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# Chapter 11:

## ABOUT NLIHC

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

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By Brooke Schipporeit, Manager of Field Organizing, NLIHC, and Steve Moore Sanchez, Development Coordinator, NLIHC

**N**LIHC provides many opportunities for advocates at the local, state, and national levels to stay informed on affordable housing and homelessness issues, to engage in coalition building and federal affordable housing advocacy, and to support NLIHC's work. Advocates are involved in NLIHC's work at varying degrees depending on their interests and capacity. Read on to learn about how you can engage with and support NLIHC's work.

## STAY INFORMED: EMAIL UPDATES AND PUBLICATIONS

The best way to stay informed about NLIHC and federal housing policy is to [subscribe to NLIHC emails](#). Subscribers receive NLIHC's weekly newsletters *Memo to Members and Partners* and *The Connection*, important federal updates and calls to action, and NLIHC publications and event info. *Memo to Members and Partners* kicks off the week breaking down relevant federal legislation and administrative actions, summarizing the latest research from NLIHC and other institutions, and highlighting its partners' activities at the state and local levels, and *The Connection* provides a recap of key updates from NLIHC at the end of the week. Other urgent updates are sent as needed.

In addition to the *Advocates' Guide*, NLIHC puts out several publications each year, including some of the most well-respected and widely cited research in the housing field and key tools for advocates. *Tenant Talk* is a biannual publication that was created to engage low-income renters in advocacy on housing policy issues that affects their lives. The resident-led Editorial Board of *Tenant Talk* approves the selection of each

issue's 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 affordable housing policies. Themes for recent editions of *Tenant Talk* have included: emergency rental assistance, disability justice, election engagement, racial justice, public housing, gentrification, and the housing obstacles that returning citizens face. Each issue also spotlights renters' perspectives related to that issue's theme.

NLIHC's signature annual research reports are *Out of Reach* and *The Gap*. The *Out of Reach* report documents the intersection of wages and housing costs by calculating the hourly "housing wage" a renter must earn to afford a modest rental home in each community in the United States. *The Gap* calculates housing shortages and cost burdens for low-income renters, documenting 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. Advocates use these reports to educate their policymakers and local media about the impact of the affordable housing crisis in their communities. NLIHC's research team also produces specialized analyses of other topics as needed such as housing preservation, disaster recovery, and emergency rental assistance distribution. Research reports contain extensive local data, and NLIHC provides annually updated Congressional District Profiles with detailed affordability statistics at the district, state, and regional levels.

## ENGAGE: CALLS, WEBINARS, AND WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

NLIHC's national calls, webinars, and working group meetings create space for housing and

homelessness partners across the country to come together, gain insight into the latest happenings on Capitol Hill, learn from each other's experiences, and develop shared solutions. NLIHC's current recurring calls and working groups include:

- **Policy Advisory Committee (NLIHC members only):** NLIHC members are invited to join NLIHC's Policy Advisory Committee, a quarterly virtual listening session where NLIHC members can weigh in on issues related to NLIHC's policy priorities. The voices and perspectives offered by NLIHC members during Policy Advisory Committee meetings will be taken into consideration as NLIHC formulates and works towards achieving its policy priorities. [Join the Policy Advisory Committee meetings quarterly on Wednesdays at 4-5 pm ET.](#)
- **National HoUsed Campaign Call for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes:** Twice a month, 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, and field updates from NLIHC's state and local partners. [Join the national HoUsed call every other Monday at 2:30-4 pm ET.](#)
- **Homelessness and Housing First webinars:** NLIHC, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities are hosting a free webinar series monthly in 2023 on proven solutions to ending homelessness. Decades of research prove that Housing First is the most effective approach for ending homelessness, however, some misguided policymakers are responding to America's housing and homelessness crisis by advancing dangerous rhetoric and harmful, dehumanizing measures. During this webinar series, thousands of advocates nationwide will come together each month to learn about emerging threats and how to work together to advance the anti-racist long-term solutions needed. [Join the Homelessness and Housing First webinars monthly on Mondays at 2:30-4 pm ET.](#)
- **Tenant Talk Live:** Geared towards low-income renters and community leaders, Tenant Talk Live provides opportunities for tenants 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 at 6-7pm ET.](#)
- **Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) Working Group:** A group of over 850 local, state, and national organizations working in disaster recovery and housing, the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) works to ensure that all disaster survivors—especially people with the lowest incomes—receive the assistance they need to fully recover. NLIHC hosts weekly DHRC calls to hear updates from DHRC 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 2-3pm ET.](#)
- **Puerto Rico Working Group:** The Puerto Rico working group started meeting when Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated the island and has continued meeting through the recent earthquakes, pandemic, and additional hurricanes. 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](mailto:npatton@nlihc.org) and Sidney Betancourt at [sbetancourt@nlihc.org](mailto:sbetancourt@nlihc.org) to join the Puerto Rico Working Group.

## **ENGAGE AND ADVOCATE: ANNUAL POLICY FORUM AND CAPITOL HILL DAY**

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 in affordable housing policy and the housing justice movement. The forum creates space for attendees to build relationships, interact with prominent national figures, and learn more about NLIHC's work. NLIHC's Policy Forum also features the recipients of NLIHC's annual Organizing Awards, which recognize two NLIHC member organizations that achieved significant affordable housing victories in the preceding year. The event concludes with NLIHC's annual Capitol Hill Day, which provides the opportunity for attendees to meet directly with their congressional offices and advocate for federal policies to support the lowest-income renters.

The NLIHC 2023 Housing Policy Forum will be held in Washington, DC, on March 20-23. Email the NLIHC Field Team with questions at: [outreach@nlihc.org](mailto:outreach@nlihc.org).

Advocating for federal affordable housing policies does not stop after Capitol Hill Day. For the latest actions you can take to advance affordable housing solutions, be sure to check out NLIHC's Legislative Action Center at: [www.nlihc.org/take-action](http://www.nlihc.org/take-action)

## **SUPPORT: BECOME A MEMBER OF NLIHC**

A great 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 NLIHC. NLIHC's

power to influence policy is rooted in the active engagement of its members. Anyone can be an NLIHC member, and the annual membership dues are suggested amounts meaning you can join at any amount that works for you. NLIHC's broad and diverse membership base includes low-income renters; professionals who work in the housing and homelessness field; direct service and other nonprofit organizations; tenant associations; state, local, and tribal housing advocacy organizations; community development corporations; housing authorities; and everyday individuals who believe in NLIHC's mission and want to support its work.

### **Why NLIHC Members Are Crucial**

NLIHC's more than 1,000 members provide invaluable support to NLIHC's work, both financially and through participation in advocacy and feedback. The membership contributions from each individual and organization, no matter how large or small, 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. NLIHC members' on-the-ground experiences inform NLIHC's policy priorities, and members are consulted before NLIHC takes a position on certain issues. Most importantly, NLIHC members are advocates—the people NLIHC counts on to mobilize their networks, build relationships with elected officials, speak with local media, and reach out to Members of Congress about the affordable housing needs of low-income people in their communities. NLIHC's geographically wide and sizeable membership base brings true power to its federal advocacy efforts.

### **Membership Benefits**

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:

- The opportunity to weigh in on issues related to NLIHC’s policy priorities through the members-only Policy Advisory Committee.
- Discounted rates to NLIHC’s annual Housing Policy Forum and Leadership Awards Reception.
- Free or discounted access to NLIHC’s 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*, informational and capacity-building webinars, and tenant resources like the *Tenant Talk* publication.
- Consultations with NLIHC staff on how to most effectively use NLIHC research data.
- Prioritization from NLIHC staff in engagement and support.

### **Become a Member Today**

Joining NLIHC is easy. Annual membership rates are flexible and are listed out by membership type. Membership dues are suggested amounts meaning you can join at any amount that is affordable to you. Join at: [www.nlihc.org/membership](http://www.nlihc.org/membership)

Learn more about membership by contacting the NLIHC Field Team at: [outreach@nlihc.org](mailto:outreach@nlihc.org)

### **SUPPORT: 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. It represents no segment of the housing or affordable housing industry; rather, it advocates 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, it relies 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 NLIHC receives through donations is crucial for achieving its 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](http://www.nlihc.org/donate).

Contact Steve Moore Sanchez at [smooresanchez@nlihc.org](mailto:smooresanchez@nlihc.org) or Benja Reilly at [breilly@nlihc.org](mailto:breilly@nlihc.org) for donation questions or assistance.