Memo To Members & Partners

A weekly newsletter from the National Low Income Housing Coalition

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Emergency Rental Assistance

ERA2 Spending Picks Up; Treasury Reallocates First Round of ERA1 Funds

The U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) released updated Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) spending data through November 30, 2021, revealing that an additional $1.5 billion in ERA1 and $1.35 billion in ERA2 was spent in November of last year. Overall, $16.9 billion from ERA1 and ERA2 has been spent, including funds for assistance to households, housing stability services, and administrative costs. In total, ERA assistance has reached over 3.2 million renter households. Treasury also released data on the first round of reallocations, including data on recaptured funds and voluntarily reallocated funds. Treasury reallocated $1.1 billion in this first round of reallocation, including $875.5 million in voluntarily returned funds and $239.9 million in recaptured funds.

October 2021 was the first month in which ERA1 spending decreased, and this trend continued into November. Despite this decrease, ERA2 spending doubled between October and November. This trend highlights the still-uneven performance of ERA programs. While around 150 programs have spent most of their ERA1 allocation and are transitioning to ERA2, other ERA1 grantees continue to spend slowly, with approximately 60 grantees still having spent less than one-third of their ERA1 allocations. This group includes several state grantees with high numbers of low-income renter households, such as Georgia, Ohio, and Arizona.

The Treasury data also include updated quarterly ERA1 data through the end of September 2021. In Quarter 3, 1.9 million households received ERA1 funding, 66% of which were extremely low-income households. Twenty-one percent of households served had incomes between 31% and 50% of their area median income (AMI), and 13% had incomes between 51% and 80% AMI. These data show that renters with the lowest incomes continue to be the most in need of ERA funding. The quarterly data also point to a continuing lag in application processing: while nearly 3.6 million applications were completed and submitted between the start of the program and the end of the third quarter in 2021, only 1.5 million households were served during the same period.
In addition to spending data, Treasury also released information on the first round of ERA1 reallocation. Per Treasury's reallocation guidance, grantees needed to reach an expenditure ratio of 30% by the end of September 2021 to avoid recapture, though grantees had the chance to significantly decrease the amount of funds recaptured if they submitted a program improvement plan. Grantees also had the opportunity to voluntarily reallocate funds to other grantees within their states during this period.

During the first round of reallocation, $875.5 million was voluntarily reallocated, with most funds flowing from state grantees to local grantees and Tribal grantees. The states of Wisconsin, Indiana, Louisiana, and Tennessee all reallocated more than $100 million of their ERA1 allocations. An additional $239.9 million was recaptured from grantees that did not meet the required expenditure ratio, though Treasury data do not indicate from where these funds were recaptured. One hundred and twenty-five programs received reallocated funds, including five states, 91 localities, and 29 Tribal entities. (This group includes programs that received recaptured and voluntarily reallocated funds.) States receiving the most reallocated funds include California ($62 million), New Jersey ($42 million), and New York ($27 million). Several cities and counties also received significant fund reallocations, including Indianapolis, IN ($91 million); Milwaukee, WI ($61 million); Maricopa County, AZ ($39 million); and New Orleans, LA ($37 million).

The next round of ERA1 reallocations will be based on the recently released November spending data. For this round of reallocations, grantees will need to reach an expenditure ratio of 40% to avoid recapture.

NLIHC tracks ERA spending on the ERA Dashboard and Spending Tracker. Our tracking integrates Treasury data with real-time data from program dashboards and program administrators to provide a closer estimate of how much ERA funding has been obligated to date.

Treasury's November ERA data can be downloaded at: https://bit.ly/3thUwWD (Please note: NLIHC's analysis of these data corrects for a presumed ERA2 Quarter 1 data reporting error in the State of Texas.)

Data on Treasury's first round of ERA1 reallocations can be downloaded here: https://bit.ly/3JWF8Vp and https://bit.ly/31GljjY

NLIHC Hosts Conversation between Federal Partners and ERASE Cohort

NLIHC hosted a January 6 conversation between NLIHC's End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) state and local partners cohort and key federal government officials. The aims of the convening were to: 1) allow federal partners to hear from cohort members on early work and recommendations to assist emergency rental assistance (ERA) programs in being visible, accessible, and preventive of displacement; 2) provide an opportunity for federal partners to share their vision for ERA moving forward; and 3) provide the cohort an opportunity to ask questions of the administration that will inform their work moving forward.

The ERASE cohort consists of 38 state and local nonprofit partners working in their states and local communities to ensure that ERA are visible, accessible, and preventive of evictions and that ERA reaches renters and small landlords with the greatest need for assistance, especially Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and other marginalized people and communities. Participants from the federal government represented a variety of offices and agencies, including the White House, the Treasury Department, HUD, the Department of Justice (DOJ), the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development office, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, all of which are working in their organizational capacity to ensure that the historic aid enacted by Congress reaches low-income and marginalized renters.

The session began with opening remarks from NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel and Senior Advisor to the President Gene Sperling on the successes of the ERA program, the importance of nonprofit partners' advocacy in ensuring the efficient and equitable distribution of funds, and the challenges that organizations and the federal government continue to face in ensuring that ERA programs reach renters and landlords with the greatest need.

Following their remarks, Sarah Gallagher, senior director of the ERASE project, discussed the ERASE Framework and its three key areas that that NLIHC is encouraging partners to focus in on throughout the country's more than 500 emergency rental assistance programs:

1. **Visible:** Conduct equitable and robust marketing and outreach efforts to ensure that all landlords and low-income renters know about the ERA program and how to access it in their communities.
2. **Accessible**: Support access to and disbursement of financial support to landlords and tenants by ensuring an accessible, streamlined, and low-barrier ERA application process.
3. **Preventive**: Prevent housing displacement by creating formal partnerships with state and/or local courts to support eviction prevention and eviction diversion in coordination with ERA.

Ms. Gallagher then introduced members of the ERASE cohort to discuss their work in their states and local communities, successes and challenges they have observed in their communities, and recommendations on how the federal government can improve the ERA program. ERASE cohort members from Alabama, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Washington DC, and Texas presented on the following topics:

- **Engagement of Trusted Community Based Organizations for Outreach and Marketing**: Maritza Crossen, Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)
- **Enlisting Housing Navigation Services to Assist with Applications:** Lee Patterson, Richland Library

- **Burdensome Documentation Requirements & the Need for Program Flexibilities**: Chi-Hyun Kim, Housing Alliance Pennsylvania
- **Accessing ERA Program Data to Support Equity**: Erin Hahn, Texas Housers
- **Ensuring Landlords Adhere to ERA Related Tenant Protections**: Jay Williams, Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama
- **Courts and ERA Working Together to Prevent Evictions**: Susan Jacob, Housing Counseling Services, Inc. of DC
- **Accessing Eviction Data to Support Tenant Protections, Eviction Prevention, and Diversion**: Erin Kemple, Connecticut Fair Housing Center

Following the presentations, Special Assistant to the President for Housing and Urban Policy Erika Poethig shared the White House's vision for emergency rental assistance and how the administration is taking an all-of-government approach to prevent evictions and end homelessness going forward. The session ended with a questions-and-answers period, during which federal partners and ERASE cohort members had an opportunity to ask questions to one another. Themes from this discussion included the continued need for housing stability services, the importance of communities being able to access ERA program improvement plans, overcoming common myths that hinder the implementation of self-attestation, the need for more granular and real time ERA data, and ways the federal government can support community-based organizations in conducting outreach to low-income and marginalized renters on their jurisdictions' ERA programs.

NLIHC thanks all our partners in the ERASE cohort and in the administration for joining us for this productive conversation between our nonprofit and federal government partners. We will continue this collaboration in the future to develop long-term solutions to housing insecurity and homelessness.

HoUSed Campaign

Eviction Prevention

HUD Report to Congress: National Evictions Database Feasible with Congressional Action and Funding

In a report to Congress, HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research outlined the feasibility of a national evictions database, including the need for such a database, potential challenges, and an approach for moving forward. Eviction data have historically been difficult to collect due to the decentralized nature of these data across court systems. A national evictions database could standardize data collection and reporting and would help policy makers, researchers, and advocates better understand the impacts of evictions and identify which policy interventions are most effective at preventing evictions. The report presents an approach for collecting data on court-ordered evictions, evictions that occur outside of the legal system, and administrative evictions in federally subsidized housing units.

Collecting data about evictions can be challenging due to the decentralized and unstandardized nature of court processes. Some courts do not maintain electronic records of eviction filings, while others do not disaggregate eviction data from other civil court cases. Data rarely includes demographic information about tenants or landlords, requiring the data to be linked to other sources to conduct more robust analysis. Despite these challenges, HUD's proposed approach to developing a national database suggests ways to overcome these hurdles.

The report suggests a three-pronged approach to initiating data collection on 1) court-ordered evictions, 2) extra-legal evictions, and 3) administrative evictions in HUD-funded units. To collect data on court-ordered evictions, the report recommends funding states with capacity-building grants which would help states build out systems to collect and report on eviction filings. This grant process could begin as a pilot program so that HUD could simultaneously learn about the most effective forms of technical assistance and state incentives for data reporting. To collect data on extra-legal evictions – or evictions that occur outside the legal system – the report recommends a national survey on the prevalence of these evictions and who they affect. This survey could be an addendum to a pre-existing survey, such as the *American Community Survey* or *Current Population Survey*. Lastly, to learn more about administrative evictions in HUD-funded properties, the report suggests that HUD revise its own data collection systems to collect more robust information on evictions that occur within its rental assistance programs.

Millions of households face eviction annually and evictions disproportionately impact low-income households, people of color, and households with children. The impact of eviction is far reaching, influencing household's mental and physical health, employment opportunities, and future housing stability. Evictions can also be costly, affecting households' ability to afford other basic needs, like food and health care. The creation of a national evictions database can help researchers and policymakers better understand what interventions are effective in preventing evictions.

Read the report at: https://bit.ly/3oXlNv0

Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness

Treasury Releases Final Rule on Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

The U.S. Department of the Treasury published on January 6 a final rule on the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program established under the "American Rescue Plan Act" and an overview of the final rule. The final rule presumes that an expanded set of households and communities are "impacted" and "disproportionately impacted" by the pandemic, allowing SLFRF recipients to assist a broad set of individuals and households without requiring additional analysis. Further, the final rule expands the list of eligible uses of SLFRF funds, including allowing affordable housing development, permanent supportive housing, and other efforts to improve access to stable, affordable housing for individuals who are homeless to be made available for "impacted" (not just "disproportionately impacted") households and communities.

NLIHC previously weighed in on Treasury's Interim Final Rule governing the implementation of SLFRF program through a comment submitted on June 17 (see *Memo*, 6/21/21) and a letter on September 17 (see *Memo*, 9/20/21). NLIHC urged Treasury to issue clear guidance on how communities can use SLFRF funds to meet the housing needs of the lowest-income renters most severely impacted by the affordable housing crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The final rule takes effect on April 1, 2022, but recipients can choose to take advantage of its flexibilities and simplifications now. Recipients may consult the "Statement Regarding Compliance with the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Interim Final Rule and Final Rule" for more information on compliance with the interim final rule and the final rule.

Overview of Major Changes

- **Expands households and communities presumed to be "impacted" and "disproportionately impacted":** Treasury's final rule establishes an eligibility standard to make it easier for recipients to assist low- and moderate-income populations without needing to identify and document a specific negative economic impact. Populations falling under the definition of low income are presumed to have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, while those falling under the definition of moderate income are presumed to have been impacted by the pandemic. See Treasury's tool for determining low- and moderate-income households. Further, the final rule allows recipients to identify impacted and disproportionately impacted beneficiaries based on their eligibility for other programs.

- **Addresses concerns about Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs)**: Treasury's interim final rule presumed housing investments were an eligible use of funds when provided in QCTs, to individuals living in QCTs, by tribal governments, and to other disproportionately impacted populations, households, or geographic areas. NLIHC urged Treasury to allow housing investments in any community – not just QCTs – as long as the homes are affordable to households with the lowest incomes. Treasury's final rule recognizes that QCTs do not reflect all underserved populations. While the final rule maintains that households residing in QCTs are presumed to be disproportionately impacted, it allows grantees to presume that low-income households are disproportionately impacted, providing greater flexibility to serve households and communities in need of assistance.
- **Expands housing programs for impacted communities:** Several uses included in the interim final rule for disproportionately impacted communities have been moved from "disproportionately impacted" to "impacted households" in the final rule. These include programs or services that address housing insecurity, lack of affordable housing, or homelessness. Permanent supportive housing or other programs to increase access to housing among individuals who are homeless, and the development of affordable housing are now available to impacted communities, not only those that were disproportionately impacted. Housing vouchers and assistance relocating to neighborhoods with higher levels of economic opportunity remain in the category of uses for "disproportionately impacted" households.
- **Provides further information on eligible affordable housing projects:** In addition to programs and services, the final rule clarifies that recipients can use SLFRF funds for capital expenditures that support an eligible COVID-19 public health or economic response, including building certain affordable housing. Treasury presumes that any projects that would be eligible for funding under the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) or the Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) are eligible uses of SLFRF funds. These programs, however, use different income limits than the definition adopted by Treasury. Alignment with these programs is intended to provide recipients "comfort and clarity" as they design and implement a variety of affordable housing activities, including production, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable rental homes, and in some case, affordable homeownership units.

To learn more about the SLFRF program and the final rule, see NLIHC's fact sheet: https://bit.ly/3zztxad

Read Treasury's final rule at: https://bit.ly/3HGIJoQ

Read Treasury's overview of the final rule at: https://bit.ly/3F5THSU

USICH Releases Guidance for Communities on Using American Rescue Plan Act Resources to Address Homelessness

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) released on December 20 guidance for communities on using resources from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to address homelessness. The guidance, "Getting It Done: The American Rescue Plan Way," highlights how three communities – Louisville, KY; Austin, TX; and Harris County, TX – utilized ARPA resources to address the needs of people experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

In Louisville, advocates targeted emergency rental assistance (ERA) funds to people at imminent risk of eviction and the lowest-income renters, who are often at greatest risk of homelessness if evicted. Officials in Austin created a system-level strategic plan for the distribution of Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs).

EHVs are specifically targeted to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, as well as people escaping domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, and those who recently exited homelessness and need assistance to remain stably housed. Harris County partnered with the City of Houston to use a portion of ARPA's health center funding to create a telemedicine program for people experiencing homelessness and to provide them with outreach, testing, vaccination sites, and primary care.

In addition to highlighting successes, the guidance discusses challenges communities have faced in implementing these programs, including overcoming mistrust of the government, landlord resistance, and supply chain shortages.

Read the USICH guidance at: https://bit.ly/3ESQXsg

To learn more about using ARPA and other federal pandemic resources available to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, visit the *Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response* at: https://housingequityframework.org/

HUD CPD Extends Some Waivers for CoC, ESG, and HOPWA

HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) issued a memorandum on December 20 updating some waivers previously available by an earlier memorandum (see *Memo*, 7/12/21) for the Continuum of Care (CoC) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) programs. The new memorandum also offers waivers explicitly for FY21 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds. These waivers do not apply to ESG grants funded under the CARES Act (ESG-CV) or FY20 or earlier fiscal year ESG grants; those earlier ESG funds remain subject to Notice CPD-21-08 (see *Memo*, 7/26/21).

Continuum of Care (CoC) Program

The following waivers from the June 30, 2021 memorandum (see *Memo*, 7/12/21) that would have expired on December 31, 2021 are extended to March 31, 2022.

- Waiving in-person, initial Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections if an HQS inspection can be conducted through video streaming, and actual physical inspections are conducted by June 30, 2022.
- Waiving annual in-person HQS re-inspections if an HQS inspection can be conducted through video streaming.
- Allowing two or more people per bedroom or living/sleeping room.
- Allowing rent payments greater than the area's Fair Market Rent (FMR), provided the unit meets the rent reasonableness standard.
- Allowing leases shorter than one year.
- Allowing people to meet one of the definitions of homeless who are exiting an institution where they lived for 120 days or less (compared to 90 days) and lived in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering the institution.
- Allowing people in rapid re-housing who have reached the 24 months of rental assistance limit to remain if they cannot afford rent without additional rental assistance.
- Waiving the requirement that staff record observation of a person's disability to be confirmed and accompanied by other evidence to be assisted with Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).

The following waivers provided in the June 30, 2021 memorandum are not included in the December 31, 2021 memorandum:

- Third-party documentation of income.
- Assistance available at the time of renewal.
- Permanent housing, rapid re-housing monthly case management.
- Limit on eligible housing search time and counseling service.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)

The following waivers from the June 30, 2021 memorandum (see *Memo*, 7/12/21) that expired on September 30, 2021 or would have expired on December 31, 2021 are extended to March 31, 2022

- Waiving in-person, initial Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections if an HQS inspection can be conducted through video streaming, and actual physical inspections are conducted by June 30, 2022.
- Allowing rent payments greater than the area's Fair Market Rent (FMR), provided the unit meets the rent reasonableness standard.

In addition, the memorandum continues to allow two or more people per bedroom or living/sleeping room, a waiver allowed in a March 31, 2020 memorandum that did not establish an end date. The new memorandum establishes an end date of March 31, 2022.

The following waivers provided in the June 30, 2021 memorandum are not included in the December 31, 2021 memorandum:

- Time limits for short-term housing facilities and short-term rent, mortgage, and utility payments.
- Self-certification of income and credible information on HIV status.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)

The memorandum offers waivers explicitly for FY21 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds; ESG grants funded under the CARES Act (ESG-CV) or FY 2020 or earlier fiscal year ESG grants remain subject to Notice CPD-21-08 (see *Memo*, 7/26/21).

- Allowing people to meet one of the definitions of homeless who are exiting an institution where they lived for 120 days or less (compared to 90 days) and lived in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering the institution.
- Allowing people to receive assistance if they sublease from a primary leasehold if three conditions are met.
- Allowing people receiving rapid re-housing or homelessness prevention assistance to continue receiving housing relocation and stabilization services even though they have reached the 24-month limit.
- Allowing people receiving rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention assistance to continue receiving rental assistance for more than 24 months during any three-year period.
- Allowing people receiving rapid re-housing or homelessness prevention assistance to lease a unit at above the fair market rent (FMR), provided the unit meets the rent reasonableness standard.

The December 31, 2021 CPD memorandum is at: https://bit.ly/3qKOEm1

More information about CoC is on page 4-84 of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about CoC in the context of the coronavirus is on page 10-47 of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about HOPWA is on page 4-81 of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about HOPWA in the context of the coronavirus is on page 10-44 of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about ESG is on page 4-84 of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about ESG in the context of the coronavirus is on page 10-47 of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

HUD PIH Provides Disaster Waivers for Public Housing and Voucher Programs

HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) published a notice in the *Federal Register* on January 5 providing public housing agencies (PHAs) in Presidentially Declared Disasters (PDDs) areas expedited review of requests for waivers of certain regulations pertaining to public housing and vouchers. The provisions apply to calendar years 2022 and 2023. Seventeen specific potential waivers are described; this *Memo* article highlights seven potential waivers. In addition, a PHA may request a waiver not listed in the notice if it demonstrates a need for one to assist in disaster relief and recovery.

Unless otherwise indicated, all approved waivers apply for a period of 12 months from the date of PIH approval. However, if a PHA needs regulatory relief for a longer period, it must submit documentation of good cause and PIH may consider extending the waiver. Requests for waivers must be submitted to PIH no later than 120 days following the date of the disaster declaration. PIH stresses that essential program requirements such as property inspections or income verification will not be granted waivers in their entirety, although modifications may be considered. Similarly, the voucher program's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) cannot be waived; however, PIH can consider variations to the acceptability criteria to HQS.

Operating Subsidy for Vacant Public Housing Units. A PHA is eligible to receive operating subsidy for vacant public housing units that are vacant due to a federally declared, state declared, or other declared disaster, subject to prior PIH approval, on a project-by-project basis.

Public Notice of Voucher Waiting List. Instead of the requirement to provide public notice in a local newspaper that a PHA is opening its voucher waiting list, a PHA may provide notice via its website, at any of its offices, and/or in a voice mail message. PHAs must still provide public notice in minority media. PHAs are reminded to consider accessibility issues. For example, public notice at PHA offices might not be accessible for people with mobility disabilities, and voice mail messages might not serve people with hearing impairments or with limited English proficiency.

Tenant Selection Policies. A PHA may seek temporary revisions to its public housing or voucher tenant selection policies to address circumstances unique to disaster relief and recovery efforts, provided the PHA identifies the temporary revisions and documents that its Board of Commissioners or an authorized PHA official supports the waiver request, rather than going through the more formal processes. However, any waiver request cannot entail a significant amendment or modification to the PHA Plan or Moving to Work (MTW) Plan.

Exception Payment Standard. PIH will consider exception payment standards up to 150% of the area's Fair Market Rent (FMR). The payment standard is the amount of assistance represented by the voucher, the amount a household offers to a landlord to help meet the cost of the market rent of a unit above the amount a household pays at 30% of its adjusted income. Regulations allow PHAs to establish their own payment standard between 90% and 110% of FMR. To seek a payment standard greater than 110%, a PHA normally has to provide data about the local rental market. However, in a disaster, typical data sources do not accurately reflect changed market conditions. In disaster contexts, PIH considers the most recently available data prior to the disaster and estimates the number of households seeking housing in the wake of the disaster to arrive at an emergency exception payment standard amount.

Housing Quality Standards Space Requirements. With written consent of a household, PIH will waive the requirement that a voucher-assisted unit have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two people in a household. PIH will not waive reasonable accommodation requirements for households with a person who has a disability.

Total Development Cost Limit. To enable PHAs to use public housing Capital Funds for repairs and construction, PIH may consider waiving the 110% cap on total development cost (TDC) and housing cost limits.

Replacement Housing Factor (RHF). PIH may consider allowing unexpended Capital Fund Replacement Housing Factor Grants to be used for public housing modernization instead of limiting RHF to developing or acquiring public housing. RHF grants are Capital Fund Grants awarded to PHAs that have demolished or sold public housing units.

The January 5 *Federal Register* notice is at: https://bit.ly/333tc3x

More information about public housing is on page 4-30 of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about vouchers is on page 4-1 of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

Information about disaster housing programs is on page 6-47 of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide.*

HUD PIH Provides Disaster Waivers and Flexibilities for Native American Programs

HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) published a notice in the *Federal Register* on January 5 providing Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG), Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG), and Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant (NHHBG) grantees located in Presidentially Declared Disasters (PDDs) areas expedited review of requests for waivers and flexibilities of certain regulations to assist in response and disaster recovery efforts. The notice outlines seven provisions that apply to calendar years 2022 and 2023. In addition, a grantee may request a waiver or flexibility not listed in this notice if it demonstrates a need for one to assist in disaster relief and recovery.

Indian Housing Block Grant

1. **Total Development Costs (TDC).** HUD is waiving the TDC regulatory requirements on cost or design standards and TDC with respect to dwelling and non-dwelling units developed, acquired, or assisted with IHBG funding. An IHBG recipient may exceed the TDC maximum by 20% without HUD review or approval with the use of this waiver. The grantee must maintain documentation that indicates the dwelling units and non-dwelling structures developed, acquired, or assisted with this funding will, after the PDD, be for IHBG eligible families, and the design, size, and amenities are moderate and comparable to housing in the area. This waiver applies to both single-family and multi-family housing, as well as non-dwelling housing. If a grantee requires a TDC limit that exceeds by more than 20% they can do so through written approval from HUD Headquarters.
2. **Income Verification.** Since families may be displaced during a disaster and may not have access to their income documentation, HUD is waiving the requirement for IHBG grantees to verify if a family is income eligible. HUD is instead allowing the following:

    a. IHBG recipients may deviate from current written admissions and occupancy policies, and may allow less frequent recertification (families may have been required to verify income periodically); and
    b. IHBG recipients may carry out other forms of income verification if they choose to do so, including self-certification over the phone or through an email with a self-certification form signed by the family.
3. **Assistance to Middle-Income Families Impacted by a Disaster.** HUD is waiving the requirements relating to providing aid to families that may exceed the 80-100% of Area Median Income (AMI) limit. HUD is allowing for the following flexibilities:
    a. IHBG recipients in PDDs may exceed the 10% cap on serving Native American families whose income falls within 80-100% of AMI without HUD approval, provided the recipient decides that the families are impacted by the disaster and that there is a need for housing for such family that cannot reasonably be met without such assistance.
    b. IHBG recipients in PDDs may provide IHBG assistance to middle-income Native American families whose income is at or below 120% of AMI without HUD approval, provided the recipient decides that the families are impacted by the disaster and that there is a need for housing for such family that cannot reasonably be met without such assistance.

Indian Community Development Block Grant

1. **Purchasing Equipment**. HUD will waive the regulation that makes it ineligible for ICDBG funds to be used to purchase equipment. With this waiver, ICDBG funds can be used to purchase certain equipment to carry out ICDBG eligible activities that assist with clearance, rehabilitation, construction, and other uses related to housing, public facilities, improvements, and works, and other disaster-recovery related purposes. Equipment must be used for authorized program purposes, and any proceeds from the disposition of equipment will be considered ICDBG program income. HUD may issue further guidance in the future on the disposition of program income after grant closeout.
2. **Emergency Payments for up to Six Months**. HUD will waive the regulation that ICDBG funds may not be used for income payments. The waiver will allow ICDBG grant funds to be used to provide emergency payments for low- and moderate-income individuals and families impacted by a disaster. These grant funds may be used for items such as food, medicine, clothing, and other necessities, as well as rental, mortgage, and utility assistance, without regard for the 3-month limitation in the waived regulation, but for a period not to exceed six months, unless further approved in writing by HUD on a case-by-case basis. ICDBG grantees may establish lines of credit with third-party providers on behalf of specific beneficiary families, provided all expenses can be properly documented and all ICDBG funds used for this purpose are expended on eligible activities.

Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant

1. **Assistance to Middle-Income Families Impacted by Disaster.** HUD is waiving the requirements relating to providing aid to families. Native Hawaiian families impacted by PDD can automatically be served provided their household income does not exceed 120% of the AMI and that the assistance is for homeownership assistance, is temporary in nature, and that it is determined that there is a need for housing that cannot be reasonably met without such assistance.
2. **Income Verification.** Since families may be displaced during a disaster and may not have access to their income documentation, HUD is waiving the requirement for a standard policy of income verification for the Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL) and is allowing the department to modify its policy and procedures to streamline any income verification and documentation requirements for families impacted by PDDs. This includes allowing income self-certification over the phone (with a written record by the DHHL's staff), or through an email with a self-certification form signed by a

family. This waiver applies only to families impacted by PDDs whose income documentation was destroyed or made difficult to access by the disaster.

The January 5 *Federal Register* notice is available at: https://bit.ly/3pZ60w6

More information about Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing Programs is on page 5-29 of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

Coronavirus Updates – January 10, 2022

National Updates

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The CDC on January 4 released updated guidance on COVID-19 quarantine and isolation protocols, including for high-risk congregate settings, such as homeless shelters, which have high risk of secondary transmission. Learn more about the updated CDC guidance for shelter residents and staff from the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD issued a memorandum on December 30 explaining the availability of waivers for regulatory requirements associated with several Community Planning and Development (CPD) grant programs to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and facilitate assistance to eligible communities and households economically impacted by COVID-19. The memorandum also addresses program-specific waivers for the following CPD programs, including Continuum of Care (CoC), Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA). Read the CPD Memo.

U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)

USICH interviewed several communities about how they are implementing American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding for emergency rental assistance (ERA), emergency housing vouchers (EHV), and health centers. The resulting guidance, "Getting It Done: The American Rescue Plan Way," seeks to help other communities maximize the impact of ARPA funding to prevent and end homelessness. Read USICH's press release and the guidance.

Advocacy and Research

The Terner Center for Housing Innovation released a report in December 2021, *Addressing Homelessness Through Hotel Conversions*, which presents the results of an analysis of 13 hotel/motel acquisition projects, with a focus on conversions aimed at providing housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Reporting

According to the latest data from the Eviction Lab, evictions are increasing in most of the 31 cities and six states where it collects data. The upsurge in cases shows the limits of federal emergency rental assistance (ERA) in areas where distribution is lagging and tenant protections are weak.

State and Local News

A list of state and local emergency rental assistance programs is available here from NLIHC.

Arizona

A Phoenix real estate attorney was put on probation in December 2021 for filing eviction cases against renters who were protected by the federal CARES Act eviction moratorium. The *Arizona Republic* says the attorney is the first to be disciplined following the newspaper's 2020 investigation, which found 900 evictions were filed against Maricopa County renters who should have been protected by the CARES Act.

California

Forty-seven people – more than half of the unhoused residents – tested positive for COVID-19 at a San Francisco navigation center at the end of December. There was a significant delay in transporting the large group of COVID-positive residents off the premises and into isolation-and-quarantine hotels. At the end of December, vaccination rates among people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco were around 65%.

The *Fresno Bee* reports at least 1,138 households were evicted across three central San Joaquin Valley counties during the 18-month statewide eviction moratorium. Not all evictions result in lockouts, and tenants often leave before an eviction is carried out in court, meaning the number of evictions during this period is likely much higher.

Florida

Thousands of renters in South Florida face eviction as property owners seek to sell while the housing market is hot. One renter who applied for and received rental assistance from Our Florida was evicted after his landlord sold the property but kept the rental assistance funds. The new landlord then provided the tenant a 3-day eviction notice.

Georgia

The *Washington Post* reports that management of the Brooks Crossing apartments – a 224-unit complex in the Atlanta area – has filed 427 evictions against its tenants since April 2020. The House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis announced in July 2020 an investigation into why Brooks Crossing's management company, the Florida-based Ventron Management, and several other large real estate firms pursued evictions despite federal efforts, including the federal eviction moratoriums. While the CARES Act eviction moratorium was in effect, Ventron filed 99 evictions against tenants of Brooks Crossing.

Dekalb County saw 945 evictions filed from December 12-18 – the steepest increase in eviction filings in the five-county Atlanta area. The county was granted an additional $14.8 million in federal emergency rental assistance (ERA) funds to reopen the Tenant Landlord Assistance Coalition. When the program stopped accepting applications last month, there were about 5,700 outstanding applications.

Illinois

The *Chicago Tribune* reports that some Chicago renters are being evicted or threatened with eviction despite receiving assistance from Illinois' emergency rental assistance (ERA) program. A member of Únete La Villita, a neighborhood group that has helped about 50 tenants in Little Village apply for rental assistance through the City of Chicago, said many landlords filed for evictions or declined to renew leases after receiving ERA payments.

The Illinois Housing Development Authority created a video illustrating the application process for tenants and landlords interested in applying for up to $25,000 in ERA through the second round of the Illinois Rental Payment Program (ILRPP2). Watch the video on YouTube.

Maine

More than $100 million in emergency rental assistance (ERA) funds have been distributed to 17,000 households across Maine. Average monthly eviction filings in Maine are lower than pre-pandemic averages, suggesting that ERA has been successful in keeping families in their homes.

Maryland

Baltimore Renters United called on Sheriff John Anderson, Mayor Brandon Scott, and Administrative Judge Weinstein to suspend evictions immediately in Baltimore City to slow the spread of COVID-19 and save lives. There are 352 evictions scheduled for January 3-7.

While Governor Larry Hogan declared a state of emergency for Maryland on January 4, he did not reinstate eviction protections. Courts recently scaled back their operations due to the omicron surge, but Maryland housing advocates say scheduled evictions are still proceeding. The National Equity Atlas estimates 111,000 renter households in Maryland are behind on rent. The tool estimates that 79% of Maryland tenants behind on rent are people of color.

Massachusetts

New regulations on Massachusetts' emergency rental assistance (ERA) funds went into effect on January 1, prompting housing advocates to demand legislators intervene to prevent displacing renters. The Baker administration altered ERA eligibility by requiring applicants to have at least one month of rental arrears before they qualify for aid. Additionally, recipients seeking to recertify their benefits will need to fall one month behind on rent and then reapply through the same central application they first used. Kelly Turley of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless says the administration moved forward with these changes without consulting lawmakers or asking for additional ERA funds – an unnecessary move that is disruptive to both tenants and landlords.

Nebraska

Nebraska's statewide Tenant Assistance Program, a collaboration of 20 programs that provide representation for tenants facing eviction, has reduced immediate eviction judgments from 90% to less than 2%.

New Jersey

With New Jersey's eviction moratorium ending on January 1, landlords are now able to evict tenants for nonpayment of rent. Judges faced a backlog of nearly 52,000 landlord-tenant cases as of the end of November.

New Mexico

According to a Searchlight New Mexico analysis, New Mexico landlords sought to evict at least 191 tenants whose rental applications were pending between April and November 2021. In each case, the eviction was filed after the tenant applied for rental assistance but before the funds were distributed.

A new court-based program to help New Mexico tenants behind on their rent and provide landlords with an alternative to eviction will launch in February. The Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program will start in the Ninth Judicial District of Curry and Roosevelt counties on February 1 and expand statewide in March.

New York

The *New York Times* reports that inside one Brooklyn homeless shelter, 11 women who tested positive for COVID-19 were crowded into a small room with just a few chairs and several mattresses on the floor. While there are hundreds of vacant beds in isolation units and quarantine rooms in hotels, the women were told none were available.

Housing advocates and tenants are bracing for a “deluge” of eviction cases when New York State’s eviction moratorium expires on January 15. Governor Kathy Hochul has not signaled that she will extend the eviction moratorium.

Oregon

Portland State University researchers released a report, “Oregon’s Safe Harbor for Tenants: Rocky Shoals in Eviction Diversion,” evaluating Oregon’s eviction diversion program implemented in July 2021. In the first 90 days of the policy, the authors found mixed results for tenants. The authors suggest that the policy could be improved by understanding how information, communication, and power affect each stage of eviction proceedings.

Texas

Marketplace reports officials in Montgomery County, Texas, voted in late November to return $7 million in federal emergency rental assistance (ERA) funds – nearly one-third of the county’s allocation. The county had spent less than 2% of its allocation. “We are seeing some states and localities suggest or outright refuse to accept additional funds, saying there is no remaining need when there clearly is,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel.

A Travis County justice of the peace extended eviction protections for renters, providing more time for them to seek rental assistance. Precinct 5 Justice of the Peace Nick Chu’s new order will halt eviction trials for nonpayment of rent for 30 days to allow Travis County renters to apply for rental assistance, consult a pro bono attorney through a justice of the peace court program, and negotiate a settlement.

Lone Star Legal Aid says eviction cases in Harris County are rising. Texas Rent Relief applications are closed, with the website reporting 95% of nearly $2 billion in federal rental assistance has been paid out. The Houston-Harris County Emergency Rental Assistance Program says it has limited funds remaining.

Wyoming

The Wyoming Department of Family Services has distributed just $14.5 million of the $325 million in federal emergency rental assistance funds. As of late December, 9,019 applications have been submitted, and 5,670 have been paid.

Guidance

Department of Housing and Urban Development

- CPD Memo: Availability of Additional Waivers for CPD Grant Programs to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 and Mitigate Economic Impacts Caused by COVID-19 – December 30, 2021

Department of Treasury

- Treasury ERA Program: Reallocated Funds Form with Exhibit C – Voluntary Reallocated Funds – December 2021

Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – January 10, 2022

Advocacy

Rob Moore from the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) joined the DHRC Disaster Recovery Working Group on January 4 to discuss FEMA's Request for Information on its proposed changes to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). If implemented, these changes could transform the NFIP into the climate-informed program needed to address the increased risk of flooding from climate change. FEMA took this action directly in response to a petition filed by NRDC and the Association of State Floodplain Managers. Here are links to a brief comment template and a long-form comment. Comments must be submitted by January 27, 2022.

The Senate Banking Committee held a hearing on December 15 on permanently authorizing HUD's Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery Program (CDBG-DR), the only source of federal long-term disaster recovery funding and the centerpiece of the DHRC-supported "Reforming Disaster Recovery Act" (S.2471/H.R. 4707). If your state has a Republican senator, please call them today and urge them to cosponsor this important bill! NLIHC and Enterprise Community Partners are circulating an organizational sign-on letter to congressional leadership in support of the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act (S.2471). Sign your organization on to the letter here.

Reporting

According to a new *Washington Post* analysis, more than 40% of Americans live in counties struck by climate-related extreme weather last year, and more than 80% of Americans experienced a heat wave. While extreme heat is not officially considered a disaster, it is one of the most fatal types of severe weather. FEMA declared eight climate-related statewide disasters encompassing 135 million people in 2021 – the most since 1998.

Biden Administration

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of the Interior (DOI), and FEMA announced on December 17 the establishment of a Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. Establishing this Commission fulfills a key provision of the bipartisan infrastructure law and represents a critical step in combating the nation's wildfire crisis and improving resilience in America's landscapes. "In coordination with our partners at USDA and DOI, FEMA is committed to doing our part to help build readiness and resilience in communities who are at risk from wildfires," said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell.

FEMA

FEMA released the 10th annual *2021 National Preparedness Report* (NPR). The report summarizes the state of national preparedness, discussing the risks the nation faces and how those risks drive whole-community emergency management capability requirements. For the first time, the report provides management opportunities outlining steps that community leaders can take to address capability gaps. These include a justification for a preparedness investment strategy to help close capability gaps and improve capabilities, an explanation of what all levels of government are doing or can do to manage climate change, and how climate change worsens existing vulnerabilities. Read the report and the executive summary.

Colorado Wildfires

President Biden on December 30 approved a Major Disaster Declaration for Colorado to supplement recovery efforts in the areas affected by the wildfires beginning on December 30, 2021. President Biden's action makes federal funding available to impacted individuals in Boulder County, including grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals recover from the effects of the disasters. FEMA Public Assistance (PA) is available on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work in Boulder County. HUD announced federal disaster assistance is available for Coloradans impacted by the wildfires.

Nearly 1,000 homes and other structures were destroyed, hundreds more were damaged, and several people are still missing after the wildfire devastated entire neighborhoods in Boulder County. Of at least 991 buildings destroyed by the Marshall and Middle Fork fires, most were homes.

According to the *Denver Post*, Governor Jared Polis and Boulder County Sherriff Joe Pelle estimated up to 1,000 homes in Superior and Louisville may have been destroyed by the Marshall fire that devastated Boulder County on December 31. A resident of a senior living apartment in Louisville reported the housing authority sent a bus to take her and other neighbors to the YMCA of Northern Colorado in Lafayette, a Red Cross evacuation center.

Tornadoes

Arkansas

President Biden on December 23 approved a Major Disaster Declaration for Arkansas to supplement recovery efforts in the areas affected by the severe storms and tornadoes on December 10-11, 2021. FEMA Individual Assistance (IA) is available to affected individuals in Craighead, Jackson, Mississippi, Poinsett, and Woodruff counties. FEMA Public Assistance (PA) is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide. HUD announced federal disaster assistance is available for Arkansans in the areas affected by the tornadoes.

Hundreds of Arkansans were displaced by the deadly tornadoes on December 10. The storms destroyed or severely damaged more than 256 homes, according to preliminary damage assessments from FEMA and the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management. Roughly 60% of the approximately 24 homes affected in Trumann County, including 72 that were destroyed, were insured, meaning some people lost everything due to the tornadoes.

Donate to the Arkansas Disaster Relief Program here.

Kentucky

Federal disaster assistance is available for Kentucky residents in the areas covered by President Biden's major disaster declaration. Survivors in counties approved for individual assistance can apply for assistance at https://www.disasterassistance.gov/ or by calling 1-800-621-3362. The deadline to apply for FEMA IA is February 11.

The deadly "quad-state" tornadoes on December 10-11 destroyed 15,000 buildings and trailer homes and caused at least $3.5 billion in damages in Mayfield, Kentucky. "People are in a daze, and some are never going to go back to their homes," said Sandra Delk, coordinator for Mayfield's community response.

To help survivors in Kentucky, donate to the Team Western Kentucky Tornado Relief Fund.

Hurricane Ida

Connecticut residents in Fairfield, New Haven, and New London who suffered damages from remnants of Hurricane Ida have until January 28, 2022, to apply for FEMA disaster assistance.

Grand Isle, Louisiana took the first hit from Hurricane Ida and continues to struggle with the storm's devastation. Hundreds of residents whose homes were destroyed remain displaced. In the wake of Hurricane Ida, 141 households on Grand Isle applied for FEMA housing, with 42 still awaiting approval or unit availability. "Everything is a fight," said Grand Isle Mayor David Camardelle. "A fight to save our community."

Terrebonne Parish residents displaced by Hurricane Ida continue to live in makeshift accommodations. Roughly 1,000 residents are staying in trailers through Louisiana's temporary housing program as FEMA's trailers have been slow to arrive.

Three hundred sixty-seven households from Terrebonne and Lafourche parishe are currently living in FEMA travel trailers or mobile homes. FEMA has determined over 4,700 households are eligible for the housing program. FEMA is paying for hotel rooms for 3,772 households across the state.

A nonprofit advocacy group and an architect are bringing an alternative form of temporary housing to Terrebonne Parish residents displaced by Hurricane Ida. The project, Built Bayou, seeks to alleviate the slow deployment of FEMA trailers and other temporary housing programs. Williams Architects and Another Gulf is Possible have built four of the small wooden structures to house displaced families. The structures are designed to be built quickly after a natural disaster without any power tools.

Research

A literature review in the journal *Frontiers in Water*, "Flood Recovery Outcomes and Disaster Assistance Barriers for Vulnerable Populations," synthesizes research across multiple disciplines regarding barriers to disaster assistance and flood recovery outcomes. The authors, Bradley Wilson, Eric Tate, and Christopher Emrich, find considerable evidence that renters, low-income households, and people of color face the most significant barriers to accessing federal recovery assistance and experience adverse recovery outcomes.

Opportunity Starts at Home

Opportunity Starts at Home Welcomes Three New State Grantees

The Opportunity Starts at Home (OSAH) multi-sector affordable homes campaign welcomes three new state grantees: Empower Missouri, Mississippi Center for Justice, and Wisconsin Community Action Program Association. With additional technical and financial assistance, these grantees will broaden their states' housing coalitions to include diverse sectors, and they will leverage these new multi-sector partners to engage in federal advocacy.

The campaign continues to build a movement with stakeholders from many sectors to generate widespread support for federal policies that correct long-standing racial inequities and economic injustices by ensuring quality and affordable housing for people with the lowest incomes. Over the past several years, the campaign has provided support to organizations in eighteen other states: Arizona, California, Connecticut, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia.

Learn more about OSAH's state campaigns here.

Follow the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign on social media: Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Be sure to sign up for our e-newsletter to get the latest updates about the campaign, including new multi-sector partners, calls to action, events, and research.

Research

Latino Voucher Households Concentrated in Segregated, Low-Opportunity Areas

A new study by Kirk McClure and Alex Schwartz explores mobility in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, with a special focus on Latino households. The study, "Movement Toward High Opportunity and Racial and Ethnic Integration for Hispanics in the Housing Choice Voucher Program," finds that Latino HCV households are concentrated in low opportunity and predominantly Latino census tracts. Only some Latino HCV households who move with their vouchers move to higher opportunity or ethnically-integrated census tracts. The largest share of Latino HCV households who move while in the program move to predominantly Latino census tracts or to census tracts of the same opportunity level. These patterns suggest the need to improve mobility outcomes for Latino HCV holders.

McClure and Schwartz used HUD's Longitudinal Household Data from 2010 to 2017 to track HCV household moves between census tracts, and the developed an index to measure neighborhood opportunity using census tract data from HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) initiative. The neighborhood opportunity index included variables for poverty, employment, and school quality, which were used to rank census tracts as very low, low, moderate, high, or very high in opportunity. The authors used *American Community Survey* data to measure the racial and ethnic composition of census tracts and explore patterns of residential segregation within the HCV program.

Latinos accounted for 16% of HCV households in 2017, comparable to their 15% share of the voucher-eligible population. Non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanic Blacks accounted for 33% and 47% of HCV households, respectively. While sixty-nine percent of all HCV households lived in low- or very low-opportunity census tracts in 2017, rates varied substantially by race and ethnicity. Both Latino (76%) and non-Latino Black (78%) voucher holders were more likely to live in low-opportunity neighborhoods than non-Hispanic whites (53%). At 51%, Latino HCV households were more likely than any other racial or ethnic minority group to reside in a census tract where their group predominates and the least likely (34%) to live in an integrated census tract.

Approximately 47% of HCV households moved to a different census tract during the eight year study period, but this varied by race and ethnicity. Latino households (45%) were less likely to move than non-Latino Black households (54%) and more likely to move than non-Latino white households (38%). Among all HCV households that moved, 43% remained in census tracts with the same level of opportunity, while 31% moved to a higher opportunity tract and 26% moved to a lower opportunity tract. Latino HCV households followed a nearly identical pattern.

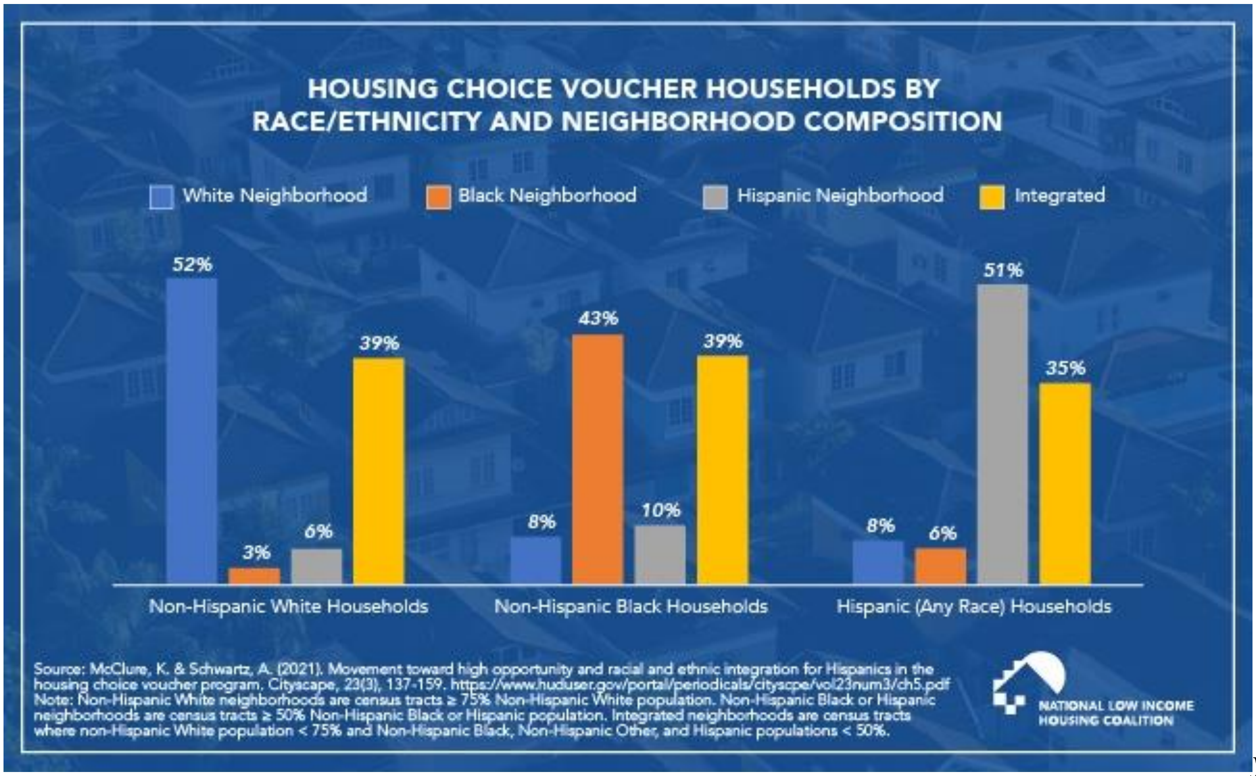
Forty-three percent of all HCV movers relocated to census tracts where their own racial or ethnic group predominated, while 41% moved to integrated tracts and 16% moved to tracts where another group was predominant. Forty-eight percent of Latino HCV movers relocated to predominantly Latino census tracts. Latino HCV movers (37%) were least likely to move to an integrated census tract compared to non-Latino Black (42%) and non-Hispanic white (39%) movers. Just 15% of Latino HCV movers relocated to census tracts where another racial or ethnic group predominated.

McClure and Schwartz conclude the HCV program has greater potential to promote desegregation and access to higher opportunity neighborhoods for Black and Latino households. The authors argue reforms are needed to realize this potential such as Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs), mobility counseling, and greater resources for landlord recruitment. Households for whom English is a second language, including some Latino households, could particularly benefit from the housing search assistance typically included in mobility counseling programs.

Read the study at: https://bit.ly/3qO77y7

Fact of the Week

Hispanic Voucher Holders Least Likely to Live in Integrated Neighborhoods



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Source: McClure, K. & Schwartz, A. (2021). Movement toward high opportunity and racial and ethnic integration for Hispanics in the housing choice voucher program. *Cityscape*, *23*(3), 137-159. https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/cityscpe/vol23num3/ch5.pdf

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From the Field

Kansas Produces Long-Awaited Housing Needs Assessment that Falls Short on Addressing Needs of Low-Income People

The State of Kansas Office of Rural Prosperity, in partnership with the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation, conducted a statewide housing needs assessment in 2021. The final report provides statewide and regional data on housing needs, population trends, and housing market dynamics. The goals of the report are to identify current housing needs and outline strategic initiatives to guide the state's future housing development efforts to meet new goals. The report was based on a series of over 70 virtual and in-person listening sessions with more than 425 community participants across the state, meetings with housing stakeholder groups, and a statewide survey of more than 4,400 respondents.

The report includes key findings that were presented through region-specific presentations:

- Prioritize middle-income housing
- Diversify housing stock to meet local needs
- Extend housing security
- Reinvest in older housing stock, including vacant units

- Address the building trades labor shortage
- Extend existing human capital resources

While acknowledging that finding quality, affordable housing is difficult for renters—and that Kansas renters are more housing cost-burdened than homeowners—the report includes few recommendations to address the needs of low- and extremely-low income renters. The report suggests ways the state could make the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit more attractive for developers and acknowledges that the national Housing Trust Fund is available to support rental developments. Regarding low-income housing, however, no state or local-level strategies or recommendations are presented. Finally, the report recommends communities should consider a risk mitigation program that assists landlords in meeting voucher requirements for Housing Choice Vouchers and provides additional insurance for any damages that may occur from the renter.

The report's prioritization of middle-income housing is disconcerting. In Kansas, there is no shortage of affordable and available rental homes for middle-income households; indeed there is a surplus such housing. For every 100 renter households at 100% area median income (AMI) in the state, there are 110 affordable and available rental homes. By contrast, extremely low-income renters face a severe shortage of affordable homes. For every 100 renter households living at or below 30% of AMI, there are only 49 affordable and available rental homes. Only 6% of middle-income renters in Kansas face housing cost burdens (meaning they pay more than 30% of their gross income on rent and utilities), while 85% of extremely low-income renters households in Kansas are cost-burdened. While some discussion of these data points were included in presentations of the *Kansas Statewide Housing Needs Assessment*, the needs of the lowest-income renters are missing from recommendations in the report.

NLIHC Housing Policy Forum 2022

Engage with Our Homes, Our Votes 2022 at NLIHC Virtual Housing Policy Forum 2022, March 22-23!

NLIHC's Virtual Housing Policy Forum 2022: Achieving Housing Justice taking place March 22-23, 2022, 12:30-5:30 pm ET on March 22 and 1-5:30 pm ET on March 23, will feature a variety of interactive sessions with NLIHC experts, including one on Our Homes, Our Votes 2022 with NLIHC Director of Field Organizing Joey Lindstrom. During this session, participants will explore best practices and innovative approaches to increasing voter registration and turnout among renters and people experiencing homelessness. This session will discuss ways to elevate housing affordability as an election issue by conducting candidate forums or questionnaires with candidates about key housing solutions.

Joey Lindstrom, NLIHC

NLIHC experts will offer other interactive sessions on Disaster Housing Recovery; Effective Media/Social Media Strategies & Practices; and Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The forum will also feature keynote speakers and panels on: Racial Equity and Housing Justice featuring MacArthur "Genius" photographer LaToya Ruby Frazier; the HoUSed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing – Progress To-Date and Road Ahead; Capitol Hill Insiders Panel; Ending Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions; Achieving Renter Protections; Expanding the Multi-Sector Affordable Housing Movement; Best Practices in Organizing; and discussions with Members of Congress and Senior Administration Officials.

Forum attendees will have an opportunity to connect and network with other attendees during a special virtual speed networking session.

Register today for the March 22-23, 2022, Virtual Housing Policy Forum!

Leadership Awards Celebration 2022

Celebrate 2022 Housing Leadership Award Honorees Ann O'Hara, Representative Ritchie Torres, and the Congressional Progressive Caucus

Join NLIHC in celebrating our 2022 Housing Leadership Awards honorees **Ann O'Hara, Representative Ritchie Torres, and the Congressional Progressive Caucus**. These exceptional leaders will be recognized at NLIHC's 40th Annual Housing Leadership Awards Celebration held virtually on Thursday, April 28. Donate to NLIHC in these leaders' honor as an individual or as an organization.

The Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award, named for NLIHC's founder Cushing Niles Dolbeare, a pioneer of the affordable housing movement, will be awarded to **Ann O'Hara** for her decades of advocacy for quality, accessible, affordable homes for extremely low-income households as a public housing authority director, Section 8 administrator, state housing official, founder and CEO of the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC), and NLIHC board member.


Ann O’Hara

Representative Ritchie Torres (D-NY) will receive the Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award for his outstanding leadership in elevating the need for historic affordable housing investments for people with the lowest-incomes in 2021. This award is named after former NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, who led NLIHC for more than 17 years.


Representative Ritchie Torres (D-NY)

A 2022 Edward W. Brooke Housing Leadership Award will be presented to the **Congressional Progressive Caucus** for its exceptional commitment to advancing historic affordable housing investments to address homelessness and housing poverty in the U.S. This award is named for Senator Edward Brooke (R-MA), who as a U.S. senator and later as chair of the NLIHC board of directors championed low-income housing. Representative Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), chair of the caucus, is invited to accept the award on behalf of the entire caucus.

The Congressional Progressive Caucus

Recognize these outstanding leaders by donating to NLIHC in their honor!

Donate and learn more about the event at: https://bit.ly/LEADERS22

Or text LEADERSHIP to 41444 to donate in honor of the awardees.

Your donation will be recognized in the Leadership Awards Celebration program, and your contribution will support NLIHC's mission to achieve racially and socially equitable public policy that ensures people with the lowest incomes have quality homes that are accessible and affordable in communities of their choice. Registration to attend the Housing Leadership Awards Celebration will be forthcoming.

Updates will be posted on the event page at: https://bit.ly/LEADERS22

NLIHC News

NLIHC Welcomes Matthew Clarke as Writer/Editor

NLIHC is pleased to welcome Matthew Clarke as writer/editor. As the newest member of the communications team, Matthew will advance the Coalition's mission by providing technical writing and editing support to staff on major publications, internal and external communications, and development efforts.

Before joining NLIHC, Matthew was a communications coordinator at the Newberry Library, an independent humanities research library in Chicago, IL, where he researched, wrote, and edited content for the library's magazine, blog, social media accounts, e-newsletter, website, and other communications channels. Prior to joining the Newberry, he served as a writer/editor for several non-profit and educational organizations in the Chicago area. In addition to his work as a writer/editor, Matthew has taught writing and literature at colleges around Chicago, including the University of Illinois at Chicago, where for five years he served as a visiting lecturer in the English Department's First-Year Writing Program.

Matthew is a graduate of Loyola University Chicago, where he received his master's and doctoral degrees in English literature. His research focused on the ways publishing practices in Romantic-era Britain shaped access to new literature. He received his bachelor's degree in philosophy from Reed College.

Please join us in welcoming Matthew to the NLIHC team!

NLIHC Welcomes Gabrielle Ross as Housing Advocacy Organizer

NLIHC welcomes Gabrielle Ross to the field team as housing advocacy organizer. Prior to joining NLIHC, Gabby was a housing stability specialist for a property management company in Washington, DC, where she worked with residents impacted by COVID-19 and at risk of eviction. She assisted residents applying for emergency rental assistance by helping them overcome potential barriers in the application process that could prevent them from receiving the support they needed. She also partnered with local nonprofits to conduct outreach to make sure DC residents were aware of the program and had the tools to apply for assistance.

Previously, Gabby worked as a housing specialist at N Street Village for the Patricia Handy Place for Women shelter in Washington, DC. During her time there, she worked alongside case managers and community partners to find safe and affordable housing for the women at the shelter to exit homelessness successfully. Gabby graduated from Howard University in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in community development.

Please join us in welcoming Gabby to the NLIHC team!

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of January 2

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of January 2:

- "Goodbye, rent assistance," *Forbes*, January 6 at: https://bit.ly/3n70VjE
- "Several states have run out of federal rental assistance," *CNBC*, January 6 at: https://cnb.cx/3tcO43n
- "U.S. experiencing 'largest wave of minimum wage raises' ever despite federal inaction," *Yahoo Finance*, January 7 at: https://yhoo.it/3F4abLC

NLIHC Staff

Xavier Arriaga, Policy Analyst, x231
Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245
Sidney Betancourt, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x200
Jordan Brown, Research Intern
Victoria Bourret, x244
Jen Butler, Senior Director, Media Relations and Communications, x239
Alayna Calabro, Policy Analyst–COVID-19 Response, x252
Josephine Clarke, Senior Executive Assistant, x226
Matthew Clarke, Writer/Editor

Courtney Cooperman, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x263
Bairy Diakite, Operations Manager, x254
Emma Foley, Research Analyst, x249
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Sarah Gallagher, Senior Project Director, ERASE, x220
Sydnee Graves, Field Intern
Kim Johnson, Housing Policy Analyst, x243
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