

**Volume 26, Issue 02**  
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## **In This Issue:**

### **Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness – Highlights**

- President-Elect Biden Announces New COVID-19 Relief Proposal
- Over 2,000 Organizations Join NLIHC Letter Urging the Incoming Biden Administration to Extend, Improve, and Enforce the Federal Eviction
- Disaster Housing Recovery Advocates Call for Comments on Proposed Rule Limiting Access to FEMA Resources
- Senator Sherrod Brown Joins NLIHC’s National Call, Discusses Accomplishments and Next Steps to Achieve Housing Justice

### **Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness – Resources**

- NLIHC Releases Report on Best Practices for State and Local Emergency Rental Assistance Programs

### **Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness – HUD**

- HUD Offices of Multifamily and Public and Indian Housing Post Updated FAQs

### **Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness - Other**

- Join NLIHC’s National Call on Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness Today at 2:30 pm ET
- Recording Available of NLIHC’s January 11 National Call on Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness
- Join NLIHC’s Webinar on Emergency Rental Assistance: Looking Back and Moving Forward, January 28
- Additional Coronavirus Updates - January 19, 2021
- Additional Disaster Housing Recovery Updates - January 19, 2021

### **NLIHC Housing Policy Forum 2021**

- State and Local Emergency Rental Assistance Programs to be Highlighted at NLIHC Virtual Housing Policy Forum 2021, March 30-31

### **NLIHC Housing Leadership Celebration**

- NLIHC Announces 2021 Housing Leadership Award Honorees: Sen. Sherrod Brown, Rep. Maxine Waters, Joy Johnson, and National Housing Law Project’s Housing Justice Network

## **Opportunity Starts at Home**

- New Report Identifies the Housing Goals Essential for Upward Economic Mobility

## **Department of the Treasury**

- Senate Finance Committee to Hold Confirmation Hearing for Treasury Secretary Nominee Yellen

## **FEMA**

- President-Elect Biden Nominates NYC Emergency Management Head Deanne Criswell to Lead FEMA

## **HUD**

- HUD Publishes National Physical Inspection Standards

## **Research**

- Rental Assistance Improves Housing Stability, Quality, and Affordability
- Government-Sponsored Enterprise (GSE) Financing Can Affect Tenants' Risk of Eviction

## **Fact of the Week**

- Only a Third of Those Leaving Temporary COVID Placements in Hotels Obtain Permanent Housing

## **From the Field**

- Washington Housing Advocates and Governor Push for Robust Housing Funding

## **Resources**

- Report Identifies Promising State and Local Policies that Advance Equitable and Inclusive Outcomes in Housing and Community Development

## **NLIHC News**

- NLIHC Seeks Research Analyst–COVID Response

## **NLIHC in the News**

- NLIHC in the News for the Week of January 10

## Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness – Highlights

### President-Elect Biden Announces New COVID-19 Relief Proposal

President-elect Biden on January 14 released a \$1.9 trillion [legislative proposal](#) for a comprehensive COVID-19 relief package. The proposal includes essential resources and protections for America’s lowest-income renters and people experiencing homelessness.

The President-elect called for an extension of the federal eviction moratorium through September 2021; \$30 billion in emergency rental and utility assistance; \$1,400 stimulus checks; and \$5 billion to address the health and housing needs of people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the proposal would increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, further expand unemployment benefits, provide a 15% increase to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), increase the Child Tax Credit, and more.

These resources and protections are urgently needed and should be enacted as quickly as possible, along with additional resources necessary to ensure housing stability for low-income renters and people experiencing homelessness. In addition to urging Congress to extend the eviction moratorium legislatively, President-elect Biden must on his first day in office issue an executive order to extend, strengthen, and enforce the current federal eviction moratorium, which expires on January 31.

While the provisions included in President-elect Biden’s proposal are vital and should be immediately enacted, Congress must also provide:

- \$28 billion for 500,000 new Housing Choice Vouchers to ensure continued housing stability for households with the greatest needs
- Legal aid resources and other renter protections to help renters avoid evictions
- An additional \$3 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants to help prevent and respond to outbreaks among people experiencing homelessness and provide stabilization and other needed services
- \$44 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to help communities provide homeless individuals currently living in hotels and motels with an exit solution through permanent supportive housing, rather than allowing them to return to homelessness

Read President-elect Biden’s proposal at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3zd3zjq>

See NLIHC’s top priorities for the next COVID-19 relief package at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5xay4gw>

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### Over 2,000 Organizations Join NLIHC Letter Urging the Incoming Biden Administration to Extend, Improve, and Enforce the Federal Eviction Moratorium

Over 2,000 national, state, and local organizations and elected leaders joined NLIHC’s January 15 [letter](#) calling on President-elect Biden, HUD Secretary-designate Marcia Fudge, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director-designate Dr. Rochelle Walensky to extend the federal moratorium on evictions for nonpayment of rent and address the moratorium’s shortcomings by improving and enforcing the order.

The eviction moratorium provides vital protections to renters at risk of eviction during the pandemic, and by doing so has helped keep stably housed millions of people who would otherwise face eviction. While these protections are desperately needed, the moratorium is currently slated to expire on January 31 and, in its current form, has significant shortcomings that undermine the order’s intent.

The letter calls on the incoming Biden administration to extend the moratorium until the end of the pandemic and to strengthen the moratorium by making its protections automatic and universal. The letter also urges the incoming administration to rescind the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document issued by the CDC on October 9 (see *Memo*, [10/13/20](#)). The FAQ undermines the intent of the moratorium and erodes protections for renters by creating loopholes in the moratorium’s protections, allowing landlords to serve eviction notices and file eviction lawsuits as long as households are not removed from their homes until the moratorium expires. The FAQ also allows landlords to challenge the validity of tenants’ moratorium declarations. The letter states that these changes “serve to mislead, pressure, scare, or intimidate renters into leaving sooner and may result in a flood of families being evicted from their homes in February.”

Additionally, despite the moratorium imposing criminal penalties on landlords who violate it, the Department of Justice (DOJ) under the Trump administration has not enforced the penalties and has provided no means of recourse for tenants to report landlords violating the moratorium’s provisions. The letter urges the Biden administration to create a hotline number renters can use to file complaints and to direct the DOJ to enforce the moratorium.

Read the letter at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5z7u9xv>

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## **Disaster Housing Recovery Advocates Call for Comments on Proposed Rule Limiting Access to FEMA Resources**

The FEMA Public Assistance Program (PA) reimburses states, local governments, and certain types of non-profits for certain disaster costs, such as debris removal, emergency protective measures to protect life and property, and permanent repair work to damaged or destroyed infrastructure. FEMA announced a [proposed rule](#) on December 14, 2020 that would severely restrict disaster-impacted states from receiving this assistance in the future. If the full rule is implemented, communities would lose access to federal resources needed to recover in all but very large disasters. During a time when state and local resources are being pushed to the limit by the COVID-19 pandemic, the rule would severely restrict access to these critical resources. As a result, the NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) is requesting that FEMA withdraw these provisions. NLIHC has created a [fact sheet](#) describing the rule and offering arguments in opposition.

To receive FEMA assistance, elected officials must first make a formal request to the president for approval – a decision based largely on FEMA’s recommendation. Specifically, the rule would modify how FEMA calculates the estimated cost of assistance (COA), one of the six factors on which FEMA bases its recommendations. The rule would apply over ten years of inflation adjustments to the nationwide standards it uses to find a COA and modify its calculations by each state’s total taxable revenue (TTR). TTR measures how much revenue a state could potentially receive if it taxed all available sources. For multiple states, the level of disaster damage required to receive FEMA PA would increase by over 100% - severely curtailing the amount of PA approvals the state would see.

These changes would abruptly restrict access to FEMA resources, leaving states with little time to boost their capacity to address disasters without federal assistance and placing disaster survivors and their communities at greater risk. In addition, the measurement proposed by FEMA to discern the economic status of states is inaccurate: TTR only measures the potential financial resources of a state, not the actual amount of funds available for disaster recovery. While these modifications were prompted by a provision of the “Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018” (DRRA), that law only required that FEMA evaluate its methods of calculating COA, meaning that FEMA is not required to make these modifications.

The DHRC will be submitting a comment in opposition to these provisions of the rule and are encouraging its partners in the disaster housing recovery field to do the same. Comments on the proposed rule are due by February 12, 2021 and can be submitted through the [Federal eRulemaking Portal](#).

View the full text of the proposed FEMA rule at: <https://bit.ly/3r6AyL3>

Read NLIHC's fact sheet on the rule at: <https://bit.ly/2XMxndO>

Submit a comment on the proposed rule at: <https://bit.ly/38NNZZb>

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## **Senator Sherrod Brown Joins NLIHC's National Call, Discusses Accomplishments and Next Steps to Achieve Housing Justice**

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) joined NLIHC as a guest speaker on our [coronavirus, disasters, housing, and homelessness](#) call on January 11. Senator Brown is the incoming chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee. A champion on housing issues, Senator Brown was instrumental in securing the extension of the CDC eviction moratorium and the provision of \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance (see *Memo 12/22*). Senator Brown highlighted the work done by advocates and Congress to secure essential COVID-19 relief and protections were included in the end-of-year COVID-19 relief package. He further detailed his efforts to plan for another pandemic relief package, stating, "We're going to begin work immediately on a new COVID-19 relief package that'll help us get this pandemic under control. . . . We'll start by working with the Biden administration to quickly get out the emergency rental assistance that we passed, and we'll extend the eviction protections as we get people the help they need."

Senator Brown went on to affirm his commitment as incoming Chair of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee to addressing the affordable housing crisis and tackling income and racial inequality that persists in the housing system.

NLIHC hosts national calls on coronavirus, disasters, housing and homelessness every week. Register for today's call (Tuesday, January 19 at 2:30 pm ET) at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

Listen to Senator Brown's full remarks at: <https://t.co/FDneNCIoiD?amp=1>

Watch a full recording of the January 11 call at: <https://tinyurl.com/y38kpav3>

Access presentation slides at: <https://bit.ly/2LXvSXC>

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## **Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness – Resources**

### **NLIHC Releases Report on Best Practices for State and Local Emergency Rental Assistance Programs**

NLIHC released on January 13 a new report, "[Best Practices for State and Local Emergency Rental Assistance Programs](#)." The report outlines key considerations and best practices for implementing emergency rental assistance (ERA) programs using the \$25 billion for ERA included in the recently enacted COVID-19 relief package.

The report provides examples from state and local programs around the country, informed by NLIHC’s ongoing research on ERA programs, as well as insights and experiences of state and local advocates. Above all, NLIHC recommends program administrators create simple, accessible application processes to deliver rental assistance efficiently and effectively to tenants most in need. The report will be updated as new information becomes available and other questions arise.

Read the report at: <https://bit.ly/3oAQ4NB>

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## Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness – HUD

### HUD Offices of Multifamily and Public and Indian Housing Post Updated FAQs

HUD’s Offices of Multifamily Housing Programs (Multifamily) and Public and Indian Housing (PIH) recently posted updated coronavirus-related guidance.

Specifically, PIH posted an [update to its Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) pertaining to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) eviction moratorium on January 8, reflecting that the date the moratorium is in effect was extended to January 31, 2021. The new date is the only change for three of the FAQs, EM-CDC 1, EM-CDC 14, and EM-CDC 15.

Multifamily, which oversees contracts with private owners of HUD-assisted properties, issued its ninth update to [“Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)”](#) on January 4. The previous update was on October 14, 2020 (see *Memo*, [10/26/20](#)). The latest version updates eight questions, with six of them simply extending the time the guidance applies to May 31, 2021. There are three new questions, two of which are most relevant to residents and advocates.

Under the category of “Resident Health,” Q15 (page 7) states that Multifamily-assisted properties may allow providers of healthcare services to temporarily use property common areas, parking lots, and vacant offices to provide flu shots, COVID-19 testing, and vaccines to residents. The services must not affect property operating costs beyond budgeted and approved supportive services funds. Owners and agents should ensure that their testing site has a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certificate of waiver or is covered by another facility’s CLIA certificate.

Under the category of “Asset Management”/“Property Reviews, Inspections, and Rent Comparability Studies,” Q4 (page 23) states that HUD will not waive the requirement for an owner to perform annual Management Occupancy Review (MOR) unit inspections. HUD Handbook 4350.3, REV-1, paragraph 6-29.A.3, requires owners to perform unit inspections at least annually to determine whether appliances and equipment in a unit are functioning properly and to assess whether a component needs to be repaired or replaced. If local or state health department coronavirus guidance prevents owners from entering a unit, an owner should consult with a tenant to confirm whether there are any issues with appliances, equipment, or other components in their unit and document the tenant’s report. Owners may also consider using electronic means to perform remote or virtual unit inspections and as a means of submitting work orders to minimize in-person interactions during the pandemic, when possible.

The Multifamily January 4, 2021 update is at: <https://bit.ly/38BR5zm>

The PIH January 8, 2021 update is at: <https://bit.ly/3i8GD5B>

More about Project-Based Rental Assistance is on [page 4-46](#) of NLIHC’s *2020 Advocates’ Guide*.



More about Public Housing is on [page 4-30](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

More about Housing Choice Vouchers is on [page 4-1](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

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## Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness – Other

### Join NLIHC's National Call on Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness Today at 2:30 pm ET

Join today's (January 19) national call on coronavirus, disasters, housing, and homelessness at 2:30-4 pm ET. We will hear about the incoming Biden administration's just-released proposal for the next coronavirus relief package, the latest on the state of evictions during the pandemic from Peter Hepburn from The Eviction Lab, updates from the field, and more.

Register for the national call at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

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### Recording Available of NLIHC's January 11 National Call on "Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness"

During the most recent national call on [coronavirus, disasters, housing, and homelessness](#), we were joined by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), who discussed plans for his new role as chairman of the [Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee](#). We shared the latest updates on the extended eviction moratorium and emergency rental assistance (ERA), heard about NLIHC's new publication on best practices for local ERA programs, and learned about an accommodation request letter generator for people with disabilities facing eviction for nonpayment of rent. We received field updates from New Jersey and Massachusetts.

Diane Yentel provided an overview of NLIHC's [letter to President-elect Biden](#), Treasury Secretary Designate Janet Yellen, and HUD Secretary Designate Marcia Fudge urging immediate action to provide state and local governments with the timely and clear guidance required to distribute critically needed ERA to millions of households at risk of eviction. NLIHC's [recommendations](#) to included prioritizing households with the greatest needs, discouraging burdensome requirements, and providing effective housing stability services. Rebecca Yae and Kim Johnson shared insights from NLIHC's recent report, "[Best Practices for State and Local Emergency Rental Assistance Programs](#)."

Rachel Cohen-Miller discussed [Disability Rights Texas's accommodation request letter generator](#) for people with disabilities who are facing eviction for nonpayment of rent. We received field updates from the [Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey](#) and the [Citizen's Housing and Planning Association](#) from Massachusetts.

NLIHC hosts national calls on Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness every week. On today's call, we will hear the latest from Capitol Hill, receive updates on the state of evictions during the pandemic, and more. Register for today's call (Tuesday, January 19 at 2:30 pm ET) at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

Watch a recording of the January 11 call at: [tinyurl.com/yxicyt8zx](https://tinyurl.com/yxicyt8zx)

Access presentation slides at: [tinyurl.com/y58zlw5](https://tinyurl.com/y58zlw5)

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## Join NLIHC's Webinar on Emergency Rental Assistance: Looking Back and Moving Forward, January 28

[Join](#) NLIHC, University of Pennsylvania's Housing Initiative at Penn, and the Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy at New York University on Thursday, January 28 at 2 pm ET for a webinar on lessons learned and successes in designing and implementing emergency rental assistance programs. Over the past year, numerous state and local governments created or expanded emergency rental assistance programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis. University of Pennsylvania's Housing Initiative at Penn, the Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy at New York University, and NLIHC surveyed over 200 program administrators to understand how choices in program design and implementation have impacted key outcomes, including how many tenants applied for assistance and how many households were served.

The webinar will highlight early findings and lessons learned from the survey and other relevant research and provide concrete recommendations on how programs can move forward to efficiently and effectively use the \$25 billion of emergency rental assistance from the COVID-19 relief package.

Register at: <https://bit.ly/38LGAcQ>

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## Additional Coronavirus Updates - January 19, 2021

### National Updates

#### *Congress*

[Senator Sherrod Brown](#) (D-OH), incoming chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, has announced that housing affordability and access to housing will be a long-term priority for the committee. Senator Brown said his first priority will be to extend the CDC eviction moratorium and provide additional emergency rental assistance.

#### *Department of Treasury*

The U.S. Department of the Treasury released official [state and territory allocations](#) of the \$25 billion Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program. Learn more about the ERA program [here](#).

#### *Advocacy*

NLIHC's DHRC will continue to push for a broad array of resources and protections, including emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention assistance, a national moratorium on evictions and foreclosures, and emergency funds for homelessness service providers, housing authorities, and housing providers, among other recommendations. For more information, see DHRC's [full list of recommendations](#).

The [Kentucky Equal Justice Center](#) updated its [homerenter declaration app](#), which allows renters to generate a custom Declaration for their landlord. Renters must submit a Declaration to their landlord to receive protection under the CDC eviction moratorium. Learn more about the [federal eviction moratorium](#).

*Stacker* compiled a [list of resources in each state](#) that help house and serve people experiencing homelessness.

#### *Reporting*

The [Associated Press](#) reports that housing advocates across the country held rallies on January 13, calling on the incoming Biden administration to extend and strengthen the federal eviction moratorium. "The eviction moratorium has to be extended in order to continue to create protection for tenants while states and localities



work to get emergency rental assistance out to tenants who need it most,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel.

NLIHC Vice President of Public Policy Sarah Saadian spoke to the [Florida Phoenix](#) about the COVID-19 housing crisis and solutions to address the affordable housing crisis. “President-elect Biden ran on a really strong housing platform that includes long-term solutions, too, so we know how to better address the next disaster that happens. We’ve learned there are really big gaps in our safety net systems,” said Sarah Saadian.

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel spoke to [ABC15](#) about the critical need for President-elect Biden to take immediate action to prevent tens of millions of renters from losing their homes. NLIHC will submit a [national sign on letter](#) to the Biden administration, urging them to extend, strengthen, and enforce the CDC eviction moratorium.

NLIHC’s Diane Yentel spoke with [WFTV](#) about the pre-pandemic affordable housing crisis in Florida and across the U.S. and the long-term solutions needed to address this crisis.

## State and Local News

A list of state and local emergency rental assistance programs is available [here](#) from NLIHC.

### *Arizona*

Despite housing advocates’ calls for [Governor Doug Ducey](#) to allocate more funds for rental assistance, the governor’s State of the State address failed to mention any aid for the more than 200,000 Arizonans facing eviction and the 10,000-plus individuals experiencing homelessness.

### *Arkansas*

The [Arkansas Times](#) compiled a list of resources for Arkansans in need of housing, healthcare, food, and other types of assistance.

The city of [Hot Springs](#) solicited proposals from nonprofit groups interested in overseeing the disbursement of nearly \$130,000 in federal funds allocated for rent and utility assistance. The city board also allocated nearly \$318,000 from the city’s CDBG-CV funds to acquire a quarantine shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness and low-income residents.

An [unprecedented number of evictions](#) and a rise in homelessness in Arkansas is expected when the CDC eviction moratorium expires on January 31. The U.S. Census *Household Pulse Survey* found that more than 425,000 Arkansans are behind on rent, and roughly half reported having zero confidence they can pay next month’s rent.

### *California*

[Marin County](#) supervisors voted unanimously on January 12 to enact a five-month eviction ban. Landlords will be prohibited from evicting a tenant if the tenant provides a declaration of pandemic-related financial distress within 15 days of receiving notice demanding payment of rent. The ban will take effect February 1 and last through June 30.

Anticipating a wave of evictions in the near future, the city of Pasadena committed nearly [\\$120,000 to cover legal fees](#) for residents facing eviction. The funds, which are part of a \$720,243 state grant from the California Emergency Solutions and Housing Program, will go to the Housing Rights Center, a local nonprofit that provides legal aid.

Los Angeles City Councilman Kevin de León unveiled a plan on January 12 aimed at [creating 25,000 housing units](#) by 2025 for people experiencing homelessness.

The [Right to Counsel movement](#) is urging Los Angeles city and county to pass legislation providing legal aid to every tenant facing eviction. Studies indicate that up to 77% of tenants win their cases when they have legal representation, compared to 6% of tenants without legal aid.

### *Florida*

[Hillsborough County](#) officials are scrambling to assist families facing eviction and those who are newly homeless. The county's first rapid rehousing project under its 10-point pandemic response plan is now complete: a new home for up to 20 Hillsborough families partially funded by \$1.25 million of the county's Coronavirus Relief Fund.

[Bay County](#) is experiencing a surge in homelessness as many residents face eviction. Panama City is looking at more than 400 evictions when the CDC moratorium expires on January 31. Affordable housing remains a [significant issue](#) more than two years after Hurricane Michael, with many of the income-based apartment complexes in Bay County having not fully returned.

### *Hawaii*

[Loopholes in Hawaii's eviction moratorium](#) have allowed landlords to evict tenants. The moratorium, which remains in effect through February 14, prohibits landlords from raising rents and evicting tenants for nonpayment of rent. Landlords, however, are allowed to move back into their units or sell their properties under the moratorium.

### *Iowa*

The Iowa Supreme Court on December 30 issued a [Supervisory Order](#) supplementing previous forcible-and-detainer-related supervisory orders related to COVID-19. The new order extends the duration of the eviction moratorium issued on October 2 through January 31, 2021.

### *Louisiana*

[KSLA](#) discusses concerns about what will happen to renters when the CDC eviction moratorium is lifted on January 31. Verni Howard, executive director for [Providence House](#) in Shreveport, reports that the pandemic is causing a boom in homelessness.

### *Maryland*

Governor Larry Hogan announced Maryland will receive [\\$402 million](#) through the Treasury Department's Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program. The majority of the funding will be administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, with local jurisdictions managing the remainder of the funds.

The Baltimore City Council on January 11 unveiled a package of [proposed housing legislation](#) targeted at helping renters and homeowners struggling during the ongoing pandemic. The bills aim to suspend late fees for those receiving public housing subsidies, change how security deposits are paid, and close a loophole allowing people to be effectively evicted despite the moratorium.

### *Massachusetts*

To combat the loss of economic stability for many community members, the [Cape Cod Housing Assistance Corporation](#) is offering mortgage and rental assistance.

### *Michigan*

[Ingham County](#), home to Lansing, is facing an eviction crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic fallout. The county has spent \$2 million in federal coronavirus relief funding for emergency rental assistance.

*MLive* reports that the number of [families in Kent County homeless shelters](#) has doubled since the onset of the pandemic. While 82% of residents in the county are white, approximately 75% of the families needing shelter are people of color, with Black residents accounting for the majority of that number.

#### *Missouri*

[Homeless encampments](#) in downtown St. Louis are being shut down. While some encampment residents are considering going to a shelter, others are moving to a different location due to safety concerns regarding shelters. Advocates are calling on the city to provide safer options for individuals experiencing homelessness. The city has provided [50 tiny homes](#) for people experiencing homelessness, and officials expect the temporary housing village to be full by the end of January.

#### *Montana*

The [Montana Eviction Intervention Program](#), a partnership between the Montana Department of Commerce and the Montana Legal Services Association, has provided attorneys to [100 households facing eviction](#) since launching in October. The project is supported by a \$70,000 grant through the CARES Act. Program partners want to extend the legal aid program, as many Montana renters remain at risk of eviction.

#### *New Jersey*

[Governor Phil Murphy](#) urged the New Jersey Legislature to pass a stalled housing relief bill, nicknamed “[The People’s Bill](#),” that would give renters time to pay back rent and provide stronger mortgage forbearance.

[Burlington County](#) submitted an application to the Department of Treasury to obtain \$13 million for an emergency rental assistance program. The county established a Housing Hub at the Burlington County Human Services Building, which has provided a total of 1,066 households with aid in 2020. Nearly 1,500 households received help from the Burlington County’s Rapid Rehousing Initiative.

#### *New York*

The [Wall Street Journal](#) reports that New York City renters owe more than \$1 billion in unpaid rent, according to a new survey conducted by the Community Housing Improvement Program, a landlord trade group.

#### *Ohio*

Ohio Representatives David Leland (D-Columbus) and Jeffrey Crossman (D-Parma) introduced a [bipartisan bill to halt evictions and foreclosures in Ohio](#) amid the ongoing pandemic. The legislation adds additional protections and addresses the well-documented gaps in the CDC federal eviction moratorium. The bill would also extend the moratorium for the duration of the COVID-19 state of emergency at the state level.

#### *Pennsylvania*

[Lancaster County housing organizations](#) are seeking proposals from hotels willing to house people experiencing homelessness for four to six months, and possibly longer. Proposals will be accepted until noon on January 15.

#### *Washington*

While Washington’s eviction moratorium is in place through March 31, [advocates are concerned](#) about the lack of a comprehensive plan to address the full rent and consumer debt tenants have accumulated during COVID-19. Approximately 60,000 to 140,000 Washington residents are at risk of eviction or mortgage default. The

COVID-19 relief package enacted by Congress provides \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance, but experts warn it is far from enough to meet the overwhelming need.

### *West Virginia*

West Virginia Governor Jim Justice and the West Virginia Housing Development Fund [announced](#) the launch of the [Mountaineer Rental Assistance Program](#), which will be funded through the Treasury Department's emergency rental assistance program.

### *Wyoming*

Non-profit organizations and service providers report that [Wyoming](#) allocated far too small a percentage of CARES Act funds – less than half a percent – to eviction prevention and food insecurity efforts. The Wyoming Emergency Housing Assistance Program was originally funded at \$15 million. By December, however, the program distributed only slightly more than 10% of the funding – \$1.5 million – and returned the rest of the funds to the governor for reallocation. The CARES rental assistance program rejected one-third of the applications it received, in part due to its stringent qualification.

## **Guidance**

### *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

[CDC Webinar on January 19, 2:00pm ET: Updates on COVID-19 Vaccination for People Experiencing Homelessness](#)

### *Department of Housing and Urban Development*

[HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing: FAQs for CDC Order Extension](#) – Updated January 8, 2021

[HUD's Office of Special Needs COVID-19 FAQ: Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#) – January 7, 2021

[COVID-19 Planning and Response: Lessons Learned from Outreach Workers](#)

[COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Questions to Assist CoCs and Public Health Authorities to Plan and Prepare for Vaccine Distribution](#)

[COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Vaccine Planning and Distribution: Roles and Responsibilities for Homeless Service Providers](#)

[CPD Memo: Availability of Waivers for the Biennial Point-in-Time Count of Unsheltered Homelessness](#) – January 7, 2021

### *Internal Revenue Service*

[What You Need to Know About the Second Economic Impact Payments \[Español\]](#)

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## **Additional Disaster Housing Recovery Updates - January 19, 2021**

The NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition is convening and supporting disaster-impacted communities to ensure that federal disaster recovery efforts reach all impacted households, including the lowest-income and most marginalized people who are often the hardest-hit by disasters and have the fewest resources to recover.

Learn more about the DHRC’s policy recommendations [here](#).

## Hurricanes Laura & Delta

Nearly five months after Hurricanes Laura and Delta, [tens of thousands of people](#) are still displaced, with many having to move several times or still living in tents. As of mid-December, more than 1,000 people remained in hotel rooms in the wake of the hurricanes.

[Lake Charles Mayor Nic Hunter](#) sent a letter to FEMA on December 26, expressing frustration with the agency’s lag in providing adequate housing for the 2,000 Calcasieu residents needing temporary housing after Hurricanes Laura and Delta. “Every day we have more bureaucracy and red tape and it’s another day that someone is sitting, missing home, missing their family, waiting to come back to a job that is here in Lake Charles, so we need to move quickly,” said [Mayor Hunter](#).

## Wildfires in the West

More than 30% of families within the [Phoenix-Talent School District](#) lost their homes in the Almeda Fire, and with COVID-19 school closures, families were left struggling to continue distance learning amid the chaos. Many of the 700 students’ families who lost their homes are Latino immigrants living in multigenerational housing who faced an added language barrier.

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## NLIHC Housing Policy Forum 2021

### State and Local Emergency Rental Assistance Programs to be Highlighted at NLIHC Virtual Housing Policy Forum 2021, March 30-31

*NLIHC’s Virtual Housing Policy Forum 2021: A New Day*, taking place on **March 30-31 from 1-5 pm ET**, will feature an in-depth session on state and local emergency rental assistance programs and NLIHC’s ongoing project to track, analyze, and influence these programs to ensure they effectively and efficiently serve people and families most in need. The session will feature best practices, challenges, and solutions for operating emergency rental assistance programs to keep people in their homes during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Register today at: <http://bit.ly/NLIHCForum21>





The Forum will also feature keynote speakers and panels on Racial Equity and Housing Justice; What the Elections Mean for Affordable Housing/Capitol Hill Insiders Panel; Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness: The Current State of Play; Achieving a Housing Entitlement; Best Practices in Organizing; and more.

Register for the Forum at: <http://bit.ly/NLIHCForum21>

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## NLIHC Housing Leadership Celebration

### NLIHC Announces 2021 Housing Leadership Award Honorees: Sen. Sherrod Brown, Rep. Maxine Waters, Joy Johnson, and National Housing Law Project's Housing Justice Network

NLIHC announces today the 2021 Housing Leadership Awards honorees: **Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH)**, incoming chair of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs committee; **Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA)**, chair of the House Financial Services Committee; **Joy Johnson**, long-time resident-leader of the Charlottesville Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR) and former NLIHC board member; and the **Housing Justice Network** of the National Housing Law Project. These exceptional leaders will be recognized at NLIHC's **39<sup>th</sup> Annual Housing Leadership Awards Celebration** held virtually on Wednesday, April 28. Donate to NLIHC as an [individual](#) or as an [organization](#) in their honor.

The first award is named for Senator Edward Brooke (R-MA), who championed low-income housing as a U.S. senator and later as chair of the NLIHC board of directors. **Senator Sherrod Brown** will receive the 2021 Edward W. Brooke Housing Leadership Award for his many years of fighting for racial and social justice, voting rights, and affordable housing and for his exceptional leadership in Congress to address to the housing and homelessness crisis during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.



Sen. Sherrod Brown

A 2021 Edward W. Brooke Housing Leadership Award will also be given to **Representative Maxine Waters** for her indispensable leadership fighting for equity and justice, combatting racism, championing the housing needs of the lowest-income people, and achieving critical housing and homelessness resources and protections during the 2020 pandemic.





Rep. Maxine Waters

The Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award, named for NLIHC’s founder Cushing Niles Dolbeare, who has been called the “godmother” of the affordable housing movement, will be awarded to **Joy Johnson** for serving her community and the nation for decades as a public housing advocate, organizer, and activist-leader, improving the lives of low-income residents in Charlottesville and across the U.S.



Joy Johnson

The Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award is named after former NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, who led NLIHC for more than 17 years. The National Housing Law Center’s **Housing Justice Network** will receive the Crowley Award for the Network’s outstanding efforts for over forty years serving on the front lines to advance housing rights and over past year providing essential legal assistance to keep families safely housed during the pandemic.



Recognize these outstanding leaders by making a donation to NLIHC in their honor!

Donate as an individual at: <https://bit.ly/2Kd9oRZ>

Donate as an organization at: <https://bit.ly/2LpBbzy>

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

Your donation will be recognized in the Leadership Awards Celebration program. The contribution will support NLIHC's mission to achieve socially just public policy to ensure the lowest-income people have decent, accessible and affordable homes.

Save the date of April 28! Registration to attend the Housing Leadership Awards Celebration will be forthcoming.

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## Opportunity Starts at Home

### New Report Identifies the Housing Goals Essential for Upward Economic Mobility

A [recent report](#) released by the Urban Institute finds that housing is necessary for families and individuals to achieve upward mobility. The authors urge communities, practitioners, and policymakers to broaden housing policy considerations to include a person's power, autonomy, and value in their community which are essential to upward mobility. To incorporate these essential components of upward mobility, the report identifies five key housing goals: housing quality, housing affordability, housing stability, housing that builds assets and wealth, and neighborhood.

“Together, this ‘bundle’ of housing goals interacts in a variety of ways to significantly affect a household's chance of upward mobility, though whether an outcome helps or hurts those chances may not be clear by examining one outcome in isolation,” writes the report's authors. “Families sometimes have to make trade-offs between goals, for example, finding stable housing at the expense of living in a low-resourced neighborhood. Programs that support one housing goal may have mixed or negative effects on another. Understanding the magnitude and direction of these interactions could significantly help households, practitioners, and policymakers focus on the tradeoffs that are likely to yield the greatest long-term mobility benefits.”

Read the report [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](#).

## Department of the Treasury

### Senate Finance Committee to Hold Confirmation Hearing for Treasury Secretary Nominee Yellen

The Senate Committee on Finance is scheduled to hold a confirmation hearing on January 19 for President-elect Joe Biden's nominee for secretary of the Treasury, Janet Yellen. Secretary-designate Yellen previously served as the 15<sup>th</sup> chair of the Federal Reserve from 2014-2018 and as a distinguished fellow in residence with the Economic Studies Program at the Brookings Institution before taking leave after her nomination for Treasury secretary.

The Department of the Treasury administers several housing and community development programs including the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, the Making Home Affordable program, the Hardest Hit Fund, and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI). The Department has overseen funding for several recent disaster recovery efforts, including special allocations of LIHTCs, incentives to spur redevelopment, and Coronavirus Relief Funds during the pandemic. The Department of the Treasury also oversees Housing Bonds, which finance the development of rental and homeownership units. The Treasury offers backing to HUD's FHA Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund and also played a key role in the nation's housing crisis recovery efforts by purchasing mortgage-backed and debt securities issued by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The end-of-2020 pandemic relief package channels the \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance through the Department of the Treasury.

NLIHC recently sent a letter to President-elect Joe Biden, Secretary of HUD-designate Marcia Fudge, and Janet Yellen, urging the incoming administration to provide state and local governments with the timely and clear guidance required to distribute critically needed emergency rental assistance to millions of households at risk of losing their homes during the pandemic (see *Memo*, [01/11](#)).

The hearing will be held on January 19 at 10 am ET and will be streamed live on the Senate Committee on Finance's website at: <https://bit.ly/38DxE9j>

Read the full text of the letter sent to President-Elect Joe Biden, U.S Secretary nominee Marcia Fudge of HUD, and U.S. Secretary of Treasury Janet L. Yellen at: <https://bit.ly/3oBCOII>

More information about the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) is on page [5-17](#) of NLIHC's *Advocates Guide*.

More information about Community Development Financial Institutions Fund is on page [8-6](#) of NLIHC's *Advocates Guide*.

More information about the Housing Bonds program is on page [5-9](#) of NLIHC's *Advocates Guide*.

More information about FHA is on page [5-1](#) of NLIHC's *Advocates Guide*.

More information about Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and Housing Finance Reform is on page [3-15](#) of NLIHC's *Advocates Guide*.

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## FEMA

### President-Elect Biden Nominates NYC Emergency Management Head Deanne Criswell to lead FEMA

President-elect Biden announced on January 15 his selection of Deanne Criswell as FEMA administrator. Ms. Criswell currently serves as commissioner of the NYC Emergency Management Department, leading the city’s response to COVID-19 and other disasters. She worked previously under the Obama administration at FEMA, where she was the federal coordinating officer and lead on the national incident management team. A [press release](#) announcing the nomination stated that she “served as the primary federal representative responsible for leading the agency’s response to and recover[y] from emergencies and major disasters.”

Prior to joining the Obama Administration, Ms. Criswell served as head of the Office of Emergency Management for the city of Aurora, Colorado and served 21 years as a firefighter and deputy fire chief with the Colorado National Guard. She was deployed twice, in 2001 and 2010, serving as an advisor on fire protection for military bases in the Middle East. After leaving the Obama administration, Ms. Criswell worked as a homeland security consultant at the Cadmus Group.

Criswell called the nomination an honor and acknowledged the known challenges of COVID-19 and climate change. “As we face the devastating impacts of COVID-19, as well as the increasing threat of climate change, it is imperative that FEMA addresses these challenges with innovative ideas to serve all Americans fairly and equitably,” she [said](#). “I look forward to this incredible opportunity at this pivotal time in our nation’s history.”

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio stated that the city’s loss was a gain for the country. “The American people deserve leaders like Deanne Criswell,” de Blasio said. “Deanne has been a fearless expert, and deeply respected voice in this administration. I’m proud of all she has accomplished in New York City, and I can’t wait to see what she’ll do in her new role.”

Ms. Criswell is the first woman nominated to lead FEMA. She will need to be approved by the Senate before assuming leadership of the agency.

Read the Biden transition team’s press release on the appointment at: <https://bit.ly/2KlwdmI>

An article on Criswell’s departure from the NYC Emergency Management Department is at: <https://bit.ly/2XPiVNr>

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## HUD

### HUD Publishes National Physical Inspection Standards

HUD published a [proposed rule](#) in the *Federal Register* on January 13 that presents a new approach to defining and assessing housing quality among HUD programs, calling the approach the “National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate” (NSPIRE). The intent of the proposed rule, along with the existing NSPIRE demonstration (see *Memo*, [8/26/19](#)), is to improve HUD oversight by aligning the physical inspection regulations used to evaluate HUD-assisted housing across multiple HUD programs to create a unified assessment of housing quality. HUD programs currently evaluate housing quality using different inspection standards, protocols, and frequencies. Comments to the proposed rule are due March 15.

The proposed rule would establish a method HUD will use to implement specific NSPIRE standards, scoring, and processes through *Federal Register* notices. In addition, the proposed rule seeks to:

- Apply a “safe, habitable dwellings” standard
- Reduce the categories of current inspectable areas for physical condition standards from five to three
- Implement a new annual self-inspection and reporting requirement for certain HUD-assisted housing
- Establish an administrative process for the treatment of health and safety deficiencies

- Incorporate provisions of the “Economic Growth and Recovery, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act” that will reduce administrative burden on small, rural public housing agencies (PHAs)

During the NSPIRE demonstration stage and parallel with formal rulemaking, HUD plans to draft *Federal Register* notices that outline specific inspection standards, scoring, and protocols. All updated standards and scoring methodologies would be published, as required by the proposed rule, through a *Federal Register* notice at least once every three years, with the opportunity for public comment prior to implementation.

### **Need for the Proposed Rule**

Two inspection models are currently used across the majority of HUD housing programs:

1. Housing Quality Standards (HQS), developed in the 1970s and applying to the Housing Choice Voucher (voucher) and the Project-Based Voucher (PBV)
2. Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS), developed in the 1990s and applying to public housing and private housing assisted with the multifamily project-based Section 8 programs.

HUD found that both inspection models can provide inaccurate and inconsistent results. NLIHC notes that advocates have found that some properties in bad condition receive passing physical condition scores (Real Estate Inspection Center, REAC scores), while other properties in good condition receive low scores.

HUD has also identified a disproportionate emphasis in physical inspections around the appearance of items that are otherwise safe and functional, while inadequate attention is paid to health and safety conditions. HUD concluded that existing housing standards should focus on habitability, residential use of structures, and most importantly, the health and safety of residents.

### **NSPIRE Background**

HUD sought PHAs and owners of private HUD-assisted multifamily properties in 2019 to volunteer for its Real Estate Inspection Center (REAC) pilot project named National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate ([NSPIRE](#)). According to a [Federal Register notice](#), on August 21, 2019, over the course of two years HUD sought to inspect 4,500 properties willing to voluntarily adopt NSPIRE model (see *Memo*, [8/26/19](#)). A list of properties approved to participate in NSPIRE as of October 2, 2020 is at: <https://bit.ly/3q9ai1k>

The NSPIRE model contains three major components:

- Three types of inspections: 1) self-inspections by PHAs and owners and agents of private, HUD-assisted multifamily housing, 2) inspections conducted by contractors and/or federal inspectors, and 3) inspections conducted solely by federal inspectors. HUD will inspect participating properties at least once during the demonstration using the NSPIRE standards.
- Three categories of physical deficiencies: 1) health and safety, 2) function and operability, and 3) condition and appearance. HUD states that ideally each category could result in emergency work orders, routine work orders, and other maintenance.
- Three inspectable areas: 1) inside (common areas and building systems), 2) outside (building site and building envelope), and 3) units (the interior of an individual home).

REAC posted two new features on the INSPIRE demonstration [Resident Engagement webpage](#). The National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT) had been advocating for these two provisions, among others, for many years. House Financial Services Committee Chair Maxine Waters (D-CA) and Representatives Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) and Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) sent a letter to HUD Secretary Ben Carson on November 18, 2019 urging HUD to better incorporate tenant perspectives in the NSPIRE demonstration (see *Memo*, [11/25/19](#)). They claimed HUD was not following through on its promise to engage with a diverse group of stakeholders (see



*Memo*, [2/25/19](#)). The letter noted that HUD had spoken only to HUD officials, PHAs, and property owners and agents, leaving tenants out of the discussion altogether.

The preamble to the proposed rule explains that HUD began building updated physical inspection standards, procedures, and scoring methodologies that will be refined through the multistage NSPIRE demonstration. NSPIRE will test and HUD will further refine the physical inspection model to best serve residents. NSPIRE program provisions will be published in the *Federal Register* and will provide an opportunity for public comment. The improvements being refined through the NSPIRE demonstration are intended to occur in parallel with changes in the proposed rule to support and reinforce the rule.

### **Highlights of the Proposed Rule**

Housing quality regulations across HUD programs would be consolidated into one location at 24 CFR part 5. However, where different statutory requirements or public policy considerations prevent alignment with 24 CFR part 5, those program-specific requirements would be maintained in their respective program regulations and would supersede or supplement 24 CFR part 5. The majority of the alignment of inspection protocols, processes, and procedures that HUD proposes involve the public housing and multifamily programs (including project-based Section 8, Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, and Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities).

The proposed rule has aligned the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program (including the Project Based Voucher (PBV) and Tenant Based Voucher (TBV) programs) with other HUD programs, particularly those administered by HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) to the maximum extent possible. Those CPD programs include HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and Continuum of Care (CoC).

NLIHC has a [more detailed summary](#) of specific proposed NSPIRE provisions.

The NSPIRE webpage is at: <https://bit.ly/2MQ9Lmr>

The NSPIRE Resident Engagement webpage is at: <https://bit.ly/3nD70BT>

The *Federal Register* version of the proposed rule is at: <https://bit.ly/3nI3dmJ>

An easier to read version of the proposed rule is at: <https://bit.ly/39pzYQw>

More information about public housing is on [page 4-30](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about multifamily housing is on [page 4-61](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about vouchers is on [page 4-1](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about Project-Based Vouchers is on [page 4-8](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

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## **Research**

### **Rental Assistance Improves Housing Stability, Quality, and Affordability**

New research published in *Housing Policy Debate*, "[The Effects of Rental Assistance on Housing Stability, Quality, Autonomy, and Affordability](#)," highlights how rental assistance programs can improve housing



outcomes for tenants. Using data from a group of low-income adults in New Haven, CT, the authors find that individuals without rental assistance report higher rates of housing instability, poor quality housing, limited housing autonomy, and unaffordability compared to those receiving rental assistance.

The study uses data from a survey of low-income residents in New Haven to assess housing, incarceration, and health outcomes. Participants self-reported whether they received any type of rental assistance. The sample included 400 residents: 81 received rental assistance, 100 were waitlisted for assistance, and 219 neither received assistance nor were on a waitlist. Researchers measured differences in housing stability, quality, autonomy, and affordability across the three groups.

Researchers assessed housing stability by asking participants about the stability of their current housing situation, whether they worried about being evicted, and how they felt about the permanency of their living situation. Compared to those receiving rental assistance, the researchers found that those without rental assistance were twice as likely to feel unstably housed and worry about eviction often, and three times as likely to view their current housing as temporary. Waitlisted individuals were four times more likely to feel unstably housed, worry about eviction often, and view their current housing as temporary compared to those receiving assistance.

With regard to housing quality, individuals on a waitlist and those not receiving rental assistance were approximately twice as likely to report their housing was in poor condition compared to those receiving rental assistance. These groups were also significantly less satisfied with their current housing situation compared to those receiving rental assistance.

To assess housing autonomy, renters were asked to indicate whether they agreed with the statements “I wish to move but am unable to” and “I am able to sleep where I want.” Waitlisted individuals and those not receiving rental assistance were two and three times more likely to report wanting to move but feeling unable to, respectively. Both groups were approximately two times more likely to report that they could never sleep where they wanted.

Lastly, housing affordability was assessed by asking participants how frequently they worried about being able to pay housing bills and whether they experienced any utility shutoffs due to non-payment. Both groups had approximately two times higher odds of worrying about paying their housing bills. Utility shut offs did not differ significantly across the three groups.

The three groups differed significantly across demographic variables including age, felony conviction status, and disability status. The effects of rental assistance across most housing outcomes, however, were large and statistically significant even after controlling for demographic variables. Evidence from this study adds to a growing body of research that indicates rental assistance can improve housing stability, prevent evictions, and contribute to renters’ health and well-being.

The article can be found at: <https://bit.ly/39r8gTn>

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## **Government-Sponsored Enterprise (GSE) Financing Can Affect Tenants’ Risk of Eviction**

A paper released in December 2020, “[Eviction Risk of Rental Housing: Does it Matter How Your Landlord Finances the Property?](#),” examines the extent to which different types of home loans affect landlords’ decisions to evict tenants for non-payment of rent. The researchers find that counties with a higher proportion of rental properties financed by a government-sponsored enterprise (GSE) experience lower eviction rates than counties with smaller proportions of GSE-financed homes. The researchers also find that GSE financing may reduce the number of potential evictions in the absence of a federal eviction moratorium.

The study is premised on the hypothesis that non-payment of rent can cause financial shocks for property owners, potentially causing them to fall behind on mortgage payments. Different types of loans and underwriting criteria may provide property owners relief when they experience these income shocks. Specifically, GSE-financed loans generally have smaller loan amounts and interest rates, resulting in a lower debt service, compared to non-GSE loans. As a result, a landlord with a non-GSE loan may feel more pressure to immediately evict and replace a tenant to recoup the income and make a mortgage payment.

To test their hypothesis, the researchers used eviction data from [Princeton's Eviction Lab](#) and multifamily loan data from [Trepp](#) to estimate differential eviction rates across loan types for 1,111 counties.

Based on an analysis of evictions from January 2001 to December 2016, the researchers estimate an average eviction rate of 2.98 per 100 renter households across the full sample. County eviction rates decrease, however, as the share of GSE-funded mortgages increases. Counties with less than 20% GSE-financed multifamily properties have an average eviction rate of 2.91, while counties with at least 80% GSE-financed multifamily properties have an average eviction rate of 2.51. This represents a 13.7% difference in eviction rates for counties with the lowest and highest proportions of GSE-backed loans.

The researchers also estimate how the number of evictions during COVID-19 would differ if national eviction moratoria had not been enacted. Using data from 12 cities tracked by the Eviction Lab, the researchers predict that evictions would have been 20.4% higher in the absence of any GSE financed mortgages due to stricter underwriting standards. The federal moratoria diminished the influence of GSE financing on reducing evictions, however, by restricting evictions in most rental properties.

The majority of research on eviction and prevention has focused on rental market factors. This research provides a new lens for understanding eviction by examining the role of mortgage financing options. These findings demonstrate how GSE loans from Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and Ginnie Mae can impact housing stability and tenant outcomes.

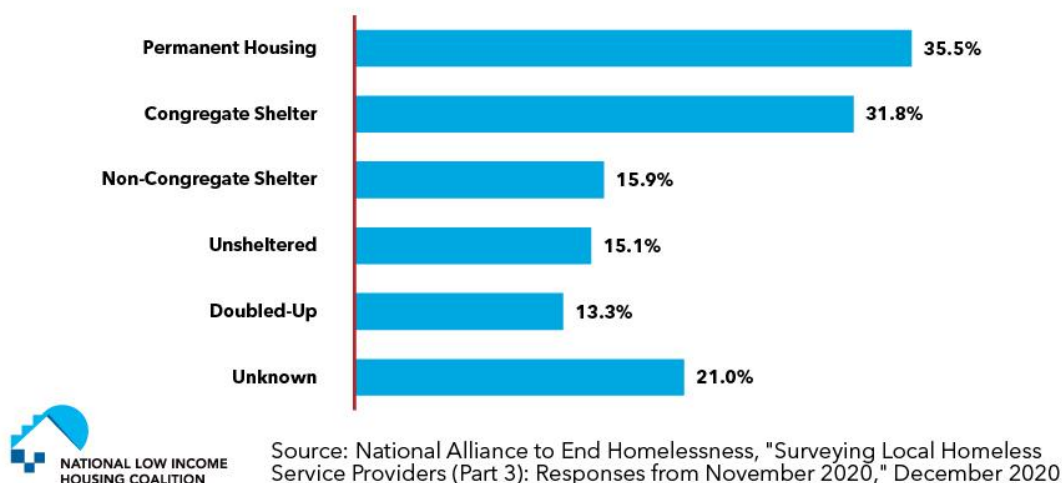
The article can be found at: <https://bit.ly/396ZwBJ>

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## **Fact of the Week**

### **Only a Third of Those Leaving Temporary COVID Placements in Hotels Obtain Permanent Housing**

## Exit Locations for Individuals Leaving Temporary COVID Placements



Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness, "Surveying Local Homeless Service Providers (Part 3): Responses from November 2020," December 2020.

### From the Field

#### Washington Housing Advocates and Governor Push for Robust Housing Funding

As the Washington state legislative session begins, the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, an NLIHC state partner, is advocating for robust investments in affordable housing and in prevention and ending homelessness. The Alliance's priorities include \$240 million for the Washington Housing Trust Fund, \$10 million for affordable housing preservation, \$110 million for shelter acquisition and capacity building, and an increase in the state's real estate document recording fee to create a state funded rental assistance program.

Governor Jay Inslee released his proposed biennial capital and operations budget in December 2020 which closely reflects these priorities. The governor's plan aims to:

- Keep individuals from falling into homelessness by preventing evictions and foreclosure and by mitigating efforts to ease shelter crowding.
- Preserve the existing stock of affordable housing units.
- Continue to build upon recent housing and homelessness investments.

To keep individuals from falling into homelessness, Governor Inslee proposed \$164 million for rental assistance through the end of June 2021 and an additional \$164 million of assistance for 2021-2023. The governor's office estimates that the first \$164 million will go to serving nearly 28,000 households. The governor's operating budget also includes \$17 million in foreclosure relief.

To address homelessness, Governor Inslee's budget proposals include approximately \$37 million for permanent supportive housing operations; \$2 million for homelessness diversion; and \$8 million in assistance for [The Anchor Community Initiative](#), a public-private partnership aiming to reduce youth and young adult homelessness to "functional zero" by 2022.

The governor’s capital and operating budget includes:

- \$220 million to build approximately 3,390 affordable housing units
- \$30 million to preserve approximately 1,500 aging affordable housing units
- \$20 million in low-interest home repair loans for low-income households in rural communities
- \$5 million transfer to the Landlord Mitigation Account which will help return at least 1,000 units to the market at an affordable price by offering grants of up to \$1,000 to landlords for move-in upgrades or cover up to 14 days of rent loss and reimburse up to \$5,000 for damages caused by a tenant during tenancy
- \$40 million to create ‘enhanced shelters’ for those experiencing homelessness
- \$10 million in grants to local governments to develop affordable housing
- \$10 million to expand the footprint of land where affordable housing can be built by cleaning up environmental contamination at hazardous sites
- \$70 million for Housing Trust Fund-eligible entities to acquire properties such as hotels or motels to convert into shelters, permanent supportive housing, or transitional housing units

Washington enacts budgets on a two-year cycle which begins July 1 of each odd-numbered year. The governor’s proposed budget can then be modified in any legislative session.

According to Housing Alliance Executive Director Rachael Myers, “I don’t think we’ve ever seen a state budget proposal this robust in meeting the housing needs of Washington residents. We applaud the governor leading with such significant investments. His proposal helps meet immediate needs and invests in long-term solutions to the housing crisis that existed well before the pandemic. Legislators should follow his lead and make sure these priorities are included in the final budget.”

As with many other states, Washington experienced a decline in its revenue growth rate and projects a deficit of over \$2.5 billion through June 2023. Simultaneously, the state’s homelessness crisis has intensified with an almost 13% increase in the number of unsheltered homeless individuals in 2020. The pandemic has created greater financial insecurity for the estimated 250,000 households that were already struggling to pay rent. It is estimated that there are as many as 175,000 renters who are behind on rent and providing rental assistance to meet the full need would cost approximately \$100 million per month.

The governor’s budget helps address these needs in part by including a tax on capital gains. Currently, Washington has the most regressive tax structure of any state in the United States. The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance is part of a coalition effort to fix the state’s tax code to ensure that the wealthiest people and corporations pay their fair share and that the state has the revenue necessary to meet the needs of all its residents.

For more information about the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, please contact Rachael Myers at [rachaelm@wliha.org](mailto:rachaelm@wliha.org) or visit: <https://www.wliha.org/>

For more information about Governor Inslee’s 2021-2023 proposed budget, visit: <https://bit.ly/3oXFy3i>

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## Resources

**Report Identifies Promising State and Local Policies that Advance Equitable and Inclusive Outcomes in Housing and Community Development**

A new report published by Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), “[Local Change, Big Impact: State and Local Policy Responses to Community Needs](#),” identifies state and local policies that advance equitable and inclusive outcomes within the fields of community development. LISC’s report provides an analysis of a survey which received 521 responses from their partners, including Community Development practitioners, service providers, and individuals in the philanthropic, government and corporate sectors in 45 states and the District of Columbia.

The report demonstrates the critical importance of state and local policy while also showcasing important themes about how local practitioners view effective policies. The report further demonstrates that local programs can fill the gaps left unmet by existing federal policy and includes examples of some of the policies and programs that are being successfully implemented to improve the lives of residents, while making readers aware of their limitations.

The full report can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/3sjPbey>

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## NLIHC NEWS

### NLIHC Seeks Research Analyst–COVID Response

NLIHC seeks a research analyst to further the coalition’s research on housing-related responses to the coronavirus pandemic and economic crisis. The analyst will work with other members of the NLIHC research team to initiate and carry-out research, including data collection and analysis, on rental assistance and other housing policies intended to aid low-income renters. This is a one-year position.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Develop and implement research related to housing-related responses to the coronavirus pandemic
- Collect and analyze federal housing-related expenditure data, including spending through FEMA, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and other federal programs
- Participate in NLIHC working groups related to the coronavirus and other disasters
- Collect data on state and local housing-related responses to the coronavirus pandemic
- Write reports that communicate NLIHC research with the general public
- Disseminate NLIHC research to the general public, members, and partners through writing reports and blogs, creating visualizations, and other means
- Participate in other research as assigned
- Prepare materials and give research presentations for webinars, briefings, conferences, and similar events organized by NLIHC and other partner organizations
- Contribute to NLIHC’s weekly e-newsletter *Memo to Members & Partners* by identifying and summarizing new research relevant to NLIHC members’ interests
- Attend and participate in NLIHC staff meetings, events, Board meetings, and trainings
- Other duties as assigned.

#### Qualifications

A bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred). Applicants should have at least one year of experience in research and/or public policy (three years of experience for senior research analyst position). Applicants should have a commitment to social justice and some knowledge of affordable housing, homelessness, or fair housing policies (knowledge of CDBG, ESG, or FEMA a plus). Candidates should have strong analytical, writing, and editing skills, oral and interpersonal communications, organizational skills, and attention to detail. Applicants

should be proficient in the Microsoft Office suite. Experience with statistical software like SPSS, STATA, or R. GIS is a preferred.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. NLIHC is located in Washington, DC, but the analyst will work remotely, at least initially.

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, and two writing samples to Bairy Diakite, operations manager, and Andrew Aurand, vice president for research, at: [bdiakite@nlihc.org](mailto:bdiakite@nlihc.org) and [aaurand@nlihc.org](mailto:aaurand@nlihc.org)

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## **NLIHC in the News**

### **NLIHC in the News for the Week of January 10**

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of January 10:

- “Housing advocates call on Biden to extend eviction ban,” *ABC News*, January 13 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y6jnr17>
- “Biden calls for extending national eviction moratorium through September 2021 as part of \$1.9-trillion stimulus,” *MarketWatch*, January 14 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y32efknn>
- “Rent relief from the federal stimulus bill is coming. Here's what to know,” *LA Times*, January 14 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5xt4v4r>
- “Special report: Sheltering: Grandmother and grandson live under eviction, covid threats,” *Reuters*, January 12 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5kg5zbp>

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## **NLIHC Staff**

Kyle Arbuckle, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x227  
Olivia Arena, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x209  
Xavier Arriaga, Policy Analyst, x231  
Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245  
Victoria Bourret, Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy, x244  
Jen Butler, Director, Media Relations and Communications, x239  
Alayna Calabro, Policy Analyst–COVID-19 Response, x252  
Josephine Clarke, Senior Executive Assistant, x226  
Bairy Diakite, Operations Manager, x254  
Emma Foley, Research Intern, x249  
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316  
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314  
Kim Johnson, Housing Policy Analyst, x243  
Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232  
Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317  
Joseph Lindstrom, Director, Field Organizing, x222  
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Sarah Saadian, Vice President, Public Policy, x228  
Khara Norris, Senior Director of Administration, x242  
Noah Patton, Housing Policy Analyst, x227



Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Coordinator, x246  
Catherine Reeves, Development Coordinator, x234  
Brooke Schipporeit, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233  
Dan Threet, Research Analyst, x202  
Chantelle Wilkinson, Campaign Manager, OSAH, x230  
Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247  
Rebecca Yae, Senior Research Analyst–COVID-19 Response  
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225