
Chapter 10: ABOUT NLIHC

Make a Difference: Ways to Engage with and Support the National Low Income Housing Coalition

By Courtney Cooperman, Housing Advocacy Organizer, NLIHC and Catherine Reeves, Development Coordinator, NLIHC

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE COALITION

The best way to demonstrate your commitment to ensuring that people with the lowest incomes in the United States have quality, affordable, accessible homes in communities of their choice is to become a member of the Coalition. NLIHC's power to influence policy is rooted in the active engagement of our members. NLIHC has been a membership organization since our earliest days, and it is our large and involved membership that sets us apart from other organizations.

Anyone can be an NLIHC member. Our broad and diverse membership base includes low-income renters; professionals who work in the housing field; tenant associations; state, local, and tribal housing advocacy organizations; community development corporations; housing authorities; and individuals who believe in NLIHC's mission and want to support our work. Our members care about a broad array of affordable housing issues, such as accessibility and affordability for people with disabilities, the preservation of resources for homelessness prevention and affordable housing programs, veterans' housing, fair housing, community development, and more.

WHY OUR MEMBERS ARE CRUCIAL

The modest membership contributions from each individual and organization, when multiplied by our more than 1,000 members, are important sources of revenue for NLIHC. Members provide invaluable feedback about the housing issues that low-income renters and people experiencing homelessness face every day in cities, towns, and

rural areas across the country. Our members' on-the-ground experiences inform NLIHC's policy priorities, and members are sometimes consulted before NLIHC takes a position on a particular issue. Most importantly, our members are our advocates—the people we count on to mobilize their networks, build relationships with local elected officials, speak with local media, and reach out to Members of Congress about the affordable housing needs of low-income people. A geographically wide and sizeable membership base brings true power to NLIHC's advocacy efforts.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Through membership contributions and engagement with our priorities, NLIHC's members deepen our capacity to expand affordable housing access for extremely low-income individuals and families. Many NLIHC members value the opportunity to be identified publicly with the affordable housing movement and to participate in a nationwide network of dedicated advocates. In addition, NLIHC members receive:

- *Memo to Members and Partners*, NLIHC's acclaimed weekly newsletter on federal housing issues.
- Discounted rates to NLIHC's annual Housing Policy Forum and Leadership Awards Reception.
- Free or discounted access to our research publications like *Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing* and *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*, educational resources like the *Advocates' Guide*, frequent informational and capacity-building webinars, and tenant resources like the *Tenant Talk* magazine.
- Consultations with NLIHC staff on how to most effectively use NLIHC research data.

- Periodic NLIHC Calls to Action and updates alerting members to urgent changes on Capitol Hill, often requiring quick attention from advocates.
- Telephone resource referrals with links to state and regional networks.
- The opportunity to participate in NLIHC’s policy-setting decisions.
- Resources and support for participation in such efforts as National Housing Week of Action, *Our Homes, Our Votes* nonpartisan voter engagement project, the *Opportunity Starts at Home* multi-sector affordable housing campaign, and the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition, among many others.

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

Joining NLIHC is easy. Our membership rates are flexible and tiered by member type. All rates are suggested—you can join at any contribution amount affordable to you. Join at: www.nlihc.org/membership.

You can also contact a housing advocacy organizer to learn more about membership by emailing outreach@nlihc.org.

JOIN A WEBINAR OR WORKING GROUP CALL

NLIHC provides many opportunities for advocates at the local, state, and national levels to dive deeper into the critical issues facing our communities and participate in NLIHC’s work. As the COVID-19 pandemic presents new challenges, our weekly convenings create space for NLIHC partners across the country to learn from each other’s experiences and develop shared solutions. NLIHC’s webinars and working group calls also offer detailed insight into the latest happenings on Capitol Hill and empower participants to understand the nuances of federal policy and advocate more strategically. NLIHC’s current campaign calls and working groups include:

- **National Call on HoUsed: Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing:** Each week, hundreds of advocates across the country join NLIHC’s HoUsed campaign call. Focused on long-term solutions to the housing crisis, the HoUsed campaign advances anti-racist policies and large-scale, sustained investments and reforms necessary to ensure that renters with the lowest incomes have an affordable place to call home. The call features affordable housing champions from Congress and the executive branch, in-depth legislative updates and research briefings from NLIHC staff and other organizations, analyses of the latest Treasury data on emergency rental assistance distribution, and field updates from NLIHC’s state and local partners. [Join the HoUsed national call every Monday from 2:30-4 pm ET.](#)
- **HoUsed Campaign Legislative Working Group.** The legislative working group discusses and responds to the latest news from Capitol Hill related to the HoUsed campaign’s priority legislation. Participants exchange feedback from their interactions with congressional offices, brainstorm strategy to pursue the goals of the HoUsed campaign, and develop tactics that meet the needs of the current political moment. [Join the HoUsed legislative working group meetings every Tuesday at 12:30 pm ET.](#)
- **Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) Working Group.** The Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) is a group of over 850 local, state, and national organizations working in disaster recovery and housing to ensure that all disaster survivors—especially people with the lowest incomes—receive the assistance they need to fully recover. The DHRC holds weekly calls to hear updates from members on disaster recovery efforts taking place throughout the country, share best practices, and stay up to date on the latest federal changes to the disaster recovery response framework. Working group conversations identify and guide federal policy reform needed to improve

FEMA's disaster homelessness and housing recovery efforts. [Join the DHRC working group every Tuesday at 3pm ET.](#)

- **State & Local Implementation Working Group.** The state and local implementation working group provides opportunities to share lessons learned and best practices as organizations respond to the housing needs of people experiencing homelessness and the lowest-income renters during the COVID-19 pandemic. This working group tracks the spending of federal resources provided under the “CARES Act” and the “American Rescue Plan Act”—including Emergency Rental Assistance and fiscal recovery funds—and how states, local governments, and nonprofit organizations can ensure equitable distribution of these resources. [Join the State & Local Implementation Working Group calls every other Wednesday at 3pm ET.](#)
- **Puerto Rico Working Group.** The Puerto Rico working group has been meeting since Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated the island and has continued through the recent earthquakes and now the pandemic. This working group is facilitated by the DHRC, but it is led by advocates and organizations working in Puerto Rico. Email Noah Patton at npatton@nlihc.org and Sidney Betancourt at sbetancourt@nlihc.org to join the Puerto Rico Working Group.
- **Tenant Talk Live.** Geared towards low-income renters, Tenant Talk Live provides opportunities for tenant leaders to connect with NLIHC and each other, to share their experiences, and to engage in federal advocacy. Each session of Tenant Talk Live features presentations on a different topic that affects the lives of low-income renters, offers tenant leaders the chance to offer their own perspectives on policy issues, and mobilizes participants to take action. [Join Tenant Talk Live webinars on the first Monday of every month from 6-7pm ET.](#)

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR PUBLICATIONS

NLIHC's weekly newsletter, *Memo to Members and Partners*, gives a succinct breakdown of relevant federal legislation and administrative actions, summarizes the latest research from NLIHC and other institutions, and highlights our partners' activities at the state and local levels. Subscribing to *Memo* is one of the best ways to keep up with NLIHC's activities and stay informed about housing policy.

Tenant Talk is a biannual publication that focuses on the issues affecting low-income renters, spotlights their perspectives, and mobilizes them to take part in federal advocacy. Themes for recent editions of *Tenant Talk* have included: disability justice, election engagement, racial justice, public housing, gentrification, and the housing obstacles that returning citizens face. The Editorial Board of *Tenant Talk* approves the selection of each theme and offers essential input into the publication, ensuring that the magazine addresses the concerns and reflects the experiences of those most directly affected by housing policy.

NLIHC produces some of the most well-respected, widely cited research in the housing field, most notably the annual *Out of Reach* report on the intersection of wages and housing costs, and *The Gap*, which calculates housing shortages and cost burdens for low-income renters. Advocates harness our signature research reports to educate their policymakers and local media about the impact of the affordable housing crisis in their own communities. *The Gap* documents the stark disparities between the needs of renter households and the number of units that are affordable and available to them, as well as housing cost burdens, at each income level; *Out of Reach* calculates the hourly “housing wage” that a renter must earn to afford a modest rental home in each community in the United States. NLIHC's research team also produces specialized analyses of other topic such as housing preservation, disaster recovery, foreclosures, and emergency rental assistance distribution. Research reports contain extensive local data, and NLIHC provides annual Congressional District Profiles with

detailed affordability statistics at the district, state, and regional levels.

ATTEND NLIHC'S ANNUAL POLICY FORUM

The annual NLIHC Housing Policy Forum and Capitol Hill Day convenes affordable housing advocates, thought-leaders, policy experts, researchers, housing providers, low-income renters, and elected officials to explore the latest frontiers in affordable housing policy and the housing justice movement. The forum creates space for attendees to build relationships, expand their networks, interact with prominent national figures, and learn more about NLIHC's work. NLIHC's Policy Forum also features the recipients of the annual State and Local Organizing Awards, which recognize two NLIHC member organizations that achieved significant affordable housing victories in the preceding year. The event concludes with an annual Capitol Hill Day, which provides the opportunity for constituents to meet directly with their own congressional offices and advocate for federal policies to support the lowest-income renters.

The NLIHC 2022 Housing Policy Forum will be held virtually on March 22 and 23, 2022 from 12:30-5:30pm ET. Attendees can [register online](#), or email outreach@nlihc.org with questions.

DONATE TO NLIHC

NLIHC is unique in that it solely focuses on the housing needs of extremely low-income people, including those who are experiencing homelessness. We represent no segment of the housing or affordable housing industry; rather, we advocate for proven housing solutions that support the lowest-income individuals and families, grounded in the findings of our research reports and our members' input. As a nonprofit organization that accepts no government funding of any kind, we rely on our partners to support us in our work to pursue solutions to housing poverty and homelessness. Contributions to NLIHC directly support our research, education, organizing, policy analysis and advocacy efforts. The financial support we receive through

donations is crucial to helping us achieve our mission.

WHAT CAN YOU DONATE TO NLIHC?

A contribution at any level makes a difference. You can support our work by making an end-of-year gift, a general contribution, or a donation in honor of our annual Housing Leadership Awards recipients. NLIHC also accepts donations of stocks and participates in the [Amazon Smile](#) donation program.

Your contributions are critical to helping NLIHC end housing poverty and homelessness in America. Individual donations to NLIHC are tax deductible.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The generosity of our donors makes it possible for NLIHC staff to produce and distribute our acclaimed weekly e-newsletter *Memo to Members and Partners*, conduct and publish important research like that presented in *Out of Reach* and *The Gap*, and produce valuable publications like *Tenant Talk* and the *Advocates' Guide*. Your contributions subsidize discounted membership rates and scholarships for low-income renters who otherwise would not be able to attend our annual Policy Forum. Donations support our efforts to make policymakers and the general public aware of our nation's affordable housing crisis and to enact much-needed solutions; to work with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle and with each Administration on policies to address homelessness and the shortage of affordable housing; to conduct our annual Housing Policy Forum and Capitol Hill Day; to ensure the success of the national Housing Trust Fund and build support for increased funding to the program; to pursue large-scale, sustained investments and anti-racist policies through the HoUSed campaign; to prevent evictions and ensure that federal aid keeps the lowest-income renters stably housed through the ERASE Project; to coordinate the and the *Our Homes, Our Votes* nonpartisan candidate and voter engagement

project; to lead the *Opportunity Starts at Home* multi-sector affordable housing campaign; to work for equitable and comprehensive disaster housing recovery for those most in need; to ensure that fair housing laws are enforced; and to keep our members informed about the federal budget and appropriations, changing federal regulations, policy developments, and much more. Each contribution makes a meaningful difference. Please donate to NLIHC today at www.nlihc.org/donate.

Contact NLIHC Development Coordinator Catherine Reeves at creeves@nlihc.org for donation questions or assistance.