

Volume 25, Issue 5
February 3, 2020

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Take Action

Urge Congress to Provide Robust Funding for Affordable Housing Programs

President Trump is expected to release his budget request for fiscal year (FY) 2021 on February 10. The president's previous budget requests have proposed extreme cuts and the elimination of affordable housing programs, as well as rent increases and work requirements on low-income families. Thanks to the efforts of advocates and congressional champions, Congress has rejected the Trump administration's proposals each of the past three years. NLIHC and other national leaders in housing, homelessness, community development, and transportation are circulating a [sign-on letter](#) urging Congress to again reject steep cuts and ensure transportation and housing programs receive the highest amount of funding possible for FY 21.

While the two-year bipartisan budget agreement signed last summer (see *Memo 7/29/19*) provided some relief from the low spending caps on defense and domestic programs, Congress will only have about \$5 billion more in FY21 than this year for non-defense programs, including affordable housing and community development programs. In order to cover rising costs, HUD's budget will need a significant increase over FY20 levels just to maintain assistance to the current number of households.

Last year, more than 3,500 national, state, and local housing and community development, faith-based, disability, and civil rights organizations, as well as officials in municipal, tribal, and state governments, joined NLIHC in sending a letter to Congress expressing their support for these programs.

Let's do it again! [Sign the letter](#) urging Congress to ensure transportation and housing programs receive the highest amount of funding possible for FY21. Because the FY21 letter is substantially similar to the [previous letter](#), organizations who would like to **opt-out** of the letter should email outreach@nlihc.org.

Organizations that would like to join the letter for FY21 can read and sign it at: <https://sforce.co/2UaH1X4>

Please share this letter and urge organizations in your network to sign on!

Sign National Letter Urging Housing Investments in Infrastructure Package

House Democrats have unveiled a \$760 billion blueprint for an infrastructure package that does not include robust resources to build or preserve affordable and accessible homes for America's lowest-income seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, families with children, and other individuals.

Congressional leaders need to hear from you! Please sign onto a national letter urging Congress to include in any infrastructure bill at least \$5 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and \$70 billion to repair public housing.

Sign the letter at: <https://sforce.co/2S4u3rm>

Background

The connection between affordable housing and infrastructure is clear: like roads and bridges, affordable housing is a long-term asset that helps communities and families thrive. An infrastructure bill presents a critical opportunity to build and preserve homes affordable to our nation's lowest-income households.

The HTF is the first new federal housing resource in a generation exclusively targeted to building and preserving housing affordable to people with the lowest incomes. Most states have chosen to use their HTF

investments to build, rehabilitate, or preserve affordable rental housing for extremely low-income veterans, seniors, people with disabilities or special needs, and people experiencing homelessness.

Public housing is home to nearly 1 million households and plays a critical role in providing safe, decent housing to families with the greatest needs. Due to decades of declining capital funds, however, public housing now faces a backlog of capital repair needs of as much as \$70 billion, threatening the quality and even the existence of these homes. Without sufficient resources, 10,000 to 15,000 public housing apartments are lost each year to obsolescence or decay.

Take Action

Please join organizations across the nation in urging congressional leaders to include in any infrastructure package at least \$5 billion for the HTF and \$70 billion for public housing capital funds.

[Sign the letter today!](#)

Urge the Trump Administration to Support Evidence-Based Approaches to Ending Homelessness

Homelessness is one of our country's most urgent, tragic and solvable crises. We cannot end homelessness, however, by ignoring the evidence about what works. For this reason, NLIHC, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and other national leaders are urging organizations to sign onto a letter expressing concerns about the Trump administration's rejection of evidence-based approaches to ending homelessness.

Sign the letter at: <https://sforce.co/2UfhhZY>

Background

It is critical that any federal effort to address homelessness is rooted in evidence and data. Dr. Robert Marbut, President Donald Trump's pick to lead the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), rejects evidence-based approaches to ending homelessness, including "Housing First" and initiatives to stop the criminalization of homelessness.

Housing First and anti-criminalization efforts are supported by [decades of learning and research](#), which has led to broad, bipartisan agreement that the solution to homelessness starts with an affordable home coupled with supportive services to help individuals address other challenges, not with a ticket or jail.

To end homelessness once and for all, our nation must significantly expand investments to make homes affordable for people with the lowest incomes, and Housing First and efforts to stop the criminalization of homelessness must remain the foundation for any federal approach to addressing homelessness.

Take Action

Please sign onto [this national letter](#) to ensure that any federal action on homelessness is based proven solutions and then tweet about it using the hashtag #HomesEndHomelessness.

[Read and sign the letter today!](#)

Congress

Members of Congress Introduce “The People’s Housing Platform”

A group of congressional leaders announced on January 29 a set of proposals to address homelessness and housing poverty called “The People’s Housing Platform.” The congressional leaders are Representatives Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Jesús "Chuy" García (D-IL), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), Ilhan Omar (D-MN), and Rashida Tlaib (D-MI). NLIHC worked with these members on their proposals and joined them and other partners at an event announcing the platform.

The People’s Housing Platform Proposal consists of seven separate bills, each addressing a different aspect of the affordable housing and homelessness crisis. Representative Ocasio-Cortez’s bill, “A Place to Prosper Act of 2019” ([H.R. 5072](#)) strengthens tenants’ rights and ties highway funding to equitable development. Representative Omar’s “Homes for All Act of 2019” ([H.R. 5244](#)) would improve and significantly expand public housing and affordable apartments built with the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) while preventing displacement. Other members’ plans have yet to be introduced but would provide significantly increased funding for the HTF, strengthen public housing resident councils, provide new grants to create community land trusts and land banks in disinvested communities, combat homelessness by increasing funding for services, create a monthly tax credit for renters and first-time homebuyers, and fight real estate speculation. Through these proposals, the members aim to create a framework that declares housing as a human right.

“Our nation is in the midst of an affordable housing crisis that most severely impacts America’s lowest-income seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, families with children, and other individuals who struggle to afford to keep a roof over their heads or who have no home at all,” stated Diane Yentel, NLIHC president and CEO, in a press statement. “Robust investments in proven solutions, like those proposed by Representatives Pressley, Omar, Tlaib, Blumenauer, Ocasio-Cortez, Garcia, and Jayapal, are needed to solve the housing crisis. Our country can choose to end homelessness and housing poverty – we have the data, the solutions, and the resources. We lack only the political will to fund solutions at the scale necessary. NLIHC stands ready to work with these congressional champions and others to enact bold legislation to end homelessness and housing poverty once and for all.”

A recording of the event is at: <https://tinyurl.com/upr34xl>

Diane’s full statement on the People’s Housing Platform is at: <https://tinyurl.com/s2r4eob>

Text of “A Place to Prosper Act of 2019” (H.R. 5072) is at: <https://bit.ly/2UbyenS>

Text of the “Homes for All Act of 2019” (H.R. 5244) is at: <https://bit.ly/2GDMJZG>

NLIHC CEO Calls for HTF and Public Housing Investments in Infrastructure Package

After House Democrats unveiled the outline for a \$760 billion [infrastructure package](#), NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel sent a letter to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, urging them to include \$5 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund and \$70 billion for public housing to build and preserve rental homes affordable and accessible to America’s lowest-income households. The infrastructure plan does not currently include these resources.

One of the most critical issues facing extremely low-income families today is the lack of decent, accessible, and affordable housing. The underlying cause of our nation’s affordable housing crisis is the shortage of homes affordable and accessible to America’s poorest seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, families with

children, and other individuals. In many communities, the lack of affordable housing for the lowest-income households has led to increased evictions and, in worst cases, homelessness.

An infrastructure package presents an important opportunity to help end homelessness and housing poverty by investing resources to build and preserve rental homes affordable to the lowest-income people.

Diane's letter is at: <https://bit.ly/2U9sOdf>

More about the proposed infrastructure package is at: <https://tinyurl.com/sqtxvhb>

House Subcommittee to Hold Hearing on Public Housing

The House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development and Insurance will hold a hearing, "A Future Without Public Housing? Examining the Trump Administration's Efforts to Eliminate Public Housing," on Wednesday February 5 at 2:00 p.m. ET in Room 2128 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Witnesses have not yet been announced. View a live broadcast of the hearing at: <https://financialservices.house.gov/live/>

House Subcommittee to Hold Hearing on Trump Administration's Attacks on Fair Housing and the Potential Impacts on Children

The House Committee on Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties will hold a hearing, "A Threat to America's Children: The Trump Administration's Proposal to Gut Fair Housing Accountability," on Wednesday, February 5 at 2:00 p.m. ET in Room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing, which will be broadcast live, is part of a series of four that focus on how various proposals by the Trump administration negatively impact children. The other hearings will focus on health, hunger, and the definition of poverty. Witnesses for the fair housing hearing include:

- Ateira Griffin, CEO and founder, Building Our Nation's Daughters (BOND), Inc.
- Ellen Lee, director of community and economic development, City of New Orleans
- Dr. Megan Sandel, MD, principal investigator, Children's Healthwatch, and pediatrician at Boston Medical Center
- Jorge Andres Soto, director of public policy, National Fair Housing Alliance

Learn more about the series of hearings at: <https://tinyurl.com/w7sut6a>

Watch the livestream of the hearings at: <https://tinyurl.com/vy9wnsz>

House Committee Discusses LIHTC as Part of Hearing on Infrastructure Investments

The House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing, "Paving the Way for Funding and Financing Infrastructure Investments," on January 29. Witnesses and members discussed the various tools in the tax code that can be used to invest in transportation and infrastructure improvements, including the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. The same day, House Democrats unveiled the outline for a \$760 billion [infrastructure package](#) that includes LIHTC as an important tool for community development.

In his opening remarks, Chair Richard Neal (D-MA) highlighted LIHTC as a critical tool for revitalizing struggling communities in both urban and rural areas. Representative Suzan Delbene (D-WA) emphasized that infrastructure investments should also include resources for affordable housing. She highlighted her bill, the “Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2019” ([H.R. 3077](#)), which would strengthen and expand LIHTC. “It’s critical that we continue to strengthen this housing credit so we can address the affordable housing shortage that we’re seeing across the country,” she said. Laura Canter, executive vice president and division director of the finance programs division at the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency, echoed the representative’s sentiments, noting the importance LIHTC for affordable housing development in Massachusetts. While other members also noted the importance of LIHTC for development, they did not discuss affordable housing as a part of infrastructure investment more broadly.

Learn more about the hearing at: <https://tinyurl.com/yxypc6fz>

Learn more about the proposed infrastructure package at: <https://tinyurl.com/sqtxvvhb>

Banking Committee Democrats Send Letter to USICH Director Marbut Questioning His Approaches to Ending Homelessness

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), ranking member of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, led Committee Democrats in a letter to United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Executive Director Robert Marbut on January 30. The letter requested answers from Director Marbut on the policies and approaches he plans to advance in his new role as USICH director.

Director Marbut rejects “Housing First” policies, a proven strategy for reducing homelessness that prioritizes finding safe, stable, accessible housing for people experiencing homelessness so they can begin addressing other problems, such as substance abuse or untreated mental illness (see *Memo*, [12/09/19](#)). In their letter, the senators noted they are “troubled by reports of policies [Director Marbut] has previously recommended to communities,” including “the rejection of evidence-based Housing First approaches, and the adoption of punitive policies that would prevent charities from providing food to people experiencing homelessness and require people to earn the right to sleep indoors at local shelters.”

The senators asked 11 questions to Director Marbut regarding his approach to addressing homelessness and housing instability and asked for clarification around previous statements the director has made about the “true causes” of homelessness. Director Marbut has been instructed to respond to the senators’ questions by February 6.

The senators’ letter is at: <https://bit.ly/2GEvlnx>

Immigration

Supreme Court Allows Public Charge Rule to Take Effect

The Supreme Court on January 27 overturned by a 5-4 vote a nation-wide injunction of the Trump administration’s final “public charge” rule. This decision allows the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to implement the harmful new rule across the country, except in Illinois, where there is a state-wide injunction. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced that the agency will apply the final rule to any applications and petitions submitted on or after February 24. New guidance and forms will be published on its website the week of February 3. The *Protecting Immigrant Families* (PIF) campaign has a variety of [resources](#)

in various languages to ensure impacted communities and service providers understand their rights and the potential implications of the rule.

Noncitizens seeking admission to the U.S. or applying for lawful permanent resident status (green card) have long been subject to a review to determine whether they are, or might become, a “public charge,” defined as someone who might become “primarily dependent on the government.” DHS’s new rule expands the list of “public benefits” that could lead an immigrant to be considered a potential public charge to include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and federal housing assistance, such as public housing, Housing Choice Vouchers, and Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance. Immigration officials will also now consider other factors, such as health, age, income, and English language skills when making public charge determinations (see *Memo*, [8/19/19](#)).

The majority of immigrants who are subject to the public charge test are not eligible for the programs included in the final rule, and eligible family member’s use of these benefits does not count against an immigrant’s application for admission or lawful permanent resident status. The PIF campaign has resources to ensure immigrants and their families understand how they might be impacted by the rule and their rights so they can make informed decisions. Understanding the impacts and immigrants’ rights helps lessen the fear the Trump administration is trying to engender to take away healthcare, food, and housing from millions of people.

While the Supreme Court’s decision allows DHS to implement the rule, the courts have not made a final decision about the rule’s legality. States and organizations have filed a total of 9 lawsuits that have yet to be decided. In addition, congressional champions have proposed bills, such as the “No Federal Funds for Public Charge Act of 2019” ([H.R. 3222](#)), which would prevent federal funds from being used to carry out the public charge rule. Advocates should urge their members of Congress to support H.R. 3222 and similar proposals.

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel’s statement on the Supreme Court’s ruling is at:

<https://tinyurl.com/wnpmyv8>

Updates and resources from the Protecting Immigrant Families campaign are at:

<https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org>

Fight for Housing Justice

Texas Housers Hosts Podcast on History of AFFH, Critiques Carson’s Proposed Rule in *Shelterforce*

Betsy Julian, formerly with the Inclusive Communities Project, discusses the history of “affirmatively furthering fair housing” (AFFH) on “[The Mandate to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing](#),” one of a series of [podcasts](#) from Texas Housers, an NLIHC state partner. Also, in the lead article of the January 27 [Shelterforce Weekly](#), Texas Housers Co-Director John Henneberger explains that HUD Secretary Ben Carson is asking the nation to accept housing segregation.

In the 31-minute podcast hosted by Mr. Henneberger and Christina Rosales, also from Texas Housers, Ms. Julian explains that the “Fair Housing Act of 1968,” enacted after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., not only prohibited discrimination but called for dismantling the segregation and discrimination that federal policies created and perpetuated. The law required, in other words, federal policy to “affirmatively further fair housing.” Most people do not realize that AFFH applies to all federal agencies, not just to HUD, but it has never been applied – even nominally – to other agencies.

AFFH at HUD was ignored until a very modest provision was introduced in the Consolidated Plan (ConPlan) regulations created in 1994. Although HUD staff in the Clinton administration worked for more than a year to develop a meaningful AFFH regulation, the Newt Gingrich “revolution” shut down that AFFH rule-making, leading to the much more anemic 1994 rule. That rule merely required jurisdictions receiving Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and other HUD formula grants to “certify” they were affirmatively furthering fair housing by identifying obstacles to fair housing choice and taking actions to overcome the obstacles. The obstacles were described in a jurisdiction’s Analysis of Impediments (AI), which the Government Accountability Office (GAO) concluded was ineffective.

The Obama administration started working on creating a far more robust AFFH rule in 2009, engaging with a broad range of stakeholders for at least two years (especially local elected officials and developers as well as advocates). The final rule, published in 2015, included the word “segregation” for the first time. That rule was suspended by HUD Secretary Ben Carson, whose recently proposed rule (see *Memo*, [1/13](#)) deletes the word “segregation” and does not mention race.

John Henneberger’s [Shelterforce Weekly article](#), “HUD Secretary Asks America to Accept Housing Segregation,” asserts: “In a proposed new rule, Secretary Carson supports the gutting of the 1968 Fair Housing Act, abandoning HUD’s enforcement of provisions of the law that requires cities, counties, and states that take federal funds for housing to use them in ways that end racial segregation.” Mr. Henneberger notes that the proposed change removes consideration of where housing is available, suggesting cities instead commit to activities that represent a developer and landlord wish list, but have nothing to do with housing integration. “The solution to residential segregation isn’t found in creating more market rate housing,” he writes. “Segregation is the product of discrimination. Federal, state, and local government built the walls of housing and neighborhood segregation that plague our cities today.”

In addition, Mr. Henneberger states: “Secretary Carson argues that the persistent problem of housing segregation and discrimination will be solved by deregulating the housing development industry, loosening labor requirements and eliminating environmental protections to build more housing. That has been tried. It doesn’t work.” He points to Houston, which has infamously loose development standards, unenforced housing and building codes, and weak labor and environmental protections that have harmed families of color and low incomes. For example, Houston officials have refused to provide storm sewers and other essential public infrastructure in neighborhoods of color. About 88% of Houston’s open-ditch drainage can be found in neighborhoods of color, and almost half of those ditches do not perform under modest storm conditions.



The Sandpiper Cove apartment complex in Galveston (right) floods regularly. Its residents are predominantly African American. Neighborhoods on the island populated by tourists and wealthier residents are afforded storm protections, this area is not. Photo credit: Texas Low Income Housing Information Service.



Side-by-side photos illustrate the disparity in drainage provision in the city. About 88 percent of Houston’s open ditch drainage can be found in neighborhoods of color, and almost half of those ditches do not perform under modest storm conditions. Photo credit: Texas Low Income Housing Information Service.

The podcast “The Mandate to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing” is on the [Fight for Housing Justice website](#).

It is also available on the Texas Houser’s website at: <https://bit.ly/2tQCrCY>

The *Shelterforce* article “HUD Secretary Asks America to Accept Housing Segregation” is at: <https://bit.ly/2GuOA37>

A Texas Houser’s article, “Texas Housers opposes HUD’s further retreat from promoting and enforcing fair housing,” is at: <https://bit.ly/2GEgiKx>

Readers are urged to visit frequently the [Fight for Housing Justice website](#) because more information will be added in the coming days and weeks. Look for more summaries of the proposed rule, sample comment letters, talking points, and social media resources. Fight for Housing Justice is at: <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh>

Information about the 2015 AFFH rule, Secretary Carson’s suspension of the 2015 rule, as well as the AI process that jurisdictions must follow until a final rule is published is on pages [7-14](#), [7-21](#), and [7-26](#) of NLIHC’s *2019 Advocates’ Guide*.

More podcasts and articles are on the Texas Houser’s website at: <https://texashousers.net>

The *Shelterforce* homepage is at: <https://shelterforce.org>

HUD

HUD Updates Mainstream Voucher Policies

Mainstream Voucher Program policies are updated in [Notice PIH 2020-01](#), issued by HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) on January 22. Mainstream Vouchers are tenant-based vouchers that serve

households that include a non-elderly person with a disability. Public housing agencies (PHAs) can apply for Mainstream Vouchers when HUD issues a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

The Mainstream Voucher Program was authorized in by the “National Affordable Housing Act of 1990,” but voucher assistance was not provided to people with disabilities until 1997. It operated separately from the regular Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program as the Mainstream 5-Year program (sometimes referred to as the Section 811 Voucher Program) until the “Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act of 2010” converted it to the HCV program. Congress, however, provided appropriations only to renew existing Mainstream Vouchers until the 2017 appropriations act, which provided funds for additional Mainstream Vouchers for the first time. The appropriations act for the fiscal years from 2017 through 2019 provided a total of \$500 million for incremental vouchers. Congress did not appropriate additional funds for Mainstream Vouchers for FY20.

Households that include a non-elderly person with a disability are eligible to receive Mainstream Vouchers. Non-elderly is defined as someone between 18 and 62 years of age. A household receiving Mainstream Voucher assistance does not lose its eligibility once the disabled person exceeds 62 years of age; the household does not “age out” of the program.

The Notice clarifies that it does not apply to Non-Elderly Disabled (NED) vouchers. NED vouchers serve non-elderly disabled families, defined as families with a head, co-head, or spouse under age 62. While Mainstream Vouchers serve non-elderly persons with disabilities, they are not NED vouchers. The funding, monitoring, and eligibility requirements are different for NED vouchers and Mainstream Vouchers.

The FY19 appropriations act added that all new and existing Mainstream Vouchers upon turnover (when a family receiving Mainstream Voucher assistance leaves the program) had to be provided to non-elderly disabled people. The Notice stresses that at turnover, all Mainstream Vouchers must be reissued to the next Mainstream-eligible family on the PHA’s waiting list.

PHAs cannot have a separate waiting list for Mainstream Voucher assistance. Instead, PHAs must maintain one waiting list for all tenant-based assistance, including Mainstream Voucher assistance. When issuing a Mainstream Voucher, the PHA must choose the first Mainstream-eligible family from its tenant-based waiting list. The Notice has detailed instructions regarding waiting-list updates.

If a Mainstream Voucher participant ports to another PHA and the receiving PHA chooses to bill the initial PHA, the voucher will remain a Mainstream Voucher. If the PHA chooses to absorb the voucher, the voucher will be considered a regular voucher or a Mainstream Voucher, if the receiving PHA has a Mainstream Voucher available. The Mainstream Voucher at the initial PHA will be freed up to lease to another Mainstream-eligible family.

PHAs are not permitted to reassign existing HCV participants to the Mainstream Voucher Program in order to make regular HCVs available.

Notice PIH 2020-01 became effective immediately and supersedes all previous Notices.

Notice PIH 2020-01 is at: <https://bit.ly/37GPEwz>

The PIH Mainstream Voucher webpage, is at: <https://bit.ly/2S19b4r>

More information about Mainstream Vouchers and NED vouchers is on [page 4-18](#) of NLIHC’s *2019 Advocates’ Guide*.

NLIHC Housing Policy Forum 2020

“Big Housing Bills – What’s in Them and How to Move Them Forward” to be Addressed at NLIHC Housing Policy Forum 2020

A session on the “**Big Housing Bills**” recently introduced in Congress, what’s in them, and how advocates can move them forward will be explored at NLIHC’s Housing Policy Forum 2020: *Ending Homelessness and Housing Poverty* taking place in Washington, DC, March 25-27. Register today for the 2020 Policy Forum at: <https://bit.ly/2ofWibO>.

The past year has seen unprecedented national coverage of the affordable housing crisis and the introduction of bold housing bills for meaningful solutions. In a session at NLIHC’s Housing Policy Forum 2020, Hill staffers will discuss some of these major housing bills and what they mean for federal housing policy. An expert in field organizing will also share insights on organizing successful grassroots coalitions to advance these bills in Congress.

Invited speakers include Randy Abreu, Office of Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez; Janae Ladet, professional staff, House Financial Services Committee; and Matt Hayword, legislative policy director, Congressional Progressive Caucus Foundation.

Other Forum keynote speakers include:

- **U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar** (D-MN), who recently introduced bold legislation, the “Homes for All Act” (H.R. 5244), to dramatically expand the public housing stock in the U.S. and to guarantee housing as a human right. The bill would authorize the construction of 12 million new affordable rental homes through major investments in public housing and the national Housing Trust Fund.



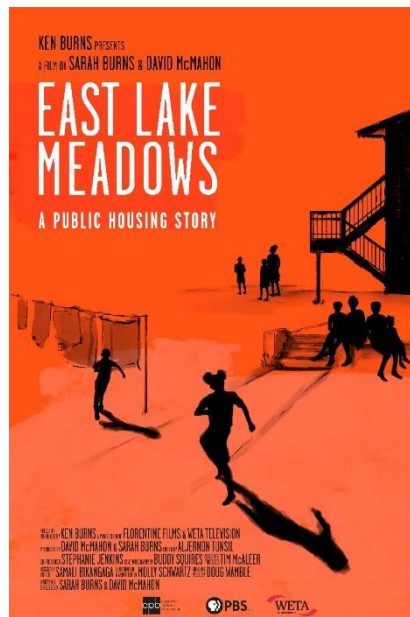
- **U.S. Representative Lacy Clay** (D-MO), chair of the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development & Insurance and lead sponsor of the “Strategy and Investment in Rural Housing Preservation Act.”



- **Ibram X. Kendi**, National Book Award-winning author of *How to Be an Antiracist* and *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America!*



The Forum will also showcase a summary version of the new **Ken Burns Film, “East Lake Meadows: A Public Housing Story,”** followed by a discussion with the film’s directors, a resident featured in the film, and policy experts. PBS, which will broadcast the film in March, stated in a press release about the film: “The documentary tackles the impact of racism on public housing while also exploring the daily lives of those who called East Lake Meadows home.”



Other sessions at the Forum include a Capitol Hill Insiders Panel; the current state of affordable housing in America – the opportunities and threats; promoting healthy homes; mobilizing against attacks to housing opportunities; creating and sustaining multi-sector housing coalitions; the administration’s actions on homelessness; redesigning the disaster recovery system; the YIMBY movement; affordable housing messaging and narrative change; research on ending homelessness; NLIHC’s *Our Homes, Our Votes* nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement project; the latest affordable housing research; resident-led movements; state and local affordable housing solutions; rural and native housing; state and local organizing best practices; and more.

When: The Forum will begin for most participants (see note about special Resident sessions below) on **Wednesday, March 25 at 1:00 pm**, with a full day of sessions on Thursday, March 26. Capitol Hill Day will take place on Friday, March 27.

Additional Sessions for Low-Income Residents: The 2020 Housing Policy Forum will offer additional resident sessions **starting on Tuesday, March 24, at 2:00 p.m.**, including a dinner with NLIHC state partners that evening. The special resident sessions will continue on Wednesday, March 25 at 8:30 a.m. prior to the full Forum start at 1:00 p.m.

Housing Leadership Awards 2020: The 2020 NLIHC Housing Leadership Awards Reception will take place on Thursday, March 26, 2020 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., also at the Washington Court Hotel. A separate registration fee is required to attend the Leadership Awards event. (See related article in this *Memo to Members and Partners*.)

Hotel Reservations: NLIHC has a room block at discounted rates at the Washington Court Hotel where the Forum will take place. Reserve a room at <https://bit.ly/32GOAXb> or call 800-321-3010 or 202-628-2100 and ask for the NLIHC rate. Rooms are limited, so register early. The cutoff is March 6, 2020.

Register for the 2020 NLIHC Housing Policy Forum [today!](#)

NLIHC Housing Leadership Awards

Contribute in Honor of Shauna Sorrells, Bill Faith, and Jennifer Ho; Register for March 26 Leadership Awards Reception Celebrating the Honorees!

Make a [contribution](#) to NLHC today in recognition of 2020 Housing Leadership Award Honorees **Jennifer Leimaile Ho, Bill Faith** and **Shauna Sorrells**. These exceptional leaders will be recognized at the **38th Annual Housing Leadership Awards Reception** on March 26, 2020 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, DC. Register to attend [here](#).

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. **Shauna Sorrells** will receive the 2020 Edward W. Brooke Housing Leadership Award posthumously for her unwavering commitment to ending homelessness and housing poverty in the U.S. over many years at HUD, at the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County, and on the NLIHC Board of Directors.



Shawna Sorrells

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 bestowed to **Bill Faith** for his many years of leadership, dedication and tireless work to secure decent, safe, and affordable homes for the lowest-income people in Ohio and across the U.S. Bill is the executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio and former NLIHC board chair.



Bill Faith

The Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award is named after former NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, who led NLIHC for more than 17 years. **Jennifer Ho**, commissioner of Minnesota Housing and former senior advisor at HUD and deputy director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), will receive the Crowley Award for her outstanding work to end homelessness and housing poverty in the U.S. since 1999 at Hearth Connection, USICH, HUD, Minnesota Housing, and beyond.



Jennifer Ho

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

Donate as an individual at: <https://bit.ly/34ng1FP>
Donate as an organization at: <https://bit.ly/2WyFnOb>

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

The 2020 Leadership Awards Reception will be held on the second evening of NLIHC’s 2020 Housing Policy Forum: *Ending Homelessness & Housing Poverty* taking place March 25-27, 2020. Register for the Forum at: <https://bit.ly/2PutSGn> and/or Leadership Awards Reception at: <https://bit.ly/362lyDf>

Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020

New Housing Proposals from 2020 Presidential Candidates Bloomberg and Patrick

Two more 2020 presidential candidates—former New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg and former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick - released new details on their proposals to address the shortage of affordable housing in America. Now all presidential candidates except former Vice President Joe Biden have released housing plans.

Governor Patrick outlined his vision for equity in affordable housing in his newly released [An Equity Agenda for Black Americans](#). Governor Patrick also has a [broad proposal](#) to address affordable housing and homelessness that includes more details, including increasing funding for the national Housing Trust fund; building and expanding on the housing voucher program and exploring new renters’ tax credits; and resuming implementation of the 2015 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule that provides clear guidance to local governments on how fulfill their legal requirements to undo racial segregation, which the Trump administration is currently proposing to gut.

Mayor Bloomberg released on January 30 a new [Plan to Tackle America’s Housing Affordability and Homelessness Crisis](#). The plan promises to “treat homelessness as a national emergency, double annual federal spending, and cut homelessness in half by 2025.” It would guarantee rental assistance to all extremely low-income Americans and “aims to create hundreds of thousands of new affordable housing units” through increased investments in the national Housing Trust Fund and Low Income Housing Tax Credits. In addition to helping 1 million Black Americans become first-time homeowners, the plan would address zoning barriers that impede the development of affordable housing; provide the needed capital to maintain public housing by streamlining the administration of the RAD program; tie federal housing funding to progress in reducing segregation; create a Housing Fairness Commission to test policies aimed at reversing the effects of discrimination; and curb discrimination by landlords, so that recipients are protected regardless of income source, sexual orientation, or immigration status.

Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020, NLIHC’s nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement project, tracks what 2020 presidential candidates have proposed on affordable housing and homelessness.

More information about what Governor Patrick has said on affordable housing and homelessness is available on his *Our Homes, Our Votes 2020* [candidate page](#).

More information about what Mayor Bloomberg has said on affordable housing and homelessness is available on his *Our Homes, Our Votes 2020* [candidate page](#).

Register for February 20 Podcast on the “Role of Housing Providers in Registering and Mobilizing Voters”

NLIHC will offer a podcast on “**The Role of Housing Providers in Registering and Mobilizing Voters**” on February 20 at 3:00 p.m. ET. Register for this podcast and NLIHC’s entire 15-month “[Third Thursdays at](#)

[Three](https://tinyurl.com/y3t9gfr2)” webinar and podcast series on nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement, free to the public, at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3t9gfr2>

The February session will provide a review of how housing providers can register and mobilize their residents, with specific considerations for public housing agencies (PHAs) and operators of Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) housing. Presenters will also explore ideas on how PHAs can conduct voter registration with Housing Choice Voucher households who are often harder to connect with during registration drives because the households are scattered.

NLIHC provides [an array of nonpartisan resources, tools, and training](#) on increasing voter registration and turnout among low-income renters and on engaging candidates leading up to the 2020 elections, including these webinars and podcasts covering many facets of voter and candidate engagement, featuring experts and advocates with frontline experience.

The presentations take place at 3:00 p.m. ET on the third Thursday of each month. All sessions will be recorded and posted to the *Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020* website for those who cannot attend the live broadcasts. The full list of webinar topics:

- Session 1: Legal Considerations for Election Engagement for 501 (c3) organizations, September 19. (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 2: Developing an Effective Plan for Voter Engagement Work, October 17. (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 3: Helpful Tools and Partners for Election Engagement, November 21 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 4: Voter Registration Part 1 – Messaging, Events, and Canvassing, December 19 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 5: Voter Registration Part 2 – Finding and Registering Residents of Subsidized Housing, January 16 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- **Session 6: The Role of Housing Providers in Registering and Mobilizing Voters, February 20**
- Session 7: Getting Candidates on the Record, March 19
- Session 8: Educating Voters, April 16
- Session 9: Housing Issues and Ballot Initiatives, May 21
- Session 10: Overcoming Common Obstacles to Voting, June 18
- Session 11: The Challenge of Voting While Homeless, July 16
- Session 12: Voter Mobilization Part 1 – Early Voting and Vote-by-Mail, August 20
- Session 13: Voter Mobilization Part 2 – Protecting Low Income People from Voter Intimidation and Voter Caging Tactics, September 17
- Session 14: Election Day! Getting Out the Vote, October 15
- Session 15: After the Vote – Holding Candidates to their Promises, November 19

Register once for all webinars/podcasts and receive reminders at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3t9gfr2>

Watch recordings of previous webinars at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>

Opportunity Starts at Home

Report Shows Most White Children Live in Neighborhoods of Opportunity, Most Black and Hispanic Children Live in Neighborhoods with Low Opportunity

A new [report](#) from the Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy at Brandeis University shows that most white children in the U.S. live in neighborhoods of opportunity while most Black and Hispanic children live in neighborhoods with low opportunity. In fact, across the 100 largest metros, the majority of white (65%) and Asian (62%) children live in high- or very high-opportunity neighborhoods but the majority of Black (67%) and Hispanic children (58%) live in very low- or low-opportunity neighborhoods. Black children are 7.6 times and Hispanic children 5.3 times more likely to live in very low-opportunity neighborhoods than white children.

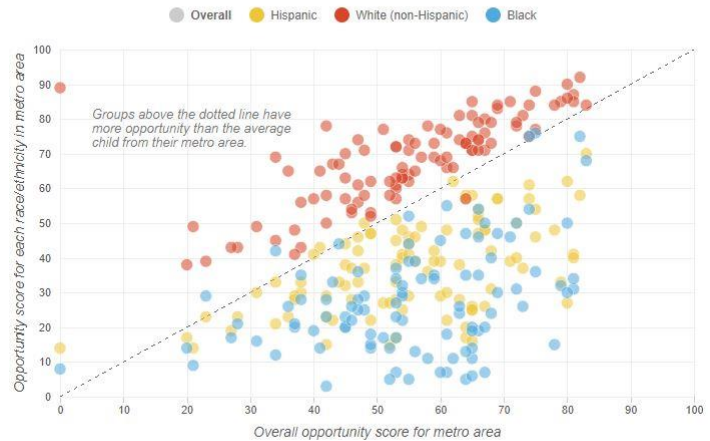
The researchers created a Child Opportunity Index that analyzed 72,000 neighborhoods or census tracts in the U.S. The index measures a range of neighborhood conditions that shape child outcomes, such as the availability and quality of early education centers and schools, high school graduation rates, the number of adults with high-skill jobs, poverty and employment rates, air pollution levels, housing vacancy and home ownership rates, and the availability of green spaces and healthy food options. Each neighborhood received a composite score and was assigned an opportunity level: very low, low, moderate, high, or very high opportunity.

“Neighborhoods matter for children’s health and development,” write the report’s authors. “All children in the United States should live in neighborhoods with access to good schools, healthy foods, safe parks and playgrounds, clean air, safe housing and living-wage jobs for the adults in their lives. However, far too many children in the U.S. live in neighborhoods that lack these conditions.”

Read the report [here](#). Read an NPR article about the report [here](#). Read the *Opportunity Starts at Home* multisector affordable homes campaign’s Racial Equity and Housing Fact sheet [here](#).

Across the U.S., White Children Have More Opportunity Than Their Black And Hispanic Neighbors Do

In 95 of the largest 100 metro areas, black and Hispanic kids have a lower opportunity score than the average for that area. White kids, on the other hand, have a higher opportunity score than average in 99 out of 100 metro areas.



Source: Child Opportunity Index 2.0, Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy, Brandeis University.
Credit: Daniel Wood/NPR

Disaster Housing Recovery

Restrictions on Recovery Aid to Puerto Rico Rile Advocates; Members of Congress Call for Expanded Disaster Housing Assistance

Opposition to HUD’s decision to place severe restrictions on recovery and mitigation funding headed to Puerto Rico (see *Memo*, [1/27](#)) continues to grow among advocates and some members of Congress. One of the top concerns is the empowerment of the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) to control recovery decisions. The FOMB is a federally created board that has been guiding the territory out of its substantial debt. Advocates are arguing for the creation of a civil society task force to oversee the recovery process instead of the FOMB, whose members have no disaster recovery experience. “There is nothing more powerful or effective to combat corruption and ensure that federal dollars meet peoples’ needs than to give voice to community leaders” stated Adi Martinez of Oxfam and DHRC member in an [op-ed in The Hill](#). “We stand with civil society in Puerto Rico overwhelmingly rejecting the idea of greater centralization and the continued disconnect from those who matter most: the people of Puerto Rico.”

As Puerto Ricans mark the fourth week since deadly earthquakes began to rock the island, conditions at territorial government-administered refugee camps are deteriorating. Flooding from recent heavy rains has

turned many of the camps into muddy quagmires, as families continue living in tents and Puerto Rico National Guardsman patrol camp perimeters. Hundreds of families have already fled to the mainland, many to Florida where they have struggled to find affordable housing. As a result, members of the Florida congressional delegation have been closely following the situation in Puerto Rico. Representative Darren Soto (D-FL) led the delegation in [sending a letter](#) to FEMA Administrator Pete Gaynor urging the agency to enter into an agreement with HUD to implement the Disaster Housing Assistance Program ([DHAP](#)) in Puerto Rico. DHAP had been successfully utilized by both Democratic and Republican administrations to provide housing assistance to low-income disaster survivors in the past. However, the agencies have refused to enact such programs after recent major disasters. “The people of Puerto Rico have faced enough tragedy” the letter reads. “Providing safe, affordable housing is the least we can do for our fellow American citizens in need.”

Adi Martinez’s op-ed is at: <https://bit.ly/37Hixsr>

The Florida Congressional delegation’s letter to FEMA is at: <https://bit.ly/2S4IZph>

Newly Introduced Puerto Rico Earthquake Recovery Bill Includes Recovery Funding and Tax Credits for Economic Development, Affordable Housing

The “Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief and Puerto Rico Disaster Tax Relief Act of 2020” (H.R. 5687) was introduced on January 28 by House Appropriations Committee Chair Nita Lowey (D-NY). The bill includes [multiple provisions](#) designed to assist Puerto Rico in recovering from its recent earthquakes, continue the island’s recovery from Hurricane Maria, and strengthen Puerto Rico against future disasters.

The bill provides over \$3.25 billion for disaster relief and rebuilding through HUD’s Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) program, with over \$1.5 billion specifically reserved for disaster mitigation efforts in earthquake-stricken areas. The legislation would not only allocate the funds but would also allow them to be used in conjunction with previously allocated funds and would institute strict deadlines for HUD to execute grant agreements allowing the territory to access the money. In addition to these CDBG-DR funds, the bill provides \$50 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits for 2020 and over \$500 million annually in New Market Tax Credits for 2020 and 2021. These tax credits are intended to spur investments in affordable housing and economic development. The bill would also provide \$1.25 billion for road repair, \$100 million for education, \$40 million in Disaster Nutrition Assistance, and \$21 million for energy-sector planning and technical assistance.

The supplemental does not, however, include any measures to roll back the severe restrictions placed on over \$16 billion in recovery and mitigation assistance announced by HUD in January. Those restrictions require the territorial government of Puerto Rico to make substantial changes to local law and policy before it can access the funding. Further, the bill does not include any requirement for FEMA and HUD to initiate the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP) to assist displaced survivors of the earthquakes access affordable housing. That jointly administered program was used to great success by Democratic and Republic administrations in the aftermath of previous major disasters like Hurricane Katrina. The agencies have neglected to activate DHAP in the aftermath of more recent disasters.

Read the text of the bill at: <https://bit.ly/2Ub3nYA>

Read a summary of the bill at: <https://bit.ly/2Uc6sHY>

Additional Disaster Housing Recovery Updates, February 3, 2020

The following is a review of additional disaster housing recovery developments since the last edition of *Memo to Members and Partners* (for the article in the previous *Memo*, see [01/27](#)).

Federal Action & National News

For the first time, select federally supported construction projects will be required to adhere to several International Building Codes ([I-Codes](#)). The I-Codes are an addition to the current consensus-based codes and standards that aim to support infrastructure resilience during disasters.

Some of America's first climate change refugees are members of indigenous communities. Faced with losing what land they have left to the sea, four coastal tribes and an Alaskan village filed a complaint with the UN [challenging federal inaction](#).

Puerto Rico Earthquakes

Puerto Rico banks are [coming under criticism](#) as the need for housing grows. One bank, Banco Popular, currently owns 824 vacant homes, the result of a recent uptick in foreclosures. The recent earthquakes in Puerto destroyed 800 homes.

Tropical Storm Imelda & Hurricane Harvey

Texas

Harris County Commissioners Court has [replaced](#) the head of its Community Services Department, expressing frustration at the slow pace at which aid has been disbursed. Josh Stuckey, deputy executive director of the county's budget management office, will oversee the recovery program until a permanent replacement is named.

The Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved over \$31 million for [infrastructure projects](#) that will "protect lives, homes, and businesses from future storms" in Harvey-affected areas according to Land Commissioner George P. Bush.

Grant funds from the Bob Woodruff Foundation have been awarded to connect veterans negatively impacted by Hurricane Harvey to rebuilding services. Grantees Lone Star Legal Aid (a Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition [DHRC] member), Combined Arms, and SPA USA will be hosting a live-stream panel discussion to kick start [their work](#).

California Wildfires

About \$1 billion in [Low Income Housing Tax Credits](#) were approved for disaster-impacted areas of California in January. California officials are seeking to utilize the tax credits for housing projects for people experiencing homelessness in other areas of the state. Local officials and advocates in Northern California and other impacted areas argue the money is desperately needed to replace housing lost to recent wildfires.

Rural California seeks to respond to its desperate need for disaster-recovery housing without creating new conditions that would be ripe for [destruction by future wildfires](#).

Hurricane Michael

Florida

Ken Lawson, executive director of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) attempted to “[set the record straight](#)” about disaster recovery funding in Florida. Mr. Lawson stated the DEO will be ready to act as soon as government funds are received.

Florida is sitting on \$900 million in Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds as the recovery from Hurricane Michael progresses slowly. The “[Reforming Disaster Recovery Act](#),” passed by the House of Representatives in November 2019, could help move those funds more quickly, while also ensuring that accountability and oversight mechanisms are improved. “Without any laws on the books, HUD has been hesitant to enforce accountability standards,” Sarah Saadian, NLIHC vice president for public policy, told [Politico](#). “There have been some cases where the money that was supposed to go to people with low-to-moderate incomes, but it went somewhere else.”

Hurricane Florence and Dorian

North Carolina

If North Carolina’s Office of Recovery and Resiliency State Action Plan is approved, \$542 million in federal aid will be released to [assist](#) with the Hurricane Florence rebuilding efforts. DHRC members in North Carolina submitted public comments on the plan, which was finalized in January.

South Carolina

Myrtle Beach city leaders work to create a recovery plan for intense natural disasters. [Currently](#) no plan is in place, but city leaders hope to receive funding to change that.

2016, 2017, and Older Disasters

Hurricane Irma: U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) Governor Albert Bryan Jr. had initially celebrated that the islands “were successful in not being lumped in with Puerto Rico” (to which HUD has delayed the release of disaster recovery and mitigation funds and on which the agency has imposed strict spending requirements) and signed a grant agreement to access recovery funding. Territorial officials seemed to have been [taken by surprise](#), however, by the news that the financial recovery monitor appointed by HUD for Puerto Rico’s recovery would also monitor recovery activities in the USVI.

Research

Study Highlights Year-15 Challenges for LIHTC Projects in Weak Housing Markets

An article in *Housing Policy Debate*, “[Challenges for Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Projects at Year 15 and Beyond in a Weak Housing Market: The Case of Detroit, Michigan](#),” examines the financial conditions and outcomes for Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties around Year 15 in Detroit, Michigan. The authors conclude that preservation challenges for LIHTC properties in weak housing markets may be more significant than reflected in prior national research on Year 15.

The LIHTC program is the largest source of subsidy for affordable housing construction in the nation, having financed over 3 million units since its creation in 1986. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates the LIHTC will cost \$9.4 billion in tax expenditures (foregone federal tax revenues) in 2020, with a total of \$49 billion between 2019 and 2023. Housing produced with LIHTC must be used for the construction or rehabilitation of rental housing affordable to households earning less than 60% or 50% of the area median income (AMI). Rents

are set at a fixed amount of 30% of the income eligibility threshold for a given unit; in other words, rents are not based on actual household incomes.

There are two types of credits, commonly referred to as 4% and 9% credits. LIHTC projects built with either type of credit after 1989 must remain affordable for a minimum of 30 years, after which all program requirements end unless requirements are in place from other funding sources or state and local governments. The first 15 years of this period is referred to as the compliance period, the end of which is often referred to as Year 15. New ownership is typically organized around the end of the compliance period when investors in the tax credits leave the ownership structure. Foreclosure presents a risk both before and after Year 15.

To study outcomes for LIHTC properties reaching Year 15 in Detroit, the authors analyzed public records for LIHTC projects, reviewed news stories about projects and developers, and conducted interviews with 19 stakeholders involved in developing and managing LIHTC projects, syndicating tax credits, and overseeing the program. The authors used satellite images and site visits to assess the physical condition of the properties. The financial condition of LIHTC units reaching Year 15 was assessed through analysis of financial audits for a limited sample of LIHTC projects reaching Year 15 between 2016 and 2022.

Among the multifamily LIHTC projects that reached Year 15 between 2004 and 2017, about half continued to operate as affordable housing with the same rents and serving the same populations without subsequent reinvestment. Fewer than 30% of projects were recapitalized following Year 15. Approximately 15% of multifamily LIHTC projects, however, were subject to foreclosure, which is far higher than foreclosure estimates reported in national studies. At least 5% of low-income units in multifamily projects past Year 15 were uninhabitable, also far higher than estimates suggested by national studies.

Single-family LIHTC homes only accounted for about 5% of low-income units past Year 15 in Detroit, but their outcomes were worse than for multifamily projects. None of these projects were recapitalized following Year 15 and just 40% of the single-family units continued to operate with affordability restrictions. Twenty-three percent of single-family units went through foreclosure and 14% of all single-family LIHTC units past Year 15 were uninhabitable due to deterioration or demolition. Projects involving syndicators (financial intermediaries in LIHTC deals) fared better than those without. Syndicators, especially mission-driven ones, frequently intervened to preserve distressed projects and prevent their loss from the affordable stock.

Examination of the financial audits of the limited sample in Detroit revealed that LIHTC projects approaching Year 15 were far more financially distressed than projects included in national surveys. The median debt coverage ratio (the difference between net operating income and required replacement reserve contributions divided by mandatory debt service payments) for Detroit LIHTC projects reaching Year 15 was .95 compared to 1.34 for all projects in a national survey. After subtracting hard debt service and required contributions to operating reserves, the median per unit net operating income for Detroit LIHTC units reaching Year 15 was minus \$72 compared to a positive \$599 for all projects nationally. Economic occupancy (the ratio of actual rental income to potential gross income) was 97% in both Detroit LIHTC projects and all projects in a national survey.

These indicators of the financial health of Detroit LIHTC projects reaching Year 15 suggest a high demand for LIHTC units, but insufficient rents to support debt and operating expenses. The authors found that a median of 41% of replacement reserves had been funded per project, while 11 projects had no replacement reserves at all. Insufficient reserves significantly undermines the ability of owners to finance needed repairs and renovations, which puts projects at risk of physical deterioration. In terms of financial health, projects financed with 4% credits fared better than those financed with 9% credits, larger multifamily projects fared better than smaller multifamily and single-family projects, and projects with project-based rental assistance fared better than those without it.

The authors largely attributed the relatively poor outcomes and financial conditions for LIHTC projects to Detroit's weak housing market where a sluggish recovery from the Great Recession and stagnant income growth significantly restricted rental income and negatively impacted the capacity of affordable housing developers. The weakness of Detroit's housing market presents a fundamental challenge for making LIHTC development financially sustainable. This challenge in Detroit brings to light concerns about preservation issues facing the LIHTC stock in communities with weak housing markets across the country.

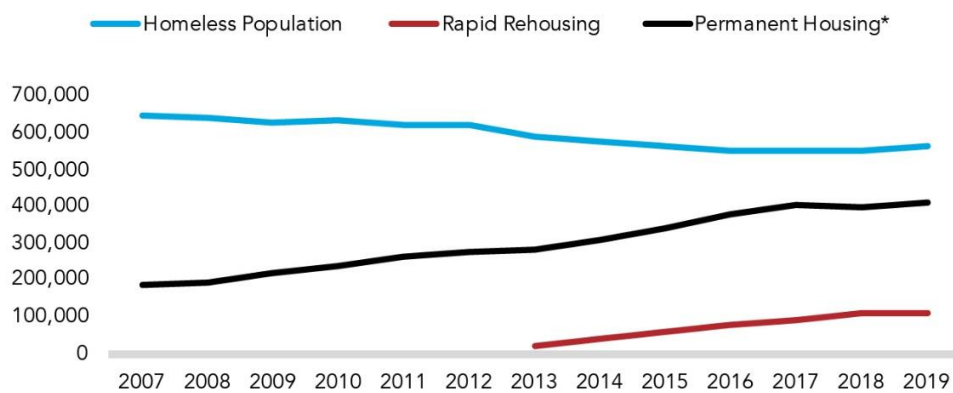
"Challenges for Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Projects at Year 15 and Beyond in a Weak Housing Market: The Case of Detroit, Michigan" is at <https://bit.ly/38RPfrh>.

More information about the LIHTC program is on [page 5-14](#) of NLIHC's 2019 Advocates' Guide.

Fact of the Week

Homelessness Declined with Increase in Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Housing

Homelessness Declined with Expansion of Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Housing "Beds"



*Permanent Housing includes both "Permanent Supportive Housing" and "Other Permanent Housing."
Source: 2019 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress.

Source: 2019 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress.

Resources

Prosperity Now 2020 Scorecard on Economic Well-being and Financial Health

Prosperity Now released its 2020 Scorecard, an advocacy tool that compiles data on financial assets and income, employment, homeownership and housing, health care, and education by state, race, and gender. Some data are available for local jurisdictions and congressional districts. The Scorecard ranks states based on these data and provides information on state policies to improve economic well-being.

The Prosperity Now Scorecard is available at: <https://scorecard.prosperitynow.org/>

From the Field

DC Housing Authority Redevelopment Plan Opposed by Housing Advocates

The District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) has plans to sell its headquarters location to a developer who proposes to build approximately 1,000 homes in the gentrifying NoMa (North of Massachusetts Avenue) neighborhood of the District, but the DCHA's and developer's plans are opposed by local advocates and some of DCHA's board members.

The redevelopment was originally supposed to contain 70 affordable homes reserved for families with incomes at 30% of the area median income (AMI). Last year, NLIHC state partner Coalition for Non-Profit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED) issued recommendations for DCHA's redevelopment. The first recommendation states, "DCHA should increase the number, size, and affordability of units in its portfolio, with a focus on units with rents that are affordable to households at 30% of their income."

In December, the DCHA board approved more square footage, allowing for an increase from 70 to 200 affordable units. All 200 would be reserved for households earning 60% of AMI, with none guaranteed for households with incomes at or below 30% of AMI. At a DCHA meeting on January 16 to vote on this change, DHCA Executive Director Tyrone Garrett told the board the agency would do all it could to target low-income families and those displaced by redevelopment in the area.

This response did not satisfy local housing advocates. "It's not a legal definition," said Commissioner William Slover, who voted against the deal. "It doesn't mandate or require the developer to put anybody in there . . . and that's as simple as it gets,"

DC Council Member Elissa Silverman urged the agency at the January 16 meeting to rescind the decision, stating, "This is a moment, I think, for this board to send a clear message . . . that you truly are concerned and are focused on making sure there is a place for working people at 0% to 30% of AMI in this city."

Beth Harrison, an attorney at Legal Aid, added that new low-income units would not actually be created because those reserved for low-income households would only be available to those who already have a housing voucher. There are 40,000 households on the housing voucher waiting list, which has been closed since 2013.

At the end of the January 16 meeting, Mr. Garrett offered to reserve half of the 200 proposed affordable units for those with incomes at 30% of AMI. A board vote on a motion to pause the deal entirely failed, so the current agreement to reserve 200 units for those with incomes at 60% of AMI is scheduled to move forward. The board could hold another vote at its next meeting in February.

More about this story is at: <https://bit.ly/3b5WAFQ>

Information about the Coalition for Non-Profit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED) is at: <https://www.cnhed.org>

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of January 26

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of January 26:

- “One Paycheck Away: Families struggle to survive in Palm Beach County,” *Breaking U.S News*, January 30 at: <https://tinyurl.com/wx7wm6b>
- “We should prioritize affordable housing in 2020,” *The Hill*, January 30 at: <https://tinyurl.com/wzkajvc>
- “Connecticut investigates HUD-funded landlord who rented infested homes to poor families” *NBCNEWS.com*, January 29 at: <https://tinyurl.com/wedqn7r>
- “Could HUD Chief Ben Carson's Bus Tour Help Solve the Affordable Housing Crisis?,” *SFGate*, January 29 at: <https://tinyurl.com/wvzr89h>
- “The Trump administration seeks to make it easier for banks to reject loans for people of color,” *Markets Insider- Business Insider*, January 27 at: <https://tinyurl.com/qkltwpl>
- “Florida sits on \$900M in aid while storm victims wait,” *Politico*, January 25 at: <https://tinyurl.com/yx575ohj>

NLIHC News

Where to Find Us – February 3

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel and other NLIHC staff will be speaking at the following events in the coming months:

- [At What Price? The Hidden Costs of Housing](#), The Texas Lyceum, Waco, TX, February 7
- [Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless Legislative Action Day 2020](#), Boston, MA, February 27
- [NYHC March Thought Leader Event](#), New York, NY, March 12
- [YIMBY Town 2020](#), Portland, Oregon, April 3
- Humility Homes and Services 30 Years Celebration, Davenport, IA, April 18
- [Building Michigan Communities Conference](#), Lansing, Michigan; April 28
- Tulsa Mayor's Development Roundtable, Tulsa, OK, April 30
- [Princeton Community Housing Annual Homes Build Opportunity Gala](#), Princeton, NJ, June 13
- [HousingWorks RI Annual Factbook Lunch](#), Providence, RI, October 16

NLIHC Staff

Sonya Acosta, Policy Analyst, x231

Jordan April, Research Intern, x249

Kyle Arbuckle, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x227

Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245

Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244

Alayna Calabro, Field Intern, x252

Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226

Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316

Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314

Kim Johnson, Housing Policy Analyst, x243

Mia Juliana, Graphic Design/Communication Intern, x240

Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232

Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317

Joseph Lindstrom, Director, Field Organizing, x222

Mayerline Louis-Juste, Communications Specialist, x201

Lisa Marlow, Manager, Media Relations and Communications, x239

Tyra Reed, Policy Intern, x241
Sarah Saadian, Vice President, Public Policy, x228
Khara Norris, Director of Administration, x242
Noah Patton, Housing Policy Analyst, x227
Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Specialist, x246
Catherine Reeves, Development Coordinator, x234
Brooke Schipporeit, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233
Dan Threet, Research Analyst, x202
Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Coordinator, x230
Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225