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Disaster Housing Recovery

Resources for Supporting Disaster Housing Recovery Following Hurricane Helene

Tag: Disasters *Keywords: disasters, Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition, DRHC, hurricanes, Helene, floods, flooding, resources*

Hurricane Helene has brought about widescale destruction throughout the southeastern U.S. and had [caused](#) more than 200 deaths as of October 2, making it one of the deadliest storms to hit the U.S. since Hurricanes Katrina and Maria. President Joe Biden [described](#) Hurricane Helene as a “storm of historic proportions.” NLIHC and its Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) have been working to aid partners in areas of the country impacted by Hurricane Helene and will continue to offer advocacy support, technical assistance, and capacity to advocates and organizers helping their communities recover from this catastrophic disaster over the months and years to come, including through a soon-to-be-announced national webinar focusing on Helene’s housing impacts. Over the last week, the DHRC has gathered resources and information about what advocates can do now to assist in the response to Hurricane Helene.

Background

After making landfall in the Big Bend region of Florida on September 26, the storm severely impacted the northern Tampa Bay area and coastal towns including Cedar Key and Perry. Parts of Georgia – including southern and coastal Georgia and the Augusta area – suffered from hurricane force winds that felled trees, damaged roofs, and brought down powerlines. Torrential rains from the storm caused catastrophic flooding in the Atlanta metro area, as well as throughout upstate South Carolina, including in Greenville. Upon reaching western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee, the storm slowed, pouring historic amounts of rain on the area. Preliminary stream gauge data indicate that a “14,000-year flood” occurred in the Asheville, North Carolina area. Multiple smaller towns in western North Carolina have been severely impacted, and portions of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee remain inaccessible. Search and Rescue personnel are attempting to reach stranded survivors using mule trains, as many roads in the area no longer exist and the steep terrain prevents evacuation by air.

The number of homes damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Helene is not currently available due to the lack of access to disaster-impacted areas. However, as we know from recent disasters, households with the lowest incomes, including people of color, seniors, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, people with limited English proficiency, and other individuals, are often hardest hit, have the fewest resources to address the crisis, and face the longest, steepest paths to recovery. Moreover, many of those households impacted by Hurricane Helene were also impacted by earlier hurricanes over the past several years. Some of these households were making progress in their recovery from those earlier storms and will now have to start again.

Despite the clear need, federal efforts frequently leave survivors without the assistance needed to get back on their feet and their communities less resilient to future disasters. The result is a disaster housing recovery framework that exacerbates and reinforces racial, income, and accessibility inequities at each stage of response and recovery.

As part of its Disaster Housing Recovery, Research, and Resilience initiative (DHR), NLIHC leads the [Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition](#) (DHRC) of [more than 900 national, state, and local organizations](#), including many working directly with disaster-impacted communities and with first-hand experience recovering after disasters. We work to ensure that federal disaster recovery efforts reach all impacted households, including disaster survivors with the lowest incomes and those who are most marginalized.

In what follows, the DHRC provides resources to help advocates support housing recovery efforts following Hurricane Helene.

How Can I Get Help for Survivors?

Hotlines: Rescue, Resources, Reunification; Clean Up, Disability Integration

Call **9-1-1** for rescue or other life-threatening situations.

Call **2-1-1** or **1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767)** for shelters, supplies, and reunification resources.

Reunification: [Red Cross](#), [County by County](#)

Call Crisis Cleanup at 844-965-1386 to connect with volunteer organizations who can assist with issues like trees, debris, tarps, and mucking out. Note: Crisis Cleanup cannot assist with social services such as food, clothing, shelter, insurance, or FEMA registration. Artwork to advertise the hotline is available at <https://www.crisiscleanup.org/disasters>.

Disability & Disaster Hotline - The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies: Call/Text: +1 (800) 626-4959, Email: hotline@disasterstrategies.org.

How Can I Volunteer?

Do NOT self-deploy! Sign up as a volunteer! Do not travel to impacted areas without coordinating with local and state officials. There are at least 405 roads in North Carolina alone that remain closed due to flooding, trees, and downed power lines. Coordinate your volunteering with any of the groups below:

- American Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.org/volunteer/become-a-volunteer.html>
- **Sign up to answer calls to Crisis Cleanup hotline. English and Spanish volunteers are badly needed for Crisis Cleanup's hotline.** Information is located here: <https://tinyurl.com/ms3nmw53>. You must be affiliated with an organization to volunteer. If you are not, contact sabrina.mcgee@mdcinc.org.
- [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters](#) (NVOAD)

How Can I Donate?

Cash donations are best. Look for local mutual aid, voluntary organizations, or philanthropies that are setting up disaster relief funds both for immediate needs and for medium/long-term

recovery. In addition, one of the biggest issues after a disaster is access to legal assistance and assistance for individuals living with disabilities.

Presented below is a non-exhaustive list of groups accepting monetary donations for Hurricane Helene response across the Southeast:

National Partners

Many members of the NLIHC-led [Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition](#) (DHRC) are responding or recovering from the impact of Hurricane Helene. Three members have requested direct donations:

- **Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies**
 - [The Partnership](#) is the nation's disability and disaster hub, led by and for disabled people in the U.S. and across the world. They fill the gaps in the traditional humanitarian response. Disability-led Inclusive Emergency Management is paramount for the equitable future we're building together. Donations help people with disabilities maintain safety and independence through: Search and Rescue coordination, acquisition and distribution of essential aid and disability-related supplies and equipment, peer support, accessible disaster services, and partner logistical coordination.
- **Emergency Legal Responders**
 - [Emergency Legal Responders](#) is a nonprofit organization that helps people faced with disasters solve and prevent legal challenges by providing free, accessible, and easily understandable information and services. They do this through customized legal training for disaster-response service providers, free and accessible legal information slides, and free community legal clinics. They are a women-led organization committed to addressing disparities in disaster assistance that stem from systemic inequities.
- **Organizing Resilience**
 - Organizing Resilience's [Hurricane Helene Response Fund](#) has already committed \$110,000 to organizing and mutual aid groups on the ground that are working around the clock to assist communities in Georgia and North Carolina.

North Carolina

- An extensive list of mutual aid and community based organizations responding in North Carolina is available here: <https://bit.ly/wnc Heleneguide>
- Legal Aid NC: Support mobile legal clinics, additional staff for hotline intake, pro bono programs preparing cases to volunteer lawyers, and other emerging needs. Your donation can be the lifeline that helps a family rebuild. [Donate to Legal Aid NC](#).
- Disability Partners: With offices in Sylva and Asheville, [Disability Partners](#) is a private, non-profit, community-based organization providing independent living services, community education, advocacy, and transitioning to independent living.

South Carolina

- United Way of Greenville: [Community Relief Fund](#)
- Feeding the Carolinas: Food Bank coalition covering both North and South Carolina. <https://4agc.com/donate/helene>
- [Able SC](#) is a disability-led, consumer-controlled, community-based nonprofit making South Carolina a national leader in equity and inclusion for all people with disabilities.
- South Carolina Legal Services (SCLS) provides free legal assistance in a wide variety of civil (non-criminal) legal matters to eligible low-income residents of South Carolina. [Donate Now - South Carolina Legal Services \(sclegal.org\)](#)

Georgia

- [Walton Options](#) has provided services and resources to help people with all types of disabilities live independently within the community. As a private, non-profit, non-residential Center for Independent Living (CIL), they serve 16 counties in Georgia and 10 counties in South Carolina.
- Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP) provides civil legal services, free of charge, to people with low incomes and eligible seniors in 154 of Georgia's 159 counties. [Donate Now | Georgia Legal Services Program \(givelively.org\)](#)

Florida

- The Community Foundation of Sarasota County's [Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund](#) was established in 2022 in response to Hurricane Ian's catastrophic impacts across the region. The fund is specifically focused on mental and behavioral health, legal services, case management, children and youth services, and more.
- Pinellas Community Foundation's [Tampa Bay Resiliency Fund](#) helps organizations aiding the most vulnerable of residents impacted by disasters. The Fund is a strategic collaboration of area nonprofits and has been activated to aid organizations helping those suffering after Hurricane Helene.
- [Ability1st](#), the Center for Independent Living of North Florida, is a community-based nonprofit organization that provides services to persons with varying disabilities.
- The [Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida](#) (CILNCF) is a locally controlled, consumer driven, community based, non-residential, 501(C)3 private not-for-profit organization headquartered in Gainesville, Florida. The CILNCF serves 16 counties in the North Central Florida region.
- [Legal Services of North Florida](#) (LSNF) provides representation to low-income and vulnerable individuals in civil matters only.
- [Bay Area Legal Services](#) provides free civil legal help to eligible residents of their five-county service area in Tampa Bay, and seniors and veterans across Florida.

Combating Misinformation about Hurricane Helene: Rumors and Corrections

Tag: Disaster *Keywords: disaster, Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition, DHRC, DHR, hurricane, Helene, floods, flooding, storms, FEMA, misinformation*

In the wake of Hurricane Helene, misinformation regarding the response to the storm has been spreading on social media. This misinformation has the potential to directly harm disaster survivors and make the already-difficult task of recovering from the disaster even harder. Advocates and organizers should be aware that some of this misinformation is being intentionally spread by malicious actors and that some has resulted from misunderstandings about existing recovery resources. FEMA is maintaining a [running list](#) of rumor corrections regarding incorrect information being spread online and in disaster-impacted areas about Hurricane Helene recovery. NLIHC's Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) has drawn on this list to identify and correct especially pernicious rumors.

Rumor: [FEMA is in the process of confiscating Helene survivor property. If I apply for disaster assistance and my land is deemed unlivable, my property will be seized.](#)

Fact:

FEMA cannot seize your property or land. Applying for disaster assistance does not grant FEMA or the federal government authority or ownership of your property or land. When you apply for disaster assistance, a FEMA inspector may be sent to verify the damage on your home. This is one of many factors reviewed to determine what kind of disaster assistance you may be eligible for. If the results of the inspection deem your home uninhabitable, that information is only used to determine the amount of FEMA assistance you may receive to make your home safe, sanitary and functional.

Rumor: [FEMA is no longer accepting applications for housing assistance.](#)

Fact:

FEMA is still accepting assistance applications throughout areas affected by Helene. For current application timelines, visit disasterassistance.gov. You can also see if applications are being accepted on FEMA's state-specific Helene disaster webpages: [Florida](#), [Georgia](#), [North Carolina](#), [South Carolina](#), [Tennessee](#) and [Virginia](#).

Rumor: [FEMA does not have enough money to provide disaster assistance for Helene.](#)

Fact:

FEMA has enough money right now for immediate response and recovery needs. If you were affected by Helene, do not hesitate to apply for disaster assistance, as there is a variety of help available for different needs.

Rumor: [FEMA is asking for cash donations and turning away volunteers.](#)

Fact:

This is false. FEMA does not ask for or generally accept any cash donations or volunteers for disaster response. We do encourage people who want to help to volunteer with or donate cash to reputable voluntary or charitable organizations. After a disaster, cash is often the best way to

help as it provides the greatest flexibility for these reputable organizations working on the ground to purchase exactly what is needed.

If you encounter someone claiming to represent FEMA and asking for donations, be careful, as that is likely a scam. Government employees will never solicit money.

Rumor: [Funding for FEMA disaster response was diverted to support international efforts or border related issues.](#)

Fact:

This is false. No money is being diverted from disaster response needs. FEMA's disaster response efforts and individual assistance is funded through the Disaster Relief Fund, which is a dedicated fund for disaster efforts. Disaster Relief Fund money has not been diverted to other, non-disaster related efforts.

Rumor: [FEMA is confiscating donations for survivors.](#)

Fact:

Rumors about FEMA turning away donations, stopping trucks or vehicles with donations, or confiscating and seizing supplies often spread after a disaster. These are all false.

FEMA does not take donations and/or food from survivors or voluntary organizations. Donations of food, water, or other goods are handled by voluntary agencies who specialize in storing, sorting, cleaning, and distributing donated items.

FEMA does not conduct vehicle stops or handle road closures with armed guards -- those are done by local law enforcement.

Rumor: [FEMA will only provide \\$750 to disaster survivors to support their recovery.](#)

Fact:

This is false. One type of assistance that is often approved quickly after you apply is Serious Needs Assistance, which is \$750 to help pay for essential items like food, water, baby formula, breastfeeding supplies, medication and other emergency supplies. There are other forms of assistance that you may qualify to receive once you apply for disaster assistance. As your application continues to be reviewed, you may still receive additional forms of assistance for other needs such as support for temporary housing and home repair costs. Learn more about the types of assistance available. If you have questions about your disaster assistance application and what you qualify for, contact us at 1-800-621-3362 to speak with a FEMA representative.

Homelessness and Housing First

Register for Tomorrow's (10/8) NLIHC, The Alliance, and CBPP Webinar on Preventing and Ending Homelessness through Innovative State and Local Legislation

TAG: Homelessness *Keywords: NLIHC, CBPP, NAEH, homelessness, Housing First, webinar, state and local, homelessness solutions*

NLIHC, the National Alliance to End Homelessness (The Alliance), and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) invite advocates nationwide to [register](#) for the fourth webinar in our series on advancing solutions to the homelessness crisis. The webinar, "Preventing and Ending Homelessness through Innovative State and Local Legislation," will take place **tomorrow** (Tuesday, October 8) from 2 to 3 pm ET. Register for the webinar [here](#).

State and local governments can play a critical role in ending housing instability and homelessness by pursuing proven solutions that address the root causes and harmful conditions of housing injustices. On this webinar, advocates will discuss state and local policy levers to both advance housing access and create effective alternatives to punitive approaches.

Last year, more than 13,400 people participated in our monthly Homelessness and Housing First [webinar series](#). Given the tremendous interest among stakeholders and the worsening homelessness and affordable housing crises, we decided to continue and expand the series to focus on the solutions to homelessness. On the webinars, we share proven strategies to successfully end homelessness, best practices for state and local advocacy, and actions advocates can take to advance solutions.

Homelessness demands urgent action from all levels of government. We know what works to end homelessness: providing individuals with stable, accessible affordable housing and voluntary supportive services. We hope you will join us in building the political will and congressional support necessary to do so!

Please note that this webinar is not a training, and webinar attendees will not receive a certificate of completion.

Register for the webinar at: <https://tinyurl.com/2spa9f7b>

VA Housed More Than 43,000 Veterans Experiencing Homelessness during Last Fiscal Year

TAG: Homelessness *Keywords: HUD, VA, veterans, homelessness, Housing First, Biden, veteran homelessness, HUD-VASH, permanent supportive housing, USICH*

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [announced](#) on September 24 that between October 2023 and August 2024, the department housed more than 43,000 veterans experiencing

homelessness, surpassing its [goal](#) to house 41,000 veterans one month before the end of the fiscal year. The VA's efforts are built on the [Housing First approach](#), which prioritizes getting a veteran into housing, then providing or connecting them with the services and support they need to stay housed, including access to health care, job training, legal and education assistance, and more.

Through this approach, the VA has ensured that over 96% of the veterans housed during the last fiscal year have not returned to homelessness and has engaged 38,476 unsheltered veterans to ensure they have access to housing and other services and necessities.

The VA permanently housed nearly 87,000 veterans between 2022 and 2023. As a result of these efforts, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness in the U.S. has been lowered by over 4% since early 2020 and by more than 52% since 2010. The VA also made significant progress combating veteran homelessness in the Greater Los Angeles area, providing 1,647 homeless veterans with permanent housing over the last fiscal year and contributing toward a nearly 23% reduction in veterans experiencing homelessness in the city between 2023 and 2024.

Preventing and eliminating veteran homelessness is a top priority for both the VA and the Biden-Harris administration, which has taken considerable steps this year to combat veteran homelessness. Such initiatives include the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness releasing the federal government's first ever [framework for homelessness prevention](#), awarding the VA more than \$800 million in grants through its Supportive Services for Veteran Families and Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem programs, and ensuring veterans receive housing assistance under the HUD-VA Supportive Housing program through HUD and VA policy changes, among other notable actions.

Read the VA announcement at: <https://tinyurl.com/yc6vuekj>

Learn more about Housing First at: <https://bit.ly/3TP2Tpk>

Budget and Appropriations

Take Action: Urge Congress to Finalize FY25 Spending Bill with Increased Affordable Housing and Homelessness Resources by 12/20

TAG: Budget and Appropriations *Keywords: Appropriations, federal budget, continuing resolution, Mike Johnson, Chuck Schumer*

Congress is in recess until November 12, having passed a continuing resolution (CR) that will extend funding for the federal government until December 20 and provide minimal needed spending adjustments for certain programs to ensure they receive adequate funding to operate for the duration of the CR (known as “anomalies”). When they return to Capitol Hill – and regardless of the outcomes of elections – members of Congress will need to work quickly to finalize 12 fiscal year (FY) 2025 spending bills before the current CR expires, including the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) bill that funds HUD's vital

affordable housing and homelessness assistance programs. Allowing the CR to expire without passing final bills or another CR to continue funding would result in a partial shutdown of the federal government.

Despite the urgency, lawmakers have a steep road ahead to reaching a final agreement on FY25 spending. The House's proposed FY25 budget for HUD would cut funding to the department by 3%, while the Senate's proposal would provide a 10% increase to HUD programs. Moreover, the Senate bill provides sufficient funding to renew all existing housing voucher contracts; the House bill would come up short, failing to meet the full funding required to ensure vouchers remain available to households in need.

Take Action!

Advocates should continue pressuring their members of Congress to enact a final FY25 spending bill that provides increased funding for HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness programs. Inadequate funding, long-term CRs, and government shutdowns [have serious consequences](#) for HUD programs: because the cost of housing and homelessness programs rise every year, it is vital these programs receive increased funding every year just to maintain current levels of assistance.

Advocates can use NLIHC's resources to take action today and push Congress to pass increased funding for affordable housing and homelessness in FY25, including for NLIHC's top priorities:

- Full funding to renew all existing contracts for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and expand assistance to 20,000 more households.
- \$6.2 billion for public housing operations and \$5.2 billion for public housing capital needs.
- \$4.7 billion for HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) program.
- \$100 million for the Eviction Protection Grant Program.
- At least \$1.3 billion for Tribal housing programs, plus \$150 million for competitive funds targeted to tribes with the greatest needs.

Use NLIHC's toolkits and resources to take action on FY25 funding, including by:

- **Emailing or calling members' offices** to tell them about the importance of affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources to you, your family, your community, or your work. You can [use NLIHC's Take Action page](#) to look up your member offices or call/send an email directly!
- **Sharing stories** of those directly impacted by homelessness and housing instability. Storytelling adds emotional weight to your message and can help lawmakers see how their policy decisions impact actual people. Learn about [how to tell compelling stories with this resource](#).
- **Using our "Oppose Dramatic Cuts to Federal Investments in Affordable Housing" toolkit:** This toolkit includes resources, talking points, advocacy ideas, and other helpful information on defending funding for affordable housing and homelessness resources in the FY25 federal budget. Meet with your members and urge them to provide the most possible funding for these vital programs in any final FY25 budget agreement!

National, state, local, tribal, and territorial organizations can [also join over 2,300 organizations on CHCDF's national letter](#) calling on Congress to support the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY25.

HUD

HUD PIH Posts Useful Voucher Summary Resource

TAG: Housing Choice Voucher *Keywords: voucher, HCV, PBV, Notice, summary, PIH, HUD, payment standard, FMR, SAFMR, exception payment standards*

HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) posted [Notice PIH 2024-34](#), a handy summary of Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) provisions otherwise scattered throughout various regulations, Notices, and the [Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook](#). The 28-page Notice also includes recent regulatory and policy guidance updates, including those implementing the "Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016" (HOTMA), and provides basic information about the HCV program in easy-to-understand language. Residents and advocates will likely find the Notice to be a useful resource.

The Notice begins with an overview of Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and Small Area FMRs (SAFMRs) on page 2, noting differences that apply to Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs). Next, the Notice explains voucher "payment standards," "payment standard areas," and the payment standard "basic range." An entire section (Section IV, page 8) delves into SAFMRs, explaining their potential benefits, and clarifying the distinction between "Mandatory SAFMRs" and "Opt-in SAFMRs" (also called "voluntary SAFMRs").

An important section (Section V, page 11) discusses "exception payment standards," which can come into play when FMR or SAFMR payment standards are not high enough to enable households to successfully rent a home with a voucher. The Notice goes into detail about each of the four exception payment standard options. The text becomes somewhat more technical when elaborating on situations not likely to arise in most localities (though making such information available could be beneficial for some or future readers). Advocates may consider noting Section IX (page 18), which describes when a public housing agency (PHA) should apply an increase to the payment standard, as well as Section X (page 19), which addresses applying a decrease to the payment standard. Advocates may also want to make sure their PHA decides to use a "hold harmless" provision when there is a decrease in the payment standard; doing so is essential to prevent households who are already living in a home with an HCV from experiencing a rent increase.

The fourth exception payment standard, a "reasonable accommodation" for a person with a disability, is explained at Section XI (page 20). Advocates have noted that many PHAs do not inform households about the reasonable accommodation exception payment standard, and some PHAs often deny a reasonable accommodation even though a household should be eligible.

Project-Based Vouchers (PBV) are discussed in detail in Section XII (page 21), which goes into detail about how SAFMRs work in tandem with PBVs and the PBV maximum rent and its relationship to exception payment standards. The text becomes more technical in this section as well.

Read Notice PIH 2024-34 at: <https://tinyurl.com/5db6n7mr>

More information about Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) including HOTMA provisions is on [page 4-1](#) of NLIHC's *2024 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs) including HOTMA provisions is on [page 4-11](#) of NLIHC's *2024 Advocates' Guide*.

Our Homes, Our Votes

Our Homes, Our Votes Updates – October 7, 2024

TAG: OHOV *Keywords: Our Homes Our Votes, nonpartisan campaign, voting, elections, voting rights, National Voter Education Week, voter education, voter guides*

Celebrate National Voter Education Week (October 7-11)!

Today (Monday, October 7) marks the first day of National Voter Education Week (NVEW), a nonpartisan voter education campaign that prepares voters to cast their ballots with confidence. NVEW provides resources to walk voters through five aspects of a “voting checklist”: registering to vote, getting to know your ballot, making a plan to vote, understanding the process, and sharing with friends and family. For each step, NVEW provides a [Partner Toolkit](#) with programming ideas, message guidance, and social media content.

Here are steps that voters should take to fulfill each of the five items in the voting checklist throughout NVEW (October 7-11):

- 1) **Register to vote:** Voter registration is the first step to casting a ballot. Take a minute to register to vote, or confirm that you are registered with your current name and address, at ourhomes.turbovote.org.
- 2) **Get to know your ballot:** Voting is not a pop quiz – you can see exactly what to expect on your ballot ahead of time! Elections up and down the ballot will have an impact on housing policies affecting your community. In addition to candidates for office at the federal, state, and local levels, many voters will have the opportunity to directly weigh in on policies through [ballot measures](#). Familiarizing yourself with the candidates and issues on the ballot can help you vote with confidence. Enter your address at ourhomes.turbovote.org to preview what's on your ballot.
- 3) **Make a plan to vote:** Research shows that voters are more likely to cast a ballot if they make a plan to do it ahead of time. Take some time to determine when, where, and how you will vote: by mail, in person on Election Day, or during your state's in-person early voting period. If you are voting in person, determine your polling place location and hours, how you will

get to the polls, and if you need to bring an ID. If you are voting by mail, ensure that you know the deadline for requesting and returning your ballot, as well as the available options for returning a ballot in your state. You can find more guidance about where to vote in your state at ourhomes.turbovote.org/where-to-vote.

- 4) **Understand the process:** To feel more confident in your vote and encourage others to participate in the democratic process, it can be helpful to understand who runs elections in your community, how ballots are counted, and what systems are in place to ensure accuracy and transparency. Visit nationalvotereducationweek.org/process/ for an FAQ about the voting process, guidance for addressing misinformation, and resources that you can use to build confidence in our democracy.
- 5) **Share with your friends and family:** People are more likely to vote when they're asked to do so by someone they know. This week, reach out to at least three friends, family members, or neighbors to help them register and make their voting plan. You can use template nonpartisan [voter registration](#) and [get-out-the-vote phonebanking scripts](#) from *Our Homes, Our Votes* to reach out to members of your community.

To learn more about National Voter Education Week and other nonpartisan Civic Holidays, see the [Our Homes, Our Votes “Celebrating the Civic Holidays” factsheet](#).

For more *Our Homes, Our Votes* voter education resources, visit: www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org/voter-education

Partner Resources for Nonpartisan Voter Education

Many organizations that partner with *Our Homes, Our Votes* have released nonpartisan resources that help voters navigate the logistics of voting, understand what's at stake in the elections, and combat mis/dis/malinformation.

Coalition on Human Needs: “Vote for Human Needs” Voter Guides

The [Coalition on Human Needs \(CHN\)](#), a nonpartisan coalition that advocates for policies to serve low-income people, released a series of voter guides intended to help human needs organizations and voters navigate the policy issues that matter most to our communities. The guides cover the topics of housing, healthcare, hunger, caregiving, democracy, and helping families and low-income people. Each guide provides a brief description of the issue, relevant statistics, and an outline of policy solutions.

The voter guides (branded and unbranded versions are linked below) can be used as flyers or handouts or posted on social media, using the hashtag #VoteforHumanNeeds:

- Vote for a Better Care System; [Branded Version](#) | [Unbranded Version](#)
- Vote for a Better Healthcare System; [Branded Version](#) | [Unbranded Version](#)
- Vote to Fight Hunger; [Branded Version](#) | [Unbranded Version](#)
- Vote for Better Housing; [Branded Version](#) | [Unbranded Version](#)
- Vote to Help Families and Low-Income People; [Branded Version](#) | [Unbranded Version](#)
- Vote to Protect Our Democracy; [Branded Version](#) | [Unbranded Version](#)

Camilla Ahmed, voter engagement coordinator at CHN, presented about the nonpartisan voter guides on a recent *Our Homes, Our Votes* webinar, “Voter Education: The Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.” The webinar recording and recap can be found [here](#).

League of Women Voters Resources to Combat Mis/Dis/Mal Information

The League of Women Voters (LWV) compiles a collection of resources that advocates can use to combat mis/dis/mal information and promote accurate election information in their communities. [“The Do’s and Don’ts of Election Disinformation”](#) is an educational one-pager offered in both English and Spanish that offers straightforward guidance for responding to mis/dis/mal information.

For those seeking to engage more directly in combating mis/dis/mal information, LWV is partnering with the Algorithmic Transparency Institute to recruit volunteers for the Civic Listening Corps (CLC), a volunteer network trained to monitor, evaluate, and report mis/dis/mal information on essential topics. Individuals can sign up using this [link](#).

The best way to combat mis/dis/mal information is for trusted messengers to ensure they are spreading accurate and credible information. LWV’s [VOTE411.org](#) can be used to find official information, and its “Plan Your Vote Cards” can help voters take the necessary steps to cast their ballots and make their voices heard. The cards can be found in English [here](#) and Spanish [here](#).

Jeannette Senecal, senior director of mission impact at LWV, presented on a recent *Our Homes, Our Votes* webinar about the differences between misinformation, malinformation, and disinformation, and how to recognize and combat them during election season. The webinar recording and recap can be found [here](#).

REV UP’s 2024 State Voting Guides

As part of its mission to build the power of the disability vote, the American Association of People with Disabilities’ ([AAPD](#)) nonpartisan REV UP Voting Campaign has released [2024 State Voting Guides for the General Election](#). The state-level voting guides contain plain-language information about voter registration, accessibility, what to expect on the ballot, in-person and mail-in voting options, and additional resources to support voters with disabilities. The voting guides also link to a [“My Plan to Vote” worksheet](#). The worksheet walks through every step that a voter should take to get ready to vote. Though designed for people with disabilities, the REV UP state guides are applicable for any voter seeking to learn more about their state’s rules or develop a personalized voting plan.

REV UP’s voter guides can be found [here](#).

NARF Factsheets and State Guides

The Native American Rights Fund ([NARF](#)) has released a collection of state-level [voter guides](#) for the 2024 elections. As of now, NARF has posted guides for 11 U.S. states, with plans to add at least three more before the 2024 elections. The voting guides outline the logistics of voting in each state and highlight issues disproportionately affecting Native voters, such as residential address and voter ID requirements. NARF also creates factsheets for Tribal leaders, including

explainers of Indian Health Services (HIS) voter registration facilities and other resources that can make voting more accessible on Tribal lands. In addition, NARF has a collection of Native language voting resources that outline the rights to language assistance for speakers of both historically written and unwritten languages.

NARF is dedicated to dismantling barriers faced by Native Americans seeking to exercise their right to vote, and has published an extensive [report](#) detailing the obstacles Native people face at every turn just to get their vote counted, including (but not limited to) pervasive housing insecurity, unequal access to in-person and online registration, voter purges, inadequate polling facilities, and lack of pre-election outreach. NARF fights for political representation [in court](#), works against discriminatory redistricting litigation, and ensures that Native languages are legally recognized and preserved in political proceedings.

The list of NARF state voter guides, Tribal leaders' guides, language assistance factsheets, and other voting resources can be found [here](#).

NLIHC Joins Housing Network of Rhode Island for *Our Homes, Our Votes* Events

Diane Yentel, president and CEO of NLIHC, and Courtney Cooperman, project manager of the *Our Homes, Our Votes* campaign, joined the Housing Network of Rhode Island for a series of nonpartisan voter engagement events on Tuesday, September 25. The Housing Network of Rhode Island is a member of NLIHC's State & Tribal Partner network and [an *Our Homes, Our Votes* Pilot Community](#) partner.

The day began in Pawtucket with nonpartisan voter outreach at Shower to Empower, a one-of-a-kind mobile service provided by [House of Hope](#) that offers basic needs such as complimentary showers and haircuts, onsite case management, and medical services to individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability. The team provided nonpartisan voter registration assistance and held meaningful conversations about why voting matters for people experiencing homelessness and housing instability to make their voices heard.

In the afternoon, NLIHC joined Rhode Island Secretary of State Gregg Amore, Housing Network of Rhode Island, the Homes RI coalition, and West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation for a press conference and community voter engagement event at West Elmwood's [Sankofa](#) community in Providence. Diane Yentel gave remarks about the importance of closing the voter turnout gap between low-income renters and high-income homeowners to build the political will for housing justice. Secretary Amore emphasized his office's commitment to promoting voter access for all eligible Rhode Islanders. Candace Harper, executive director of West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation, spoke about West Elmwood's commitment to empowering residents to vote. Georgina Sarpong, a resident leader in West Elmwood, highlighted the importance of voting for residents to make decisions on the policies affecting their daily lives. The press conference was followed by a family-friendly voter engagement ice cream social with West Elmwood residents and neighbors.

West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation is a member of the *Our Homes, Our Votes* Housing Providers Council, a nonpartisan group of affordable housing developers, property managers, and resident services staff committed to boosting voter turnout in their communities.

The group meets virtually every other month to receive trainings and exchange best practices in resident voter engagement. To learn more about the Housing Providers Council, visit: www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org/housing-providers-council

Check out images from *Our Homes, Our Votes*' visit to Rhode Island on social media [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

State and Local Innovation

NLIHC's SLI Project Releases Case Studies on Laws Limiting Rental Junk Fees in Rhode Island and Connecticut

Tag: State and Local Innovation *Keywords: State and Local Innovation, SLI, rental junk fees, Rhode Island, Connecticut, State and Local Tenant Protection Series*

NLIHC's [State and Local Innovation \(SLI\) project](#) released on October 2 a new publication exploring laws limiting rental junk fees in Connecticut and Rhode Island. The publication is the newest installment of NLIHC's *State and Local Tenant Protection Series: A Primer on Renters' Rights*, a collection of resources aiming to shape the conversation about state and local tenant protections. Read the new publication [here](#).

In recent years, the cost of housing has far outpaced wages for millions of renters, forcing many households to spend a greater and greater share of their income on rent and other rental expenses. These additional rental expenses often include fees related to the rental and occupancy of a unit, such as application fees, processing fees, pet fees, convenience fees, administrative fees, late fees, and other fees that raise total rental costs. Commonly known as “junk fees,” these costs are often undisclosed, unpredictable, and arbitrary, and they can quickly accumulate for tenants, putting safe and decent rental housing even more out of reach for the lowest-income and most marginalized renters, who already tend to spend most of their income on rent.

While no federal protections currently exist to regulate excessive rental fees for renters in the private rental market, a growing number of state and local legislatures have passed laws limiting rental junk fees. The new publication explores legislation enacted by two states – Connecticut and Rhode Island – to address rental junk fees. Connecticut's “[Senate Bill 998](#)” regulates rental application fees, security deposit fees, tenant screening fees, and late payments for non-payment of rent. Rhode Island's “[House Bill 6087](#)” focuses on rental application fees. The case studies explore the core components of each piece of legislation while also discussing the efforts undertaken by housing advocates in each state that led to passage of the laws.

Like other materials in the *State and Local Tenant Protection Series*, the new publication is meant to help state and local advocates identify successful tactics for advancing, enacting, and implementing just cause protections in their own jurisdictions, as well as to offer insights into the challenges that can occur during the advocacy and legislative processes. The case studies also highlight the qualitative impact of these protections for tenants and how such laws can be critical in mitigating the threat of housing instability.

NLIHC will publish two more case studies this year exploring additional tenant protections that can work in tandem with rental junk fee laws to ensure housing stability and prevent evictions. Explore NLIHC's [State and Local Tenant Protections Database](#) to learn about the more than 600 tenant protections that have been enacted in states and localities around the country.

Download the new case study [here](#).

Learn more about NLIHC's SLI project [here](#).

Opportunity Starts at Home

Recap of 10/1 OSAH Roundtable Event

Tag: Opportunity Starts at Home *Keywords: Opportunity Starts at Home, OSAH, multi-sector, Roundtable*

The Opportunity Starts at Home (OSAH) campaign hosted a Roundtable event in Washington, D.C. on October 1. The event, “Opportunity Starts at Homes: Six Years of Building Effective and Robust Cross-Sector Partnerships,” marked the first in-person meeting of the OSAH Roundtable since 2019. Over 40 representatives from multi-sector national organizations joined to connect with fellow Roundtable members, mobilize around the campaign’s priority bills, and discuss new strategies to further collective efforts.

Stephanie Love-Patterson, CEO and president of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), opened the event with a history of NNEDV’s involvement with the OSAH campaign and its shift from participating as a Roundtable member to serving on the Steering Committee. She emphasized the importance of safe, affordable housing for survivors of domestic violence and the power of cross-sector partnerships. Chantelle Wilkinson, OSAH campaign director, provided an overview of the OSAH campaign’s work over the past six years and what the campaign has accomplished. Sarah Saadian, vice president of field and policy at NLIHC, gave attendees an update on the campaign’s priority bills and plans to advance those bills in the coming year.

Julie Walker, OSAH campaign coordinator, moderated a panel that highlighted the partnerships between the campaign and leaders in domestic violence prevention, early childhood development, food security, and education. Dfox, collaborative approach to housing for survivors (CASH) senior specialist at NNEDV; Patricia Cole, senior federal policy director at ZEROTOTHREE; Robert Campbell, vice president of policy at Feeding America; and Barbara Duffield, executive director of Schoolhouse Connection joined the panel to discuss why their organizations joined the Roundtable and how they have engaged with the OSAH campaign over the years. The event concluded with time for Roundtable members to discuss ideas for continued collaboration in 2025.

The OSAH [Opportunity Roundtable](#) is made up of representatives from 122 multi-sector organizations and enables the campaign to raise awareness about the intersections of housing and

other sectors, continually expand its multi-sector network, and reach a diverse array of new stakeholders.

Research

Research Reveals Rapid Rehousing Programs for Single Adults Are Associated with Substantive Decreases in Anxiety and Depression Symptoms

TAG: Housing Instability and Homelessness *Keywords: mental health, rapid rehousing, RRH, Housing First, Housing Studies, anxiety, depression, homelessness*

An article in *Housing Studies*, “[Assessing anxiety and depression trajectories among single homeless adults receiving rapid rehousing following placement in housing](#),” examines self-reported anxiety and depression symptoms among a group of 98 single adults experiencing homelessness shortly after receiving rapid rehousing (RRH) services. RRH programs aim to house people as quickly as possible through the [Housing First model](#) by providing a range of services such as housing identification, temporary financial assistance for rent and move-in costs, and ongoing case management. The authors find that RRH programs were associated with significant decreases in anxiety and depression symptoms among single adults experiencing homelessness. They emphasize the need for expanding upon these findings through additional research studies focused on the impact of rapid rehousing programs on mental health outcomes.

Prior research on RRH programs has focused mainly on outcomes related to housing stability, with limited or no consideration of the programs’ impact on recipients’ mental health status. Housing is widely considered a key [social determinant of health](#) and, in the context of homelessness, has a particularly strong link to mental health. The authors note that studies of other kinds of housing assistance, such as permanent supportive housing, have placed a greater emphasis on examining the mental health outcomes of recipients.

The authors sought to estimate the extent to which the anxiety and depression symptoms of people experiencing homelessness changed over time following placement in housing through an RRH program and to understand how individuals’ demographic and socioeconomic characteristics influenced these changes. They recruited participants from individuals receiving RRH services from a large nonprofit homeless service and housing agency based in a major city in the northeast U.S. Case specialists were given recruitment flyers to share with clients, who could choose to opt into the study. Eligibility was limited to clients who were initially placed into housing between March 2018 and June 2020 and had access to the internet or a phone. Participants took surveys online or by phone at the time of housing placement and every six months thereafter through June 2021; participants received a \$15-25 gift card as compensation for each completed survey.

The surveys took approximately 10 minutes to complete and asked a range of questions on housing status, employment, income, health status, and sociodemographic measures. The authors included two well-tested and widely used clinical assessments within each survey to measure participants’ anxiety and depression levels: the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7),

which has a scale of 0 to 21, and the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), which has a scale of 0 to 27. For both assessments, scores closer to zero indicate lower levels of anxiety or depression, and higher scores indicate more severe levels of anxiety or depression. Participants took anywhere between one to six follow-up surveys depending on time of enrollment and availability, with a total of 210 surveys included in the analysis.

The authors found that participants' anxiety and depression scores decreased over time following placement into stable housing through the RRH program. From the initial surveys taken during the first month of being rehoused, the estimated average anxiety score for participants was 8.3 and the estimated average depression score was 8.8. At one year post move-in, estimated average participant scores for anxiety and depression declined to 7.3 and 7.7, respectively. At two years post move-in, the estimated average scores further declined to 6.4 for anxiety and 6.7 for depression. The authors identified several factors that influence the trajectory of anxiety and depression levels among participants including age, race, and monthly income. Generally, older participants and those with a poor credit history displayed a more dramatic reduction in their symptoms over time than younger participants and those with no history of poor credit scores.

Given the deficit of prior research studies on this subject, as well as the lack of a control group in this study, the authors note that it is hard to place the significance of some of their findings. They emphasize the need for additional studies regarding the relationship between RRH and mental health outcomes to fully examine the impact of these programs. Additionally, the authors suggest that future studies consider factors such as participants' access to mental health and substance use treatment services, the availability of educational and vocational programs, and the structure of participants' social networks to understand how RRH services can be modified to meet the unique needs of individuals in the program and support greater improvements in mental health outcomes.

Read the full article [here](#).

From the Field

Apply Today to Join NLIHC's *Generation Housing Justice!*

Tag: **From the Field** Keywords: *Generation Housing Justice, application*

NLIHC is accepting applications to join our new initiative *Generation Housing Justice!* Twenty young housing advocates ages 18 to 24 will be selected to participate in the first cohort, which kicks off in January 2025 and runs through May 2025. Participants will gain the knowledge and resources needed to successfully advocate for federal affordable housing solutions and to organize effectively in their own communities. Apply to *Generation Housing Justice* [here!](#)

Generation Housing Justice fellows will receive a \$1,000 stipend after successfully completing the program and travel support to attend NLIHC's Housing Policy Forum and Capitol Hill Day in Washington, D.C. The program will include monthly virtual meetings, attendance at NLIHC's Housing Policy Forum and Capitol Hill Day in March 2025, and a final project that contributes

to NLIHC's mission. Projects may include but are not limited to writing and publishing an op-ed, starting a campus or community housing advocacy group focused on NLIHC's priorities, or planning and facilitating a discussion with elected officials.

Applications will be accepted until November 1 at 5 pm ET, and fellows will be notified of a decision by December 2. People with lived experience of housing instability or homelessness are encouraged to apply.

Learn more and apply by November 1 at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XDXBWSG>

Join Today's (Monday, 10/7) "Tenant Talk Live" on Advancing Housing Preservation through Tenant Engagement!

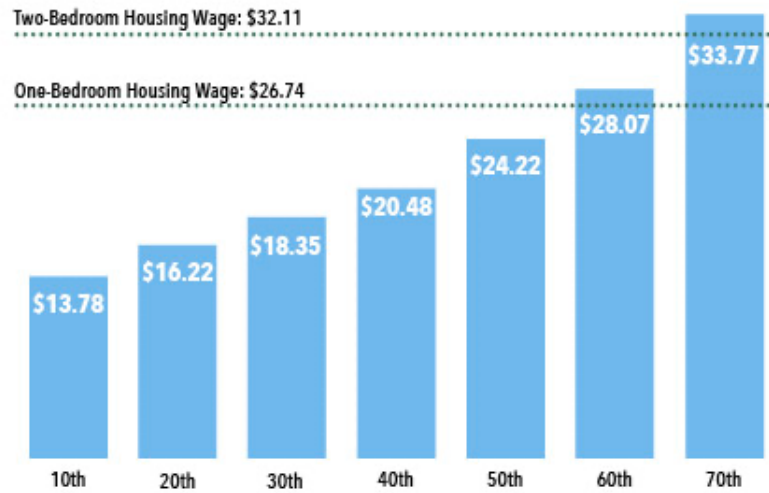
Join NLIHC's next "Tenant Talk Live," a meeting geared toward tenant and resident leaders, **today**, October 7, at 6 pm ET (5 pm CT, 4 pm MT, and 3 pm PT). During the meeting, NLIHC staff will host a discussion with advocates from Minneapolis who are working to pass the "Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act" (TOPA). This legislation aims to empower tenants by promoting the transfer of property ownership to them. Similar laws have been enacted in cities like Washington, D.C., and advocates in Minneapolis hope to achieve passage of TOPA by the end of this year. Join us to learn more about the advocates' journey so far and to ask questions about their work. Register for today's webinar [here](#).

Fact of the Week

Rental Housing Is Out of Reach for Workers in Bottom Half of Wage Distribution

TAG: Fact of the Week *Keywords: Out of Reach, housing costs, wages, Housing Wage*

HOURLY WAGES BY PERCENTILE VS. ONE- AND TWO-BEDROOM HOUSING WAGES



Source: Housing wages based on HUD fair market rents. The hourly wages by percentile are drawn from the Economic Policy Institute State of Working America Data Library 2023, adjusted to 2024 dollars.



Note: Housing wages based on HUD fair market rents. The hourly wages by percentile are drawn from the Economic Policy Institute State of Working America Data Library 2023, adjusted to 2024 dollars.

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition. *Out of Reach 2024*. Available at: www.nlihc.org/oor

NLIHC Careers

NLIHC Seeks Fund Development Director

NLIHC seeks a fund development director to work closely with the NLIHC vice president of external affairs to support NLIHC's development and fundraising endeavors. The fund development director will develop and execute multi-year fundraising plans to include major gifts, annual appeal, planned giving, event sponsorship, and campaigns. The fund development director will supervise two staff (fund development coordinators) and will report to the vice president of external affairs.

Responsibilities/Duties:

- Lead organizational fundraising strategy and implementation plan to grow current annual fundraising.
- Expand NLIHC planned giving initiatives.

- Manage NLIHC's donors and prospects base, developing and implementing tailored cultivation, solicitation and stewardship plans.
- Manage major donor engagement – to include effective solicitations and other fundraising activities.
- Manage research and apply to foundations for grant awards for various programs as needed; manage all aspects of post-award grants including reporting requirements.
- Evaluate progress toward organizational goals/budgets and provide regular reporting to NLIHC CEO and vice president of external affairs.
- Manage systems, processes, and tools to maximize fundraising capacity including overseeing donor management database.
- Work closely across NLIHC's external affairs and other teams to ensure brand representation in all communication outreach and efforts.
- Lead and collaborate with staff on the management and planning of fundraising events and donor receptions.
- Work with communications team to develop print, digital, and social media marketing collateral related to fundraising.
- Plan and manage e-communications, to deliver NLIHC updates across donor base.
- Plan and lead fundraising special events and drives.
- Manage and maintain gift recognition policies.
- Work closely with NLIHC's finance team to manage financial reporting and tracking of donor contributions.
- Manage development and execution of reports and proposals – oversee writing and archiving of all proposals with a long-term relationship-management approach.
- Oversee monitoring of all donor information and use of Salesforce for donor contact management.
- Monitor and report regularly on the progress of the development program, including NLIHC board reports
- Work closely with the fund development committee of NLIHC's board of directors on planning for annual fundraiser.
- Lead planning and implementation of securing event sponsorships.
- Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

This is a full-time position, and candidates must be physically located in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree. Applicants must have a strong commitment to social justice and NLIHC's mission. This position would be ideal for someone with eight or more years of directly relevant fund development experience, and five or more years of management experience. Proficiency with Salesforce is required. Proficiency in grant writing is required.

The salary range for this position is contingent upon experience and is from \$92,000 - \$138,000. This position requires physical time in the office and the candidate must be located in the metropolitan Washington, DC area or be able to commute to our office located in DC for a hybrid work schedule.

A person will be most successful in this role if you have knowledge and experience in all aspects of philanthropy, giving trends, benchmarks, and best practices; research; fundraising techniques and strategies; data analytics; and development operations such as gift processing, prospect and donor research, and fundraising reporting.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and a generous benefits package.

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, and one writing sample to Jen Butler, NLIHC VP of External Affairs, via email at jbutler@nlihc.org.

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of September 29

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of September 29:

- “Homeless camping bans are complicating hurricane recovery efforts” *Vox*, October 3, at: <https://tinyurl.com/54xujjak>
 - “Governor Newsom warns city of Norwalk over ban on homeless shelters” *AOL*, October 3, at: <https://tinyurl.com/ccxyuskr>
 - “Presque Isle supportive housing complex is nearly full 2 weeks after opening” *Bangor Daily News*, October 1, at: <https://tinyurl.com/24d7yp92>
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NLIHC News

Where to Find Us – October 7

- ANC 1A Housing Committee Meeting – Washington, D.C., October 7 (Billy Cerullo)
- International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC) Executive Council Meeting – Washington, DC, October 7 (Sarah Saadian)
- Metro Housing Boston [Celebration of Section 8](#) – Virtual, October 8 (Sarah Saadian)
- Georgia ACT 2024 Annual Fall Affordable Housing Conference – Atlanta, GA, October 8 (Diane Yentel)
- NLIHC Southeast Tenant Protections Roundtable – Miramar Beach, FL, October 9 (Sarah Gallagher, Tori Bourret, Nada Hussein)
- Hilton Foundation Annual Partner Convening – Los Angeles, CA, October 10 (Diane Yentel)
- SCANPH Annual Conference, “Our Voice, Our Vote” – Pasadena, CA, October 10 (Courtney Cooperman)
- [2024 Southern Conference on Homelessness and Housing](#) – Miramar Beach, FL, October 10-11 (Sarah Gallagher, Tori Bourret, Nada Hussein)

- Rainbow 16th Annual Awards Banquet – Scottsdale, AZ, October 17 (Diane Yentel)
- [*Our Stories, Our Solutions: A Summit on Transformative Solutions for Economic Equity*](#) - New York, NY, October 17-18 (Raquel Harati)
- Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York Annual Conference – Poughkeepsie, NY, October 22 (Lindsay Duvall)
- NC Balance of State CoC LEAC – Virtual, October 24 (Billy Cerullo)
- American Association of Service Coordinators National Conference – Indianapolis, IN, October 29 (Courtney Cooperman)
- Educare DC – Washington, D.C., November 6 (Billy Cerullo)
- [South Carolina Association of Community Action Partnerships Conference](#) – Myrtle Beach, SC, November 19 (Julie Walker)

NLIHC Staff

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 Sidney Betancourt, Project Manager, Inclusive Community Engagement, x200
 Victoria Bourret, Project Manager, State and Local Innovation, x244
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 Nara Kim, Policy Intern
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 Khara Norris, Vice President of Operations and Finance, x242
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