



MEMO OF MEMBERS

The Weekly Newsletter of the National Low Income Housing Coalition

Your Vote Matters! Vote Tomorrow, Tuesday, November 6

NLIHC encourages you to head to the polls and make your voice heard on Tuesday, November 6.

Use Nonprofit VOTE's online registration tools to confirm that you are registered, check the address associated with your registration and obtain contact information for your local elections office. Visit Nonprofit VOTE at <http://bit.ly/RwJkwB>.

To locate your voting place, go to <http://bit.ly/RwJl3F>.

NATIONAL HOUSING TRUST FUND

Support Grows for NLIHC Proposal to Reform Mortgage Interest Deduction

More than 410 national, state and local organizations have endorsed the proposal of the National Low Income Housing Coalition to modify the mortgage interest deduction (MID) and use the savings from reform to fund the National Housing Trust Fund.

Recent news stories make clear the MID is no longer thought to be untouchable by those in the housing industry or by lawmakers. Real estate industry news publication *Inman News* reported on October 15 that panelists at a San Francisco real estate forum were certain that change is coming to mortgage interest tax policy, no matter who is elected president next week. On October 24, NPR reported that MID was sure to be up for reform when Congress returns from election recess for the lame duck session.

In an opinion piece in the *New York Times* on October 31, Yonah Freemark and Lawrence J. Vale argue that NLIHC's proposal is a "straightforward" way to increase housing resources for the lowest income people, without adding to the deficit or harming the middle class.

Readers can test the proposal on their own tax bill using NLIHC's housing tax reform calculator at <http://bit.ly/R4D8ZM>. The calculator uses average filings for a variety of taxpayer types to estimate the impact of different mortgage interest tax benefit scenarios—current law, a 20% mortgage interest credit and elimination of the mortgage interest deduction—for individual taxpayers.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition proposes to modify the current mortgage interest tax break by reducing the size of a mortgage eligible for a tax break to \$500,000, and to convert the deduction to a non-refundable tax credit.

Converting the mortgage interest deduction into a 20% non-refundable tax credit will save the federal government between \$20 billion and \$40 billion a year while making this tax benefit more available to the middle and lower income families who need it. Homeowners would receive a tax credit for interest on mortgages up to \$500,000. Interest on second homes and home equity loans would be eligible for credit under the \$500,000 cap.

These changes would mean that all homeowners with mortgages would get a tax break, not just those who have enough income to file itemized tax returns. With a 20% tax credit, the number of homeowners with mortgages who would get a tax break would increase from 43 million to 60 million, with 92% of the increase being households with incomes less than \$100,000 a year. It would also provide over \$20 billion a year in savings that can be used to build and rehabilitate affordable rental housing by capitalizing the National Housing Trust Fund.

Read the *Inman News* article at <http://bit.ly/RwJnIY>.

Read or listen to the NPR story at <http://n.pr/RwJpk7>.

Read the *New York Times* op-ed at <http://nyti.ms/RwJpQY>.

Learn more about the MID, and NLIHC's proposal, at www.housingtaxreform.org.

CONGRESS

NLIHC Urges Consideration of Disaster Recovery Act in Lame Duck Session

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, NLIHC urges the Congress to take up consider S. 1630, the Disaster Recovery Act, before the end of this Congress. The bill would make important reforms to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

S. 1630 was introduced by Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) on September 23, 2011 and referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs. The bill is cosponsored by Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS).

Senator Landrieu's staff tells NLIHC that the Senator will try to advance the legislation during the lame duck session of Congress after the election.

The legislation, if enacted, would make many important changes to post-disaster housing programs, which are based on lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina. Many are changes advocated by NLIHC and the Katrina Housing Group (see *Memo*, 9/23/11). Among other provisions, the bill would:

- Clearly define when a disaster is considered to be catastrophic and set up mechanisms to ensure an appropriately robust federal role in disaster response and recovery.
- Require that FEMA, HUD and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) develop a single, comprehensive case management system, and develop regulations to ensure that every survivor has a single point of contact for case management services.
- Make changes to the housing response and recovery activities authorized under the Stafford Act to minimize the time that households are in temporary housing and ensure a seamless transition for these households to new permanent housing.

While the extent of the damage by Hurricane Sandy damage to low income housing is still being assessed, NLIHC partners in affected states report significant impact to affordable housing developments.

HUD has made available resources to assist low income renters living in counties in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey where President Obama has issued a disaster declaration. According to a HUD press release, “HUD is currently contacting State and local officials to explore streamlining the Department’s CDBG and HOME programs in order to expedite the repair and replacement of damaged housing.” Further, HUD has also put into place a 90-day moratorium on foreclosures for FHA-insured loans in affected counties.

According to Federal Emergency Management Director Craig Fugate, there are adequate funds now in the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) to pay for Sandy-related response efforts. However, he has left open the possibility that additional funds may be needed at a later date. The DRF was exempted from the spending caps included in the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA). Further, disaster funds can be rolled over across fiscal years and do not need to be offset.

The text of S. 1630 is available at <http://1.usa.gov/RwJxA5>.

NLIHC’s letter of endorsement for S. 1630 is available at www.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/KHG_Endorsement_S1630.pdf.

FROM THE FIELD

NLIHC Welcomes New State Coalition Partners

NLIHC is proud to announce the addition of two statewide coalitions to its state coalition partner network. The Arkansas Coalition of Housing and Neighborhood Growth for Empowerment

(ACHANGE) and the West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness (WVCEH) have been approved by NLIHC’s Board of Directors, expanding our network to 64 State Coalitions in 41 states and the District of Columbia.

Established in 2004, ACHANGE is dedicated to promoting quality affordable housing and community economic development by supporting, informing and encouraging local and statewide efforts to improve housing for low and moderate income families throughout Arkansas. Its 50 members include nonprofit developers, public housing agencies, counseling agencies, consultants, social service providers, real estate agents, financial institutions and government agencies.

A founding member of Housing Arkansas, another NLIHC state coalition partner, ACHANGE helped to ensure passage of legislation that authorized the Arkansas Housing Trust Fund in 2009. In 2011, it received funding to conduct regional foreclosure prevention events that connected consumers with mortgage servicing organizations. As a part of this effort, ACHANGE was able to provide funding for successful foreclosure counseling efforts. To ensure that housing is part of the state’s community development conversation, it is involved with the Arkansas Community Development Society and Community Development Institute Central, a week-long class for development professionals that takes place at the University of Central Arkansas. Since 2011, the advanced course curriculum has included a housing course.

“ACHANGE is pleased to become a state coalition partner with the National Low Income Housing Coalition and looks forward to an active relationship that will benefit the citizens of Arkansas,” said Debra Banks, ACHANGE program manager. “ACHANGE’s mission is to serve as a collective voice for affordable housing providers and supporters; partnering with NLIHC will allow us to be even more effective in that mission.”

WVCEH creates partnerships and collaborations at the local, state and national levels to develop and implement long-term solutions to homelessness and poverty, including efforts to increase the affordable housing stock in West Virginia. Its 45 associates include individuals, local governments, housing authorities, Veteran Affairs medical centers, state funders and Continuum of Care leadership.

WVCEH began as a collaboration of 10 homeless shelters more than 15 years ago. As the group gained greater involvement from nonprofit provider and advocacy organizations, it became the collective voice of groups serving homeless and low income people across the state. It is the lead Balance of State Continuum of Care agency, which coordinates HUD Continuum of Care funding applications. In addition, it spearheads the Social Security Outreach and Access to Recovery (SOAR) program in West Virginia.

Known for its data-informed approach to ending homelessness in the state, WVCEH serves as the lead agency for the Balance of State CoC’s Homeless Management Information Systems, which tracks

information about people served through HUD and other homeless assistance programs. It also coordinates state homelessness data in an effort to target resources, inform advocacy and build partnerships.

“We are incredibly excited to become a state coalition partner with the National Low Income Housing Coalition for West Virginia,” said Zach Brown, WVCEH’s executive director. “Accessing and maintaining affordable housing for the homeless and low income population in West Virginia are issues of immense importance for us. Being able to work with NLIHC and its network will enable us to be at the forefront in advocating for the preservation of existing housing resources and drastically expand affordable housing resources and housing stability in West Virginia.”

To learn more about ACHANGE, visit www.achange.org or contact Debra Banks at dbanks@achange.org.

To learn more about WVCEH, visit www.wvceh.org or contact Zach Brown at zachbrown@wvceh.org.

To see a list of NLIHC’s state coalition partners and for more information about the State Coalition Project, visit <http://bit.ly/RwJzIh>. You may also contact NLIHC State Coalition Project Director La’Teashia Sykes at lateashia@nlihc.org or 202-662-1530 ext. 247.

EVENTS

CBPP to Hold Webinar on Impact of Sequestration on Affordable Housing

On November 9, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) will host a webinar, “What Do the Budget Control Act, Sequestration and the Fiscal Cliff Mean for Housing and Community Development?” NLIHC and the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) will participate in the presentation. The webinar will explain the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) and impending sequestration. It will also discuss why Congress’ upcoming decisions about the fiscal cliff and budget deficit are so important, including the funding outlook for housing and community development programs in 2013 and beyond.

The BCA requires the sequestering of discretionary funds beginning January 2, 2013. Sequestering funds means making across-the-board cuts to all discretionary programs; these cuts are estimated to be approximately 8.2% for HUD and USDA rural housing programs. The goal of the sequester is to achieve a \$1.2 trillion reduction in the deficit over a 10-year period (see *Memo*, 10/26).

CBPP has also estimated the impact of these across-the-board cuts to select HUD programs for states (see *Memo*, 10/26).

The webinar will take place on Friday, November 9 from 1 to 2pm ET. Register at <http://bit.ly/RwFoMw>.

RESOURCES

NLIHC Fact Sheets Updated for November 2012

NLIHC updated its fact sheets on current legislative issues as of November 2, based on recent legislative activity in the 112th Congress. Fact sheets track legislation related to NLIHC’s 2012 policy agenda, including the National Housing Trust Fund, vouchers, public and assisted housing preservation, budget and appropriations, protecting tenants at foreclosure, housing plus services, low income housing tax credits and other issues.

Access the updated information on the Fact Sheets page of the NLIHC website at <http://bit.ly/NQZ2U3>.

New Research Highlights Characteristics of Households Receiving Housing Assistance

NLIHC’s latest publication, *Housing Spotlight: Who Lives in Federally Assisted Housing?*, delves into new data from a public database on HUD-assisted households. The Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) database was released in February 2012 and provides household-level data on tenants participating in five of HUD’s largest programs: public housing, Project-Based Section 8, Section 202, Section 811 and Housing Choice Vouchers. The database is a 5% sample of households receiving federal assistance through these five programs (See *Memo*, 3/9).

The new *Housing Spotlight* stresses that federal programs serve households in great need of housing assistance. Most households living in subsidized units earn less than \$20,000 a year, and many families include elderly persons, children and members with disabilities. Households that include at least one member with a disability comprise over a quarter of voucher recipients (28%). The elderly make up nearly half (46%) of all households living in Project-Based Section 8 units, and 35% of families living in public housing include children under 18.

The new data sample also includes the poverty rates of census tracts where tenants receiving housing assistance reside. Public housing tenants are more likely than households served by other federal housing programs to live in neighborhoods with a high poverty rate (40% or higher). Additionally, black and Hispanic households living in public housing are four times more likely than white public housing households to live in high poverty census tracts.

In general, however, voucher holders are more likely to live in lower poverty census tracts (those with poverty rates of less than 20%). By race, 68% of white voucher holders and 45% of black voucher holders live in low poverty neighborhoods, while just 4% of white

households and 12% of black households holding vouchers live in high poverty neighborhoods.

NLIHC notes that there are policies that can provide public housing residents with more choices in their housing, such as the Rental Assistance Demonstration and the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative. In addition, NLIHC supports efforts to tie rental assistance to neighborhood-level rents, by ZIP code, in order to provide voucher holders with a broader array of neighborhood choices. Lastly, NLIHC notes that housing policy reform must also address the overall shortage of affordable housing for the country's most vulnerable populations through investment in the National Housing Trust Fund, a vehicle for expanding the supply of housing for the lowest income Americans.

The Public Use Microdata Sample and associated data dictionaries are available at <http://bit.ly/RwJILQ>.

Housing Spotlight: Who Lives in Federally Assisted Housing? is available on NLIHC's website at <http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/HousingSpotlight2-2.pdf>.

NLIHC NEWS

NLIHC Seeks Interns for Spring 2013

NLIHC is accepting resumes for Spring 2013 intern positions. Interns are highly valued and fully integrated into our staff work. We seek students passionate about social justice issues, with excellent writing and interpersonal skills.

The available positions are:

- **Communications Intern.** Assists in planning NLIHC's annual media awards, prepares and distributes press materials, and works on website and social media networking projects. Maintains the media database and tracks press hits.
- **Policy Intern.** Tracks new legislation, attends and summarizes Congressional hearings for weekly newsletter, participates in visits to Congressional offices and develops materials for use in lobbying the House and Senate to accomplish NLIHC's mission. Updates the Congressional database.
- **Outreach Intern.** Assists with grassroots organizing efforts for the National Housing Trust Fund Campaign and other legislative campaigns. Assists with membership recruitment/retention efforts and internal database upkeep.
- **Research Intern.** Assists in ongoing quantitative and qualitative research projects, writes weekly articles on current research for *Memo*, attends briefings, and helps staff respond to research inquiries.

A cover letter, resume and writing sample are required for consideration. They should be included as attachments if you choose to submit them electronically. In your cover letter, please specify the position(s) for which you applying and that you are interested in a Spring 2013 internship.

Interested students should send their materials to: Bill Shields, Vice President for Operations, National Low Income Housing Coalition, 727 15th Street NW, 6th Floor, Washington DC 20005. Or, send via email to bill@nlihc.org or fax to 202-393-1973.

FACT OF THE WEEK

Households in Public Housing More Likely to Live in High Poverty Neighborhoods

Percent of households living in census tracts where 40% or more of all households live below the poverty line, by race.

Race	Project-Based Section 8	Public Housing	Vouchers
Black	29%	41%	12%
White	7%	10%	4%
Hispanic	21%	40%	11%
Other	12%	25%	3%

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition (November, 2012). *Housing Spotlight: Who Lives in Federally Assisted Housing?* Washington, D.C.: Author.

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ABOUT NLIHC

The National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated solely to achieving equitable federal policy that assures affordable, accessible, and healthy homes for the people with the lowest incomes in the United States.

Established in 1974 by Cushing N. Dolbeare, NLIHC educates, organizes, and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing within healthy neighborhoods for everyone.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

NLIHC membership is the best way to stay informed about affordable housing issues, keep in touch with advocates around the country, and support NLIHC's work.

NLIHC membership information is available at www.nlihc.org/join. You can also e-mail us at outreach@nlihc.org or call 202-662-1530 to request membership materials to distribute at meetings and conferences.



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Check out NLIHC's blog, *On the Home Front*, at www.nlihc.wordpress.com!