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Coronavirus, Homelessness, and Housing

Join “Coronavirus, Housing and Homelessness” Call Today at 2:30 p.m. ET!

NLIHC is hosting weekly national calls on “Coronavirus, Homelessness, and Housing” each Monday afternoon. These calls feature leaders from Congress, the administration, state and national partners, local homeless service and housing providers, and NLIHC sharing the latest information on how federal, state and local governments are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on people experiencing homelessness and low-income households, and how you can help advocate for needed resources. **The next call is today (Monday, April 6) at 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. ET.** Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

The NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) will continue to advocate for a broad array of resources and protections, including emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention assistance, a national moratorium on evictions and foreclosures, and emergency funds for homelessness service providers, housing authorities, and housing providers, among other recommendations. For more information, see DHRC’s [full list of recommendations](#), which will continue to be expanded and refined.

NLIHC is also maintaining a regularly updated COVID-19/Housing and Homelessness News and Resource page [here](#).

Recording of NLIHC’s March 30 “Coronavirus, Homelessness, and Housing” Call Now Available

Over 2,000 organizers, advocates, housing and homelessness service providers, reporters, and legislative staff attended last week’s national call on “Coronavirus, Homelessness, and Housing” hosted by NLIHC and the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) on March 30. The call featured updates from congressional leaders, including Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), as well as updates from federal, state, and local advocates and service providers working to assist people experiencing homelessness, low-income households, and members of marginalized communities, all of whom are disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. A recording of that call is [here](#). Register for today’s (April 6) 2:30 p.m. ET call featuring Representative Denny Heck (D-WA) and others [here](#).

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Ranking Member Jack Reed spoke on the March 30 call about efforts to increase funding for McKinney-Vento Emergency Solutions Grants in the recently enacted “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act” (see *Memo*, [3/30](#)). House Financial Services Committee Chair Maxine Waters spoke about her efforts to include robust rental assistance in the CARES Act, and the need for additional resources in future coronavirus response packages. Keith Turi, assistant administrator of the Recovery Directorate at FEMA, discussed the agency’s response to COVID-19 as well as the funding available for homelessness and housing services through FEMA’s Public Assistance program.

During a section of the call on local updates, Adi Martínez-Roman, founder of FURIA Inc. and senior policy analyst on Puerto Rico at Oxfam America, talked about conditions in Puerto Rico, where many individuals facing the pandemic are still left unassisted after the deadly earthquakes earlier this year (see *Memo*, [1/13](#)). Maxwell Ciardullo of the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center discussed the latest efforts to assist people experiencing homelessness in New Orleans, and the need for additional guidance regarding the eviction moratorium enacted in the CARES Act. Shalonda Rivers, president of the Cordoba Courts Tenants Association in Opa Locka, FL, and NLIHC’s board member, addressed the housing conditions of low-income renters in

Miami-Dade County and the need for additional outreach to low-income tenants to ensure they are aware of their rights under the CARES Act.

Maria Foscarinis of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty discussed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations to jurisdictions not to clear homeless encampments unless individual housing units are available, and she noted that homeless communities should have access to basic hygiene measures like working bathrooms and handwashing stations. The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty released a [template letter](#) for advocates to use to urge their local communities to stop encampment sweeps. Bobby Watts of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council spoke about state and local efforts to provide people experiencing homelessness with spaces for isolation and quarantine and to convert stadiums and arenas into makeshift hospital wards, and he called for more funding for shelters and street medical outreach. Tony Walters of the National American Indian Housing Council was unfortunately not able to speak on the call but shared in writing a number of concerns for tribal communities, including a recent spike in coronavirus cases in Indian Country and the grave need for resources for tribes given the often overcrowded housing conditions in tribal areas.

Steve Berg from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) spoke about how the additional funding for the Emergency Solutions Grants program provided in the CARES Act has flexibilities built in to ensure it furthers efforts to provide housing and services to people experiencing homelessness. Shamus Roller from the National Housing Law Project provided information on the specifics of the eviction moratorium enacted through the CARES Act. Finally, Sarah Saadian from NLIHC gave suggestions for next steps, including updated requests for the next coronavirus supplemental and needed regulatory waivers from HUD in order to ensure the quick and equitable distribution of funding.

NLIHC will host national calls on the coronavirus, housing, and homelessness every week on Mondays at 2:30 p.m. ET. Register for today's call at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

See the agenda for today's call at: <https://bit.ly/3dU5ebV>

Watch a recording of the March 30 call at: <https://tinyurl.com/rj7qxwf>

View presentation slides of the March 30 call at: <https://tinyurl.com/tk9hmm7>

Stay up-to-date on COVID-19 news and housing resources at: <https://bit.ly/3dwCSEm>

Tenant Talk Live Webinar for Residents: Responding to Coronavirus, Today at 6:00 p.m. ET!

[Join](#) resident leaders and NLIHC staff for the next *Tenant Talk Live* webinar to discuss the impacts of the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic and how you can advocate for needed resources and other protections for people experiencing homelessness and low-income renters in your community. The next *Tenant Talk Live*—a bimonthly call/webinar with resident leaders from across the country—will take place today, April 6 at 6:00 p.m. ET (5 p.m. CT, 4 p.m. MT, 3 p.m. PT).

NLIHC staff will provide updates on what is being done at the federal level to address the pandemic, discuss issues and efforts from around the country, share ways you can take action, and answer questions. Clarksville, TN, Mayor Joe Pitts will discuss what steps his city has taken to mitigate the effects of pandemic on homeless populations and low-income tenants. Residents will discuss what they are seeing in their communities and what they are doing in response to the pandemic. Sharon Legenza from Housing Action Illinois will discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect the census and the importance of the census.

Tenant Talk Live provides opportunities for residents to connect with NLIHC and one another, to share best practices, and to learn how to be more involved in influencing federal housing policies and to lead in their community.

NLIHC is committed to connecting and engaging with resident leaders in new, more robust ways. If you are a low-income resident and have a topic you would like to propose for peer-sharing or if you want to be a speaker on an upcoming call/webinar, please email us at: karbuckle@nlihc.org

Register for *Tenant Talk Live* at: <https://bit.ly/2vEFS0o>

Coronavirus – Congress

Congress Begins Planning for Fourth COVID-19 Emergency Package; NLIHC and DHRC Update Policy Recommendations

Congress is already working on a fourth emergency package to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to provide additional support for individuals and provide greater economic stimulus for businesses. Both the president and members of Congress have expressed interest in including infrastructure investments in the upcoming package. Any additional funding measures responding to the pandemic and/or comprehensive investments in infrastructure must include measures to increase funding and improve policies to ensure the housing stability of people with the lowest incomes.

House Democrats on April 1 released an initial plan, which expands a [previous infrastructure proposal](#) to provide additional resources for community health centers, clean water, broadband, and transportation but fails to include additional affordable housing funding. NLIHC and the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) have updated their [recommendations](#) for the next COVID-19 spending package to include both resources to meet urgent housing needs and major housing infrastructure investments, including funding for the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF), public housing, and rental and emergency assistance. The DHRC has also compiled a list of [needed regulatory actions](#) to ensure resources responding to COVID-19 quickly reach communities and people with the greatest needs.

The recently enacted “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act” [included \\$12 billion in housing and homelessness resources](#) to help prevent an outbreak of the virus among people experiencing homelessness and protect low-income renters, an outstanding success secured by NLIHC, the DHRC, and advocates around the country. But Congress must provide more resources to meet the country’s dire and urgent needs. The DHRC urges Congress to include at least \$11.5 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants for homelessness response to get to the level of resources [independent researchers](#) say is needed. People who are homeless and contract coronavirus are twice as likely to be hospitalized, two to four times as likely to require critical care, and two to three times as likely to die as the general public. If unchecked, as many as 20,000 people experiencing homelessness could require hospitalization and nearly 3,500 could die. This level of hospitalizations and deaths would have grave implications for individuals, their communities, and our already overstretched hospital systems.

Additionally, the DHRC urges a uniform moratorium on evictions and foreclosures, and up to \$100 billion for emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention. Uniform eviction and foreclosure policies help ensure that renters will not lose their homes during the pandemic when our collective health depends on each of us staying home. A moratorium on evictions on its own, however, is not enough. Rental assistance is needed both to avoid creating a financial cliff for renters when eviction moratoria are lifted and back-rent is owed and to ensure the continued viability of our country’s essential affordable housing infrastructure.

The DHRC agrees with members of Congress who are calling for major investments in the country’s infrastructure to help communities deal with the pandemic and boost the economy, but any such measure must include resources to address the underlying causes of homelessness that increase the risk of future outbreaks: the severe shortage of rental homes affordable and available to America’s lowest-income households – the only segment of the population for which there is an absolute shortage of affordable homes. Moreover, building 100 affordable rental homes [generates](#) \$11.7 million in local income, \$2.2 million in taxes and other revenue for local governments, and 161 local jobs in the first year.

The DHRC’s updated recommendations for a stimulus or infrastructure spending bill include \$45 billion in funding for the national Housing Trust Fund, \$70 billion to address the nation’s public housing capital backlog, the expansion of rental assistance through Housing Choice Vouchers and/or the creation of a targeted renters’ tax credit, an emergency assistance eviction-prevention fund like the one proposed by Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Rob Portman (R-OH) in the “[Eviction Crisis Act](#),” and an expansion of and reforms to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit.

The DHRC has also compiled a [list of regulatory actions](#) HUD, USDA, the Department of Treasury, and the Small Business Administration should take to provide tenant protections, ensure resources are allocated quickly to communities and people most in need, and allow providers to make necessary adjustments.

View NLIHC and the DHRC’s COVID-19 congressional recommendations at: <https://nlihc.org/responding-coronavirus>

Read NLIHC and the DHRC’s recommended regulatory actions at: <https://bit.ly/39HaAUh>

Coronavirus – HUD

HUD CPD Announces Initial CARES Act CDBG, ESG, and HOPWA Supplemental Formula Allocations

HUD’s Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) posted on April 1 the FY20 [CARES Act supplemental funding](#) to states and local governments, including \$2 billion in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), \$1 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), and \$53.7 million in Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) formula funds as well as \$10 million for HOPWA competitive grants. CARES Act is the acronym for the “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act,” which was signed into law on March 27. CPD also posted [regular FY20 allocations](#) to states and local governments for CDBG, ESG, HOPWA, and HOME.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The CARES Act provides up to \$5 billion in CDBG supplemental funding. Of that amount, \$2 billion, the allocations announced on April 1, are to be distributed to states and entitlement jurisdictions using the same statutory formula used to distribute the regular, annual FY20 CDBG allocations. There is nothing in the Act that suggests that these extra \$2 billion must be used to address coronavirus-related needs. Therefore advocates will have to work hard to get as much as possible of this new extra resource allocated to coronavirus-related housing and homelessness needs.

Existing CDBG regulations [24 CFR 570.207(b)(4)] allow the use of CDBG to make “emergency grant payments made over a period of up to three consecutive months to the provider of such items or services [‘food, clothing, housing (rent or mortgage), or utilities’] on behalf of an individual or family.” Therefore, the use of CDBG to provide assistance for up to three months in the form of rent or mortgage assistance and utility

payments is an eligible use of CDBG. The CARES Act removes the statutory 15% cap on the amount of a jurisdiction's CDBG allocation that can be used for "public services," which the provision of rental or utility payment assistance would normally be considered. The Act limits the exemption from the 15% cap to "activities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus." The Act also states that a jurisdiction's FY19 and FY20 CDBG allocations are also free from the 15% public-service cap.

The CARES Act requires an additional \$1 billion to be allocated states and insular areas "to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus within the state or insular area, including activities within entitlement and nonentitlement communities, based on public health needs, risk of transmission of coronavirus, number of coronavirus cases compared to the national average, and economic and housing market disruptions, and other factors as determined by the Secretary, using the best available data." HUD has 45 days to allocate the \$1 billion.

The remaining \$2 billion of the \$5 billion are to be distributed directly to a state or unit of local government at the discretion of the HUD secretary according to a formula based on factors to be determined by the secretary, prioritizing risk of coronavirus, number of coronavirus cases compared to the national average, and economic and housing market disruptions resulting from coronavirus.

Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)

The CARES Act provides up to \$4 billion in ESG supplemental funding. Of that \$4 billion, \$2 billion are to be distributed to grantees using the same statutory formula used to distribute the regular, annual FY20 ESG allocations. These \$2 billion must be distributed within 30 days. The \$1 billion ESG allocation posted on April 1 are therefore half of the amount to be distributed within 30 days.

The remaining balance of \$2 billion are to be allocated directly to states or units of general local government within 90 days using a formula to be developed by the HUD secretary. These \$2 billion must be used for the benefit of unsheltered homeless, sheltered homeless, and those at risk of homelessness, to geographical areas with the greatest need based on factors to be determined by the secretary, such as risk of transmission of coronavirus, high numbers or rates of sheltered and unsheltered homeless, and economic and housing market conditions.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)

The CARES Act provides up to \$65 million in HOPWA supplemental funding, of which at least \$50 million are to be allocated using the formula used to allocate the FY20 HOPWA funds. CPD's April 1 announcement allocated \$53.7 million. The CARES Act also requires that up to \$10,000,000 are to be provided as additional one-time, non-renewable awards to grantees currently administering existing contracts for permanent supportive housing. The April 1 CPD posting announced the HOPWA competitive awards amounting to \$10 million.

The CARES Act supplemental allocations are at: <https://bit.ly/2yvULIa>

The regular FY20 CPD formula programs allocations are at: <https://bit.ly/3dSWq5O>

More information about CDBG is on [page 8-3](#) of NLIHC's *2019 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about ESG is on [page 4-65](#) of NLIHC's *2019 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about HOPWA is on [page 4-63](#) of NLIHC's *2019 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about HOME is on [page 5-3](#) of NLIHC's *2019 Advocates' Guide*.

HUD PIH Posts Updated “COVID-19 FAQs for Public Housing Agencies”

HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) posted an updated “[COVID-19 FAQs for Public Housing Agencies](#)” on March 30. The updated set of “frequently asked questions” (FAQs) is based in part on issues raised by public housing agencies (PHAs) as well as provisions in the “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.” For many of the FAQs, PIH indicates it will be providing detailed guidance in the near future. The first set of FAQs was posted on March 13 (see *Memo*, [3/23](#)).

The March 30 update has 31 new questions, 5 questions flagged as “Updated” that appear to provide new information, and 12 questions flagged as “Updated” that provide minor updates. The new questions are not, however, indicated as being new. This *Memo* article summarizes key changes important to residents and advocates.

Under the category, “Operational Concerns,” question OC4 (page 6) addresses situations in which a PHA has halted or is considering halting, for health and safety reasons, Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections in homes assisted with vouchers. HUD outlines existing HQS inspection flexibilities in various PIH Notices for current residents and indicates it will provide guidance regarding housing chosen by new resident applicants as well.

Regarding portability of vouchers, at OC5 (page 7) PIH says PHAs should continue to process incoming and outgoing porting of vouchers in a manner similar to how they are handling all PHA operating issues at this time. Portability refers to procedures PHAs follow when a voucher household chooses to move with their voucher from one PHA to another. PHAs are encouraged to consider processing portability requests through electronic communications, teleconferences, and phone communications to the extent practicable. HUD is not currently considering a waiver of portability regulations or other PIH requirements.

OC6 states that the soon-to-be-released CARES Act stimulus payments to individuals and families will not be included when calculating a household’s income.

OC8 states that if public housing or voucher households, including households in project-based voucher (PBV) units, obey a stay-at-home order due to the coronavirus pandemic and consequently cannot pay the rent due to a loss of income, residents are protected by a new provision in the CARES Act that provides a 120-day moratorium on eviction filings, fees and penalties related to nonpayment of rent. (Presumably if someone is sick due to the coronavirus, the same moratorium would apply, but the FAQ does not specifically state this.) PIH indicates it will issue additional guidance.

OC18 (page 10) states that public housing residents who choose to self-isolate must continue to comply with the PHA’s Smoke-Free policy.

OC20 (page 11) states that HUD is not considering waivers of the “obsolescence test” if a PHA seeks approval to demolish a public housing property under Section 18 of the Housing Act. (To obtain approval to demolish public housing, a PHA must demonstrate the property is obsolete. See [NLIHC’s summary of demolition regulations](#).)

OC25 (page 12) addresses a case involving a landlord telling a voucher household that their lease will not be renewed, resulting in the tenant being evicted. While the CARES Act has a 120-day moratorium on evictions and late fees due to nonpayment of rent that applies to the voucher program, the voucher program does not require landlords to renew a lease. Eviction after nonrenewal of a lease is a matter of state and local law. PIH indicates it will provide additional guidance.

OC28 addresses the question of whether a PHA can ban visitors to a high-rise property for seniors. HUD indicates that PHAs have the authority to restrict visitors from public housing properties. If a PHA plans to

implement a visitor ban through amended PHA policies, PIH recommends it be done as part of a broader, publicly announced plan to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. PIH also suggests that PHAs and owners review the lease as well as state and local laws to determine the permissibility of banning visitors.

OC29 (page 13) addresses PHAs in areas subject to shelter-in-place orders. PIH indicates that PHAs can use alternate methods to collect information for new admissions and interim income reexaminations for reduced wages or hardship exemptions. Alternate methods would include email, mail, or phone. PHAs already have flexibilities for third-party verifications. For example, a resident may call to report they have been laid off from a restaurant job, in which case the PHA should attempt to verify this information with the employer. If the PHA cannot obtain this verification, the PHA can document its attempts and continue with the process to adjust the tenant payment.

Under the category “Resident Health,” question RH2 (page 13) notes that if there are positive COVID-19 cases in a building or property, PHAs should convey this information to staff and residents following state and local health department guidance as well as using the communications resources from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at: <https://bit.ly/2X24zyU>

The March 30 update of “COVID-19 FAQs for Public Housing Agencies” is at: <https://bit.ly/2UzwAfF>

More about public housing is on [page 4-25](#) of NLIHC’s *2019 Advocates’ Guide*

More about vouchers is on [page 4-1](#) of NLIHC’s *2019 Advocates’ Guide*

HUD CPD Provides COVID-19 Waivers for CoC, ESG, and HOPWA Programs

HUD’s Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) distributed an undated [Memorandum](#) on April 1 outlining coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic-related program waivers for the Continuum of Care (CoC), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), and Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) programs.

To use the waiver flexibility, program recipients must provide notification in writing, either through mail or e-mail, to the CPD director of the HUD Field Office no less than two days before the recipient anticipates using the waiver flexibility.

For the CoC, ESG, and HOPWA programs there are waivers to the requirement that rent payments not exceed the area fair market rent (FMR). For the CoC and HOPWA programs there are waivers regarding Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections.

For the CoC program there are additional waivers pertaining to:

- Disability documentation for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
- Limits on eligible housing search and counseling services
- Permanent Housing and Rapid Re-housing monthly case management
- The one-year lease requirement

For the ESG program there are additional waivers pertaining to:

- Re-evaluations for homelessness prevention assistance
- Housing stability case management

For the HOPWA program there are additions waivers pertaining to:

- Self-certification of income and credible information on HIV status
- HOPWA space and security

Regarding the Consolidated Plan requirements for the ESG and HOPWA programs, CPD is waiving the 30-day minimum requirement for the public comment period for substantial amendments, provided that no less than five days are provided for public comments on each substantial amendment. HUD also waives the requirement that jurisdictions provide the public with reasonable notice and opportunity to comment on substantial amendments; grantees are responsible of determining what constitutes reasonable notice and opportunity to comment given their circumstances. These waivers are available through the end of the program recipient's 2020 program year.

The Memorandum distributed on April 1 is at: <https://bit.ly/2UBb4XN>

More information about the CoC and ESG programs is on [page 4-65](#) of NLIHC's *2019 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about the Continuum of Care Planning Process is on [page 7-49](#) of NLIHC's *2019 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about HOPWA is on [page 4-63](#) of NLIHC's *2019 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about the Consolidated Plan is on [page 7-42](#) of NLIHC's *2019 Advocates' Guide*.

Third Update of Coronavirus FAQs from HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs (Multifamily), which oversees contracts with private owners of HUD-assisted properties, made more updates to its "[Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)" (see *Memo 3/30*) on April 2. A total of 21 questions/answers were added and 10 were updated. While many address such topics as construction issues, on-site inspections, and environmental reviews, this article will highlight two categories of changes: those related to income recertifications and those related to the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD).

Annual and Interim Income Recertifications

In the "Policy and Operations" category, "Asset Management" section, Q7 (starting on page 7) is substantially modified. The question is, "**Will impacted residents still have to complete annual recertification and interim certification for lost income?**" HUD elaborates significantly on this topic in the April 2 update.

HUD considers the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) recommendations for controlling the spread of the coronavirus as well as shelter-in-place and similar orders as an "extenuating circumstance" that might impede owners and tenants from complying with interim and annual income recertification requirements. Therefore, owners should follow the extenuating circumstance instructions provided in the April 2 update as well as HUD Handbook 4350.3, REV-1.

HUD recommends an owner begin, and if possible complete, recertification actions within 90 days of being advised of the extenuating circumstance. When an extenuating circumstance is present, there is no change to a tenant's recertification anniversary date. The Total Tenant Payment/Tenant Rent and the assistance payment are effective retroactively to the recertification anniversary date.

HUD will allow tenants that may have lost income due to coronavirus to self-certify for annual or interim recertifications. Self-certification can be used if the information cannot be verified by another acceptable

verification method. Self-certification can be provided to the owner by such means such as mail or email, and the owner may consider collecting the original documents from the household at a later date.

HUD will allow alternate signatures (e.g. copies or images of signatures sent by email, fax, or other electronic means) as long as original (“wet”) signatures are obtained at a later date. Tenants can provide the owner with required documentation for the recertification by email or other electronic delivery at the owner’s discretion.

Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)

In the “Recapitalization and Rental Assistance Demonstration” section there is a new question, Q26 (starting on page 15): **“How should PHAs communicate with residents about the RAD conversion process, respond to resident questions, and solicit feedback when in-person resident meetings are not possible due to the recent COVID-19 outbreak?”**

HUD states that PHAs that continue with public meetings should follow the latest CDC, state, or local health department guidance relative to holding public meetings. It is still critical, however, for PHAs and property owners to keep residents informed about any changes to their housing, their rights, and the timing of key events related to the RAD conversion and for residents to have the opportunity to provide comments as required at different stages of a RAD conversion.

In lieu of community meetings held in common areas, PHAs and owners may hold meetings remotely using videoconferencing or teleconferencing technology. In selecting among alternative meeting methodologies, PHAs and owners should be attentive to the nature of technology that residents are likely to have in their homes. PHAs and owners must ensure they can:

- Accept and respond to answers to questions submitted during the meeting;
- Maintain an attendance log in order to track whether residents are able to participate successfully;
- Accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities or with limited English proficiency (LEP) through the meeting format. In selecting the host technology, PHAs must ensure they can comply with Section 504 of the Americans with Disability Act; and
- Provide residents with a follow-up notice after the meeting with a summary or reproduction of presented information and a means to ask additional questions related to the conversion.

HUD recognizes that effectively communicating during this period may take more time than previously, and PHAs and owners may conclude that additional meetings are necessary to ensure all residents are reached.

Beyond the required resident meeting and comment period, HUD recommends that PHAs and owners develop an alternative communication plan that is sustainable for at least eight weeks or more and that achieves the goals of providing residents relevant information about the RAD conversion. PHAs may develop a process that includes various forms of alternative communication methods so that all residents can receive information and participate in the process regardless of their individual circumstances. HUD provides a list of suggested methods for sharing information with residents:

- Teleconference calls in the place of in-person meetings, ensuring that residents have enough prior notice and receive clear directions (particularly those with limited technological access/abilities).
- Flyers/notices to residents at each unit with updates about how information can be obtained regarding the RAD process.
- Notices posted in common areas of the property.
- Letter updates in resident mailboxes.
- Text and/or email updates to residents.
- A sign-up sheet for residents to meet one-on-one with office staff or by phone.

- Online materials (video or other) available to all residents.
- A survey for residents to gather information from them about their questions, experience, and preferences.
- Contact information (phone and email) for PHA staff provided to all residents should they have questions.

“Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Coronavirus (COVID-19)” is at: <https://bit.ly/2URRghW>

More information about project-based housing is on [page 4-46](#) of NLIHC’s *2019 Advocates’ Guide*.

HUD Posts Section 3 Coronavirus-Related FAQs

HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) posted on April 3 [Section 3 frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#) regarding implementation of Section 3 in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

The purpose of Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 is to ensure that, when HUD funds are used to assist housing and community development projects, “to the greatest extent feasible” preference for some of the jobs, training, and contracting opportunities that are created go to low-income people and to businesses owned or controlled by low-income people or to businesses that hire them. PHAs and jurisdictions using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships program, and other HUD funds must comply with Section 3 and ensure that contractors and subcontractors also comply.

Question 2 of the April 3 FAQs states that Section 3 compliance obligations are not waived as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. FHEO encourages public housing agencies (PHAs) and local and state governments to follow the directives of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and state and local guidelines. If Section 3-covered HUD funding recipients are engaging in Section 3-related hiring or contracting during this time, however, those recipients are still required to meet the Section 3 compliance requirements.

Question 5 states that a recipient not meeting the Section 3 Safe Harbor goals must demonstrate why it was not feasible to meet the goals and identify any impediments they may have encountered. Therefore, if restrictions were placed on a recipient as a result of coronavirus that impeded them from achieving the goals, the recipient must annotate the restrictions and any efforts made to overcome those restrictions in their reports.

Question 6 reminds Section 3-covered recipients that they are still required to provide notice of Section 3 opportunities. FHEO understands that Section 3-covered recipients may not be able to provide notice of Section 3 opportunities in conventional ways due to the coronavirus pandemic. FHEO encourages the use of virtual or online notifications, such as telephone blast messages, text message notifications, email notifications, Facebook advertisements, other social media advertisements (such as Twitter/Instagram/etc.), and YouTube videos.

Question 1 stresses that state and local laws do not supersede federal laws, such as Section 3. A conflict with a state or local law designating a coronavirus emergency would only exist if a state or local law (or emergency order) prohibited recipients and/or their subrecipients, contractors, or subcontractors from hiring or contracting consistent with their Section 3 obligations. If Section 3-covered recipients encounter state or local laws they believe to be in conflict with Section 3, FHEO encourages them to consult with FHEO staff at section3@hud.gov.

The Section 3 coronavirus-related FAQs are at: <https://bit.ly/2JAxh2b>

More information about Section 3 is on [page 7-66](#) of NLIHC’s *2019 Advocates’ Guide* and on NLIHC’s public housing webpage at: <https://bit.ly/2R6DWFg>

Coronavirus – Other

NLIHC and National Women’s Law Center Publish Factsheet on “Improving Housing Assistance in Response to COVID-19”

NLIHC partnered with the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) to create a new factsheet, “[Improving Housing Assistance in Response to COVID-19](#),” which describes the specific housing needs of women, families, and transgender women during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because women, particularly women of color, are overrepresented in the low-paid workforce, many women and families already struggled to afford their rents. As the pandemic causes increased economic instability, low-wage women, survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, LBGQT people, people with disabilities, and immigrant women and families will need additional assistance and protections to stay stably housed. Read the NLIHC and NWLC factsheet at: <https://bit.ly/2xHMyLC>

Additional Coronavirus Updates - Monday, April 6, 2020

NLIHC is hosting weekly national calls on COVID-19, homelessness, and housing every Monday afternoon. **The next call is today (Monday, April 6) at 2:30 to 4:00 pm ET.** Register for the national call at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

The NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) will continue to advocate for a broad array of resources and protections, including emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention assistance, a national moratorium on evictions and foreclosures, and emergency funds for homelessness service providers, housing authorities, and housing providers, among other recommendations. For more information, see DHRC’s [full list of recommendations](#), which will continue to be expanded and refined. NLIHC has also compiled a list of regulatory [recommendations](#).

NLIHC is also maintaining a COVID-19/Housing and Homelessness News and Resource page [here](#).

National Updates

Congress

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi [announced](#) the creation of a new House Select Committee on the Coronavirus which will be tasked with overseeing stimulus funding.

Representativ Jerry McNerney (D-CA) sent a [letter](#) to the Trump administration pressing for details regarding how federal agencies are working to ensure the proper care of people experiencing homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaders in nine U.S. cities [called](#) on state and federal officials to provide more support to tenants as the coronavirus crisis deepens.

FEMA

FEMA announced additional Major Disaster Declarations for [Hawaii](#), [Montana](#), and [North Dakota](#), [Virginia](#), [Tennessee](#), the [Northern Mariana Islands](#), and the [U.S. Virgin Islands](#).

FEMA laid out reimbursement guidelines for [Emergency Medical Care](#) and [Non-Congregate Sheltering](#), elaborating on the existing rules allowing for both of these expenses to be covered by FEMA's Public Assistance Category B program.

As an abnormally warm Gulf of Mexico indicates an [increased](#) risk of tornados and hurricanes in the coming year, FEMA is bracing itself for a [multi-front battle](#).

HUD

HUD [announced](#) that DHS will be recognizing residential and shelter workers as essential, exempting them from stay-at-home orders occurring across the country.

Advocacy

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) released an updated [overview](#) of changes to unemployment insurance payments and eligibility related to the pandemic. CBPP also released a list of [recommendations](#) to broaden eligibility for stimulus rebates.

The National Consumer Law Center launched a new COVID-19 & Consumer Protections [webpage](#) on what's needed to protect renters and homeowners during the pandemic. The organization is also offering free access to the digital edition of "[Surviving Debt: Expert Advice for Getting Out of Financial Trouble](#)" – NCLC's comprehensive guide to navigating debt for consumers and their advocates.

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project released a nationwide [map](#) of eviction moratoriums and tenant protections.

Stateside created a 2020 state and local government coronavirus response [chart](#) to track state legislative actions, executive agency actions, and local government actions related to the pandemic.

Reporting

Popular Science released an [article](#) covering homelessness and vulnerability to coronavirus.

Wired is [reporting](#) that many individuals experiencing homelessness are turning to web forums for best practices to avoid COVID-19 infection.

State News

A list of local eviction and foreclosure moratoriums is available [here](#) from NLIHC.

Alaska

The City of Anchorage is [debating](#) what to do in order to ensure the safety of individuals experiencing homelessness in the city, including hosting them at local indoor ice arenas.

California

In Sacramento, the state's stay-at-home order has been in place for two weeks, but no new shelter beds have been created. As a result, individuals experiencing homelessness are resorting to living in [vacant homes](#). Sacramento police removed three homeless adults from a vacant home they resided in, citing them for trespass.

San Francisco is [reporting](#) its first case of COVID-19 at a homeless shelter. The individual is in isolation at a hotel room. The city is [encouraging](#) homeless residents to pitch tents for protection.

The City of Laguna Woods is “deeply concerned” with Orange County’s decision to place COVID-19 positive individuals inside a [hotel](#) in that city.

Illinois

Handwashing stations and lavatories are being [provided](#) to encampments in Chicago

Michigan

Detroit will be offering free COVID-19 [testing](#) at a Salvation Army facility with support from several area education and health organizations.

Minnesota

Service providers and officials in Minnesota are [working](#) to increase shelter room and procure hotel rooms for individuals experiencing homelessness. The Minnesota legislature recently approving \$26.5 million for homeless services.

Michigan

Detroit will be offering free COVID-19 [testing](#) at a Salvation Army facility with support from several area education and health organizations.

Missouri

An individual experiencing homelessness that tested positive for COVID-19 [walked out](#) of a St. Louis hospital and sparked an urgent search. St. Louis Human Services quickly reached out to all homeless shelters in the city, informing them of the situation. The man was later found and is staying in an area hotel room.

A homeless couple from Kansas City who experienced [difficulties](#) getting tested for COVID-19 illustrates the issues individuals experiencing homelessness are having in accessing testing and medical care.

New York

More than 99 people living in New York City’s homeless shelters have tested positive for COVID-19. The current situation is the result of years of [underfunding](#) by the state and city government.

The City of New York is posting notices to homeless encampments warning of them to vacate the premises or lose their belongings. The CDC directly advises against such “[street sweeps](#)” during the pandemic.

Nevada

After gaining nationwide notoriety for forcing homeless individuals to sleep in a cage-lined [parking lot](#), the City of Las Vegas and Clark County have now promised to have a temporary shelter facility up and running [within six days](#). The parking lot shelter was quickly closed after a shelter was successfully decontaminated.

Oregon

Portland’s and Multnomah County’s joint shelter system is putting together a series of assistance measures to deal with the pandemic that will likely cost \$3.5 million [a month](#).

Puerto Rico

200,000 COVID-19 test kits [ordered](#) by Puerto Rico are sitting in a U.S. mainland port awaiting FDA inspection. The tests were scheduled to arrive one week ago.

South Carolina

Nearly 60 individuals experiencing homelessness in Mecklenburg County are suspected of or [confirmed](#) to have COVID-19.

Texas

DHRC-member Texas Housers [called on](#) Texas Governor Greg Abbott (R) to take additional measures to ensure Texans keep their homes amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The governor recently unlocked \$11 million in tenant assistance.

Workers at the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless are wearing [bandannas](#) to protect against COVID-19

Virginia

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam (D) announced an initial \$2.5 million in emergency funding to [shelter](#) the state's homeless population.

Washington, DC

DC government is [working](#) to increase space in homeless shelters and provide hotel rooms for some unsheltered residents.

Policy and Guidance

Federal Guidance

CDC

The CDC has posted a [simple screening tool](#) that can be used at the entry of homeless shelters to identify people with symptoms of respiratory infection. If someone screens positive for symptoms, it is suggested they be directed to somewhere they can safely stay.

A Journal of Urban Health [study](#) titled "Homelessness and the Response to Emerging Infectious Disease Outbreaks: Lessons from SARS" highlights the need for an outbreak preparedness plan that accounts for unique issues related to those experiencing homelessness. The study identified lessons learned in the areas of communication, infection control, isolation and quarantine, and resource allocation.

Health and Human Services

The HHS [collection](#) of federal guidance, news, and responses to COVID-19 now includes a [memorandum](#) titled "Questions and answers about TANF and the COVID-19 pandemic". This tool addresses questions and summarizes the flexibilities in the TANF program to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Housing and Urban Development

HUD has updated it's [COVID-19 Multifamily Stakeholder Q&A Document](#).

Harm Reduction Coalition

The Harm Reduction Coalition created a [factsheet](#) to provide information about safer drug use during the COVID-19 Outbreak.

University of Washington – Northwest ADA Center

The Northwest ADA Center at UW released this [fact sheet](#) on ADA accessibility in drive-thru medical sites.

State Level Guidance

California

The State of California has published their recommended [protocol](#) and [strategic approaches](#) for COVID-19 response for individuals experiencing homelessness.

The San Francisco Street Sheet released [7 steps](#) they are urging the city to do to address the needs of homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless as a result of COVID-19. The steps aim to slow the spread of COVID-19 among unhoused populations.

The San Francisco Department of Public Health has provided interim guidance for medical providers caring for people who use drugs (PWUD) and need to be quarantined. The [guide](#) provides general recommendations as well as specific recommendations for various drug types.

Alameda County has released both COVID-19 [street outreach](#) and homeless [shelter health](#) guidance for the area. Vast resources for both are listed.

San José shared [steps](#) the city has taken to mitigate the impact COVID-19 could have on homeless individuals and families. The City is looking to expand temporary shelter capacity, increase the amount of hygiene equipment, and more.

Nevada County's [Homeless Plan](#) follows the guidance provided by the local, State and Federal government as pertains to COVID-19 and Homelessness. As that guidance changes and the situation evolve, the plan will be updated as resources allow.

New York

New York City has released [interim guidance](#) for homeless shelters in the area. The document aims to help shelters prevent the spread of COVID-19 and prepare for an outbreak if it were to occur.

North Carolina

North Carolina has released [interim guidance](#) for homeless shelters in the area. The document includes planning, prevention, and recommendations if coronavirus cases were to occur.

Texas

The Texas Health and Human Services publishes [updated communications](#) and media tools for spreading awareness about COVID-19 in Texas. Resources are available in both English and Spanish and are easily shareable.

Washington

Seattle's Downtown Emergency Service Center has successfully met the CDC guidelines for social distancing throughout their shelter programs while maintaining the same daily availability of 508 beds. They have shared their [preparation and action](#) strategies with the public.

Opportunity Starts at Home

NAACP Releases Resource Guide on Equity Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) published a new resource [guide](#) that explores the equity implications of the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic on marginalized communities. The guide outlines ten key considerations, such as heightened racism and stigmatization, particularly towards Asian Americans; unclear access to testing kits; and the fact that certain populations are more likely to be impacted by the virus, including the uninsured, communities of color, and people experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

In the guide's section on advocacy recommendations, the authors call for the elimination of homelessness and the enactment of policies to help low-income renters. The final section of the guide contains a host of promising emerging efforts, including how states and localities are halting evictions and foreclosures as part of their coronavirus responses.

“Because of the racial and economic inequities embedded in our country's systems, the effects of the coronavirus could be compounded for Black, Brown, Asian, and indigenous communities, as well as other population groups,” says the [NAACP website](#) about the guide. “The NAACP has released this resource to guide officials responsible for addressing health, economic, and other impacts, in remediating some of the issues that are disproportionately affecting communities of color.”

The [NAACP](#), a member of the *Opportunity Starts at Home* multisector affordable home campaign [Steering Committee](#), is the nation's oldest, largest, and most widely recognized civil rights organization.

Read the resource guide [here](#).

Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020

Join April 16 Our Homes, Our Votes 2020 Webinar on Educating Voters

Join NLIHC for a webinar on “**Educating Voters**” on April 16 at 3:00 p.m. ET. Register for this webinar and NLIHC's entire 15-month *Our Homes, Our Votes 2020* “[Third Thursdays at Three](#)” webinar and podcast series on nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement, free to the public, at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3t9gfr2>

Voter education is the second, vitally important step in a complete voter engagement campaign, as registered voters must also be informed voters. Educating voters on how to vote is critically important, as is providing logistics information on polling locations and dates. There are specific considerations for electronic voting machines and ID requirements, and this year especially, it is important to educate voters on absentee voting. Educating voters on their rights is also essential, and this session will delve into the use of provisional ballots and the availability of voter intimidation hotlines. Beyond logistics, voters often should be informed in a nonpartisan way on the positions of candidates related to key affordable housing issues. Assembling and distributing a voter guide can be challenging and legally tricky but highly effective. Presenters will explore best practices.

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 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 7: Getting Candidates on the Record, March 19 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- **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>

Research

TANF Cash Assistance Serves Just 22 Out of Every 100 Families in Poverty

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities released a [report assessing how well Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\) serves families in poverty](#). They find that the proportion of needy families assisted by TANF has decreased dramatically over time. Whereas its predecessor, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), served 82 out of every 100 families in poverty in 1979, TANF served just 22 families out of every 100 in 2018.

TANF provides cash assistance to families in poverty. Families may receive up to two years of consecutive assistance, which is conditioned on work requirements. TANF is funded as a block grant to states, who may set

their own eligibility standards, requirements, and benefit levels. Because the TANF block grant has not been increased since its inception in 1997, it has lost nearly 40% of its value due to inflation.

There is wide variation in how well each state program serves poor families. In California, 68% of the families in poverty are served by TANF; in Louisiana, just 4% of those families are served. In 2018, 16 states served fewer than 10% of the families in poverty. In 1996, no states served that small a proportion.

Between 2006 and 2018, the share of families served fell in most states, as the number of families in poverty increased and TANF became less accessible. The authors identify several policy changes that have severely restricted access to TANF in recent years. In Arizona, where TANF assisted 27% of families in poverty in 2006 and 6% in 2018, policymakers cut benefits, shortened time limits, and imposed other eligibility restrictions. Indiana, which assisted 35% of families in poverty in 2006 and 6% in 2018, added job-search requirements and increased sanction penalties that reduce or eliminate benefits when families fail to meet work requirements.

Black children are more likely than white children to live in states where TANF serves fewer families in poverty. Almost 41% of Black children live in states that serve 10% or fewer of families in poverty, compared to 30% of white children. Black families are also more likely to live in states with the lowest benefit levels and greater state sanction policies.

The authors recommend raising income thresholds; removing asset tests, time limits, and other hurdles; and increasing the TANF block grant to account for its decline in value.

The report can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/3bJQWIY>

Study Finds Housing Market Discrimination Contributes to Racial Disparities in Exposure to Pollutants

A working paper published by the National Bureau of Economic Research, “[Housing Discrimination and Pollution Exposures in the United States](#),” finds evidence that discrimination in the housing market contributes to racial disparities in exposure to harmful pollutants. The authors find that minority renters with racialized names are less likely to hear back from rental properties in areas with low pollution exposure than are renters with white-sounding names. For properties in areas with high pollution, there is no significant difference in response rates by race. They also found evidence that response rates are influenced by gender and racial demographics already present in the area.

To test the impact of housing market discrimination on pollution exposure, the authors first identified all ZIP codes that surrounded a major source of pollution identified in the EPA’s Toxic Release Inventory. Of all ZIP codes that met this criterion, 19 were randomly selected for the study, and 2,918 listings from those ZIP codes were drawn. The listings were derived from one major online rental housing search platform. Using the results derived from EPA’s Risk-Screening Environmental Indicators model to determine ambient concentrations of pollutants, the listings were assigned low-, medium-, or high-exposure.

Utilizing prior literature on racial associations with certain names, the authors selected 18 first-last name pairs to create identities for the study. Six of the names had a high probability of association with African Americans, six were commonly identified as Hispanic/Latinx, and six were commonly identified as white. They created nine male and nine female names.

The authors then reached out to the individual listings using a randomly selected identity in each of the three racial groups. They coded any responses given by two criteria – whether a response was received within seven days of the inquiry, and whether the respondent indicated that the property was still available for rent. They also

tested response rates to follow-up inquiries. The response rates for Black and Hispanic identities were compared relative to the rates for white identities to evaluate the presence of choice constraints in housing location for minority renters.

In total, renters with African American or Hispanic/Latinx names were 41% less likely to receive responses in low-pollution areas. Comparatively, there was no evidence of racial constraints in areas of high exposure to emissions. There were also gaps in relative response rates for Black and Hispanic identities. Black identities, with a relative response rate of 45%, were 55% less likely than white identities to receive a response in low-exposure areas. Hispanic/Latinx identities had better chances, with a relative response rate of 78%. Gender also had a significant impact on response rates. Compared to a 46% relative response rate for minority male identities, minority female identities had a relative response rate of 79%. The most severe discriminatory constraints were for Black males, who had a 28% relative response rate for low-exposure locations. When they conducted follow-up inquiries, the authors found stronger discriminatory responses—the relative response rates to African American and Hispanic/Latinx names were even lower.

Additionally, existing demographics informed response rates. The authors analyzed American Community Survey data and found that the strongest constraints on housing choice existed in the low-exposure locations that also had a low percentage of minority households present. The average relative response rate for these locations was 40%, compared to 72% for low-exposure areas with an above-median proportion of minority households. Rental prices were also found to be \$278 more on average for low-exposure locations than for high-exposure locations.

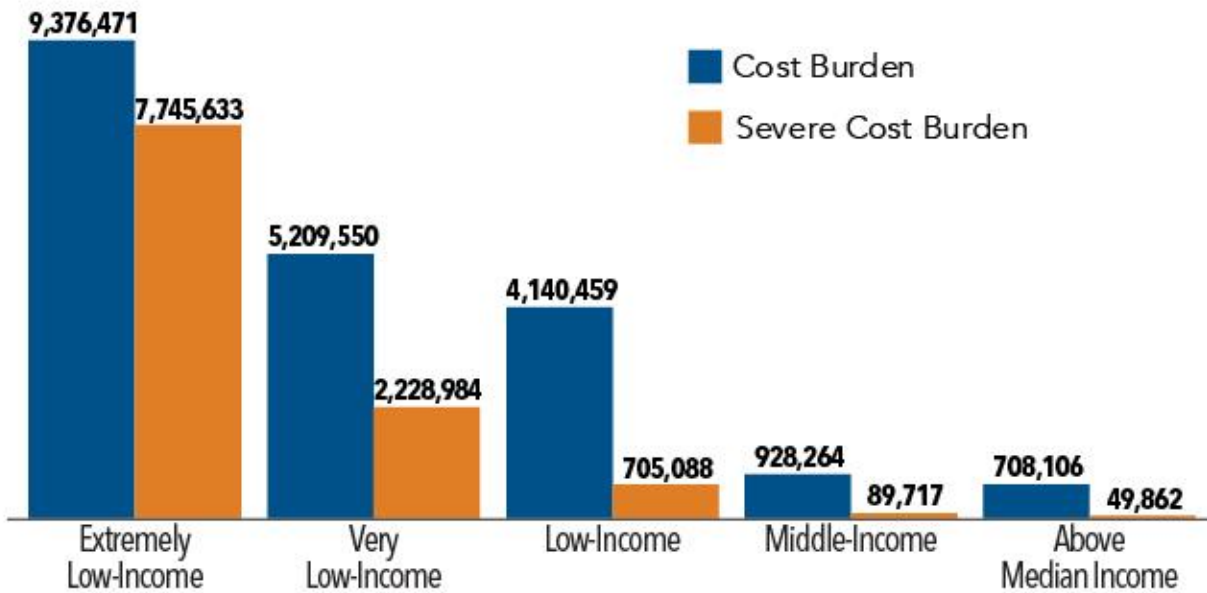
The paper can be read at: <https://bit.ly/343a5Tk>

Fact of the Week

Over 7.7 Million Lowest-Income Households are Severely Housing Cost-Burdened, Spending More Than Half of Their Incomes on Housing

THE GAP

RENTER HOUSEHOLDS WITH COST BURDEN BY INCOME GROUP, 2018



AMI = Area Median Income.
Source: NLIHC tabulations of 2018 ACS PUMS data.
©2020 National Low Income Housing Coalition

<https://nlihc.org/gap>



Source: NLIHC’s *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*; NLIHC tabulations of 2018 ACS PUMS data.

Census

The 2020 Census and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Communities

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities have historically been undercounted in previous U.S. Census counts. Today, roughly one in five Asian Americans live in hard-to-count census tracts, as do one in three Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (NHPIs). Furthermore, because the Asian American and NHPI communities are very diverse, overall statistics can easily mask the characteristics and challenges facing subgroups. A complete count of these communities in the 2020 census is extremely important.

[National CAPACD](#), a coalition of local community development organizations that advocate for and organize in low-income Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities and neighborhoods, informs (AANHPI) communities that, due to social distancing required by the coronavirus pandemic, individuals are strongly encouraged to respond to the 2020 Census [online](#) or by mail.

National CAPACD recently shared ways people can take action to inform their respective communities about the 2020 census:

People can register for a webinar, "Count Us In: Engaging AAPIs in the 2020 Census," on Wednesday April 8 at 2:00 p.m. ET. Speakers will discuss what the census means for AAPI communities and suggest steps for educating these communities. Panelists will also discuss strategies they are using locally and will provide the most up-to-date information on how COVID-19 is impacting get-out-the-count (GOTC) efforts. Register for the webinar at: <https://bit.ly/2USL9dg>

Speakers will be:

- Jenny Aramony, [U.S. Census Bureau](#)
- Quyen Dinh, [Southeast Asia Resource Action Center](#)
- Mar Hirschfield, [Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon](#)
- Tavae Samuelu, [Empowering Pacific Islander Communities](#)
- Rosalyn Epstein, National CAPACD (*moderator*)

Although the "official" Census Day was April 1, the opportunity to be counted in the census goes well beyond that date. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Census Bureau has extended the self-response phase from July 31 to August 14, so it is not too late to educate AAPI communities about completing the census. People are encouraged to check out the "[I got counted](#)" social media toolkits for in-language proverbs, AAPI-specific images, and messaging to share on social media. For more ideas on how to share census messaging digitally, check out the [digital organizing toolkit](#) developed by the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance. Advocates are urged to use the hashtag #AAPI2020 to uplift their communities' collective voice.

National CAPACD has culturally specific materials at: <https://bit.ly/3bKeux8>, including:

- Information about the 2020 census in eight NHPI languages provided by [Empowering Pacific Islander Communities \(EPIC\)](#) and *Asian Americans Advancing Justice* at: <https://www.countusin2020.org/nhpi>
- Information about Southeast Asian American (SEAA) communities at: <https://seaascount2020.squarespace.com>
- Information from the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance at: <https://www.apalanet.org/census.html>
- Information from Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote at: <https://bit.ly/3aHbuBS>

"[Count Us In 2020](#)" has a resources page at: <https://www.countusin2020.org/resources>, including:

- "[How the 2020 Census Affects Your Community](#)," which informs people in the AANHPI community that they can call a census hotline at 844-2020-API for support in English and other languages. People can go to www.CountUsIn2020.org/hotline for more information.
- Translated Get-Out-the-Count Factsheets in many languages.
- A "[Census 2020 Get-Out-the-Count Toolkit](#)" that has a tips for community engagement and communications.
- A wide variety of factsheets.

In addition [Census Counts](#), a collaborative campaign coordinated by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, has an extensive 2020 Census resource library targeted to AANHPI communities at: <https://censuscounts.org/resources/library>. Some items include:

- "[Will You Count? Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders \(NHPIs\) In The 2020 Census](#)," a detailed fact sheet.
- "[AAPI 2020: Count Us In 2020 Resource](#)," a nine-page toolkit.

- [“Factsheet on Why the Census Matters for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Communities”](#)

Other U.S. Census Bureau changes in response to the coronavirus pandemic (see *Memo*, [3/23](#)) include:

- The start of the non-response follow up and re-interview is delayed, now starting on May 28 and going to August 14. This operation involves census takers interviewing households in person who have not responded online, by phone, or by mail.
- Service-Based Enumeration is delayed, now starting on April 29 and going to May 1. This census operation involves counting people who are experiencing homelessness by reaching out to service providers such as shelters, soup kitchens, regularly scheduled mobile food vans, and targeted outdoor locations (see *Memo*, [3/9](#)).
- Census takers also count people experiencing homelessness living under bridges, in parks, in all-night businesses, etc. This operation is delayed until May 1.
- Census takers count people living in transitory locations such as hotels, motels, RV parks, and campgrounds (see *Memo*, [3/9](#)). This operation is delayed to April 23 through May 18.

From the Field

Indiana Governor Vetoes Controversial Landlord-Tenant Bill

Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb (R) vetoed a landlord-tenant bill on March 25 that would have diminished protections for more than two million Hoosier renters. This marks only the second time that the governor has vetoed a bill passed by the Republican supermajority. The “Senate Enrolled Act” (SEA) 148 would have prohibited local governments from regulating landlord-tenant relationships, expanded instances for emergency possession, and limited tenant protections from landlord retaliation. Housing advocates in the state, led by [Prosperity Indiana](#), an NLIHC state partner, engaged in coordinated efforts to oppose this bill.

SEA 148 would have substantially changed existing landlord-tenant law to weaken state protections for renters, who comprise more than 30% of the state’s population. The bill would have nullified positive tenant protections from cities and other local governments, such as an anti-retaliation ordinance and a policy requiring landlords to notify tenants of their rights and responsibilities recently passed in Indianapolis. The Indiana Apartment Association, a powerful interest group representing landlords across Indiana, supported SEA 148, arguing that different housing policies across cities contributes to high administrative costs and rents.

In his veto letter, Governor Holcomb critiqued the bill’s language as overly broad by preempting local governments from regulating any aspect of the landlord-tenant relationship. The governor also stated that this is an inappropriate time to pass a bill that could leave renters vulnerable given the threat of coronavirus, noting the [executive order](#) he signed on March 19 to temporarily halt evictions and foreclosures during the state of emergency.

Opponents of SEA 148 called attention to the devastating impact the bill would have on the state’s affordable housing and eviction crisis, particularly given the threat of coronavirus. Some opponents also critiqued the process that led to the section of the bill that would impact tenants because the bill was filed as a last-minute amendment to an unrelated bill, Senate Bill 340, and the General Assembly offered no opportunity for formal input or public deliberation.

A diverse coalition of advocates, including affordable housing developers, medical and legal assistance providers, organizations serving marginalized populations, and religious groups, participated in efforts to

oppose the harmful bill. More than 300 organizations and individuals signed a letter to the Indiana General Assembly opposing the legislation. Prosperity Indiana coordinated a veto campaign, which included sending a [letter](#) to Governor Holcomb signed by 60 organizations, after the legislature passed the bill.

The state legislature can override Governor Holcomb's veto with a majority vote, but housing advocates are prepared to continue advocating for Indiana tenants.

“We applaud Governor Holcomb for his leadership in stopping this sweeping bill during what became an unusually difficult season for our state, said Jessica Love, executive director of Prosperity Indiana. “We anticipate and look forward to working with impacted parties - those in support of and opposed to SEA 148 - next session. After we survive this pandemic, I think we'll all have a greater appreciation for safe and stable housing.”

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of March 29

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of March 29:

- “The Homeless Need Houses, Now More Than Ever,” *The Nation*, April 2 at: <https://tinyurl.com/w8myobs>
- “‘Shelter in place’ is impossible if you can’t afford a home,” *Vox*, April 1 at: <https://tinyurl.com/wzsrxxl>
- “Elizabeth Warren Wants \$15.5 Billion To Help Homeless During Coronavirus Outbreak,” *The Huffington Post*, April 1 at: <https://tinyurl.com/w7hy2hz>
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