



**Volume 28, Issue 45**  
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### **Homelessness and Housing First**

- HUD Releases *2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report*
- HUD Helps More Than 424,000 Households Access Homeless Support Services and Exit or Avoid Homelessness in 2023
- USICH Releases Summary of Successful Federal Actions to Address Homelessness in 2023

### **Budget and Appropriations**

- House of Representatives Adjourns for Holiday Recess without Finalizing FY24 Spending Bills or Enacting End-of-Year Tax Bill, while Senate Delays Holiday Recess – Take Action!

### **HoUsed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes**

- Join Today's (12/18) National HoUsed Campaign Call for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes!

### **Congress**

- Representative DeLauro and Senator Casey Introduce “Eviction Prevention Act”
- Representatives Davis, Gomez, Peters, and Panetta Reintroduce “Rent Relief Act” to Establish Renter Tax Credit

### **Events**

- Join Final 2024 “Tenant Talk Live” Today (12/28) for Discussion about Health, Wellness, and Housing!

### **Public Charge Rule**

- Urban Institute Fact Sheet Shows One in Six Immigrant Families Avoided Public Programs in 2022 due to Public Charge Fears

## **Disaster Housing Recovery**

- Senators Voice Bipartisan Support for “Reforming Disaster Recovery Act” in THUD Subcommittee Hearing
- Disaster Housing Recovery Update – December 18, 2023

## **Opportunity Starts at Home**

- OSAH Appears on *Power Station* Podcast

## **Housing Policy Forum 2024**

- Housing Policy Forum 2024 to Commemorate NLIHC’s 50-Year Anniversary and Commitment to Housing Justice!
- Apply for Forum 2024 Hotel and Travel Scholarship!

## **Research**

- Implementation of Tenant Protections Associated with Decrease in Eviction Filings
- Americans Overwhelmingly Support Policies Intended to Increase Housing
- Women’s Refugee Commission Publishes Report on Best Practices for Supporting People Seeking Asylum in Chicago, Denver, New York City, and Portland, Maine

## **From the Field**

- New Orleans Passes FY24 Budget, Including Historic Investments in Housing

## **Fact of the Week**

- Majority of Americans Support Broad Array of Policies Intended to Boost Housing Availability and Affordability

## **NLIHC in the News**

- NLIHC in the News for the Week of December 10

## **NLIHC Careers**

- NLIHC Seeks Research Analyst
- NLIHC Seeks Director of People and Culture

## **NLIHC News**

- Nominate an NLIHC Board Member Today!
- Where to Find Us – December 18

## Homelessness and Housing First

### HUD Releases 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report

HUD released on December 15 the [2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report \(AHAR\), Part 1](#), which provides estimates of homelessness in the U.S. The 2023 report estimates that approximately 653,100 people were experiencing homelessness on a single night in 2023 – a 12% increase (or about 70,650 more people) from 2022. Among people experiencing homelessness, 60% were staying in sheltered locations, while 40% were experiencing unsheltered homelessness in places not meant for human habitation. The 2023 Point-in-Time (PIT) count is the highest number of people reported as being unhoused since reporting began in 2007.

The *AHAR* summarizes estimates of homelessness at the national, state, and Continuum of Care (CoC) levels based on data from the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) counts of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in 2023. CoCs are local planning bodies responsible for coordinating homelessness services. The PIT counts, conducted by local volunteers, provide a “snapshot” of homelessness.

The increase in homelessness at the beginning of 2023 continued a pre-pandemic trend that held from 2016 to 2020. The “American Rescue Plan” – the largest single-year investment in preventing and ending homelessness in our country’s history – prevented an increase in homelessness between 2020 and 2022. Most of these resources have expired, however, contributing to the rise in homelessness reflected in the *2023 AHAR Part 1*.

Unlike past years, when a single population drove changes in homelessness rates, the report finds increases across all populations. Most people experiencing homelessness were individuals, making up 72% of people experiencing homelessness. Between 2022 and 2023, the number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness increased by 23,000 people, or 11%. The number of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness increased by about 15,000, or 7%. Nearly 28% of people experiencing homelessness (186,100) were in families composed of at least one adult and one child. The number of families experiencing homelessness rose by 16% (more than 25,000 people) between 2022 and 2023, ending a downward trend that began in 2012. This increase in family homelessness was driven by a 17% increase (24,966 more people) in the number of families experiencing sheltered homelessness.

People who identify as Black, Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, or Native Hawaiian continue to be overrepresented among the homeless population compared to the U.S. population. People who identify as Black, for example, represent 13% of the U.S. population but accounted for 37% of all people experiencing homelessness, and 50% of families experiencing homelessness in 2023 identified as Black. Nearly one-third of all people experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic or Latino. People identifying as Hispanic or Latino increased by 28% (39,106 people) between 2022 and 2023, making up 55% of the total increase in people experiencing homelessness. People who identify as Asian or Asian American experienced the greatest percentage increase among all people experiencing homelessness,

representing a 40% increase (3,313 more people) between 2022 and 2023. American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous populations also experienced a large percentage increase in both sheltered and unsheltered experiences of individual homelessness between 2022 and 2023, both of which rose by 18-19% (or 2,860 people total).

Approximately one-third (31%) of all individuals experiencing homelessness (143,105 people) reported having experienced chronic patterns of homelessness. Two-thirds of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness (93,000 people) were in unsheltered locations. Between 2022 and 2023, the number of unaccompanied youth increased by 15% (4,613 more youths).

According to the report, more than 98,000 people experiencing homelessness were aged 55 to 64, and nearly 39,700 people were over age 64. Nearly half of adults of age 55 and older experiencing homelessness were experiencing unsheltered homelessness in places not meant for human habitation. In 2023, 35,574 veterans were experiencing homelessness, marking a 7% increase (2,445 more veterans) between 2022 and 2023. Despite increases in veteran homelessness between 2022 and 2023, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness is 52% lower than it was in 2009.

The rise in overall homelessness is largely due to a sharp increase in the number of people who became homeless for the first time. Between 2021 and 2022, the number of people who became newly homeless rose by 25%, even though the number of people who exited homelessness to permanent housing rose by 8%. This increase in first-time homelessness is likely due to a combination of factors, namely the expiration of pandemic-era protections and resources, the worsening affordable housing crisis, and recent changes in the rental housing market.

The *2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, Part 1* is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yc5rnbnd>

A summary of the report's findings is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/bdd4rryp>

NLIHC, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities released a joint statement on the *2023 AHAR Report, Part 1*: <https://tinyurl.com/mu5t5fwn>

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## **HUD Helps More Than 424,000 Households Access Homeless Support Services and Exit or Avoid Homelessness in 2023**

HUD [announced](#) on December 13 that the department helped more than 424,000 households access homeless support services and exit or avoid homelessness in 2023. HUD worked with public housing authorities (PHAs) across the country to help more than 94,000 households exit or avoid homelessness in 2023, including more than 56,900 households through incremental Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs), more than 8,200 households through public housing, and more than 28,200 households through the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program.

New programs and efforts by the Biden-Harris administration have contributed to this progress. The "[American Rescue Plan Act](#) (ARPA)" – the largest single-year investment in ending

homelessness in U.S. history – prevented a rise in homelessness between 2020 and 2022. In 2023, HUD provided additional resources and guidance to encourage PHAs to address homelessness. HUD coordinated an allocation of [3,300 Stability Vouchers](#) to PHAs that are partnering with Continuums of Care (CoCs), which received \$486 million in grants to address [unsheltered and/or rural homelessness](#). Additionally, HUD issued updated [guidance](#) on how PHAs can address homelessness through their public housing and incremental HCVs and [highlighted](#) available flexibilities, such as alternative requirements and the opportunity to request waivers. Through the EHV program, HUD required PHAs to formally partner with local CoCs and victim service providers to target vouchers, provided technical assistance, and allowed greater regulatory flexibilities. During this time period, PHAs administering EHV's placed nearly 37,000 households – the majority being people experiencing homelessness – into homes.

Data collected by HUD show that these efforts have been effective. The number of people who exited homelessness into permanent housing increased from 278,209 people in fiscal year (FY) 2021 to 299,580 people in FY22 – an 8% year-over-year increase. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [announced](#) in November that it had permanently housed 38,847 unhoused veterans through October 2023 – surpassing the calendar year goal two months early (see Memo, [12/4](#)).

With many of the pandemic protections and resources having expired or wound down, however, more people are falling into homelessness. To fully address the affordable housing and homelessness crises, Congress must provide the significant, long-term investments needed to make rental assistance universally available, preserve and expand housing stock affordable to people with the lowest incomes, fund a permanent emergency rental assistance program, sustainably fund homelessness and other supportive services to help people find and keep housing, and implement and enforce robust tenant protections.

Read the HUD announcement at: <http://tinyurl.com/bdwht8j4>

Learn more about the actions HUD has taken help to help communities address homelessness is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/5n9anszw>

Learn more about how communities are making progress in addressing and reducing homelessness: <https://tinyurl.com/yj994hcv>

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## **USICH Releases Summary of Successful Federal Actions to Address Homelessness in 2023**

U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Director Jeff Olivet released a [statement](#) on December 15 summarizing the historic actions taken by the Biden-Harris administration in 2023 to prevent and end homelessness. The summary organizes the federal actions and investments according to the solutions outlined in [All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#), the Biden-Harris administration's comprehensive and ambitious plan to reduce homelessness by 25% by 2025 and set our nation on a path to ending homelessness. *All In*

recommits the federal government to the proven, effective strategy of Housing First and to directly addressing the racial inequities that contribute to homelessness (*Memo*, [12/19/22](#)).

USICH highlights how the administration launched the [ALL INside initiative](#) to address unsheltered homelessness and invested nearly half a billion dollars to address [unsheltered and rural homelessness](#). In 2023, HUD helped more than [424,000 households](#) exit or avoid homelessness, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [surpassed its goal](#) to rehouse more than 38,000 veterans experiencing homelessness year. This year, the administration improved Medicaid to allow more states to use waivers to pay for housing and wraparound supports, and HUD and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched the [Housing and Services Partnership Accelerator](#) to help states improve collaboration and leverage new funding and flexibilities. In November, USICH published [From Evidence to Action](#) – the first federal homelessness research agenda in more than a decade – to expand the evidence base for homelessness solutions, including Housing First, diversion, and guaranteed basic income. USICH also notes that the country is on track to build more apartments in 2023 than any other year on record, largely due to the [White House’s Housing Supply Action](#).

Director Olivet’s statement emphasizes that homelessness is preventable and solvable – that homelessness is a policy choice. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. chose to invest in housing, health care, and income supports to keep families in their homes. As a result of the historic resources provided in the “American Rescue Plan Act,” between 2020 and 2022, the U.S. prevented the continuation of a rise in homelessness that began in 2017. Some of the recent progress, however, is being undone due to pandemic-era protections and resources having expired.

“Homelessness is a human issue – not a partisan one. That’s why USICH’s plan calls on all parts of the federal government, as well as mayors, landlords, developers, and everyone involved to make the choice to help us build a future where no one experiences the tragedy of homelessness and everyone has a safe and affordable home,” stated Director Olivet.

Read the full list of the Biden-Harris administration’s 2023 investments at:  
<https://tinyurl.com/3narfbmbu>

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## **Budget and Appropriations**

### **House of Representatives Adjourns for Holiday Recess without Finalizing FY24 Spending Bills or Enacting End-of-Year Tax Bill, while Senate Delays Holiday Recess – Take Action!**

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives adjourned for the holiday recess while the U.S. Senate delayed its holiday recess to continue negotiations on a border security deal that would clear a path for aid to Ukraine and Israel. When members return during the week of January 8, they will face a fast-approaching deadline for fiscal year (FY) 2024 spending bills and additional priorities, including a tax package and emergency war funding bill.

## *Appropriations*

The House left town for the holiday recess without agreeing on topline spending limits for the fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations bills, leaving little time for lawmakers to work out the details of the annual spending bills in January. On November 15, Congress passed and President Biden signed into law a “two-tier” stopgap funding bill that keeps some federal programs – including HUD’s – funded through January 19. Funding for the remaining programs will expire on February 2.

The Senate has passed three of the 12 annual spending bills, including the FY24 bill for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD), while the House has passed seven spending bills, but the chambers provide vastly different funding levels for federal programs. The [Senate’s FY24 spending bill](#) for THUD provides \$70.06 billion for HUD’s affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs, an increase of \$8.26 billion (slightly more than 13%) over FY23-enacted levels. In contrast, the [House draft](#) would fund HUD at \$68.2 billion, a \$6.4 billion (or roughly 10%) increase over FY23, while also proposing deep cuts to – and even the elimination of – some HUD programs.

While both drafts propose increased funding for HUD’s vital voucher programs, a new [analysis](#) from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) estimates that, at the funding levels proposed in the House bill, 112,000 fewer families would receive vouchers; at the Senate’s proposed levels, an estimated 80,000 fewer families would be served. CBPP estimates that the program will require at least \$900 million more than the amount proposed in President Biden’s [budget request](#) to fully renew all existing voucher contracts.

The Senate worked in a bipartisan fashion to draft FY24 spending bills to the limits agreed to in the “Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023” (FRA; see *Memo*, [6/05](#)), which imposes strict spending limits on annual appropriations through FY25. To bolster needed funding, senators also agreed to an additional \$14 billion in supplemental funds designated as “emergency spending,” providing additional funding while also technically abiding by the conditions of the FRA. House Republicans, meanwhile, interpreted the limits established in the FRA as a “ceiling, not a floor” for spending cuts, and pushed for even steeper cuts to federal programs, with some members of the far-right House Freedom Caucus pushing for [up-to-30% cuts](#) to non-defense programs, including HUD. To pass a final spending bill, Congress will need to bridge the divide and reach a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on funding levels.

The House will not return to business until January 9, leaving just eight legislative days after this week to pass the spending bills through both chambers. According to Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, the process to negotiate full-year spending bills typically takes four to six weeks.

## *The Threat of a Year-Long Continuing Resolution*

U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) recently proposed an unprecedented “date change” continuing resolution (CR), or a full-year CR with no adjustments. In this case, doing so would extend FY23 funding levels without revisions for addressing new or changed needs in FY24. Because the costs of housing and development programs are tied to



market rates, which have risen dramatically in recent years, [flat funding acts as a cut](#) and reduces the number of people served by HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness programs.

While long-term CRs always act as a cut to HUD programs, a long-term CR would be especially harmful under the terms of the FRA. If any of the 12 annual federal appropriations bills are still operating under a CR by April 30, mandatory sequestration – or across-the-board spending cuts – will be triggered by the FRA. For domestic programs – including those run by HUD – a “date change” CR would result in cuts of up to 9.4% – or more than \$73 billion – from the topline funding agreed to in the FRA.

A [resource](#) released by the Senate Appropriations Committee notes that a “date change” CR would cut assistance for nearly 700,000 households who rely on HUD's housing assistance programs to keep a roof over their heads. The CR would also result in the production of nearly 3,000 fewer units of affordable housing at a time when the nation's affordable housing shortage has [become worse](#), especially for people with the lowest incomes.

### *End-of-Year Tax Package*

Congressional leaders are working quickly to reach an agreement on a tax package – including an extension of the Child Tax Credit and several business tax incentives – before the 2024 tax filing season begins. NLIHC strongly supports an extension of the Child Tax Credit and urges Congress to also reform the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) in a tax package. Housing advocates have a narrow window to voice their priorities!

If reached, the tax deal could include resources to expand and reform LIHTC. Congress must ensure that any new LIHTC resources serve the millions of households experiencing or at risk of homelessness – those most harmed by our nation's housing crisis. LIHTC is the largest source of federal funding for the creation of affordable housing, but critical reforms are needed for the program to reach those most in need. While LIHTC is an important source of federal funding for affordable housing, it is rarely sufficient on its own to build or preserve homes affordable to households with the lowest incomes – those with the greatest, clearest needs. The majority (58%) of extremely low-income renters living in LIHTC developments who do not also receive rental assistance are severely cost-burdened, paying more than half their incomes on rent.

Because there are so few opportunities in 2023 and 2024 to expand housing resources at the federal level, it is critical that Congress ensure that these new resources are spent as effectively as possible to address the underlying causes of the housing crisis and to help those with the greatest needs. Make your voice heard! Tell Congress that any expansion of LIHTC must be paired with [key bipartisan reforms](#) to better serve America's lowest-income and most marginalized households and renters living in rural and Tribal communities.

### **Take Action**

It is critical that advocates keep weighing in with their senators and representatives on the importance of increased funding for HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness programs in FY24. Tell Congress that it cannot balance the federal budget at the expense of people with the lowest incomes!



- [Contact your senators and representatives](#) to urge them to expand – not cut – investments in affordable, accessible homes through the FY24 spending bill, including full funding for NLIHC’s top priorities:
  - Full funding to renew all existing contracts for the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) and Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) programs.
  - Full funding for public housing operations and repairs.
  - The Senate’s proposed funding for Homeless Assistance Grants.
  - Protecting \$20 million in funding for legal assistance to prevent evictions in the Senate bill.
  - The House’s proposed funding for Native housing.
- [Join over 2,100 organizations](#) by signing on to a national letter calling on Congress to support the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY24.

In addition, advocates can [weigh in with their members](#) – including those who serve on the [Senate Finance Committee](#) or [House Ways & Means Committee](#) – to urge them to ensure that any new LIHTC resources reach households experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Ask your members of Congress to pair any expansion of LIHTC with [key bipartisan reforms](#), including:

- Expanding the basis boost – known as the Extremely Low-Income (ELI) Basis Boost – for housing developments that set aside at least 20% of units for households with extremely low incomes or those experiencing homelessness.
- Designating Tribal and rural communities as “Difficult to Develop Areas” (DDAs), which would make it more financially feasible for developers to build affordable homes in these areas.

Learn more about how to urge Congress to pair LIHTC expansions with key reforms at: <https://p2a.co/ZhQtIH2>

## **HoUsed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes**

### **Join Today’s (12/18) National HoUsed Campaign Call for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes!**

[Join](#) today’s (December 18) national HoUsed campaign call from 2:30 to 4 pm ET. We will provide updates on fiscal year 2024 appropriations and efforts to reform the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC). Sonya Acosta of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) will share new data from HUD showing that Housing Choice Voucher reductions under House and Senate proposals would be deeper than previously estimated. Ryan Finnigan of the University of California, Berkeley’s Turner Center for Housing Innovation will discuss a research project being undertaken by the Turner Center and two other organizations that focuses on homelessness in California. Dr. Mary Pattillo of Northwestern University will survey a new report on intergenerational poverty. We will also receive news from the field, and more!

## Agenda:

- **Welcome**
  - Kim Johnson, NLIHC
- **HUD Data Suggests Deeper Reductions in HCVs under House and Senate Proposals**
  - Sonya Acosta, CBPP
- **Addressing Homelessness in California: A Collaborative Research Series**
  - Ryan Finnigan, Terner Center for Housing Innovation, UC Berkeley
- **New Report on Intergenerational Poverty**
  - Dr. Mary Pattillo, Northwestern University
- **Field Updates**
  - Gina Wilt, Coalition on Homelessness and Housing Ohio
  - Monique Blossom, Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center
- **Policy Updates**

Today's call is the last one of 2023. National calls will resume on January 16, 2024.

[Register here.](#)

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## Congress

### **Representative DeLauro and Senator Casey Introduce “Eviction Prevention Act”**

Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) [introduced](#) the “[Eviction Prevention Act](#)” ([H.R.6696](#), [S.3463](#)) in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, respectively, on December 11. The bill would authorize new grants to provide legal representation to tenants, create the country's first federal evictions database, and mandate a government report on evictions in the U.S. The bill is endorsed by NLIHC, the National Housing Law Project, the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel, and other national and state organizations.

Evictions have devastating impacts on tenants, including physical and mental health challenges, loss of possessions, and increased difficulty finding a new home. Despite the broad and lasting consequences of evictions, tenants rarely have access to legal representation during eviction proceedings, which dramatically reduces their odds of remaining in their homes. Legal support for tenants in eviction proceedings can help keep individuals and families housed, leading to improved outcomes for tenants, landlords, and communities.

The Eviction Prevention Act would provide federal support to connect low-income tenants with legal representation. The bill authorizes a new grant program for state and local governments to hire attorneys to represent renters with incomes below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level. The Eviction Prevention Act would also create a national evictions database to improve data on eviction cases and direct the Government Accountability Office to report on the limitations of the current legal system for tenants facing eviction, the representation rates of tenants and landlords, and potential cost savings for providing legal representation to tenants facing eviction.

“Even before the pandemic, millions of the lowest-income and most marginalized households were just one financial shock away from falling behind on their rent, losing their homes, and, in the worst cases, experiencing homelessness,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel. “Today, many of these same households are even more precariously housed. The long-standing eviction crisis – which predominantly harms Black women – underscores the need for both urgent action and long-term solutions, including the Eviction Prevention Act from Representative DeLauro and Senator Casey.”

Learn more about the Eviction Prevention Act at: <http://tinyurl.com/enm5ahr9>

Read the bill text at: <http://tinyurl.com/8htxeav8>

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## **Representatives Davis, Gomez, Peters, and Panetta Reintroduce “Rent Relief Act” to Establish Renter Tax Credit**

Representatives Danny Davis (D-IL), Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), Scott Peters (D-CA), and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) introduced the “[Rent Relief Act of 2023](#)” ([H.R.6721](#)) in the U.S. House of Representatives on December 12. The bill would help bridge the widening gap between incomes and housing costs by providing a refundable tax credit for millions of housing cost-burdened renters. Senator Raphael Warnock (D-GA) will introduce a companion bill in the U.S. Senate.

The renter tax credit is an innovative strategy that – when paired with significant targeted investments to increase the supply of rental homes – could help solve the nation’s housing crisis. The bill is supported by NLIHC and leading national organizations from the housing, faith, civil rights, health, and anti-poverty sectors represented in the Opportunity Starts at Home (OSAH) campaign.

Nationwide, [8 million](#) of the lowest-income renters pay at least half of their income on rent, leaving them without the resources they need to make ends meet. Despite the clear need, only [one in four](#) eligible households receives help, and some households spend years on [waitlists](#) due to inadequate funding by Congress. The Rent Relief Act would help close the gap for millions of households who are eligible for – but cannot access – federal housing assistance due to chronic underfunding.

The Rent Relief Act would:

- Build on the success of the Child Tax Credit to provide monthly support to renters earning less than \$100,000 who spend at least 30% of their adjusted gross income on rent and utilities.
- Help housing cost-burdened renters bridge the gap between income and rents by providing a refundable tax credit that covers a share of the difference between 30% of adjusted gross income and rent, capped at 100% of Small Area Fair Market Rent. For the lowest-income renters earning less than \$25,000 annually, the credit would cover the entire difference between 30% of income and rent. The credit would phase out for households earning between \$25,000 and \$100,000, covering 75% of the 30%-income-to-

rent gap for households earning between \$25,000 and \$50,000; 50% of the gap for households earning between \$50,000 and \$75,000; and 25% of the gap for households earning between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

- Ensure the lowest-income families benefit by making the credit fully refundable.
- Overcome administrative barriers that often prevent households from accessing housing by providing relief directly to renters and minimizing landlord involvement.
- Improve access to the credit by including funding for community outreach to help eligible taxpayers learn about and apply for the credit.

“I want to thank Senator Raphael Warnock and Representatives Danny K. Davis, Jimmy Gomez, Scott Peters, and Jimmy Panetta for their leadership in introducing this bold, innovative proposal to help millions of the lowest-income people afford their homes,” said NLIHC Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Field Organizing Sarah Saadian during a [press event](#) announcing the bill. “A new renter tax credit – like the one proposed today – has the power to transform lives.”

Read an NLIHC fact sheet on the “Rent Relief Act” at: <https://bit.ly/3NhRLLx>

Read a press release about the bill and see a full list of the bill’s endorsers at: <http://tinyurl.com/3cznmj6r>

Learn more about the bill at: <http://tinyurl.com/mryknuns>

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## Events

### **Join Final 2024 “Tenant Talk Live” Today (12/18) for Discussion about Health, Wellness, and Housing!**

NLIHC’s final 2024 “Tenant Talk Live” – a meeting geared towards tenant and resident leaders – will take place today, December 18, at 6 pm ET. Amid holiday festivities, it is crucial to acknowledge the challenges faced by those struggling to secure basic necessities, including housing. Today’s session will explore the links between health and housing and shed light on the serious health risks associated with housing instability and homelessness. Attendees will also learn about solutions for alleviating the financial burdens on low-income and health-impacted communities. [Register for the meeting here.](#)

Joining today’s meeting are Charlotte Bruce of Children’s HealthWatch and Shannon Nazworth of Ability Housing. Bruce is a senior research and policy analyst at Children’s HealthWatch, where she is responsible for supporting and carrying out research and policy work with the Center Team, with a particular focus on state and federal policies. In close coordination with the director of innovative partnerships, she participates in the ongoing management, strategy, and growth of the Hunger Vital Sign™ National Community of Practice, as well as other national and state coalitions, including by co-leading the Research Task Force of the Food Is Medicine Massachusetts Coalition.

Shannon Nazworth is president and CEO of Ability Housing, a position she has held since 2003. Ability Housing is dedicated to building strong communities where everyone has a home. The organization is inspired by a vision of a society where housing is a right, not a privilege, and all individuals have safe, affordable housing in vibrant communities.

Gain insight into their impactful work and the interconnections between housing, health, and wellness by [registering for the meeting here](#).

For information on future “Tenant Talk Live” topics, view our website: <https://nlihc.org/tenant-talk-live-webinar>. To stay up to date on “Tenant Talk Live” events and connect with other attendees, join the [Tenant Talk Facebook group](#).

“Tenant Talk Live” would not be possible without tenants like you! We strive to connect and engage with residents and tenant leaders through our meetings. If you are a low-income tenant and have a topic you would like to propose for an upcoming “Tenant Talk Live,” or if you would like to participate as a speaker on an upcoming call or meeting, please email: [sbetancourt@nlihc.org](mailto:sbetancourt@nlihc.org). Meetings like “Tenant Talk Live” also depend on the support of our members. Become an NLIHC member [here](#)!

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## Public Charge Rule

### Urban Institute Fact Sheet Shows One in Six Immigrant Families Avoided Public Programs in 2022 due to Public Charge Fears

The Urban Institute released a new fact sheet, “[One in Six Adults in Immigrant Families with Children Avoided Public Programs in 2022 because of Green Card Concerns](#),” showing that even after the Biden administration’s decision to halt the “public charge” rule in March 2021, immigrant families continued to be reluctant to participate in public programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and housing assistance in 2021. This trend remained in effect even for families not previously subject to the “public charge” test. The fact sheet confirms what immigrant advocates have long claimed: that the “chilling effect” of the Trump administration’s harmful policy changes continues to impact immigrant communities, causing many immigrants to go without vital health and social services.

The resource draws on the Urban Institute’s December 2022 Well-Being and Basic Needs Survey to analyze how families with children under age 19 “avoided noncash government benefits in the past year because of concerns that receiving benefits would affect their or a family member’s ability to obtain a green card in the future (also known as chilling effects).” The resource finds that one in six adults in immigrant families with children reported they avoided such benefits in the past year due to fears related to their green card status. The [summary](#) states that “this analysis implies that chilling effects may be keeping as many as three to four million children in immigrant families from accessing public benefits that could help address their basic needs.”

The Biden “public charge” rule replaced a Trump policy that put green card applications at risk if lawfully present immigrants applied for Medicaid, SNAP, housing, and other vital social safety net services. The Trump rule was shown to undermine the pandemic response and widen racial disparities in health, hunger, and poverty. A 2021 poll [found](#) that nearly half (46%) of people in immigrant families who needed help or health care during the pandemic did not seek it because of immigration concerns.

The Biden rule, which took effect in 2021 and was finalized in 2022, implements a much clearer framework. The rule restored the historic definition of “public charge” and made clear which benefits count toward the test. It did not expand eligibility for public benefits to any new households. The final rule clarified that several health and social services are not considered in a public charge determination, a decades-old test to deny temporary admission into the U.S. or deny requests to change one’s status to lawful permanent resident (i.e., green card holder). The final rule has been in effect since December 23, 2022, and restores the historical understanding of public charge, according to which receipt of certain non-cash benefits – such as housing and Medicaid benefits – are not considered under public charge determinations. When the Biden administration’s proposed rule was announced in 2022, NLIHC joined [over 1,000 organizations](#) urging the quick finalization of the “public charge” rule.

Read the fact sheet [here](#).

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## **Disaster Housing Recovery**

### **Senators Voice Bipartisan Support for “Reforming Disaster Recovery Act” in THUD Subcommittee Hearing**

During a hearing held by the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations’ Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Chair Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Ranking Member Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS) both called for greater federal funding for long-term recovery efforts and the passage of the NLIHC-supported “[Reforming Disaster Recovery Act](#).” The bill would permanently authorize HUD’s Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program and ensure that long-term federal recovery funds quickly reach those most in need of assistance following disasters. Senator Schatz is the primary sponsor of the bill. Senator Hyde-Smith is a co-sponsor, along with 13 other senators.

The hearing, “[Communities in Crisis: What Happens When Disaster Recovery Funds are Delayed](#),” featured testimony from Senator Peter Welch (D-VT), whose state is still recovering from catastrophic floods earlier this year, as well as Shaun Donovan, the CEO of Enterprise Community Partners; Jennifer Gray Thompson of After the Fire USA; and Ran Reinhard of the South Carolina Office of Resilience.

In his opening statement, Chairman Schatz explained the need for Congress to approve significant long-term recovery funds, just as it approved additional FEMA funding for short-term recovery and disaster response efforts earlier this year. He also called for such funds to be accompanied by reforms improving the long-term recovery process. “By failing to authorize



CDBG-DR, we force HUD to rewrite rules for funding every time we finally get around to providing funding, meaning communities are left waiting months or years for aid to arrive,” said Chair Schatz. “And without certainty about when and how much aid will come, local governments end up doing some things twice and other things not at all. From a governance standpoint, it’s wasteful and inefficient. And for survivors, the uncertainty and delays make the already-difficult task of recovery even harder.”

“Natural disasters are not partisan in their impact, and our response should not be either,” said Ranking Member Hyde-Smith. “We should work on a bipartisan basis to improve existing programs like CDBG-DR. This ad-hoc approach to CDBG-DR has meant that some grantees have had to administer multiple grants concurrently, applying slightly different rules and requirements for each grant. This approach has also had the unintended consequence of slowing the delivery of assistance to communities, sometimes by several years, making it more challenging for communities to proactively design effective disaster response programs.”

In addition to the witnesses who appeared in person, Chairman Schatz entered several letters advocating for long-term recovery funds into the record, including letters from NLIHC and from the NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition. One [letter](#) – sent in conjunction with Enterprise Community Partners, National League of Cities, and the National Association of Counties, and cosigned by 90 different organizations across the country – called for the quick passage of the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act. The [other letter](#) had 25 co-signers from areas of the country impacted by disasters in 2023 and called for additional recovery funding along with reforms to long-term recovery programs.

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## **Disaster Housing Recovery Update – December 18, 2023**

### **Congressional and National Updates**

The Government Accountability Office released a [report](#) on the need for the Small Business Administration (SBA) to include an assessment of lending criteria for both businesses and homeowners and an analysis of gaps in loan outcomes among program participants from underserved communities during its review of the Disaster Loan Program.

Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) [told](#) reporters that lawmakers will be turning their attention to domestic disaster relief after dealing with appropriations for fiscal year 2024.

An [article](#) in *Hakai Magazine* on disaster assistance for renters discusses a recent report by Best that finds that even less powerful hurricanes reduce the affordability of rental housing.

An [article](#) in *Politico* explores the peculiar absence of tsunami threats in FEMA’s National Risk Index. The risk index, which provides ratings for communities across the country based on their risk of various hazards and their social vulnerability to disaster impacts, does not include any tsunami risk data, which could lead to problems for areas like the Pacific Northwest, where there is a one in four chance of a catastrophic earthquake and accompanying tsunami in the next 50 years.



An article by *Energy News Network* emphasizes the importance of [resilient homes](#) in preparing for climate disasters and cites the unpreparedness of Texans during Storm Uri. The article encourages the adoption of weatherization processes and heat pumps, particularly for renters living in poorly insulated homes, as well as use of the U.S. Department of Energy's Home Energy Rebates (HER) program, which funds energy efficiency and electrification projects. The article urges states and local governments to prioritize low-income renters and recommends actions to ensure tenant protections, center the expertise of environmental justice groups, compensate community-based organizations, and integrate HER rebates with other relevant policies.

Nearly 80 consumer, energy, housing, health, manufacturing, and environmental organizations sent a [letter](#) urging the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) to update energy code requirements for new homes backed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac mortgages. The letter highlights FHFA's role in addressing climate threats and creating consistent energy standards for federally backed mortgages. It also emphasizes the benefits of adopting the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) or ANSI/ASHRAE/IES Standard 90.1-2019 codes, including lower housing costs, increased climate resilience, improved health, emission reduction, and reduced default risk. Failure to update codes could result in prolonged energy waste, high utility bills, and reduced affordability for low-income households.

Hurricane Katrina and subsequent disasters have disproportionately affected [older adults](#), with over two-thirds of casualties being among those aged 60 and above. Danielle Arigoni, managing director for policy and solutions at the National Housing Trust, emphasizes that age is an intersectional issue, which magnifies risks. In her book *Climate Resilience for an Aging Nation*, she explores the overlooked needs of this demographic in disaster planning. Arigoni discusses misconceptions, such as mobility challenges and assumptions about preparedness, and highlights the importance of age-focused preparedness plans for cities.

A new Fannie Mae [survey](#) of homeowners and renters in the U.S. finds that awareness of flood risk is lacking among consumers, particularly those in high-risk zones, and that consumers are increasingly worried about flood insurance affordability. Respondents continued to cite FEMA as the most trusted source for flood risk information, and some consumers are taking steps to learn about and minimize flood risks. The survey identifies the need for ongoing efforts to educate consumers, improve communication, and facilitate informed choices.

Black Americans are moving to [disaster-prone](#) states like Texas and Florida, which are vulnerable to hurricanes and extreme heat. This "Reverse Migration" trend leaves Black communities particularly exposed to climate disasters, leading to higher mortality rates, increased debt, and a lack of infrastructure for survival.

## **State and Local**

### **Alaska**

Highway clearing and relief efforts are ongoing after the [deadly landslide](#) that took place in Wrangell on November 20. Fundraising efforts have brought in over \$43,000 to support families affected by the disaster. The Alaska Department of Transportation provided new measurements

of the slide's length and coverage, emphasizing the need for long-term monitoring and safety measures.

## **California**

Ahead of the March 2024 [elections](#), an interview-based survey of voters in Santa Cruz County indicated that disaster preparation was among the top priorities of residents, along with power reliability and housing affordability.

Disparate recoveries among three counties in California suggest that [rebuilding](#) after wildfires does not result in the same success rate for all communities. Survivors in Coffey Park, Paradise, and Greenville alike say their sense of community has been immeasurably strengthened since the fires, despite massive displacements, impacts on community mental health, and housing shortages in surrounding areas. Informed by the experiences of communities in Australia and Japan that rebuilt following significant natural disasters, leaders initiated focus groups, strategic planning sessions, open mic community forums, and an annual revival festival with performances, panel discussions, and opportunities for people to engage in conversations about the future.

## **Florida**

The U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget is launching an [investigation](#) into the financial stability of Florida's state-backed insurer, Citizens Property Insurance Corporation. With rising concerns about the impact of climate change, the committee aims to assess whether the insurer has sufficient funds to withstand future disasters. As a last-resort insurer, Citizens covers properties that private insurers may reject, but its financial viability is under scrutiny, particularly after major hurricanes in 2022 and 2023. The investigation will examine the potential economic consequences of the hurricanes, including the impact on property values and the broader economy, amid fears of a federal bailout if Citizens faces insolvency.

[Harmony Shores Mobile Home Park](#), a 12.5-acre waterfront property in East Naples that flooded during Hurricane Ian in 2022, is on the market for nearly \$25 million. The property was owned by Cove Communities, which bought it in June 2021 for \$18.5 million. Following Hurricane Ian, residents were told to "vacate" the flooded mobile home park by their landlord in violation of due process. The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is not involved in the current sale and was not aware that the property was on the market.

## **Hawaii**

Efforts to quickly [convert vacation rentals](#) into homes for Maui's fire evacuees are leading to confusion and profiteering. Short-term rental operators are being offered financial incentives of up to \$9,000 for long-term leases, which have led to reports of landlords evicting existing tenants in favor of the new program. Hawaii's Department of Human Services spoke out against these actions and warned that such reports would bring about disqualification from the program and a referral to the Attorney General's office. As 2,500 families leave hotels over the next two months, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement estimates that funding the short-term rental program for one year will cost \$176 million, of which FEMA will pay \$92 million. The remaining \$83 million would be made up of a combination of private philanthropic

contributions, state support, and evacuees' personal funds. Governor Josh Green's office said the state is prepared to cover one-third of the expenses, though it remains uncertain whether legislative approval is necessary. Both the complexity of existing housing programs and uncooperative rental owners continue to be significant barriers, though Maui County has threatened to impose higher taxes for uncooperative rental owners, and the governor is considering blocking short-term rentals if sufficient units are not secured. In the meantime, the council has set up a website so that rental owners and evacuees can access the program. For those ineligible to receive FEMA aid, like some migrants and undocumented immigrants, the state is sponsoring a \$2.5 million program together with AirBnb and the nonprofit Global Empowerment Mission (GEM).

## **Kentucky**

The Kentucky Department for Local Government (DLG) is facing [criticism](#) over its plan to allocate \$300 million in federal flood relief. The funding, announced in March, aims to address flood-related damages. The DLG's draft plan proposes creating safe housing options by incentivizing new construction or repairs outside flood plains. However, local leaders are expressing concerns that the plan appears to prioritize state-led high ground communities over severely affected counties and that the cut-off for aid for moderate-income households is too low. Public hearings are being held to gather input before the plan is submitted for federal review.

## **New York**

New York Governor Kathy Hochul has [formally requested](#) a major disaster declaration from President Joe Biden to support the ongoing recovery of downstate communities impacted by the significant flooding that occurred during a two-day period in late September 2023. The declaration, if approved, would allow the state to receive federal reimbursement for recovery expenditures. The state, in collaboration with FEMA and local governments, is assessing the damage to determine eligibility for federal aid, with the threshold set at \$35.7 million as of September. The funds would support debris removal, emergency measures, and infrastructure restoration in areas severely affected by the storm, including Brooklyn, Manhattan, Nassau, and Westchester counties.

## **Tennessee**

[Catastrophic tornadoes](#) in middle and west Tennessee left at least six people dead on the evening of December 9. The storms damaged numerous homes in the city of Clarksville and in the suburbs of Nashville. The state and federal governments have both issued Major Disaster Declarations for the impacted areas, and impacted residents can now apply for assistance via FEMA's Individual Assistance Program.

## **Utah**

Utah's flood control crews are among the nominees for the [Utahn of the Year award](#), which is chosen by editors and editorial board members at the *Salt Lake Tribune*. Record-breaking snowpack resulted in a stressful spring and summer for many Utahns who were put on flood watch. Behind the scenes, flood control teams, like Salt Lake City's "Stream Team," composed

of engineers, hydrologists, administrators, communication specialists, and emergency management officials, worked diligently to safeguard homes and public properties from potential disasters.

## **Vermont**

Construction on infrastructure for [mobile homes](#) intended to house Vermonters displaced by the July 2023 floods is set to begin in mid-December at the old Montpelier Elks Country Club. FEMA spokesperson Briana Summer Fenton stated that bidding for contractors is underway, and once selected, they will be able to bypass certain regulations to expedite the process. The trailers are expected to arrive 30 to 60 days after construction begins, possibly between mid-January and February 2024. FEMA has verified qualifying criteria for homeowners and renters interested in the housing solution. Of those who met the criteria, 64% had already found adequate housing or were able to return to their damaged homes. Still, 25 households remain interested in pursuing housing in a trailer. Those moving into the trailers will have 18 months to secure permanent housing, with FEMA covering essential expenses during that period. The city of Montpelier plans to convert the site into permanent housing once trailers are no longer needed.

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## **Opportunity Starts at Home**

### **OSAH Appears on *Power Station* Podcast**

Opportunity Starts at Home (OSAH) campaign director Chantelle Wilkinson [shared her insights](#) about multi-sector coalition-building recently on the podcast *Power Station*. Chantelle sat down with Anne Pasmanick, host of *Power Station*, to share how the OSAH campaign has helped make affordable housing a top-line issue and how the campaign's partnerships have evolved since its launch six years ago. Chantelle also discussed the current state of housing in the nation and what is needed to address housing instability. [Listen to the podcast](#) to hear the powerful story of the OSAH campaign's launch and about its collaborations with national partners – like the NAACP, UnidosUS, and the National Education Association – that are embracing housing advocacy and elevating affordable housing in their own organizational policy agendas.

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## **Housing Policy Forum 2024**

### **Housing Policy Forum 2024 to Commemorate NLIHC's 50-Year Anniversary and Commitment to Housing Justice!**

Register today for [NLIHC's Housing Policy Forum 2024: An Unwavering Path Forward to Housing Justice!](#) Since being founded by Cushing N. Dolbeare in 1974, NLIHC has educated, organized, and advocated to ensure decent, affordable housing for everyone. Housing Policy Forum 2024 – which will be held in Washington, D.C., in March – will commemorate NLIHC's 50-year anniversary by celebrating our history, achievements, and partners, while renewing our commitment to achieving housing justice!

The forum will feature an opening keynote discussion with **Sherrilyn Ifill**, an acclaimed civil rights attorney and scholar, whose work has played a prominent role in shaping the national discourse on race and civil rights.

The forum will also feature a closing keynote by **Jelani Cobb**, a renowned author and journalist revered as one of the clearest voices in current conversations about race.

Additional forum speakers and breakout sessions will be announced in the coming weeks.

*NLIHC members will receive a \$150 discount when registering for the forum! [Join NLIHC today to receive a promo code.](#)*

*Think you're a member but didn't receive a promo code? Email [outreach@nlihc.org](mailto:outreach@nlihc.org).*

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## **Apply for Forum 2024 Hotel and Travel Scholarship!**

[NLIHC's Housing Policy Forum 2024: An Unwavering Path Forward to Housing Justice](#) will commemorate the 50-year anniversary of NLIHC by offering a limited number of shared-lodging scholarships for stays at the Hilton Washington DC Capitol Hill Hotel and travel reimbursement to individuals and sponsoring organizations to help low-income people attend.

NLIHC encourages the active participation of low-income people in all areas of our work, including our annual Housing Policy Forum. A limited number of scholarships are available and will cover shared lodging and travel costs for low-income people to attend. Scholarship recipients must be current, dues-paying NLIHC members and must pay the \$100 Forum registration fee. Scholarships will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

The forum will offer an array of opportunities to engage with and learn from others to advance housing justice, including a special session for tenant leaders and keynote addresses by acclaimed attorney and scholar Sherrilyn Ifill and Jelani Cobb, a renowned author and journalist.

### **IMPORTANT SCHOLARSHIP DATES AND DEADLINES:**

**December 8:** Scholarship applications open on a first-come, first-served basis.

**January 5:** Scholarship applications are due. Once all scholarships are filled, additional applicants will be placed on a waitlist until February 5.

**February 2:** Deadline for scholarship recipients to pay NLIHC membership dues (if not already current) and the \$100 Forum registration fee. After this date, those who have not paid will forfeit their scholarship to someone on the waitlist.

**February 5:** Individuals on the waitlist will be notified about whether NLIHC will be able to offer a scholarship to them.

**February 16:** Deadline for scholarship recipients notified on February 5 of a scholarship award to pay NLIHC membership dues (if not already current) and the \$100 Forum registration fee.

For more information, email [outreach@nlihc.org](mailto:outreach@nlihc.org)

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## Research

### Implementation of Tenant Protections Associated with Decrease in Eviction Filings

An article published in *Housing Policy Debate*, "[The Effect of State Housing Policies on Eviction Filings and Judgments in the United States 2001–2018](#)," indicates that certain state and local policies, such as those that restrict abusive landlord practices, can reduce eviction filings and repeat filings, though their effect on eviction judgments is less certain. The findings suggest that tenant protections can significantly influence housing stability.

The researchers examined the association between housing policies and evictions in U.S. counties from 2001 to 2018 using a panel of state-level landlord-tenant laws as well as data from Princeton University's Eviction Lab. Researchers also included local housing investment by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (e.g., rent subsidies and units in the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program (LIHTC)).

Researchers found that, on average, there was an average of 1,528 eviction filings per county in the U.S. More than 95% of these filings were unique households, with the remaining share representing multiple filings to the same household. The most common tenant protections implemented at the state-level included disallowing evictions to be processed through small claims courts, prohibiting landlord retaliation against tenant attempts to enforce the terms of a lease, and requiring waiting time for eviction filings. Researchers found few eviction protections explicitly targeted vulnerable groups.

States with policies prohibiting landlord retaliation against tenants saw a reduction in case filings of about 11 percentage points. Prohibiting eviction cases in small claims court was associated with a significant reduction in repeat eviction filings. After controlling for other factors, researchers found a 50.6 percentage point reduction in multiple filings in areas with prohibitions against eviction cases in small claims court.

Overall, policies that tended to increase the cost of landlords initiating eviction proceedings were negatively associated with the number of evictions that occurred. Further, prohibiting landlord retaliation was associated with a reduction of eviction judgments by 14.1 percentage points. On the other hand, mandating waiting time between a lease violation and when a landlord is allowed to file for an eviction order was associated with an increase in eviction judgments of 14.6 percentage points.

The nature of the eviction data did not allow researchers to determine the demographic characteristics of households that received a filing; however, researchers estimated the share of minorities in a county to determine whether some tenant protections have a different impact on



evictions for Black, Hispanic, and other minority tenants compared to white tenants. In general, researchers found that policies affect eviction filings and judgements in counties with large minority populations to approximately the same degree as they do in other counties.

Researchers note that certain state and local policies can significantly influence eviction filings, offering valuable insights for policymakers aiming to address housing stability. However, the effect of these policies on actual eviction judgments is less clear.

Read the report at: <http://tinyurl.com/3668zw96>

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## **Americans Overwhelmingly Support Policies Intended to Increase Housing**

A recent national [survey](#) conducted by The Pew Charitable Trust found that a majority of Americans support a broad array of zoning policies intended to boost housing availability and affordability. Researchers asked participants about a range of zoning policy reforms, including expediting the permitting process, converting offices and similar buildings into housing, limiting parking space mandates, allowing accessory dwelling units, and decreasing mandatory lot sizes. The survey results indicate broad concern among Americans regarding housing supply and affordability.

The majority of survey respondents supported diverse policies for addressing housing supply. Nearly 90% of respondents supported the expediting of the permitting process, and 81% of respondents supported allowing offices, hotels, and other similar buildings to be converted to housing.

Respondents indicated that improving affordability and consumer choice were compelling reasons to change housing policies. More than 80% of respondents said that making housing more affordable was an excellent or good reason for changing housing rules. Nearly eight in 10 respondents (79%) indicated that allowing people to move closer to jobs and schools was an excellent or good reason for changing housing policy, and more than seven in 10 respondents (73%) felt that reducing homelessness was an excellent or good reason for changing housing rules.

Republicans and Democrats prioritized different reasons for creating more housing. Slightly more Republicans identified increasing freedom for property owners as an excellent or good reason to change housing policy (68% vs. 62%). Democrats were more likely to identify the reduction of racial segregation as an excellent or good reason to change housing policy (81% vs. 49%). Despite these differences, the survey data indicate that housing policies designed to end the housing shortage and affordability crisis are popular and have bipartisan support among Americans.

Read more about the survey and its findings at: <http://tinyurl.com/4pptsucy>

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## **Women’s Refugee Commission Publishes Report on Best Practices for Supporting People Seeking Asylum in Chicago, Denver, New York City, and Portland, Maine**

The Women’s Refugee Commission (WRC) released a report, [\*Opportunities for Welcome: Lessons Learned for Supporting People Seeking Asylum in Chicago, Denver, New York City, and Portland, Maine\*](#), on November 30. As part of a multi-city project, WRC evaluated how the four cities are responding to the needs of people seeking asylum or other forms of protection in the U.S. The report finds that those seeking protection in the U.S. face myriad challenges as they navigate the immigration process. While each of the four cities had different processes for welcoming people seeking asylum, the WRC report identifies key best practices and challenges in supporting newcomers.

In 2023, WRC interviewed stakeholders in Chicago, Denver, New York City, and Portland, Maine, to learn more about how cities were responding to people seeking asylum. Stakeholders included community-based organizations; federal, state, and local government officials; legal service providers; shelter providers; grassroots advocates; and people seeking asylum, among others.

The report highlights promising best practices for welcoming people seeking asylum. Portland, for example, provided on-site access to medical and social services, including services to help individuals with their asylum cases. New York City’s partnership with the Archdiocese of New York’s Catholic Charities Community Services helped people in the asylum process settle in their new communities. The report identifies additional best practices, including community-led case management support services and rental assistance programming tailored to the needs of people seeking asylum and private hosting programs that catalyze community involvement and integration. Access to legal representation emerged as a critical factor in helping newly arriving people navigate their immigration proceedings and move out of transitional shelter and into permanent housing. Importantly, the report highlights that safe and secure housing plays an essential role in facilitating asylum seekers’ ability to settle in their new communities while complying with their immigration obligations.

WRC identifies several common challenges for welcoming people seeking asylum, including the lack of affordable housing, the limitations of emergency shelter, and community disinvestment and tension with new arrivals. Communities – including New York City, Chicago, and Denver – have also faced challenges in operating shelters for people seeking asylum, particularly related to concerns about transparency and the reliability of for-profit companies contracted to operate the shelters. Finally, the lack of a national coordination strategy and incomplete support from the federal government emerged as one of the most consistent challenges across all four cities.

Given the identified barriers, the report recommends a fundamental shift in framing and targeted policy changes at the federal, state, and local levels. WRC recommends that the U.S. move beyond a crisis response to design and implement sustainable policies to help people seeking asylum and other people in need of shelter and basic services. At the federal level, Congress must prioritize and substantially increase flexible and responsive investment for state and local governments and community organizations providing housing and services in destination communities. WRC also calls on the Biden administration to lead an all-of-government approach to coordinating a safe and dignified reception of people seeking asylum. States and localities

should promote collaboration among government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community-based organizations, as well as establish and expand programs and funding for services, benefits, and support for people seeking asylum and other protections. Finally, the report recommends that philanthropy ensure that funding for direct services provides flexibility to respond to shifting needs.

Read the WRC report at: <http://tinyurl.com/53ndb9r8>

Read a fact sheet on the report at: <http://tinyurl.com/238escff>

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## **From the Field**

### **New Orleans Passes FY24 Budget, Including Historic Investments in Housing**

The New Orleans City Council has [passed](#) an executive budget for the 2024 fiscal year, signaling remarkable new commitments from lawmakers to housing justice. The \$1.57 billion budget allocates an historic \$22 million for an array of housing initiatives, including full funding for the city's new Healthy Homes program, a citywide effort that will ensure rental housing units are up to standard. The council also allocated funds for the expansion of the city's existing right to counsel (RTC) program and made funds available for a newly created housing trust fund that will support the construction of more affordable housing.

One of the advocacy groups involved in securing funding for the city's housing priorities was the [Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center](#) (LFHAC). LFHAC, which worked with another New Orleans-based group, [Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative](#), also served as a cohort member of NLIHC's 2022-2023 End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) project cohort. As a member of the cohort, LFHAC worked towards the passage of the city's Healthy Homes program, as well as on the implementation of the city's RTC program.

Monique Blossom, the director of policy and communications for the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center, expressed support for the city's budgetary investments. "The Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center is pleased that our advocacy for fully funded Healthy Homes and Right to Counsel programs, as well as a \$17 million investment in the newly created Housing Trust fund, received support of all members of New Orleans City Council, the Mayor, and the City Administration," she said. "This is a significant commitment to ensure all New Orleanians have safe, healthy, and affordable places to live, and representation in eviction court. We will continue to work to make sure the city follows through on these commitments, and we will keep pushing for policies and funding equal to the scale of our housing crisis."

Housing has long been a top priority for the city's residents. For more than a decade, tenant advocates have [rallied](#) for protections that would prevent New Orleans's historic housing stock from falling into substandard condition – but to no avail. Because New Orleans is home to a significant share of older housing units, a portion of homes have fallen victim to issues such as mold and structural impairment. Often, tenants asking for maintenance issues to be rectified by their landlords were met with eviction notices in response – a tactic not historically prohibited by

law in Louisiana. As a result, maintenance issues with buildings in the city would typically go unrepaired or not even be investigated.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the passage of such protections became a reality after advocacy efforts increased tenfold due to the ongoing threat of the public health crisis, culminating in a proposed “Healthy Homes” ordinance (“[Ordinance No. 33898](#)”). In the original proposed ordinance, advocates set out to secure three key wins for tenants, including anti-retaliation protections, stronger health and safety standards for housing units, and proactive upkeep and enforcement of rental inspections. An [amended](#) version of the bill was passed in November 2022 after months of negotiations between local housing justice-based organizations, tenant advocates, landlord groups, and elected officials. In the amended version, which was later gutted by the bill’s opponents through a formal amendment process, rental inspections were not included. However, the Healthy Homes program was created to include anti-retaliation protections for tenants. Anti-retaliation protections went into effect in the city on July 1, 2023. The law also requires landlords to register their properties with the City of New Orleans and take an oath that their housing unit is habitable. This portion of the law goes into effect on January 1, 2024.

To ensure the successful implementation of the Healthy Homes program, the city budget allocated an investment of \$2.5 million, the total amount of funding asked for by the city council members. The allocation of funding will go towards hiring staff members who will oversee the program.

Another housing priority funded through the council’s budget is the city’s “right to counsel” program. Lawmakers in New Orleans formally passed RTC protections in 2022 after successfully piloting a “[Tenant Eviction Assistance Program and Right to Counsel](#)” program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the law, which was passed through “[Ordinance No. 33682](#),” all tenants, regardless of income, will be eligible to receive representation through a court-appointed lawyer who has been contracted out through [Southeast Louisiana Legal Services](#). When the program was first created, it was funded with \$2 million through the city’s emergency rental assistance grant (ERAP). In the city’s new budget, the RTC program will receive an additional \$2.4 million dollars.

The expansion of the city’s RTC program is a much-needed win for New Orleanians. High eviction rates have impacted renters in the city [disproportionately](#), even prior to the pandemic. On average, the yearly eviction rate included over 5,000 households. Of those, renter households of color, who make up 59% of the city’s population, were most likely to experience the largest impacts. In 2022, court watchers in the city reported that 82.2% of eviction proceedings in the city involved Black tenants. Black women faced the greatest disparities in eviction rates of any population group, representing 56.8% of evictions filings. Of those individuals facing eviction in the city, it has been [reported](#) that only 6% of tenants in New Orleans had access to legal representation in court prior to the start of the RTC program, a number that has certainly shifted under the newly expanded program.

Finally, the largest portion of the \$22 million in funding passed through the city council’s budget provides \$17 million for a newly created affordable housing trust fund. One purpose of the fund is to address the city’s growing housing unaffordability crisis. In 2021, NLIHC’s [Gap](#) report

found that the city faces a shortage of nearly 48,000 homes available to renters with incomes at or below 50% of area median income (AMI). [To address this gap](#), a renter in New Orleans [would need](#) to make \$22.73 an hour to afford a two-bedroom housing unit at fair market rent (\$1,182). In the State of Louisiana, however, the minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour.

The passage of funding for affordable housing developments has been seen as a big win for tenant advocates and housing justice-focused organizations that have asked for more long-term solutions to solve the city’s housing crisis – one of Mayor LaToya Cantrell’s top administrative [priorities](#). In June 2023, the City of New Orleans passed [\\$32 million](#) in short-term funding for affordable housing development using pandemic relief funds through the “American Rescue Plan Act.” The funding contributed to the development and upkeep of 14 existing affordable housing projects. The new affordable housing trust fund, however, will focus on sustaining investments made into affordable housing developments. The new housing trust fund has not been allocated permanent funding past the 2024 funding cycle, but lawmakers in New Orleans are working to include an amendment to the ballot in the 2024 election that will make the trust a permanent item funded through the city council.

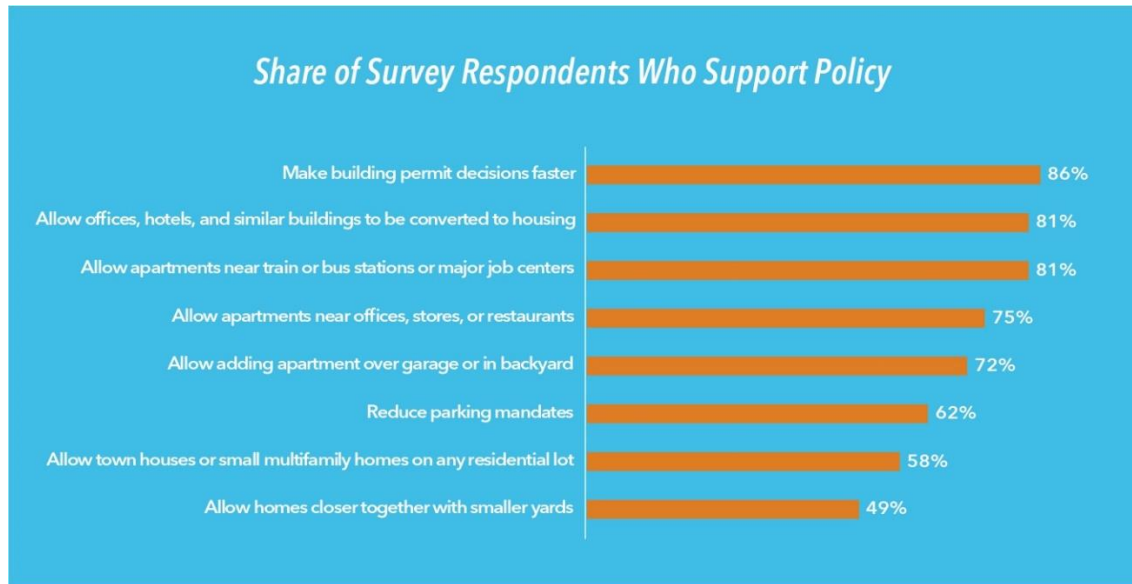
More information on the New Orleans budget can be found [here](#).

To learn more about the ERASE Project, including the work conducted by LFHAC, please visit: <https://nlihc.org/erase-project>

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## **Fact of the Week**

### **Majority of Americans Support Broad Array of Policies Intended to Boost Housing Availability and Affordability**



Source: The Pew Charitable Trust, 2023. Survey Finds Large Majorities Favor Policies to Enable More Housing. <http://tinyurl.com/36h5pmt3>



Source: The Pew Charitable Trust, 2023. *Survey Finds Large Majorities Favor Policies to Enable More Housing.* <http://tinyurl.com/36h5pmt3>

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## NLIHC in the News

### NLIHC in the News for the Week of December 10

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of December 10:

- “Eviction Prevention Act Introduced to Combat Housing Instability” *My ChesCo*, December 14 at: <https://tinyurl.com/2c36j8jb>
- “US is not prepared to house a growing number of older Americans” *Scripps News* December 10 at: <https://tinyurl.com/mtjn7knh>

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## NLIHC Careers

### NLIHC Seeks Research Analyst

NLIHC seeks a research analyst to further the coalition’s research on the housing needs of low-income renters and policy responses. The analyst will work with other members of the NLIHC research team to initiate and carry out research, including data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

## **Responsibilities:**

- Implement quantitative and/or qualitative research, including data collection and analysis.
- Maintain and expand NLIHC holdings of and access to major datasets that inform NLIHC campaigns and partners.
- Assist other NLIHC staff and interns with data usage.
- Write reports that communicate NLIHC research to the general public.
- Disseminate NLIHC research to the general public, members, and partners through written reports and blogs, visualizations, and other means.
- Participate in other research, as assigned.
- Contribute to NLIHC's weekly e-newsletter *Memo to Members & Partners* by identifying and summarizing new research relevant to NLIHC members.
- Prepare information and position papers as required to meet NLIHC's goals and objectives.
- Represent NLIHC with other partners through participation in working groups and advisory committees.
- Public speaking at meetings and conferences in DC and around the country, with a priority for NLIHC member organizations.
- Respond to requests for information from NLIHC members, members of the media, and the public.
- Participate in NLIHC staff meetings, staff training, working groups, and other events.
- Other duties as assigned.

## **Qualifications:**

Applicants should have a bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred) and at least one year of experience in research and/or public policy (three years of experience for senior research analyst position). Applicants should have a commitment to social justice and some knowledge of affordable housing, homelessness, or fair housing policies. Candidates should have strong analytical, writing, and editing skills, oral and interpersonal communication skills, organizational skills, and attention to detail. Applicants should also be proficient in the Microsoft Office suite and optimally statistical software like SPSS, STATA, or R. GIS experience also a plus.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, and two writing samples to Millen Asfaha, Operations Coordinator, at: [masfaha@nlihc.org](mailto:masfaha@nlihc.org).

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## **NLIHC Seeks Director of People and Culture**

NLIHC seeks a director of people and culture to lead all aspects of human resources, including the fostering of an inclusive culture, talent acquisition/development, compensation and benefits, hiring/onboarding, employee engagement, performance management, change management, organizational and workforce planning, training, and development. Reporting to the vice

president of operations and finance, the director of people and culture will be involved in a wide range of internal initiatives, including the creation and implementation of staffing plans, policies, and practices.

## **ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS**

### ***Culture/Employee Relations***

- Collaborate with members of the Operations Team to oversee, support, and distribute internal staff communications.
- Serve as HR contact for all employees; proactively engage employees to maintain and improve working relationships and office culture, build morale, and increase productivity and retention; communicate openly and frequently, keeping staff informed on benefit resources, organizational events, and other pertinent information.
- Provide leadership and partnership with all staff to suggest updates with the Operations Team and communicate and administer human resource policies and procedures.
- Demonstrate understanding, sensitivity, and responsiveness to cultural differences in staff; be a champion for and oversee the creation and implementation of policies and programs that build momentum for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Manage and resolve complex employee relations issues; where applicable, conduct effective, thorough, and objective investigations.
- Conceptualize and oversee planning and implementation of employee events and appreciation activities, such as the annual all-staff meeting, social events, and group activities, tracking anniversaries, birthdays, and other milestones.

### ***Strategy***

- Collaborate with Operations Team to assess and address staffing requirements and employee needs.
- Review and make recommendations to SLT for improvement of the organization's organizational development policies, procedures, and practices; propose strategies for effective talent management as part of organizational development.
- Provide input on department restructurings, workforce planning, and succession planning.
- Serve as the senior staff liaison to the Racial Equity taskforce.

### ***Professional Development and Performance Management***

- Oversee performance management activities including supporting staff growth and improvement through effective feedback and performance management process and training.
- Collaborate with Operations Team, with input from full Senior Leadership Team, to develop and implement new performance management approaches.
- Provide performance management guidance and training to supervisors and support them in carrying out their responsibilities on personnel matters (supervision/coaching, mentoring, professional development, and disciplinary actions); provide supervisors and staff members with coaching and resources to promote and improve interpersonal and team collaboration.



- In collaboration with the Operations Team and full Senior Leadership Team, identify departmental and organizational needs, and assist management with finding appropriate training resources; ensure that relevant training is being offered to all employees across all programs; monitor and evaluate success of training programs, following up to ensure training objectives are met.
- Help identify and coordinate ongoing training for staff members, including annual mandatory trainings (e.g., workplace safety, sexual harassment), skills-based training, diversity and inclusion trainings, organizational compliance, and other trainings as needed; in consultation with Operations Team, design and implement a management training program for supervisory staff.

### ***Recruitment, Hiring, Onboarding, Off Boarding, Succession Planning***

- Lead the development of strategies to identify and attract talent, including the creation of a recruitment and hiring process; work closely with supervisors and Operations Team on crafting job descriptions and setting recruitment goals.
- Plan and conduct general organizational onboarding and orientation for new employees; develop and standardize onboarding expectations, schedules, protocols, and procedures across organization.
- Manage and conduct an off-boarding process, including exit interviews; analyze data and make recommendations to Operations Team and full Senior Leadership Team for corrective action and improvement.
- In collaboration with the Operations Team and full Senior Leadership Team, develop, maintain, and update a senior leadership succession plan for the group, and proactively identify and develop new leaders.

### ***Compensation and Benefits Management/Payroll***

- Administer a compensation program including salary and benefit surveys and market research to ensure that salary offers remain highly competitive.
- Oversee and implement budgets for recruiting, training/staff development, and benefits programs.
- In collaboration with the Operations Team, manage all HR administration, including the organization's benefits programs, and provide payroll support to the Finance Team; manage relationship with benefit brokers, coordinate annual Open Enrollment, and address employee benefits questions; propose additional benefit options pertinent to the organization's workforce.

### ***HRIS/Technology***

- Select, maintain, and maximize implementation of human resources information systems (HRIS) ensuring integration with other IS systems, as applicable; track and apply relevant organizational/human resources metrics; contribute HR information, analysis, and recommendations; advance use of technology in HR functions and activities to support programmatic and fiscal needs.

### ***Employment Regulatory/Compliance***

- Guide management and employee actions by researching, developing, and updating policies, procedures, methods, and guidelines following all applicable laws and regulations.
- Provide leadership and direction to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal employment-related laws and regulations; advise management on necessary actions in alignment with current employment law requirements; provide guidance and training to staff as required.
- Maintain in-depth knowledge of changing employment regulations and implement policies, and procedures by participating in educational opportunities, reading professional publications, maintaining personal networks, and participating in professional organizations/committees, to ensure regulatory compliance and reduce the organization's legal risks.

## **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS**

### ***Experience and Education***

- Bachelor's degree in human resources, business administration or a related field required; advanced degree in human resources, business, public administration, or related field highly desirable; SHRM-SCP, PHR, or SPHR certification a plus.
- Minimum of seven years of relevant professional experience; knowledge of nonprofit organizations; medical/scientific organization knowledge a plus.
- Extensive knowledge of benefit administration, employee relations, performance management, recruitment, HRIS, and training and development.
- Extensive knowledge of and experience with change management, DEI work, and improving organizational culture.

### ***Qualifications***

- Ability to connect with all staff, cultivate an environment of openness and empathy and encourage honest, compassionate feedback.
- Knowledge of best practices and experience in building inclusive and engaged workplaces; cultural awareness and sensitivity with lens on racial and gender equity; experience supporting a diverse, multi-generation workforce.
- Capacity to demonstrate leadership skills, with a minimum of five years of supervisory/personnel management experience; experience consulting and educating senior management on HR-related topics.
- Knowledge of local and federal laws and regulations affecting employer practices and compliance requirements; specific knowledge of requirements for 501c3 or 501c6 organizations preferred.
- Experience in revising or developing new HR policies and procedures to meet changing organizational needs, and to support the desired organizational culture.
- Proficient in industry trends and best practices in workplace development and change management.

- Ability to deal with conflict effectively, and to manage difficult situations confidently and calmly; capability to coach and counsel both executive-level management and employees; willingness to make decisions.
- Excellent interpersonal communications skills: ability to partner effectively with internal and external stakeholders, including expectation setting.
- Strong project management skills: ability to effectively plan, implement and manage HR programs and functions; ability to implement, explain, and apply relevant policies, procedures, laws, and regulations.
- Desire to be part of a hardworking, collaborative, fun, and value-driven team.
- Commitment to the NLIHC mission.

Interested candidates may submit an application [here](#).

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## NLIHC News

### Nominate an NLIHC Board Member Today!

NLIHC members and partners are encouraged to submit nominations (or self-nominate!) to fill upcoming vacancies on the NLIHC Board of Directors. Nominees for board membership must be current dues-paying NLIHC members or be employed by a current dues-paying NLIHC member organization. Please send nominations – and in the case of self-nomination, a brief biographical description or resume and a statement of interest – to NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel at [dyentel@nlihc.org](mailto:dyentel@nlihc.org) by close of business on December 31.

NLIHC’s board consists of six impacted persons (defined as individuals with lived experience of homelessness and/or housing instability), 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 the following positions: one representative from a national NLIHC member organization, and three at-large NLIHC member representatives. The new board members will assume their duties in March 2024.

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 three-year terms and can serve up to three terms. The board meets in person twice a year in Washington, D.C. – 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. 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 Washington D.C. soon after their election.

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.

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 Housing 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](mailto:dyentel@nlihc.org) by December 31.

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## Where to Find Us – December 18

- [United Way National ALICE Summit](#) – New Orleans, LA, January 30-31, 2024 (Andrew Aurand)
- [Neighborworks Training Institute](#) – San Francisco, CA, February 26-27 (Sid Betancourt)

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## NLIHC Staff

Sarah Abdelhadi, Senior Research Analyst  
Meredith Abel, Research Intern  
Andrew Aurand, Senior Vice President for Research, x245  
Sidney Betancourt, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x200  
Victoria Bourret, ERASE Senior Project Coordinator x244  
Jen Butler, Vice President, External Affairs, x239  
Alayna Calabro, Senior Policy Analyst, x252  
Matthew Clarke, Writer/Editor, x207  
Courtney Cooperman, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x263  
Lindsay Duvall, Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy, x206  
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316  
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314  
Sarah Gallagher, Senior Director, ERASE Project, x220  
Jordan Goldstein, Communications/Graphic Design Intern  
Yingxue Snow Guo, Communications Intern  
Danita Humphries, Senior Executive Assistant, x226  
Nada Hussein, ERASE Project Coordinator, x264

Kim Johnson, Public Policy Manager, x243  
Kayla Laywell, Housing Policy Analyst, x231  
Mayerline Louis-Juste, Senior Communications Specialist, x201  
Steve Moore Sanchez, Development Coordinator, x209  
Khara Norris, Vice President of Operations and Finance, x242  
Noah Patton, Senior Housing Policy Analyst, x227  
Mackenzie Pish, Research Analyst  
Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Manager, x246  
Benja Reilly, Development Specialist, x234  
Gabrielle Ross, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x208  
Sarah Saadian, Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Field Organizing, x228  
Brooke Schipporeit, Manager of Field Organizing x233  
Sophie Siebach-Glover, Research Analyst, x205  
Lauren Steimle, Web/Graphic Design Specialist, x246  
Chantelle Wilkinson, OSAH Campaign Director, x230  
Renee Willis, Senior Vice President for Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, x247  
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225