy director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH); **Shauna Sorrells**, former NLIHC board member and chief operating officer at the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County; and **Bill Faith**, executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio and former NLIHC board chair. These exceptional leaders will be recognized at the **38th Annual Housing Leadership Awards Reception** on March 26, 2020 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, DC.

The first award is named for Senator Edward Brooke (R-MA), who championed low-income housing as a U.S. senator and later as chair of the NLIHC board of directors. **Shauna Sorrells** will receive the 2020 Edward W. Brooke Housing Leadership Award posthumously for her unwavering commitment to ending homelessness and housing poverty in the U.S. over many years at HUD, at the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County, and on the NLIHC Board of Directors.



Shawna Sorrells

The Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award, named for NLIHC’s founder Cushing Niles Dolbeare, who has been called the “godmother” of the affordable housing movement, will be bestowed to **Bill Faith** for his many years of leadership, dedication and tireless work to secure decent, safe, and affordable homes for the lowest-income people in Ohio and across the U.S.



Bill Faith

The Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award is named after former NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, who led NLIHC for more than 17 years. **Jennifer Leimaile Ho** will receive the Crowley Award for her outstanding work to end homelessness and housing poverty in the U.S. since 1999 at Hearth Connection, USICH, HUD, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and beyond.



Jennifer Ho

Recognize these outstanding individuals by making a donation to NLIHC in their honor!

Donate as an individual at: <https://bit.ly/34ng1FP>
Donate as an organization at: <https://bit.ly/2WyFnOb>

Your donation will be recognized in the Leadership Awards Reception program. The contribution will support NLIHC’s mission to achieve socially just public policy to ensure the lowest-income people have decent, affordable homes.

The 2020 Leadership Awards Reception will be held on the second evening of NLIHC's 2020 Housing Policy Forum: *Ending Homelessness & Housing Poverty* taking place March 25-27, 2020. Register for the Forum at: <https://bit.ly/2PutSGn> and/or Leadership Awards Reception at: <https://bit.ly/362lyDf>

NLIHC Organizing Awards

Apply or Nominate for NLIHC 2020 Housing Organizing Awards Today!

Submit applications or nominations for the 2020 Annual Organizing Awards today! The honorees will be presented at the NLIHC 2019 Housing Policy Forum being held March 25-27, 2020 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, D.C. Two awards are given each year, usually with one award recognizing **statewide or regional achievements** and another recognizing **citywide or neighborhood achievements**. Nominations can be submitted online [here](#).

The NLIHC Organizing Awards recognize outstanding achievement during 2019 in statewide, regional, citywide, neighborhood, and/or resident organizing that furthers NLIHC's mission of achieving socially just public policy to ensure people with the lowest incomes in the U.S. have affordable and decent homes. Special consideration will be given to nominations that incorporate tenant- or resident-centered organizing.

Nominations for the awards are due by 5:00 pm E.T. on Friday, January 10, 2020.

An Organizing Awards Committee composed of NLIHC board members and previous award winners will determine this year's honorees. NLIHC will provide two representatives of each honored organization a complimentary Policy Forum registration, 2-3 nights of hotel accommodation, and transportation to Washington, DC to accept their award.

To be eligible, nominated organizations must be current NLIHC members. Organizations may self-nominate. NLIHC board members and Award Committee members may not nominate an organization with which they are employed or affiliated.

More information on submitting nominations can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2CeEKQJ>

Questions? Please reach out to Joey Lindstrom at: jlindstrom@nlihc.org

Opportunity Starts at Home

New York Times Profiles Daily Lives of Students Experiencing Homelessness in NYC

The New York Times published on November 19 an interactive feature [article](#) on the pervasive problem of student homelessness in New York City. The *Times* followed two school children experiencing homelessness for one full day “to capture how much effort, help and luck it takes for homeless children to have a shot at a decent education.” Sandivel, age 10, who shares a single bedroom with her mother and four brothers, has moved seven times in the past five years. Darnell, age 8, lives in a shelter and commutes 15 miles per day to attend school.

“The number of school-age children in New York City who live in shelters or ‘doubled up’ in apartments with family or friends has swelled by 70 percent over the past decade — a crisis without precedent in the city’s history,” writes Eliza Shapiro, the article’s author. “By day, New York’s 114,085 homeless students live in plain sight: They study on the subway and sprint through playgrounds. At night, these children sometimes sleep in squalid, unsafe rooms, often for just a few months until they move again. School is the only stable place they know.”



Written by Eliza Shapiro; Photographs by Brittainy Newman (*New York Times*)

The [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) multi-sector affordable homes campaign is working with leading organizations in the education sector, such as the [National Education Association](#), to help raise awareness about the connections between affordable housing and educational success, and to implement a bold package of federal [policy solutions](#). These new housing-education partnerships illustrate the growing recognition within the education sector that investments in affordable homes would improve outcomes for teachers, students, and families.

The full *New York Times* article is at: <https://nyti.ms/2OR9VZx>

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](#).

Research

Small Area Fair Market Rents Lead to Better Locational Outcomes for Families with Children Who Move

Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research released a special issue dedicated to research on Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs). Over the next several editions of *Memo*, NLIHC will highlight papers from this issue. One of these papers, "[The Effects of Small Area Fair Market Rents on the Neighborhood Choices of Families with Children](#)," found that the introduction of SAFMRs did not make voucher-recipient families with children more likely to move, but those who did move were more likely to locate in higher-opportunity neighborhoods.

The SAFMR rule reforms voucher payment standards. Whereas traditional Fair Market Rents determine a single rent standard for an entire metropolitan region, SAFMRs set varying rent standards in different U.S. Postal Service ZIP codes within a metropolitan region (see *Memo*, [11/14/16](#)). This method of setting voucher payment standards can help voucher recipients move to higher-opportunity neighborhoods where rents are higher than the average for a metropolitan region. SAFMRs provide greater subsidies in higher-rent ZIP codes and lower subsidies in lower-rent ZIP codes.

The authors sort ZIP codes into categories of high-, medium-, and low-rent using a special tabulation of American Community Survey (ACS) data and 2008-2012 ACS 5-year estimates. The authors also create an Opportunity Index for each census tract using data on several opportunity indicators: poverty rate, local public elementary school proficiency (based on exam scores), jobs' proximity access, and environmental hazards (based on EPA data). Finally, detailed household-level data on voucher-recipient families with children is drawn from a HUD administrative dataset. The analysis focuses on a sample of seven public housing agencies (PHAs) that have implemented SAFMRs and 138 PHAs that still use traditional Fair Market Rents (FMRs).

The paper analyzes the impact of SAFMRs on the number and location of units affordable to voucher-recipient families with children. Across the seven PHA jurisdictions using SAFMRs, the number of affordable homes in high-rent ZIP codes more than doubled compared to the number that would have been affordable under standard FMRs. The total number of rental homes affordable to voucher-recipient families fell after the adoption of SAFMRs, however, due to a substantial reduction of affordable units in low-rent areas. Overall, these results suggest that SAFMRs provide more options for voucher recipient families in high-rent and high-opportunity areas but introduce a potential tradeoff of reducing the overall supply of affordable homes.

The authors examine the actual locational outcomes of voucher-recipient families with children. They find the introduction of SAFMRs made voucher-recipient families with children who move almost seven percentage points more likely to move to neighborhoods with significantly higher opportunity index scores, compared to their counterparts in PHAs using FMRs. This effect was strongest for families that moved from low-rent neighborhoods. Additionally, the introduction of SAFMRs led to an average 4.4-percentile increase in families' neighborhood opportunity index, more than double the increase in percentile ranking for families in areas using FMRs. By 2017, 15% of voucher-recipient families with children in SAFMR areas lived in high-opportunity neighborhoods compared to 10% in 2010. Voucher-recipient families supported by PHAs using FMRs experienced virtually no changes over the same period.

The authors conclude that their findings highlight the ongoing benefits of SAFMRs for voucher-recipient families with children. Not only do SAFMRs increase housing options in high-opportunity neighborhoods, they also make families who move more likely to use their vouchers in such neighborhoods. High-opportunity neighborhoods can provide access to better schools and job opportunities and less exposure to harmful environmental conditions for families with children. The authors recommend that PHAs using SAFMRs devote

more resources to helping new voucher-recipient families navigate the housing market and to recruiting landlords in high-rent neighborhoods.

The full paper can be read at: <https://bit.ly/2Y9YGOQ>

The entire *Cityscape* issue is available at: <https://bit.ly/2riyCVI>

Small Area Fair Market Rents Increased Rates of Exit from the Housing Choice Voucher Program

A paper in *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*, “[Impact of Expanded Choice on Attrition in the Housing Voucher Program](#),” finds that the introduction of Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs) increased attrition in the Housing Choice Voucher program. The authors’ analysis indicates that introducing SAFMRs increased the probability of tenants exiting the program by 27% and reduced the median length of stay in the program by about 20%. The reasons for attrition are not known, but increased attrition could be an unwelcome development if households are not leaving the voucher program because of increased wages.

The authors use longitudinal administrative data from HUD on program participants in 145 public housing agency (PHA) jurisdictions between 1995 and 2017. Using a combination of difference-in-differences and a survival analysis model, the authors compare tenant exit rates from the program in the seven PHAs that initially implemented SAFMRs to the 138 PHAs that continued to use traditional metropolitan-wide Fair Market Rents (FMRs). Whereas traditional FMRs determine a single rent standard for an entire metropolitan region, SAFMRs set varying rent standards in different U.S. Postal Service ZIP codes within a metropolitan region (see *Memo*, [11/14/16](#) or [12/9](#)).

On average, the introduction of SAFMRs increased the probability of tenants exiting the program by 27% and reduced the median length of stay by 27 months – a decrease of about 20%. The authors determined this finding was not due to chance. The paper examines varying attrition rates among different demographic groups. The introduction of SAFMRs did not have disparate impacts in terms of attrition on disabled heads of household compared to nondisabled heads of household or households with children compared to those without children. Attrition rates did differ, however, based on neighborhood rent levels. The introduction of SAFMRs increased exit rates in low- and moderate-rent neighborhoods by 26% and 41%, respectively, but not in higher rent neighborhoods. Finally, the authors found that exit rates were significantly higher for households with no seniors compared to households with seniors.

The authors are confident in their findings but highlight the need for further research to better understand them. There are a variety of factors involved with implementing SAFMRs that could either increase or decrease attrition, such as landlords in low-rent areas becoming less willing to accept lower payment standards or to deal with a more complicated program. The authors cite previous research that suggests most households leaving the program are not doing so because they are financially better off. The authors recommend improved processes for gathering exit information to better understand program exits and inform future research.

This paper is part of a [larger special issue](#) in *Cityscape* on SAFMRs. The next edition of *Memo* will highlight more work from this issue.

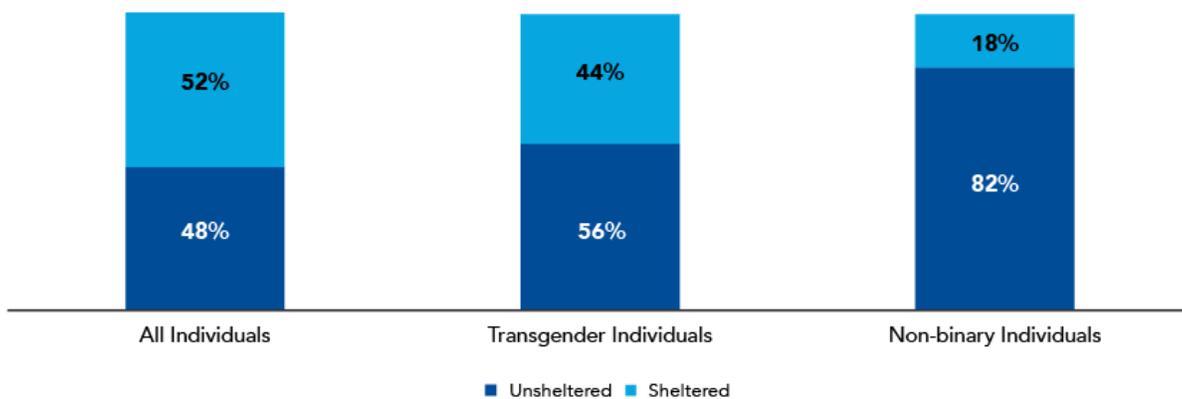
The full paper can be read at: <https://bit.ly/2szJLBF>

Fact of the Week

Higher Shares of Transgender and Non-Binary People Experiencing Homelessness are Unsheltered

Tag: Research, Fact of the Week Keywords: Fact of the Week, homeless, transgender, non-binary, sheltered, unsheltered

Share of People Experiencing Homelessness Who Are Unsheltered, by Gender Identity



Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness, Demographic Data Project (2019). Non-binary individuals do not identify as male, female, or transgender.

Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness, Demographic Data Project (2019).

From the Field

Los Angeles Board of Supervisors Takes Action to Prevent Displacement During LA River Area Revitalization

The 51-mile LA River area in Los Angeles is slated for a makeover, with [approved plans](#) for the southern portion promising new parks, bridges, and greenery. As is the case in many revitalization efforts, community advocates and city officials are concerned that long-term residents will be displaced as a result of the new investments. Los Angeles Supervisors Hilda Solis (D) and Janice Hahn (D) last week introduced a motion approved by the Board of Supervisors that will would dedicate \$41 million in state funds with a high priority for the development of affordable homes to allow residents to remain in their preferred neighborhoods through expanded subsidized housing options.

[Recent studies show](#) that 64% of households living near the lower LA River are considered low-income, 93% identify as non-white, and more than 2,000 homeless people live along the river. The lower LA River is only a

19-mile segment of the waterway, and a full revitalization for the rest of the area along the river and nearby neighborhoods is planned for 2020.

For more information, contact Southern California Association of Non Profit Housing Policy Director Frank Martinez at: fmartinez@scanph.org

Events

What Can States and Localities Do to Preserve Publicly Supported Affordable Rental Housing? – Webinar, December 10

[Register today](#) for “Affordable Housing Preservation Solutions for State & Local Governments,” the second webinar on the preservation of affordable housing hosted by NLIHC and the Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation (PAHRC). The webinar will be held on Tuesday, December 10 at 2:00 pm ET.

Attendees will hear from four experts on best policies and practices local and state governments can consider to support long-term affordability of publicly supported homes, as well as strategies housing providers can consider for developing strong partnerships for preservation.

The presenters will be:

Moha Thakur, public engagement and policy associate, National Housing Trust

Laura Cox, director of asset management and guarantee program, Florida Housing Finance Corporation

Danilo Pelletiere, senior advisor, DC Department of Housing and Community Development

Brian Robinson, senior vice president, Originations & Capital Markets, National Affordable Housing Trust



Moha Thakur



Laura Cox



Danilo Pelletiere



Brian Robinson

Register at: <https://bit.ly/2Xacick>

A recording from the first webinar, “Understanding Preservation Needs, Risks, and Tenant Protections,” is at: <https://bit.ly/2sLDJ14>

Webinar on Working with PHAs to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing, December 11

The National Housing Law Project (NHLP) and the Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) will hold a webinar to discuss public housing agencies’ (PHA’s) obligation to affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH). The webinar will take place Wednesday, December 11, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. ET. Register [here](#).

Panelists will provide an overview of federal and California AFFH obligations, as well as examples of how advocates, local government agencies, and PHAs can work together to ensure PHAs are meeting their obligation to affirmatively further fair housing. The webinar will also discuss how to examine through an AFFH

lens Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs), source-of-income discrimination, and the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD).

The webinar will preview soon-to-be-released materials for PHAs and advocates and conclude with a Q&A.

Presenters are:

- Bridgett Simmons, staff attorney, National Housing Law Project
- Megan Haberle, deputy director, Poverty & Race Research Action Council
- Philip Tegeler, president and executive director, Poverty & Race Research Action Council
- Renee Williams, staff attorney, National Housing Law Project

Register at: <https://adobe.ly/2YhUD39>

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of December 1

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of December 1:

- “Donald Trump's new controversial homelessness czar got his start with San Antonio shelter,” *The Texas Tribune*, December 6 at: <https://tinyurl.com/wl4ysu2>
 - “California Congresswoman Waters: Trump Takes Food From Poor While Giving Rich Tax Breaks,” *Black Star News*, December 6 at: <https://tinyurl.com/uav6mzy>
 - “White House Names Controversial Pick To Head Homelessness Office,” *National Public Radio*, December 5 at: <https://tinyurl.com/v46sp6z>
 - “He wanted to ban feeding homeless people. Now he’s about to lead a federal homeless agency,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 4 at: <https://tinyurl.com/vkwyf3g>
 - “Trump taps consultant who urged food ban on homeless to lead council,” *Yahoo! News*, December 4 at: <https://tinyurl.com/wfqanzq>
 - “Hirono Co-Introduces Bill to Fight Homelessness,” *Big Island Now*, November 30 at: <https://tinyurl.com/qnbktw9>
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NLIHC News

Deadline for Nominating NLIHC Board Members Approaches

The deadline for NLIHC members and partners to submit nominations (or self-nominate!) to fill upcoming vacancies on the NLIHC board of directors is COB December 31. Nominees for board membership must be current dues-paying NLIHC members or be employed by a current dues-paying NLIHC member organization. Send a brief biographical description or resume and a statement of interest to NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel at dyentel@nlihc.org.

NLIHC’s board consists of six low-income persons (defined as individuals with incomes less than 50% of their area median income), six representatives of allied national organizations, six representatives of [NLIHC state partners](#), and up to seven unrestricted or at-large NLIHC members. NLIHC is seeking nominations for two low-income, two state-partner, and two national-partner board members to assume their duties in March 2020.

At least 90% of NLIHC board members must be people with low incomes or individuals who are or have been engaged directly in working on meeting the housing needs of low-income people. In selecting board members, NLIHC strives to achieve a broad diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and geography, including representation from both urban and rural communities. We seek to have as many different states represented as possible.

Board members are elected for 3-year terms and can be nominated to serve up to three terms. The board meets in person twice a year in Washington, DC, once in conjunction with our annual forum in the spring and once in the fall. The board also meets by conference call in the summer. Attendance at board meetings is required, with exceptions for illness or emergencies. Generally, new board members are elected by existing board members at the annual board meeting held in the spring.

NLIHC subsidizes travel and lodging expenses of low-income board members to attend board meetings. All others are expected to cover their own travel and lodging expenses, unless doing so would prevent an otherwise qualified person from serving on the board. In addition to paying NLIHC membership dues, all board members are asked to make financial contributions to NLIHC at the level they are able. We strive for 100% board giving.

All board members serve on at least one standing committee of the board and all board members are members of the NLIHC Policy Advisory Committee. Committees meet by conference call. All new board members must attend an in-person orientation in DC soon after their election.

The best way to be considered for board membership is to get involved in the activities of NLIHC, particularly by serving on the Policy Advisory Committee and attending NLIHC's annual Policy Forum in the spring. The NLIHC Nominating Committee will review the level of a potential board member's involvement in his or her own community or state/national housing advocacy activities and accountability to a constituent base.

To make a nomination or self-nominate, send the required materials (statement of interest and bio or resume) to Diane Yentel at dyentel@nlihc.org by December 31.

Help End Homelessness and Housing Poverty as You Shop for the Holidays

You can help end homelessness and housing poverty when you shop for the holidays on [Amazon Smile](#). Amazon will make a contribution to NLIHC on your behalf at no cost to you with every purchase you make on [Amazon Smile](#). Just begin typing "National Low Income Housing Coalition" as your preferred organization to support and select it when it appears. Click [here](http://amzn.to/2ew9GOn) (<http://amzn.to/2ew9GOn>) to support NLIHC's work while shopping. Thank you for your support!

NLIHC Seeks Graphic Design/Communication Intern for Winter/Spring 2020 Semester

NLIHC is accepting applications for its graphic design/communications internship position for the winter/spring 2020 semester. 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 Graphic Design/Communications Intern prepares and distributes press materials, assists with media research and outreach for publication releases, works on social media projects, maintains a media database, and tracks press hits. The intern will also assist with sending out e-communications; designing collateral print material such as brochures, flyers, and factsheets; and updating content on the NLIHC website. Graphic design and Adobe Creative Cloud (Illustrator, InDesign, and/or Photoshop) experience is needed.

Interns are expected to work 25 hours a week beginning in January and finishing up in May. A modest stipend is provided. A cover letter, resume, and three design samples and/or a link to an online portfolio are required for consideration. In your cover letter, please specify that you are applying for the graphic design/communications internship and that you are interested in the winter/spring 2019 semester.

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@nlihc.org

Where to Find Us – December 9

Keywords: Diane Yentel, NLIHC staff, speaking

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

- [Homes RI Summit](#), Providence, RI, December 11
 - [At What Price? The Hidden Costs of Housing](#), The Texas Lyceum, Waco, TX, February 7.
 - [Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless](#) Legislative Action Day 2020, Boston, MA, February 27
 - Humility Homes and Services 30 Years Celebration, Davenport, IA, April 18
 - Tulsa Mayor's Development Roundtable, Tulsa, OK, April 30
 - [Princeton Community Housing Annual Homes Build Opportunity Gala](#), Princeton, NJ, June 13
-

NLIHC Staff

Sonya Acosta, Policy Analyst, x231
Jamie Ash, Communications Specialist, x201
Kyle Arbuckle, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x227
Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245
Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244
Alayna Calabro, Field Intern, x252
Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Kim Johnson, Housing Policy Analyst, x243
Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232
Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317
Joseph Lindstrom, Manager, Field Organizing, x222
Mayerline Louis-Juste, Communications Coordinator, x201
Lisa Marlow, Communications Coordinator, x239
Alex Mears, Research Intern, x249
Sarah Saadian 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
Eddie Stephens, Communications/Graphic Design Intern, x250
Dan Threet, Research Analyst, x202
Katama Vorsheim, Policy Intern, x241
Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Coordinator, x230
Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225