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## Budget and Appropriations

### President Trump Proposes Drastic Cuts to Affordable Housing Programs

President Donald Trump's fiscal year 2020 budget request – released today - proposes to drastically cut housing benefits that help millions of low-income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, veterans, and other vulnerable people afford their homes. Like his other budget requests in FY18 and FY19, the proposal would reduce housing benefits for the lowest-income people by slashing federal investments in affordable homes, increasing rents, and imposing harmful work requirements on America's struggling families. If enacted, the budget could leave even more low-income people without stable homes, undermining family stability, increasing evictions, and, in worst cases, leading to more homelessness.

Overall, the administration proposes to cut HUD by an astounding \$8.6 billion or 16.4% below 2019 enacted levels, imposing deep cuts to affordable housing and community development, as well as other essential programs that ensure basic living standards.

**NLIHC strongly urges Congress not only to reject Mr. Trump's budget, but to significantly expand the investments in affordable homes that America's families and communities need to thrive.**

At a time when the affordable housing crisis has reached new heights and homelessness is increasing in some communities, the president's proposal would eliminate or deeply cut essential housing and community development programs like the national Housing Trust Fund, the HOME Investments Partnership program, and public housing capital repairs.

The president would underfund rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher program and raise rents - by as much as three times current levels - on America's poorest families. While the administration suggests its proposed budget would provide an increase in funding to the voucher program, this is misleading; the budget, in fact, includes cuts to housing assistance.

The budget would also impose punitive measures that would jeopardize family stability, increasing the financial burdens they face through higher rents and harmful work requirements that often [push families deeper into poverty](#). Last year, HUD unveiled legislation to cut housing benefits through rent increases and work requirements. Learn more about President Trump's [proposed legislation](#) to cut housing benefits, [how cutting housing benefits would increase homelessness and housing poverty, and why this approach is has nothing to do with "increasing family self-sufficiency."](#)

“With this budget request, President Trump and Secretary Carson are making clear in no uncertain terms their willingness to increase evictions and homelessness - for the vulnerable seniors, people with disabilities and families with kids who will be unable to manage having to spend more of their very limited incomes to cover rent hikes,” said Diane Yentel, NLIHC president and CEO. “The administration callously disregards its responsibility to the millions of households living in deteriorating public housing and to low-income people and communities working to recover and rebuild after disasters by eliminating critical resources for public housing, rental housing construction and community development. This is a cruel and unconscionable budget proposal, and it should be soundly rejected by Congress.”

Additional details and analysis on the budget proposal are [here](#) and an updated budget chart is [here](#). The administration is expected to release more details on its funding proposals next week.

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## Research

### Expanding Housing Choice Vouchers Would Significantly Reduce Child Poverty

Congress directed the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (the National Academies) in 2015 to conduct a study of childhood poverty in the United States and identify policies and programs that would reduce childhood poverty by half over the next ten years. The National Academies have released their findings in a report, [A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty](#). The report finds that implementing a child allowance program, expanding the provision of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs), and increasing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are among the most effective policies to accomplish the goal of reducing child poverty.

The Supplemental Poverty Measure estimates 13% of U.S. children (9.6 million) lived in poverty in 2015. Three percent of children were in deep poverty, defined as incomes less than 50% of the poverty level, and 36% of children were in poverty or near poverty, defined as less than 150% of the poverty level. Poverty rates vary greatly by race and ethnicity, with 8% of white children, 18% of black children, and 22% of Hispanic children living in poverty. Children are more likely to be poor if their parent or parents do not work or have less than a high school degree, if the children live with a single parent or without a parent, or if the children were born to younger mothers.

The report modeled the extent to which different policy proposals could effectively reduce child poverty. Work-oriented policy options, despite increasing employment and earnings, were the among the weakest options to reduce child poverty. Social safety net options such as implementing a child allowance, expanding Housing Choice Vouchers, and increasing SNAP benefits were among the most effective for reducing childhood poverty, despite reducing employment and earnings.

While the goal of reducing child poverty by half would require a 6.5 percentage point drop in the child poverty rate (from 13.0% to 6.5%), no single policy or program modeled in the report reduced child poverty to this level on its own. A proposed \$3,000 annual child allowance, however, was modeled to reduce child poverty by 5.3 percentage points, while a \$2,000 annual allowance was projected to reduce poverty by 3.4 percentage points. The third most effective option modeled was increasing the availability of HCVs to 70% of eligible families not currently receiving subsidized housing, which was estimated to reduce child poverty by 3 percentage points. Increasing SNAP benefits by 30% was estimated to reduce child poverty by 2.3 percentage points, while expanding the availability of HCVs to 50% of eligible families not currently receiving assistance or expanding the EITC by 40% would reduce child poverty by 2.1 percentage points. Job training proposals and a minimum wage increase to \$10.25 produced some of the smallest effects on the child poverty rate.

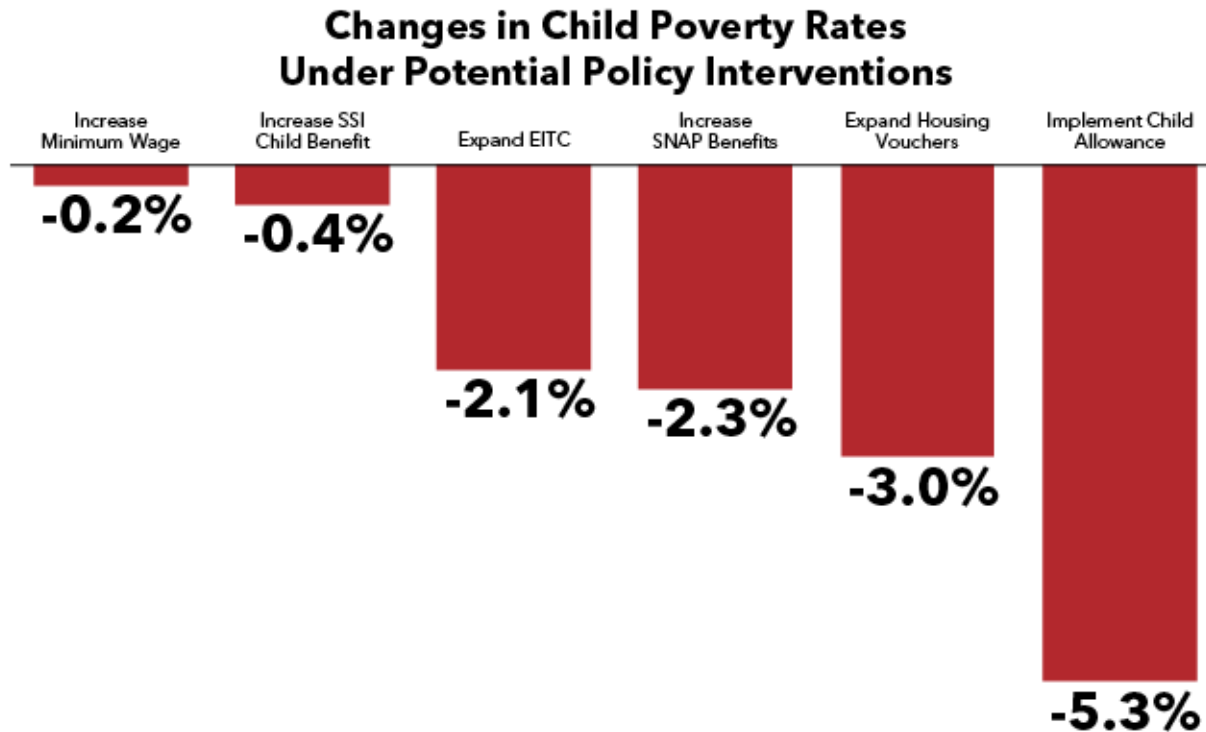
The authors emphasize the importance of mitigating contextual factors which could impact the effectiveness and equity of the proposed policy options. Racial and ethnic discrimination in housing, for example, could potentially undermine benefits of expanding HCVs and the exclusion of formerly incarcerated people from many social programs could deny children of the formerly incarcerated the benefits received by children in similar economic circumstances.

*A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty* is available at: <https://bit.ly/2Tni0bh>

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## Fact of the Week

### A New Child Allowance and Increased Housing Vouchers Would Reduce Child Poverty Rates the Most



Increase Minimum Wage: Raise current federal minimum wage to \$10.25 and index it to inflation.

Increase SSI Child Benefit: Increase by 2/3 the maximum child SSI benefit.

Expand EITC: Increase payments by 40% across the entire schedule.

Increase SNAP Benefits: Increase SNAP benefits by 30% for families with children, make adjustments for the number of children age 12 and above, and increase the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children.

Expand Housing Vouchers: Increase the number of Housing Choice Vouchers directed to families with children so that 70% of eligible families not currently receiving subsidized housing would use them.

Implement Child Allowance: Pay monthly benefit of \$250 per month per child (\$3000 annual) to the families of all children under age 17 who were born in the US or are naturalized citizens.

Source: National Academy of Sciences. (2019). *A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2TtSZOG>

Source: National Academy of Sciences. (2019). *A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty*. Washington, DC: Author.

## 2019 NLIHC Housing Policy Forum

### Revitalizing Neighborhoods and Preventing Displacement to be Explored at NLIHC's March 27-29 Housing Policy Forum

Too often, new development and efforts to revitalize communities do not prioritize the needs and interests of long-term residents, and people are pushed out. The NLIHC [2019 Housing Policy Forum: \*Seizing the Moment for Bold Solutions\*](#), taking place in Washington, DC, March 27-29, will offer a session on effectively revitalizing neighborhoods while preventing displacement. The session panelists are **Randy Shaw**, Tenderloin Housing Clinic and author of *Generation Priced Out*; **Council Member Gregoria Casar**, Austin City Council; and **Donna Mossman**, Crown Height Tenants Union. Pre-event registration ends in one week (on March 15), so register to attend [today!](#)

How can communities develop desperately needed new housing and infrastructure to benefit long-term residents without displacing them? The Forum will explore examples of communities that have successfully implemented development without displacement. Learn about the broad-based coalitions needed to win key zoning reforms, tenant protections, community benefits agreements, and other policy solutions.

Other forum topics will include the state of affordable housing in 2019, recent successes and challenges, and emerging opportunities; ensuring equitable housing recovery in the wake of recent and future disasters; tribal and rural affordable housing needs and solutions; the state of play related to affordable housing on Capitol Hill in 2019; housing the most vulnerable people in America; and the U.S. eviction epidemic and its solutions. There will also be sessions on working with and making housing an issue with the media; the future of public housing; the keys to state, local, and resident-led organizing; achieving greater racial equity in housing; how advocates and policy makers can “undesign” redlining in America; the growing *Opportunity Starts at Home* multi-sector affordable housing movement; non-partisan voter and candidate engagement; and low-income resident leadership, among many others.

See a more complete list of Forum speakers at: <https://www.nlihcforum.org/forum-speakers>

Pre-event registration for the Forum **ends on Friday, March 15**. Register today at: <http://www.nlihcforum.org/>

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## **Final Week to Purchase Tickets to NLIHC’s March 28 Housing Leadership Awards Reception Honoring Pinky Clifford, Dr. Mitchell Katz, and Rep. Emanuel Cleaver**

The deadline to purchase [pre-event tickets](#) to attend NLIHC’s March 28 Reception recognizing 2019 Housing Leadership Award honorees **Emma “Pinky” Clifford**, executive director of the Oglala Sioux Tribe Partnership for Housing and NLIHC board member; **Dr. Mitchell Katz**, president and CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals; and **Representative Emanuel Cleaver** (D-MO) is Friday, March 15. [Purchase your ticket today!](#)

Emma “Pinky” Clifford will receive the Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award, named for NLIHC’s founder Cushing Niles Dolbeare, a true pioneer of the affordable housing movement. Ms. Clifford will receive the award for her many years of leadership and dedication on behalf of Native Americans and her tireless work to secure decent, safe, and affordable homes for the lowest income people living on Pine Ridge Reservation.

Dr. Mitchell Katz will receive the Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award, named after former NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, who led NLIHC for more than 17 years. Dr. Katz will receive the award for elevating public and policy-maker awareness about the connections between health, housing, and homelessness and for implementing bold solutions to meet the affordable housing needs of the lowest income people.

Representative Cleaver will receive the 2019 Edward Brooke Housing Leadership Award for his years of leadership in Congress, unwavering commitment to addressing the needs of the lowest income people in the U.S., and steadfast support for federal affordable housing and homelessness programs. As ranking member of the Housing and Insurance Subcommittee, he co-authored the landmark “Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act,” a comprehensive bipartisan housing bill passed into law unanimously in 2017. The award is named after former U.S. Senator and NLIHC Board Chair Edward W. Brooke.

In addition to attending the reception, you can also make a donation to NLIHC in recognition of these outstanding leaders. Donate online as an [individual](#) or as an [organization, or download the pledge form and submit it via mail or email](#). Your donation will support NLIHC’s efforts end homelessness and housing poverty in America.

Purchase a ticket to the reception [here](#).

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## **NLIHC Offers Webinar on Policy Priorities for Advocates, March 14**

NLIHC will host a “[2019 Forum Policy Priorities Webinar](#)” on Thursday, March 14, 2:00 p.m. ET. The webinar will highlight key legislative requests that advocates should make to lawmakers in 2019 and provide comprehensive information that makes the case for more federal investments in affordable homes. The webinar will prepare advocates for NLIHC’s annual Capitol Hill Lobby Day on March 29, as part of the NLIHC Housing Policy Forum: *Seizing the Moment for Bold Solutions* March 27-29. Register for the Forum today at: [www.nlihcforum.org](http://www.nlihcforum.org). Pre-event registration closes on Friday, March 15.

Register for the March 14 “[2019 Forum Policy Priorities Webinar](#)” today!

NLIHC staff presenting on the webinar are:

- Sarah Mickelson, Senior Director of Public Policy
- Elayne Weiss, Senior Policy Analyst

NLIHC staff offered a webinar on effective advocacy, “Lobbying 101,” on March 7, covering information on how a bill becomes a law and key moments for advocates to be involved, details of the federal budget process, reasons to advocate, and tips for effective lobbying and advocacy. It also included a mock legislative visit. A recording of this webinar can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/sQJJ-Pf0N08>

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## **Take Action**

### **Advocates Urged to Endorse Lead-Safe Housing Bill**

Organizations are urged to endorse a lead-safe housing bill about to be introduced. The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law and the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative are seeking organizations to endorse “The Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act of 2019” even before it is formally introduced. The original sponsors for the bi-partisan and bi-cameral bill include Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL), Tim Scott (R-SC), and Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Representative Donald McEachin (D-VA). Additional members are being contacted to co-sponsor the bill. The bill is identical to “[The Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act of 2017](#)” (S. 1845).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention consistently cautions that no level of lead exposure is safe, and lead poisoning results in permanent brain damage, among other disabilities. But HUD does not require pre-rental lead hazard risk assessments in the Housing Choice Voucher program or at project-based Section 8 housing receiving less than \$5,000 in assistance. Children in these federally assisted housing programs must develop lead poisoning before any meaningful lead hazard inspection is required. In 2016, HUD identified 57,000 federally assisted housing units with active lead hazards and an additional 450,000 units built before 1978 that were occupied by a child, exposing them to potential lead contamination.

The “Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act of 2019” would:

1. Require lead hazard risk assessments and controls in all federally assisted housing (but not housing covered by federal mortgage insurance) prior to occupancy by a child under the age of six;
2. Give families the ability to relocate on an emergency basis from a unit with an uncontrolled lead hazard without losing their housing assistance; and
3. Authorize appropriations necessary to carry out the amendments made by the Act.



To endorse the bill, send an email to Emily Benfer at: [emily.benfer@law.columbia.edu](mailto:emily.benfer@law.columbia.edu), indicating your organization's name and a contact person. Emily is a visiting associate clinical professor of law and the director of the Health Justice Advocacy Clinic at Columbia Law School.

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## **Congress**

### **House Subcommittee Examines Stakeholder Perspectives on Affordable Housing Production**

The House Transportation-HUD (THUD) Appropriations Subcommittee held a hearing on March 7 where stakeholders provided their perspectives on the production and preservation of affordable housing. Witnesses testified about the critical importance of HUD programs and of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs) in preserving the nation's affordable housing stock and the great need to increase those resources. Witnesses also discussed how the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) is being utilized to convert public housing and preserve it as affordable housing by enabling public housing agencies to leverage Section 8 rental assistance contracts to raise private debt and equity for capital improvements.

Ellen Lurie Hoffman, the federal policy director of the National Housing Trust, testified that while the LIHTC program is important in preserving affordable housing, it often is insufficient, and other resources are needed. She explained that HUD's HOME and project-based rental assistance (PBRA) programs help leverage other funding streams. In particular, PBRA is able to attract investors based on a consistent flow of funding from the federal government, giving investors security from risk. She also spoke about how the recent government shutdown, the longest in U.S. history, impacted the affordable housing community since PBRA contracts were not being renewed and some owners had to dip into reserves to cover their expenses for an undefined period of time. She said that on-time payments to these owners is critically important not only to help them run their business but also to allow them to attract needed investments to better preserve their properties.

Citing NLIHC's data, Representative Pete Aguilar (D-CA) asked the witnesses about the large shortage of affordable and available homes in his home state of California. Ms. Hoffman responded that there is a shortage of affordable homes in every community, urban, suburban and rural. She said that while we must preserve the existing affordable housing stock, we must build new units as well, and that it comes down to how we prioritize federal funding and the tax code to do so. She urged Congress to increase resources and pointed out that federal lawmakers had not funded new PBRA development for years.

All the witnesses opposed President Trump's budget proposal to cut affordable housing benefits and resources by increasing rents and eliminating programs. Ms. Hoffman said raising rents on the poorest Americans would be devastating, while Scott Farmer, the executive director of the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, said that the elimination of HOME and CDBG would force his agency to serve people with higher incomes since they would not have the resources necessary to serve the lowest-income people. Anthony Scott, the CEO of the Durham Housing Authority, said President Trump's budget request would increase homelessness, force his agency to cut needed staff, and lead to the loss of public housing units.

Subcommittee Chair David Price (D-NC) and Representative Katherine Clark (D-MA) asked how the preservation of affordable housing and accompanying wrap-around services can help lead to greater economic mobility and support for low-income residents. Ms. Hoffman explained that 43% of PBRA developments are in low-poverty communities and said we must ensure PBRA properties in transitioning neighborhoods are preserved to allow the tenants to benefit from the new investments in their communities. She also spoke about the benefits of the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, which helps residents improve their job skills, learn financial literacy, and save money to improve their lives. She said that since Congress has permanently



authorized the program for PBRA owners last year, the subcommittee should increase FSS funding. Without funding, PBRA owners have had to pay for the program out of their own pockets.

Chairman Price also asked about the RAD program and its potential pitfalls. Mr. Scott testified that there has been misinformation and, hence, misunderstandings about the program. He said, for example, that there are tenant protections built into the program that many are not aware of. He said the program requires developments maintain long-term affordability and one-for-one replacement of units being converted from public housing to Section 8 rental assistance contracts. He also encouraged advocate- and tenant-participation when PHAs undergo RAD conversions. He said the program helps PHAs create financial stability over the long haul since it allows them to leverage new resources they previously did not have access to. He advocated for the complete elimination of the RAD cap and said the program could be improved by requiring a set-aside of 9% LIHTCs for RAD projects.

Learn more about the hearing at: <https://bit.ly/2Eu5xZZ>

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## **Our Homes, Our Voices**

### **2019 *Our Homes, Our Voices* National Housing Week of Action Announced for May 30-June 5**

Federal investments in proven affordable housing solutions [benefit us all](#). Join the growing grassroots movement to support increasing those investments during this year's [Our Homes, Our Voices](#) National Housing Week of Action, May 30-June 5! Advocates carried out more than 130 rallies, press events, teach-ins, meetings with elected officials, letter-writing campaigns, voter registration drives, tweetstorms, and other activities around the country during the 2018 Week of Action. Let's make 2019 even more powerful!

You can start planning an event in your community for the 2019 Week of Action by going to [www.ourhomes-ourvoices.org](http://www.ourhomes-ourvoices.org). There you will find guides for how to plan different types of activities and sample materials and content for you to use, including talking points, tweets, op-eds, press releases, social media images and posters. When you have identified an event, NLIHC will feature it on the website, directing supporters to you and inspiring others to plan activities.

To help you plan and carry out your event or activity, NLIHC is hosting a [webinar](#) on Tuesday, April 2 at 3:00 p.m. ET to discuss best practices and resources available to you. Webinar attendees will hear suggestions about effective messaging, the best uses of templates and materials, and building turnout. The webinar will include advice and perspectives from organizers who conducted events during the 2018 Week of Action.

NLIHC's [2019 Housing Policy Forum: Seizing the Moment for Bold Solutions](#) in Washington DC, March 27-29, will also help you prepare. In addition to the latest updates on federal housing policies and many other valuable sessions and content, the Forum will offer a panel on effective state and local organizing strategies and share tools and ideas to help you plan a successful event for this year's [Our Homes, Our Voices](#) Housing Week of Action.

It's time to act - to raise our voices not only to protect vital affordable housing programs, but to expand them so that everyone, especially those with the lowest incomes, has an affordable place to call home. Sign up and begin planning today to participate in the 2019 National Housing Week of Action May 30-June 5. Join with the thousands of others who will make our voices heard!

Register for the *Our Homes, Our Voices* webinar at: <https://bit.ly/2tONfxA>.

Register for NLIHC's Housing Policy Forum: *Seizing the Moment for Bold Solutions* at: <http://www.nlihcforum.org/>

Follow the *Our Homes, Our Voices* campaign on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/OurHomesVoices>

Follow the *Our Homes, Our Voices* campaign on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/OurHomesOurVoices/>

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## Disaster Housing Recovery

### Senators Call for Robust Disaster Supplemental Funding Bill

Senators have been pressuring congressional leadership to prioritize passing a robust disaster supplemental funding bill. Senators Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Kamala Harris (D-CA) led nine other Democratic senators on a [letter](#) dated February 28 urging congressional leadership to quickly pass a disaster relief package that includes relief for all states, territories, and tribal nations impacted by the 2018 disasters, as well as continued assistance for Puerto Rico. Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ) sent an additional [letter](#) to congressional leaders on March 1 related to disaster-related funding needs in Puerto Rico, including \$610 million for the Nutrition Assistance for Puerto Rico (NAP) program and other infrastructure, education, and housing programs.

The timing of a disaster supplemental bill is unclear, although Senate Appropriations Chair Richard Shelby (R-AL) said on March 5 that he would like to pass something before the congressional recess scheduled for the week of March 17. He also announced that his committee is working on a new package that will differ from both a bipartisan Senate bill ([S. 572](#)) introduced at the end of February and a \$14.2 billion proposal ([H.R. 268](#)) that passed the House in January.

Read the letter led by Senators Hirono and Harris at: <https://bit.ly/2EUky8O>

Read the letter on assistance for Puerto Rico at: <https://bit.ly/2H6hHvV>

Read the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition's priorities for any disaster recovery package at: <https://bit.ly/2K8Mp6b>

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### HUD Approves Disaster Recovery Funding with Additional Oversight for Territories

HUD approved the latest Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) state action plans from [Florida](#), [Puerto Rico](#), and the [U.S. Virgin Islands](#). Approval for both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands come with additional fiscal controls and HUD oversight. These states and territories will now have access to additional disaster recovery funding: \$518 million for Florida, \$779 million for the Virgin Islands, and \$8.2 billion for Puerto Rico.

HUD has not provided specifics regarding the financial controls they plan to implement for the territories. Some advocates express concerns that additional bureaucracy will further delay funding, and others contend additional oversight will help programs run more effectively and equitably. All advocates stress that whatever controls are put in place must help ensure survivors receive the assistance they need with efficiency, fairness, and accountability. Groups working in Puerto Rico have already [expressed concerns](#) the government's recovery plan will not provide sufficient resources to low-income communities.

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## **Additional Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – March 11, 2019**

The following is a review of disaster housing recovery developments since the last edition of *Memo to Members and Partners* (for the article in the previous *Memo*, see [3/4](#)).

### **Alabama Tornados**

President Trump [approved](#) a major disaster [declaration](#) (DR-4419) on March 5 for the state of Alabama, specifically Lee County. Survivors are eligible to apply for Individual Assistance (IA), and local governments and certain nonprofits may receive Public Assistance funding for emergency work.

### **2018 California Wildfires**

In a recent [interview](#), Chico Mayor Randall Stone discussed the Camp Fire's impact on the city's housing stock and potential solutions for a market that was already tight before survivors from Paradise were displaced.

### **Hurricane Michael**

#### **Florida**

##### *Federal Response*

FEMA [released](#) a fact sheet about the Direct Temporary Housing program that lists all the group sites, commercial parks, and private sites with units; 630 households have been licensed in, with about 200 more under construction or about to begin the license-agreement process. FEMA has also leased homes for 20 survivors.

Survivors whose homes suffered damage from Hurricane Michael and are uninsured or underinsured may be eligible for help from FEMA to restore their homes. FEMA has provided a [fact sheet](#) on eligibility and conditions.

##### *Local Perspectives and Resources*

Households in the Panhandle [continue to struggle](#) to find housing and get back on their feet. Contractors are in high demand, making it difficult for residents to complete repairs. Since so many families remain unhoused, some Bay County schools are offering laundry services for students and staff.

Panama City News Herald [toured](#) Bay County to speak with some families that still lack housing and have been living in one of the multiple tent communities throughout the area. County officials [estimate](#) about 7,800 residents are still considered homeless, included about 4,700 students.

### **Hurricane Florence**

#### **North Carolina**

##### *Federal Response*

FEMA shared a disaster recovery [summary](#) of federal assistance in North Carolina over the six months following Hurricane Florence. About 200 families are still staying in FEMA-funded hotels while others are living in 660 FEMA-supplied temporary housing units

FEMA’s Transitional Sheltering Assistance program [ends](#) Tuesday, March 12. Representatives encourage participating households, particularly those unable to find permanent housing by the March 12 deadline, to stay in contact with their disaster case-management service provider.

### *Local Perspectives and Resources*

Wilmington City Councilman Paul Lawler [discussed](#) affordable housing in a recent interview, emphasizing the ways flooding and storm damage from Hurricane Florence have exacerbated the problem: “You have housing that got refurbished, and now a landlord is probably going to look at it and say, ‘Well I was getting \$1,000 before I can get \$1,300 now,’ and that will further contribute to the problem,” Councilman Lawler said.

## **2017 Disasters**

### *Federal Response*

A Congressional delegation led by House Committee on Natural Resources Chair Raúl Grijalva will hold a listening session on Friday, March 15, 4:30 pm ET at the Roberto Clemente Coliseum in San Juan. The event, free and open to the public, will provide an opportunity for residents to share their concerns and experiences. Registration is required and can be completed online [here](#).

Freddie Mac has [invested](#) \$61 million in a new LIHTC fund, \$15 million of which will aid displaced residents from Hurricane Harvey. Housing and supportive services will be given to 170 individuals and families through Houston’s New Hope Housing’s Dale Carnegie development.

### *Local Perspectives and Resources*

A year and a half after Irma, four Florida Keys cities and Monroe County have yet to be [reimbursed](#) for approximately 88% of what was approved by FEMA. The localities may have to restructure their finances to prepare for longer-term delays. Keys officials were told by state emergency managers that the primary focus is recovering from Hurricane Michael in the Panhandle.

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## **Opportunity Starts at Home**

### **Leading Urbanist Richard Florida Talks about How Affordable Housing Can Boost Economic Growth**

In its latest [podcast episode](#), the *Opportunity Starts at Home* multisector affordable homes campaign talks to Dr. Richard Florida about the complex nexus between housing affordability and economic productivity. Because of a lack of affordable housing in high-wage, high-productivity areas, many workers – particularly those without a college education – are unable to live where good jobs are available. Many of these productivity “hubs,” which offer the greatest chances for upward mobility, are places where housing costs are unaffordable for the people who need the opportunity the most. And for those modest wage earners who do live in high-productivity hubs, much of their gains are consumed by high housing costs. These factors and the resulting loss in productivity and wages create a major drag on economic growth nationally.

“Many of these places do offer greater upward mobility, and the only people who can get a toehold on them are the already advantaged,” explained Dr. Florida. “Because we have not built enough housing in these superstar places, we get a shock to our national productivity which is in the trillions. It’s a national imperative that we work together to make sure that we have the affordable housing we need.”

[Researchers](#) Chang-Tai Hsieh and Enrico Moretti, whom Dr. Florida references in the podcast, estimate the lack of affordable housing costs the economy roughly \$1.6 trillion a year in lost productivity and wages. If affordable housing options enabled workers to move freely to these productivity hubs, they estimate annual wages would increase \$8,775 for the average worker, and America’s overall GDP would be 13.5% higher.

Listen to the podcast episode at: <https://bit.ly/2Tpkh6E>

Follow the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign on all social media platforms: [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](#).

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## HUD

### **Letter Urges HUD to Require Carbon Monoxide Detectors at All HUD-Assisted Housing**

NLIHC and other organizations sent a letter to HUD Secretary Ben Carson urging him to require carbon monoxide detectors at all HUD-assisted housing.

The letter calls on the HUD secretary to:

1. Issue emergency guidance to public housing agencies (PHAs) and private owners of HUD-subsidized housing that:
  - a. Requires the immediate installation of carbon monoxide detectors in all program units that have gas-powered appliances, generators, or other devices.
  - b. Reiterates PHAs’ and owners’ obligations to adhere to state and local building and public health codes.
2. Immediately propose rules amending the inspection standards in all of HUD’s programs to include the lack of a working carbon monoxide detector as an immediate “fail” item and a life-threatening emergency.

The effects of carbon monoxide poisoning occur almost immediately and can result in death in a matter of minutes. In addition, exposure to carbon monoxide can cause permanent brain damage, life-threatening cardiac complications, and fetal death or miscarriage.

For decades, HUD’s Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH) has warned about the dangers of carbon monoxide as a poisonous gas that can be fatal at high levels of exposure. HUD has yet to

require, however, the use of carbon monoxide monitors in all of its housing programs. Federally assisted housing residents are therefore at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and subsequent death due to inspection practices that are not in line with prevailing science and the best practices described by OLHCHH and other federal agencies.

Since 2003, at least eleven federally assisted tenants have died from carbon monoxide poisoning, including two very recent deaths of public housing residents at the Allen Benedict Court in Columbia, SC. All 26 buildings at Allen Benedict Court were evacuated due to carbon monoxide leaks and exposure. Many of the Allen Benedict Court residents are still living in hotels or with relatives or are struggling to find housing that will accept vouchers. An NBC report on the project is at: <https://nbcnews.to/2UfCv78A>

Carbon monoxide detectors are already required for certain voucher-based units. And as recently as October 27, 2017, HUD issued regulations implementing the “Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016” (HOTMA) provision that requires HUD to classify inoperable or missing carbon monoxide detectors as “life-threatening” violations of the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) for the Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Voucher programs. In addition, the Universal Physical Conditions Standards–Voucher demonstration project includes the lack of functional carbon monoxide detectors as a life-threatening condition. HUD’s incorporation of carbon monoxide detectors in its tenant-based rental assistance programs represents the agency’s acknowledgement of the life-threatening danger of carbon monoxide exposure. HUD should now extend these protections to all federally assisted homes to fulfill the statutory duty to provide safe and decent housing.

The [letter to Secretary Carson](#) was written by Emily Benfer, the director of the Health Justice Advocacy Clinic at Columbia Law School and Deborah Thrope, supervising attorney at the National Housing Law Project.

More about lead hazard control and healthy homes is on [page 5-6](#) of NLIHC’s *2018 Advocates’ Guide*.

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## **HUD Provides Information on How to Participate at Remaining REAC Listening Sessions**

HUD has informed NLIHC about how residents and advocates can register to attend one of the four remaining listening sessions HUD is conducting to gather input about a pilot program to test new approaches to Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) inspections (see *Memo*, [2/25](#)). A media release on February 20 indicated the public and stakeholders would be invited, but it was not clear how. After NLIHC did not observe any general notification to the public and did not find opportunities to register on the REAC homepage, NLIHC wrote to HUD. On the evening of March 6, HUD responded with instructions on how to register.

The first listening session took place on February 21 (see *Memo*, [3/4](#)). The remaining sessions will be held in Fort Worth (March 19), Detroit (March 26), Seattle (March 28), and Atlanta (April 4). There will be separate morning and afternoon sessions. According to the links HUD provided to NLHC, both March 26 sessions are full, and both March 19 sessions have a wait list.

Here is the information HUD sent to NLIHC:

- February 21, Region III: completed
- March 19, Region VI, at the Fort Worth regional office: <https://bit.ly/2EJb4Mj>
- March 26, Region V, at a Detroit hotel conference room: <https://bit.ly/2tT95QB>
- March 28, Region X, at the Seattle regional office:
  - Morning: <https://bit.ly/2UULTG5>
  - Afternoon: <https://bit.ly/2NMqNOQ>



- April 4, Region IV, at the Atlanta regional office: <https://bit.ly/2H30GTr>
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## **From the Field**

### **New York Rural Affordable Housing Advocates Descend on State Capitol, Call for Increased Investments**

Advocates from the New York State Rural Housing Coalition, an NLIHC state partner, joined with the New York State Rural Advocates at the Capitol in Albany on February 27 to urge legislators to fully fund rural preservation companies (RPCs) and rural affordable housing programs. There was an excellent turnout from all parts of the state to meet with legislators in their offices, hallways, and sometimes in elevators. Advocates asked legislators to maintain funding for a variety of programs that improve rural communities and help seniors and people with disabilities live in stable housing.

Advocates met with legislators to ask for full funding (at \$100,000 per contract) for RPCs, which are community based nonprofit corporations that provide local, frontline support to meet the housing needs in rural communities throughout the state. They also asked for an increase to \$50 million for the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC), given that in 2017 AHC received funding requests in excess of \$67 million.

Regarding rural rental housing, the State has used federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds to support the Small Rental Development Initiative (SRDI), which helps create and preserve single-family housing with one to four units and small rental developments of fewer than 25 apartments. As plans are underway for another round of funding for this initiative, advocates recommended appropriating \$15 million in the state Housing Trust Fund program for the SRDI program.

Local program administrators see huge demand for emergency home repairs from senior homeowners, as well as the need for home accessibility improvements so that seniors and disabled individuals can continue living independently. Advocates called for an additional \$1 million for the Hope/RESTORE program for emergency repairs to the homes of seniors and an increase of \$4 million for the Access to Home Program to make accessibility modifications.

The highly popular New York Main Street Program has achieved positive transformations of many village downtowns across the state, and advocates asked that the governor's proposed \$4.2 million funding level for the program be increased to \$10 million. The advocates argue that such an investment would be responsive to the existing demand and would generate significant community revitalization and economic benefits.

The governor and leaders of the Assembly and Senate have just begun meetings to hammer out a budget agreement by March 31. The New York State Rural Housing Coalition encourages advocates to continue to meet with legislators in district offices to share information about housing and community development programs and their communities' unmet needs.

For more information about the New York State Rural Housing Coalition, contact Executive Director Jeff Keller at [jeff@ruralhousing.org](mailto:jeff@ruralhousing.org) or 518-458-8696 x112.

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## **NLIHC in the News**

### **NLIHC in the News for the Week of March 3**

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of February 24.

- “HUD Secretary Ben Carson says he intends to leave his post at the end of Trump’s term,” *The Washington Post*, March 4 at: <https://wapo.st/2HmIsvd>
  - “Florida lawmakers want to expand renter protections amid affordable housing crisis,” *Blogs - Orlando Weekly*, March 8 at: <https://bit.ly/2TCVSda>
  - “‘Universal Rent Control’ Is the Left-Wing Dream That’s Actually Happening,” *Vice*, March 6 at: <https://bit.ly/2CbARME>
  - “MBTA acknowledges homelessness concerns in trains and stations,” *Boston Herald*, March 5 at: <https://bit.ly/2XLskJD>
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## NLIHC News

### NLIHC to Release *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes 2019* on March 14

NLIHC will release *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes 2019* on Thursday, March 14. This year’s report finds a shortage of seven million affordable and available rental homes for America’s extremely low-income renter households, those with incomes at or below the poverty level or 30% of their area median income. There are fewer than four affordable and available homes for every 10 of the lowest-income households nationwide. Seventy-one percent of renter households with extremely low-incomes are severely housing cost-burdened, spending more than half of their incomes on housing. They account for nearly 73% of all severely cost-burdened renters in the U.S. This year’s report also examines the racial disparities among renters, points out the limited scope of severe housing cost burdens for renters with higher incomes, and reviews the benefits of affordable homes.

Join us for a Twitter chat on March 21, 3:00 – 3:30 p.m. ET to discuss the research in *The Gap* and share solutions and thoughts for next steps. Use #TheGap19 to join the conversation. Follow and submit questions to @nlihc on Twitter.

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### NLIHC Seeks Creative Services Specialist/Manager

NLIHC seeks a creative services specialist/manager who will be responsible for designing all of NLIHC’s print and electronic publications (e.g., *Memo to Members and Partners* weekly e-newsletter, *The Advocates Guide*, etc.), research reports (*The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*, *Out of Reach*, etc.), and other materials; managing NLIHC websites and electronic communications; developing and maintaining the NLIHC brand through all external materials; and assisting with the development and execution of communications and marketing strategies.

The creative services specialist/manager will collaborate with other teams in the design process and will have ultimate responsibility for designing and producing all print and electronic materials, graphics, and reports. S/he will hold primary responsibility for updating and maintaining all NLIHC websites and microsites, as well as for tracking and analyzing communications metrics, including web activity and *Memo to Members and Partners*. The specialist/manager will assist in the development and execution of the event marketing strategies and will design the visual themes to be used throughout all event materials and presentations. S/he will recruit and supervise (with another staff member) the communications and graphic design interns (one each semester).

### Qualification Requirements:

- Bachelor’s degree, preferably in marketing, communications, graphic design, or related field
- Strong graphic design experience using Creative Cloud software (InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, etc.)
- Some knowledge of coding CSS/HTML preferred
- Some knowledge of/experience with Drupal preferred
- Some knowledge of/experience with video-production software preferred
- Strong interpersonal, communications, and customer-service skills
- Highly organized and detail-orientated; ability to deal with a high-paced environment with multiple projects happening simultaneously
- Ability to write clearly
- Strong commitment to social justice and NLIHC’s mission

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. This is a full-time position located in Washington, DC.

Interested candidates should send a cover letter (with salary requirement), resume, and some graphic-design samples (examples of publications, links to online content, etc.) to Paul Kealey, COO, and Renee Willis, VP for Field and Communications, at: [pkealey@nlihc.org](mailto:pkealey@nlihc.org) and [rwillis@nlihc.org](mailto:rwillis@nlihc.org)

## Where to Find Us – March 11

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

- [National League of Cities Congressional Conference](#), Washington, DC, March 10-11
- NCSHA Legislative Conference, Washington, DC, March 11
- NCRC [2019 Just Economy Conference](#), Washington, DC, March 12
- NHLP [Housing Justice Network National Meeting](#), New Orleans, LA, March 18-20
- Wells Fargo Housing Summit, Houston, TX, March 21
- National League of Cities Mayor's Conference, Detroit, MI, April 2 - 4
- [Housing California Annual Conference](#), Sacramento, CA, April 16
- [NACEDA People & Places 2019](#) Conference, Arlington, VA, April 16
- Arkansas Fair Housing Commission 2019 Annual Fair Housing/Fair Lending Conference, Little Rock, AR, April 18
- [Denver Housing Forum](#), Denver, CO, April 19
- [Building Michigan Communities Conference](#), Lansing, MI, April 30
- Colorado NAHRO Conference, Vail, CO, May 15
- [National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies Conference](#), Denver, CO, May 16
- Supportive Housing Network of New York Conference, New York, NY, June 13
- [Mental Health America, Annual Conference: Dueling Diagnoses](#), Washington, DC, June 14
- Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development Home for Everyone Conference, Eau Claire, WI, July 18-19
- Housing Colorado Conference, Keystone, CO, October 9
- [Housing & Community Development Network of NJ](#) Annual Conference, New Jersey (location TBD), October 18
- Rural Housing Summit, San Jose, CA, November 7

## **NLIHC Staff**

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Lily Barrett, Policy Intern, x241  
Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244  
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Abby Cooper, Research Intern, x249  
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Ellen Errico, Creative Services Manager, x246  
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314  
Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232  
Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317  
Joseph Lindstrom, Manager, Field Organizing, x222  
Lisa Marlow, Communications Coordinator, x239  
Sarah Mickelson, Senior Director of Public Policy, x228  
Khara Norris, Director of Administration, x242  
Catherine Reeves, Development Coordinator, x234  
Brooke Schipporeit, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233  
Elayne Weiss, Senior Policy Analyst, x243  
Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Coordinator, x230  
Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247  
Gloria Yang, Communications & Graphic Design Intern, x250  
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225