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NLIHC 2019 Housing Policy Forum

Hundreds Convene to Seize the Moment for Bold Affordable Housing Solutions in Washington, DC, March 27-29

Nearly 500 affordable housing advocates and providers, resident leaders, researchers, and policy makers from around the country attended the NLIHC 2018 Housing Policy Forum: *Seizing the Movement for Bold Solutions*, which took place in Washington, DC, March 27-29. A broad cross-section of NLIHC members and partners engaged with policy makers, experts, and one another; participated in more than a dozen sessions and workshops; and met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill to urge them to take bold action to address homelessness and housing poverty in America. Senators Kamala Harris (D-CA) and Todd Young (R-IN) provided two of the keynote addresses during the Forum.



Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA)



Sen. Todd Young (R-IN)

The Policy Form began with a **Special Session for Resident Leaders** from across the country to discuss the steps the current administration has taken to reposition HUD—specifically public housing. Former HUD Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing Sandra B. Henriquez and NLIHC Senior Advisor Ed Gramlich discussed what was on the horizon for public housing and why residents need to be involved in the conversation. National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT) President Geraldine Collins and NAHT Vice President Charlotte Rodgers discussed how tenants in privately-owned, HUD multifamily housing as well as public housing tenants facing Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) conversions can work to secure affordability, repairs and improved management. Pamela Phillips, a resident leader of Marble Hill Houses in New York City and founder of *Changing the Narrative*, shared creative ideas on how residents can inform and educate advocates, policy makers, and other stakeholders about the benefits of affordable housing. The session wrapped with resident leaders joining NLIHC state partners for a screening of [*Owned: A Tale of Two Americas*](#)—a new documentary on the history of racial discrimination in housing in America. National Fair Housing Alliance President and CEO Lisa Rice led a discussion with the film’s director, Giorgio Angelini.

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel kicked off the broader Forum with an address about “seizing the moment for bold solutions to the housing crisis.” While threats and challenges abound – the erosion of the social safety net, more frequent and severe disasters, the increase in homelessness in many areas, the crumbling public housing infrastructure – she said, “I’ve never felt so hopeful and so certain we will achieve big, positive change - because, in fact, we already are.” She cited the 10% increase to HUD’s budget in FY18 and FY19; the 50,000 new housing vouchers for low-income people with disabilities, veterans and youth experiencing homelessness; the protection of funding to the national Housing Trust Fund; new legislation to renew the Protecting Tenants in Foreclosure Act and to expand and permanently authorize the Family Self Sufficiency program; proposed legislation to ensure more equitable disaster housing recovery; new funding for a voucher mobility program; and the defeat of the Administration’s proposed rent hikes on low-income families. “All told,

our work together over the last year means new housing for nearly 100,000 deeply poor renters . . . and 5 million low-income families won't be subject to cruel rent hikes," she said.



Diane Yentel

Diane lauded local advocates for achieving unprecedented affordable housing wins in their own states and communities – in New Jersey, Florida, Maine, Ohio, New York, California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, Texas and “others too many to name.” She spoke about how NLIHC and our partner are raising the issue of race and racial inequities in new and important ways. And she spoke about the growing *Opportunity Starts at Home* multi-sector affordable housing movement and “powerful new partners” calling for federal action to ensure families have affordable homes.

All of these efforts and more are “changing the narrative and building the political will,” she said. She cited a major increase in media coverage over the last two years, how a new public opinion poll shows overwhelming support for federal action on affordable housing, how members of Congress are responding with remarkably bold new legislative proposals, and how presidential candidates are addressing the housing affordability issue in their campaigns as never before (showing a [video clip](#) of examples). “It’s an extraordinary moment, one filled with tremendous challenge and exhilarating possibility,” she concluded. “With your continued partnership, advocacy and organizing, big change is within reach. We’ll seize it together. . . . We *will* end homelessness and housing poverty!” Read Diane’s remarks in their entirety here: <https://bit.ly/2YQJcz4>

After a presentation by Senator Todd Young (R-IN) (see separate article in this *Memo to Members and Partners*), the first plenary panel of the Forum featured an in-depth discussion on **Achieving Racial Equity in Housing Policy**. NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel moderated the conversation with Marc Dones from the National Innovations Service, Amanda Misiko Andere from Funders Together to End Homelessness, Christina Rosales from Texas Housers, and Don Chen from the Surdna Foundation. The panelists all emphasized that addressing racial inequality is essential to achieving housing justice. “We want to end housing poverty and homelessness. This won’t happen unless we center racial equity,” said Ms. Andere. She said racial equity can only be achieved by consciously disrupting the power dynamics and systems that hold people of color back. Marc Dones noted that people of color are at a much higher risk of facing homelessness than whites even when they have higher incomes because their networks are less likely to be able provide financial support during crises. Ms. Rosales shared stories of her work in Latino communities along the Texas border and emphasized the need to use a racial equity lens when allocating disaster housing recovery dollars. Mr. Chen said that focusing explicitly on race and the racial-equity implications of grant awards as a funder has been transformative for his and the Surdna Foundation’s work. The panelists emphasized that voices of people of color who are directly impacted by policies must be included and centered in every step of the policy-formulation and implementation process and that everyone in the room must “get comfortable with uncomfortable conversations” about racial inequities and power dynamics to achieve real, systemic change.

In a workshop titled **Revitalizing Neighborhoods and Preventing Displacement**, attendees learned about and discussed local strategies to conduct “development without displacement” strategies that expand the supply of available rental housing without driving out long-term residents. Panelists were Randy Shaw, co-founder and executive director of the Tenderloin Housing Clinic and author of *Generation Priced Out: Who Gets to Live in the New Urban America*, and Council Member Gregorio Casar of the Austin City Council. Mr. Shaw elaborated on many of the organizing successes featured in his book, emphasizing the importance of advocates confronting NIMBY homeowner associations that stand in the way of affordable housing development and urging attendees to consider the importance of rent-control policies to protect residents from rapid rent-price gouging. Council Member Casar detailed the ways Austin’s policies prevented the development of rental housing, like antiquated zoning codes that require excessive parking space, restrict building heights, and limit the numbers of unrelated roommates. The discussion among participants and panelists was lively, with attendees exploring various options for zoning reforms and development policies to take back to their communities.

In another workshop, **National Housing Trust Fund [HTF]: Getting Started Building Homes**, NLHIC Senior Advisor Ed Gramlich provided a review of NLIHC’s [Getting Started](#) report and a recent [supplement](#) on how states used their inaugural 2016 HTF allocations. With just \$174 million available for 2016, 1,918 HTF rental homes for extremely low-income residents are either completed or in the pipeline, most targeting homeless people, people with disabilities, elderly people, and veterans. Leonard Robbins from the Urban League of Essex County, NJ, discussed an HTF acquisition and rehab project in Newark that will have units exclusively serving people re-entering the community from incarceration, with the Urban League and others providing supportive services. Holly Glauser from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency described her agency’s combination of HTF dollars with housing tax credits and the agency’s goal to have 50% of the projects located in rural or suburban communities. Ms. Glauser noted there were 35 requests for Pennsylvania’s 2017 HTF allocation but funding sufficient for only six projects. Virginia Sardone from HUD provided an overview of the results of a HUD survey of state housing finance agencies (HFAs) citing a need for a dedicated stream of rental assistance for HTF homes and concerns about the 30-year affordability requirement. Ms. Sardone acknowledged that HUD’s interim rule defining “operating cost assistance” was too narrow and that the agency would seek input on how to best modify that definition when finalizing the HTF rule in the future.

In a workshop titled **Organizing Wins: Our Homes, Our Voices Housing Week of Action**, attendees learned about the goals and messaging components of the Housing Week of Action from NLIHC staff and heard from advocates about the events they organized in 2018. Brenda Clement from Housing Works Rhode Island spoke about the event she organized with two other organizations to honor U.S. Senator Jack Reed for his leadership on the creation of the national Housing Trust Fund. Andreanecia Morris from Housing NOLA described a Week of Action mock debate she moderated between two historical leaders of New Orleans. The take-away: marginalized communities have been dealing with oppression for decades, and future generations should apply past leaders’ insights and wisdom to current problems, like the affordable housing crisis. Mindy Woods, an organizer with the Resident Action Project in Washington who had experienced homelessness herself, described a resource table she set up at the local library during the Week of Action to share resources available to people experiencing homelessness. All three presenters emphasized that the Week of Action events were just part of the many advocacy efforts their organizations conducted throughout the year, and that consistent engagement is key to effective advocacy. Workshop participants asked for and received feedback on ideas they had for the Week of Action, strategies to garner media coverage, and ways to engage people with lived experiences.

Another workshop offered three times during the Forum featured **Undesign the Redline**, developed and presented by Designing the WE. This exhibit and facilitated exploration of it invited participants to learn the history, effects, and possibilities for “undesigning” redlining in America. It explored how racism in the U.S. became structural through redlining, where redlining fit in a history of devaluing and disenfranchisement, and how it was combatted by people with another vision for society. The session provided an exploration of alternative models, policies, practices, and entities that could “undesign” this legacy. The session was facilitated by Designing the WE co-founder Braden Cooks.

The first day of the Forum concluded with a networking reception and address by Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) (see separate article in this *Memo to Members and Partners*).

Day two of the Forum started with a series of workshops, one of which was on **New Research on Housing for Extremely Vulnerable Populations** featuring a panel of researchers who discussed the living arrangements of individuals and families who cannot find affordable and accessible housing in their communities. Sheila Crowley, former NLIHC president and CEO and a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, talked about families living in motels who are not technically homeless according to HUD despite not having a permanent home. Kevin Martone, executive director of the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC), discussed the challenges faced by people with disabilities living in institutional settings because of the lack of affordable and accessible housing. Cindy Quezada, director of research and special projects at the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative, discussed unconventional housing like converted garages. Families living in unconventional housing are not counted by the U.S. Census, which means distribution of federal funds to local communities do not account for their needs.

The workshop **Creative Ways to Get your Story Out** featured Molly Parker, reporter for *The Southern Illinoisan*; Celeste Wesson, radio editor, producer, reporter, and podcaster; and Angela Tucker, producer, writer, and director. These experts from various media spoke to a full room of advocates about how to keep the affordable housing message top-of-mind in the media, how to effectively use storytelling, and why visuals are so important when sharing the story of others. The audience asked questions on how to leverage the new media attention on affordable housing and how to pitch and produce new stories to different outlets. “Check out the reporter’s background to confirm [he or she] is still on the same beat and has complementary interests,” Ms. Parker suggested. “Do not neglect local papers or reporters. And research and pitch ‘people’ stories as those are what will resonate with reporters.” Ms. Tucker added, “It’s important to develop collaborations and feel comfortable about the team you’re working with to tell the story.” Ms. Wesson suggested advocates incorporate solutions to give the story positivity and hope. The panelists agreed that when telling a story about a community, it is important to connect with a variety of community members and bring into the story different perspectives—e.g., residents, organizers, landlords, and even public officials.

In a workshop titled **Federal Fixes for Equitable Disaster Recovery**, Chrishelle Palay, director of the Houston HOME Coalition and NLIHC board member, moderated a panel featuring Adi Martinez from the Fondo de Acceso a la Justicia in Puerto Rico, Ilene Jacobs from California Rural Legal Assistance, and Trey Reffett from the Office of U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI). The panel discussed some of the obstacles low-income communities face following a disaster and the need for increased investments in affordable housing to prevent displacement. Ms. Martinez explained how the colonial history of Puerto Rico has impacted disaster recovery following Hurricane Maria and noted that the current administration acts as though Puerto Rico is out to steal from the federal government. Ms. Jacobs agreed, adding that FEMA seems to operate under the assumption that disaster survivors are lying. She stressed the need to learn from previous disasters and to stop repeating preventable mistakes. Mr. Reffett observed that the mission conflict between HUD and FEMA and the lack of coordination between federal agencies allows more vulnerable people and those with additional needs to fall through the cracks of the current recovery system. He and the other panelists offered several solutions, including increasing the number of HUD staff dedicated to disaster housing recovery and codifying the Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery program.

In a plenary session titled **Capitol Hill Insiders Panel**, four experienced Capitol Hill staffers shared their perspectives and predictions on federal affordable housing policy and on opportunities to increase investments in the coming year through the appropriations process, housing finance reform, or an infrastructure package. Joe Carlile, who works for Chairman David Price (D-NC) on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD), spoke passionately about the need for Congress to reach a bipartisan agreement to lift the low spending caps that would make it much more difficult to fund housing programs at the levels necessary. Jason Woolwine, who has long worked with Chairwoman Susan

Collins (R-ME) on the Senate Appropriations THUD Subcommittee, said there remains a high level of uncertainty about when Congress would reach such an agreement and whether any agreement would provide sufficient funding for housing programs. Beth Cooper, who works on the Senate Banking Committee for Ranking Member Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and Esther Kahng with House Financial Services Committee Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), spoke about opportunities to increase investments in the national Housing Trust Fund and Capital Magnet Fund through housing finance reform.



Dr. Matthew Desmond

Dr. Matthew Desmond, author of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, gave a keynote address about his work at the Eviction Lab at Princeton University studying the prevalence and causes of evictions. He focused on three major findings. First, on average, about half of families who face eviction are behind only one or two rent payments – people are being evicted for owing very small amounts of money. While the rates differ depending on location, the nationwide trend demonstrates the need to expand emergency assistance that would help families dealing with financial setbacks stay in their homes. Second, Dr. Desmond said, there are jurisdictions with a preponderance of serial evictions – the same renters being repeatedly evicted – due to policies like low eviction filing fees for landlords, varying attorney requirements, and overly strict regulations on late fees. Third, Desmond said, despite lower property values, rents in low-income communities remain disproportionately high. Even after considering variable costs and appreciation values, the median profit for property owners in low-income communities is still higher than those in higher-income communities. He noted that this trend did not hold true for major cities with hot housing markets, but generally low-income communities pay more for their housing.

After Dr. Desmond’s presentation, the Forum featured two sessions titled ***Opportunity Starts at Home: New National Public-Opinion Poll Results*** and ***Presentation of 2019 Organizing Awards and Discussion with Honorees***. (See separate articles on each of these in this *Memo to Members and Partners*.)

During a workshop on the **Future of Public Housing** moderated by Shauna Sorrells, Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County and NLIHC board member, panel members and the audience had a lively discussion on how we can best preserve public housing through current law and new solutions while protecting the rights of residents to live in safe, decent housing. New York City Housing Authority resident Charlene Nimmons discussed the importance of public housing residents leading advocacy for policy solutions to maintain and preserve their homes. She also said existing laws and regulations must be enforced, including HUD’s Section 3 rule that requires public housing agencies, to the greatest extent possible, hire local residents and contract with local contractors and businesses. Molly Parker, a journalist with the *Southern Illinoisan*, talked about her reporting on the desperate living conditions at the Alexander Housing Authority in Cairo, IL. Deborah Thrope of the National Housing Law Project talked about how the Rental Assistance Demonstration

(RAD) was created to preserve public housing and protect residents but noted that those protections have not been adequately enforced in some communities. NLIHC’s Elayne Weiss discussed how Congress has repeatedly failed to provide adequate funding for public housing, and the Trump Administration proposes to eliminate public housing capital funding altogether while “repositioning” 105,000 public housing units through RAD, demolition and disposition, and conversion of units to vouchers by the end of September. Ms. Weiss also touched upon draft legislation to better preserve public housing.

To open a workshop on **Elevating Rural and Native Housing Issues**, Lance George from the Housing Assistance Council discussed the housing realities in rural America, including a lack of affordability, higher rates of substandard housing, out-migration, and prevalence of manufactured housing. Tony Walters from the National American Indian Housing Council provided an overview of issues related to tribal housing and the need for additional funding for the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG), the main housing resource for tribal areas. Mr. Walters explained that the IHBG was created in 1996 as a way to provide tribal governments with greater flexibility, but because funding has not kept pace with inflation, Native communities lack the necessary resources to address their critical housing needs. He urged advocates to include IHBG in appropriations requests and work to ensure state governments allow tribes to access other resources. Rob Wiener of the California Coalition for Rural Housing discussed how his organization and others have worked to increase resources for both rural and tribal areas in the state. Mr. Wiener also highlighted a number of successes achieved in California, including opening up state programs to Native nations and securing rural-specific funding.

The final workshop of the Forum was titled **Our Homes, Our Votes Nonpartisan Voter/Candidate Engagement**. The panelists were all housing providers who shared how owners and operators of affordable rental housing can engage their residents in voting as a key part of empowerment. Dr. Karen Dubois-Walton from Elm City Communities, the New Haven (CT) housing authority, spoke about how public housing agencies could engage their residents to ensure they are registered and informed voters. She spoke about efforts in Connecticut to automatically register public housing residents to vote as part of the housing approval and lease-up process. Halley Henry from the National Housing Trust & NHT Communities spoke about the perspective of a non-profit housing provider, sharing that voter engagement was just one piece in her organization’s holistic approach to resident engagement and empowerment. She discussed the legal considerations for 501(c)(3) organizations engaging in elections and how to preserve one’s nonprofit status while conducting voter engagement with residents. Andrew Foley from Jonathan Rose Companies described voter engagement from perspective of a for-profit housing provider. He emphasized the importance of partnering with other organizations and ways to address any potential tensions or confusion with landlords. Mr. Foley shared details about Jonathan Rose Companies’ relationship with local League of Women Voters chapters to help with voter registration, and he discussed efforts to work with Lyft to coordinate rides to the polls for renters in remote or rural areas. NLIHC’s Joey Lindstrom provided an overview of voter engagement tools and resources available through NLIHC’s website [ourhomes-ourvotes.org](https://www.nlihcforum.org) and urged all housing organizations to be more involved in civic engagement.

The Forum concluded with a **Capitol Hill Day** on March 29 during which advocates from around the country conducted more than 150 meetings with their congressional delegations about the need for bold solutions to the nation’s affordable housing crisis. (See separate article in this *Memo to Members and Partners*.)

Visit <https://www.nlihcforum.org/> for videos and photos from the Forum.

Senator Young Tells Forum Attendees Affordable Homes are Key to a “Fair Shot to Succeed”

Senator Todd Young (R-IN) provided a keynote address at NLIHC's Policy Forum on March 27, explaining to attendees why tackling the affordable housing crisis has become one of his top priorities as a policymaker. Because having an affordable home is essential to ensuring that all families have access to "a fair shot to succeed," Senator Young said, he has made housing policy central to his "Fair Shot Agenda." He spoke about two bipartisan housing bills he has introduced, the "Housing Choice Mobility Demonstration Act" to help voucher holders live in areas of opportunity and legislation to create a housing affordability task force to study the cross-sectoral impacts of the housing crisis and to propose solutions, both bills NLIHC supports. Senator Young noted other areas of housing policy that deserve more attention, including security deposits, restrictive land-use and zoning regulations at the local level, and federal disaster housing response. He concluded his remarks by encouraging the audience to continue to advocate for affordable housing with their members of Congress.



Senator Harris Calls Housing a "Fundamental Human Right" at Forum

Recently announced presidential candidate Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) gave an address to nearly 500 NLIHC Housing Policy Forum attendees during a reception on Wednesday, March 27. "I believe the right to housing should be a fundamental right, a human right, a civil right," she said to enthusiastic applause. Senator Harris highlighted her work on the California Homeowner Bill of Rights during her tenure as the California attorney general. She cited how too many Americans are a \$400 expense from "complete upheaval" and that that millions of Americans fall victim to predatory payday loans to pay for their housing. Senator Harris talked about the "Rent Relief Act" she introduced in the Senate in 2018 and will reintroduce this week, which aims to reduce rent burdens on low-income renters by creating a refundable tax credit for those paying more than 30% of their incomes on their rent and utilities - so they can afford other basic needs like food, healthcare, education, and child care. Senator Harris closed her address by thanking the forum attendees for their affordable housing advocacy: "Thank you, thank you, thank you."



NLIHC Honors Advocates from Sacramento and Houston with 2019 Organizing Awards

The winners of the 2019 Organizing Awards were honored on March 28 at NLIHC's Housing Policy Forum: *Seizing the Moment for Bold Solutions*. Mutual Housing California (Sacramento, CA) received the State and Local Organizing Award for taking on a year-long voter-participation effort with its residents as part of a larger movement to secure more local and statewide funding for affordable housing through 2018 ballot measures. Their efforts resulted in a 14% increase in low-income resident voter registration and the participation of over 100 of its residents in leadership training. Texas Housers (Houston, TX) received the Resident Organizing Award for an initiative called "12 Moms." The effort began in 2018 with a goal of recruiting and working with 12 women with children living in HUD-subsidized homes to elevate their voices around the poor conditions of those homes. Over the course of the year, 12 Moms greatly exceeded its goal by organizing 120 tenant leaders who mobilized to improve the quality of their HUD-subsidized homes and properties.

Representatives from the two organizations were present to receive the awards recognizing outstanding achievements in state, local and resident organizing that advances NLIHC's mission to ensure people with the

lowest incomes in the U.S. have access to decent, affordable homes. After receiving the awards, Alexandra Alvarado and Verna Ekpедuma from Mutual Housing California and Ericka Bowman and Daija Jackson from Texas Housers sat down for a conversation with Chrishelle Palay, HOME Coalition director and NLIHC board member. The representatives from each organization were asked about their success, challenges, and takeaways related to building and implementing each campaign.



L to R: Chrishelle Palay, Ericka Bowman, Daija Jackson, Verna Ekpедuma, Alexandra Alvarado

“You are more powerful than you think you are. You don’t have to live in terrible conditions. You can organize,” said Daija Jackson, 12 Moms Tenant Leader at Texas Housers. “You go into it [organizing] and become a friend,” said Ericka Bowman, community organizer at Texas Housers. “You saw properties passing inspections but . . . still in horrible condition. But when we spotlighted the horrible living conditions, HUD actually did something to improve them. The tenants now saw the power in their voices.”



Verna Ekpедuma and Alexandra Alvarado

“I feel acknowledged and respected as resident leader, and I felt incredibly inspired by the other winners to keep fighting to be heard and make change,” said Verna Ekpедuma, a Mutual Housing at Norwood resident member. “This award has energized us,” said Alexandra Alvarado, a Mutual Housing California community organizer. “Being here in DC with such a strong community advocate in Verna, to represent all my fellow organizers, is an honor.”

Representatives from Mutual Housing California and Texas Housers also wrote blog articles about their initiatives. Check out their stories, as well as blogs from other Organizing Award winners and nominees, at: <https://hfront.org/>

Read NLIHC's press release on the Organizing Awards at: <https://bit.ly/2UDaqd8>

Congress Hears from Affordable Housing Advocates from Across the Country

More than 100 affordable housing and homelessness advocates attended NLIHC's **Capitol Hill Day** on March 29 to close out NLIHC's 2019 Policy Forum: *Seizing the Moment for Bold Solutions*. The advocates visited more than 150 House and Senate offices, armed with [NLIHC data on every state and congressional district in the country](#) and copies of NLIHC publications, including the recently released [The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes](#) report.

The core messages shared with congressional delegations were the need to include housing investments in any infrastructure package, to expand the national Housing Trust Fund through housing finance reform to at least \$3.5 billion annually, to lift the low Budget Control Act spending caps on defense and domestic programs, and to fund HUD and USDA affordable housing programs at the highest levels possible. Advocates also discussed some of the bold housing bills introduced in the new Congress and others forthcoming, such as the "American Housing and Economic Mobility Act," the "Rent Relief Act," the "Housing, Opportunity, Mobility, and Equity (HOME) Act," the "Ending Homelessness Act," the "Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act," and others.

Capitol Hill Day advocates shared their experiences of disinvestment in their communities and spoke about the need to increase the supply of affordable rental homes in their respective states and communities. People with lived experiences discussed their concerns with their current living situations and the importance of having the ability to organize for quality, safety, and ongoing affordability in their housing.

NLIHC 2019 Housing Leadership Awards Reception

NLIHC Honors Three Individuals with the 2019 Housing Leadership Awards

NLIHC and a crowd of approximately 300 honored Representative Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO), Dr. Mitchell Katz, and Emma "Pinky" Clifford with the 2019 Housing Leadership Awards at a presentation and reception in Washington, DC, on March 28.

NLIHC Board Chair Marla Newman emceed the presentation of the awards and thanked the many sponsors of the event, especially the host-sponsor Wells Fargo Foundation, represented by Connie Wright, who commended NLIHC for its work and congratulated the honorees.

Ms. Newman presented the Edward Brooke Housing Leadership Award to **Representative Emanuel Cleaver**. (A short video described each award and honoree.) The Brooke Award is named for the late senator from Massachusetts who championed low-income housing as a U.S. senator and as chairman of the NLIHC Board of Directors after he left the Senate. The Brooke award goes to an exemplary housing leader with a record of fighting for affordable housing on the national level.



Representative Cleaver received the 2019 Brooke Award for his years of leadership in Congress, commitment to addressing the needs of the lowest income people in the U.S., and steadfast support for federal affordable housing and homelessness programs. Representative Cleaver has fought for the wellbeing of low-income people and for racial and social justice as a Kansas City-Missouri councilman and the city's first African American mayor, as a representative in the U.S. Congress since 2005, and as a member and 20th chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. Representative Cleaver grew up in public housing and has been a staunch supporter of public housing in Congress. As the ranking member of the Housing and Insurance Subcommittee, he co-authored the landmark "Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act," a comprehensive bipartisan housing bill that benefits extremely low-income people in many important ways, passed into law unanimously in 2016. He has long been a champion of the national Housing Trust Fund and will be an important ally to the Trust Fund as a member of the House Financial Services Committee in the 116th Congress. The award was presented to Representative Cleaver "for being a stalwart leader on affordable housing and homelessness programs throughout his career."

Representative Cleaver thanked NLIHC for the award, which has particular significance to him, he said, because it is named for the late, great senator from Massachusetts whom the representative holds in such high regard. Representative Cleaver reaffirmed his strong commitment to affordable housing for low-income people and families.

National Alliance to End Homelessness President and CEO Nan Roman presented the Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award to **Dr. Mitchel Katz**. The Crowley Award, named for former NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, goes to an outstanding leader who has elevated the conversation around affordable housing for those most in need. Dr. Katz is the president and CEO of New York City Health + Hospitals, the largest municipal health system in the U.S. For many years - from his "Direct Access to Housing" initiative in San Francisco, to his work with the homeless in Los Angeles, to his current efforts in New York City -



Dr. Katz has raised public and policy-maker awareness about the connections between health, housing, and homelessness and implemented groundbreaking solutions to meet the housing needs of the most vulnerable. As director of the Los Angeles County Health Agency, Dr. Katz led an effort to provide supportive housing to people living on Skid Row to keep them from cycling in and out of county hospitals, clinics, and jails. He moved over 4,000 medically complex patients from hospitals and emergency departments into independent housing - eliminating unnecessary, expensive hospital care and giving patients the dignity of their own home.

Dr. Katz was presented the award “for his work directly benefiting thousands of extremely low-income people and for his national advocacy leadership around the message that affordable housing *is* healthcare.”

In accepting the award, Dr. Katz commended NLIHC and all those present who work to ensure those most in need have decent and affordable homes, sharing a personal story of a family member with a disability who has stability and dignity because of his ability to live in safe, permanent supportive housing.

NLIHC Board Treasurer Moises Loza presented the Cushing Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award to **Emma “Pinky” Clifford**. The award, named after NLIHC’s late founder who has been referred to as the “godmother” of the affordable housing movement, goes to an individual who has demonstrated an unyielding commitment to achieving safe, decent and affordable homes for low-income people over a long period of time. Pinky Clifford, executive director of the Oglala Sioux Tribe Partnership for Housing and NLIHC board member, received the Dolbeare Award 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 the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Pinky has an extensive record of service in housing from her work with Running Strong for American Indian Youth and her service as a U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Builder to her membership on the OST Tribal Council from Wounded Knee District and her current positions leading Oglala Sioux Tribe Partnership for Housing and serving on the board of NLIHC. Pinky was bestowed with the HUD Leadership Award at the Faith-Based and Neighborhood Leadership Conference in Denver in 2009, and she was appointed by the South Dakota governor to the state Commission for National and Community Service in 2011. Pinky Clifford received the Award for “her years of determined effort to secure decent, affordable homes for the lowest-income tribal people and communities.”



Pinky’s acceptance of the award, delivered in her characteristic quiet, humble, and heartfelt manner, rivetted the audience. She thanked NLIHC for the recognition by presenting NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel with a “dream catcher” from her tribe.

Diane Yentel concluded the presentation program by congratulating each of the honorees and thanking attendees for their support for NLIHC. She announced that, thanks to their and other donors’ generous support, NLIHC had surpassed its fundraising goal and reached a new fundraising record, raising over \$505,000 from the event.

National Housing Trust Fund

FHFA Releases 2018 National Housing Trust Fund Allocation

Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) Acting Director Joseph Otting announced on March 4 that he has authorized the disbursement of Fannie Mae’s and Freddie Mac’s 2018 allocations of \$244.86 million to HUD for the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and of \$131.84 million to the Department of the Treasury for the Capital Magnet Fund.

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel stated in an NLIHC press release: “I applaud the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) acting director for releasing the 2018 national Housing Trust Fund annual allocations.

. . . NLIHC is grateful to Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Jack Reed (D-RI), as well as Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), for their leadership and tenacity in successfully urging FHFA to release these much needed funds.”

On March 15, NLIHC sent a [letter](#) on behalf of the national Housing Trust Fund campaign to Acting Director Otting to urge him to immediately transfer the 2018 HTF allocation to HUD, as required by law. In past years, FHFA transferred HTF allocations within 60 days of the end of the calendar year.

NLIHC’s full press statement about the release of the HTF allocation is at: <https://bit.ly/2YOjdIv>

FHFA’s media release is at: <https://bit.ly/2G3KqzT>

Senate Confirms Mark Calabria as FHFA Director

The Senate confirmed on April 4 Mark Calabria to serve a five-year term as director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA). Dr. Calabria will be leading the agency, which governs the activities of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, during a critical period when both Congress and the Administration are considering comprehensive housing finance reform.

Dr. Calabria has held positions as a chief economist for Vice President Mike Pence and deputy assistant secretary for regulatory affairs at HUD, as well as posts at the National Association of Home Builders, the National Association of Realtors, the Cato Institute, and Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies. As a senior aide to the Senate Banking Committee during the drafting of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, he played a key role in creating the FHFA he now directs and both the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and the Capital Magnet Fund (CMF), which receive their funding from a small assessment on Fannie and Freddie’s annual books of business.

The national Housing Trust Fund is used to build and preserve rental homes affordable to America’s lowest-income renters - seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, people experiencing homelessness, veterans and other individuals most impacted by the nation’s growing affordable housing crisis. The HTF is woefully underfunded compared to the need; fewer than four homes are affordable and available for every 10 of the nation’s lowest-income renters. Housing finance reform offers an outstanding opportunity to increase funding to the HTF to address this dire shortage of affordable homes.

When asked if he would commit to continue funding for the Housing Trust Fund and the Capital Magnet Fund in his confirmation [hearing](#) in February, Dr. Calabria said, “within the confines of the statute, absolutely yes.” In a joint [op-ed](#) from 2017, NLIHC president and CEO Diane Yentel and Dr. Calabria stated that “scarce federal resources should be targeted to those who need them the most . . . through programs like the national Housing Trust Fund and rental assistance.”

Read NLIHC’s statement on Dr. Calabria’s confirmation at: <https://bit.ly/2OUoUAo>

Budget and Appropriations

HUD Secretary Carson Testifies on HUD FY20 Budget

HUD Secretary Ben Carson testified on the Trump administration’s FY20 budget request before both the House and the Senate Appropriations Transportation-HUD (THUD) Subcommittees on April 3. Lawmakers from both parties criticized the budget request for its deep funding cuts, including the elimination of whole programs, and its inclusion of harmful policy proposals to raise rents and impose work requirements on people receiving

housing assistance. The administration has proposed to cut \$9.6 billion from HUD's gross discretionary spending for FY20—an 18% cut from FY19 spending levels.

Senate

In her opening statement, Senate THUD Subcommittee Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) said that the budget “includes provisions that were rejected as part of our deliberations last year, and I predict that many of those same program eliminations and other cost-shifting gimmicks will once again be rejected. The request again reflects a significant realignment of the federal role in housing and community development.” Senator Collins expressed concern that, despite the affordable housing crisis, the administration was eliminating programs, like the national Housing Trust Fund and HOME Investment Partnerships program, that help develop new housing. She and Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-RI) pointed to the need to reach a deal to lift the austere caps on federal spending to adequately fund HUD programs.

In his testimony, Secretary Carson justified some of the administration's budget cuts by saying that state and local governments are best suited to support the programs proposed for elimination. He spoke about the need to expand the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) to preserve public housing and advocated for the elimination of the statutory RAD cap on converting units, currently set at 455,000. He also discussed the administration's proposal to increase rents and impose work requirements on people receiving housing assistance.

Senator Reed asked Secretary Carson about the delays in HUD providing Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds to areas impacted by recent natural disasters. Secretary Carson responded that the delay in getting the CDBG-DR notice in the Federal Register was caused by the government shutdown, as well as HUD's efforts to ensure proper oversight of such a large amount of money, but he said the notice would be published by May 1. Secretary Carson could not answer whether the White House would request funding for the recent devastating floods that occurred in the Midwest. He also said HUD was currently reorganizing its Office of Disaster Management and updating IT systems to make the office more efficient.

Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) criticized the administration's proposal to make significant cuts to public housing funding and pointed to two situations in his own state that highlighted the great need for more resources to address the growing capital needs of public housing agencies across the country.

Secretary Carson later testified that funding for lead-abatement grants provided by Congress last year would be available by the summer, and that new funding for Section 202 Housing for the Elderly would be available as soon as possible.

House

House THUD Subcommittee Chair David Price (D-NC) said in his opening remarks, “The department's most recent 'Worst Case Housing Needs' report to Congress identified more than 8 million renters who spend more than half of their income on rent, live in severely substandard conditions, or both. Yet today, just one in four families eligible for federal housing assistance gets the help they need — that's 25 percent. At a time when housing should be a front-burner issue, we seem to be falling farther behind. As I've said before, this reality is not written in the stars; it is a political failing, and it can be remedied. That's why it's disappointing that the department — for the third year in a row — has put forward a budget request that is wholly inadequate for the task at hand.”

House Appropriations Chair Nita Lowey (D-NY) said, “There is no justification for these harsh cuts. Let me be clear, these cuts do not exist in a vacuum. If enacted, they would cost taxpayers even more than current investments in the very types of assistance you propose to eliminate or severely cut. Housing is the foundation on which the rest of a life is built. It is nearly impossible to go to school, get a job, raise a family, or age in

place, without having a stable place to live. These investments play a big role in empowering hardworking families, giving children a good start in life and providing economic opportunity for all Americans.”

Chair Price and Ranking Member Mario Diaz-Balart asked Secretary Carson how soon HUD would make available the increased funds Congress provided last year for certain programs, including Native American block grants, Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program, Section 811 Housing for People with Disabilities program, and Section 811 Mainstream vouchers. Secretary Carson said notices of funding availability (NOFA) for those programs should be out by the end of this quarter. He also said that HUD was looking at ways to improve efficiency in getting money out to the field.

Chair Lowey asked Secretary Carson about HUD’s ability to implement recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommendations to improve the protocol for inspecting HUD-assisted properties, noting that the budget request would cut resources that could be used to inspect properties. Secretary talked about HUD’s recent action to reduce the time property owners know when they will be inspected to two weeks but acknowledged that HUD could use more inspectors and better training.

Appropriations Ranking Member Kay Granger (R-TX) asked Secretary Carson about unspent CDBG-DR funds and asked if it made sense to permanently authorize the program in statute to help get funding to communities more quickly. Secretary Carson said that could help but making the program statutory would not take into account the individualized nature of each disaster. He said he was willing to work with Congress to come up with a solution that would take into account both needs.

Chair Granger also asked about the status of the newly authorized Voucher Mobility Demonstration. Secretary Carson said the program is moving along well and HUD will be studying the barriers that prevent voucher holders from moving to areas of opportunity, including discrimination and stereotypes.

Representative Quigley (D-IL) criticized HUD for failing to replace guidance the administration had removed from its website on HUD’s equal-access rule to protect LGBTQ people seeking emergency shelter. “HUD grantees need guidance to avoid the discrimination and to make clear to them what the rules are,” Mr. Quigley said. Secretary Carson replied that Mr. Quigley “might not like” and “probably wouldn’t agree with” the HUD’s new guidance if the agency were to provide it.

Watch the Senate hearing at: <https://bit.ly/2I2NwpH>

Watch the House hearing at: <https://bit.ly/2TPZogf>

Budget Committee Passes Legislation to Lift Non-Defense Discretionary Funding Caps

The House Budget Committee approved on April 3, by a vote of 19-17, legislation that would raise the discretionary spending caps for fiscal years (FY) 2020 and 2021. The “[Investing for the People Act of 2019](#)” ([H.R. 2021](#)) marks an important first step in negotiations to raise the 2011 Budget Control Act’s austere federal spending caps that threaten to cut funding for important basic-needs programs, including affordable housing. The plan would raise the FY20 cap for non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding to \$631 billion, a \$34 billion (5.7%) increase over FY19, while raising the cap on defense discretionary spending to \$664 billion, \$17 billion above FY19. In FY21, the NDD cap would rise to \$646 billion and the defense cap to \$680 billion. The full House is likely to vote on the bill on Wednesday, April 10. **NLIHC urges you to [call your representative to support the bill](#).**

NLIHC joined NDD United and more than 800 organizations to urge lawmakers to work together to end the Budget Control Act’s spending caps. [The letter](#) emphasizes: (1) the importance of nondefense discretionary (NDD) programs, including essential housing programs, (2) the harmful effects of budget cuts to-date that

impact people who are homeless, unstably housed, and low-income, and (3) the equal importance of both defense and nondefense programs in America’s security at home and abroad, and thus the need for equal cap-relief. (NDD United is a broad group of stakeholders interested in protecting federal nondefense discretionary funding; NLIHC represents housing, homeless, and community development organizations on the steering committee of NDD United.)

Congress

House Financial Services Committee Approves ‘Ending Homelessness Act’

The House Financial Services Committee approved, by a vote of 32-26, the “[Ending Homelessness Act of 2019](#)” (H.R. 1856) on March 28. The legislation was first introduced by House Financial Services Committee Chair Maxine Waters (D-CA) in 2016 and reintroduced last week. The proposal would provide \$13.27 billion over five years to fight homelessness and housing shortages through vouchers, the construction of new units, and outreach.

The bill’s funding is targeted to McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants, new Special Purpose Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), the national Housing Trust Fund, outreach to connect homeless people to resources, and state/local initiatives. The bill would provide 410,000 new affordable homes for the lowest-income households. It would also permanently authorize the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness—both of which are essential to ensure homeless people have access to emergency shelter and services, transitional housing, job training, primary health care, and education.

Several amendments were adopted during the vote, including an amendment offered by Representative Bill Posey (R-FL) to provide incentives for communities to adopt inclusionary zoning policies, an amendment from Representative Andy Barr (R-KY) to allow nonprofit organizations to apply for funding, and an amendment offered by Representative Bill Huizenga (R-MI) to allow faith-based organizations to apply for funding.

Click here to view the [legislation](#), an [executive summary](#), and a [section-by-section presentation of the bill](#).

House Committee Reviews Fair Housing Act

The House Financial Services Committee held a hearing on April 2 to review the Fair Housing Act and related efforts to eliminate discrimination and promote opportunity in housing. Witnesses testified about the importance of fair housing laws and rules, including those related to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH), disparate impact, and LGBTQ equal access.

Debbly Goldberg of the National Fair Housing Alliance said that more funding is needed for HUD’s fair housing programs, especially those that fund nonprofit organizations that handle most fair housing complaints. She also said Congress should provide more funding for HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity to hire more people, offer more training, and update IT systems. Cashauna Hill of the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center testified that underfunding and staffing issues at HUD were jeopardizing her organization’s ability to enforce the Fair Housing Act.

Members of Congress asked how HUD’s recent decision to propose changes to its disparate-impact rule could impact people’s ability to bring fair housing claims. HUD sought public input on whether the regulation is consistent with the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs v. Inclusive Communities*. Ms. Goldberg asserted that courts found there is no conflict between the Supreme Court’s ruling and the disparate-impact rule. Ms. Goldberg said that while we do not yet know what is in the final rule, HUD’s

Notice of Advanced Rule Making to amend the disparate-impact rule raised red flags and said that proposed changes could make the rule unworkable.

Representative Madeleine Dean (D-PA) spoke about how the disparate-impact rule helps protect survivors of domestic violence from nuisance and crime-free ordinances that disproportionately discriminate against women. These types of laws penalize landlords and tenants when police are called too many times to the premises. She cited a case in her own district where a woman who was beaten by her partner but refused to call the police out of fear of eviction sued to have the nuisance ordinance struck down based on disparate-impact liability. Ms. Hill also talked about inequality and disparate impact in the case of post-Katrina housing policy in New Orleans, insisting that the nation could not afford to wait ten years before including the mandate of the Fair Housing Act as a foundational part of disaster recovery.

Some members of Congress talked about ways to better incentivize communities to address barriers to fair housing through inclusionary zoning. Representative Bill Posey (R-FL) spoke about penalizing communities for having exclusionary policies by withholding their Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and asked if there were other feasible incentives since not every community receives CDBG dollars. Salim Furth of the Mercatus Center at George Mason University stated that withholding CDBG funding was one way to incentivize inclusionary zoning but warned against withholding funding for other programs that directly help renters, like the HOME Investment Partnerships program. Representative Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) said we need to do more than just change zoning laws. Ms. Goldberg and Ms. Hill stated that merely changing zoning laws will not make housing affordable to extremely low-income people.

Representative Velázquez (D-NY) asked witnesses to describe how residents living in subsidized housing can be particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment and discrimination. Citing NLIHC research, Ms. Goldberg said that because the supply of affordable housing is so limited, women are less likely to come forward with sexual harassment complaints because they fear losing their affordable home. Keira Johnson of the National LGBTQ Task Force emphasized that housing shortages compel people to stay in a home, regardless of whether it is safe and hospitable or not.

Legislation discussed included the “Veterans, Women, Families with Children, Race, and Persons with Disabilities Housing Fairness [Act](#) of 2019,” the “Equality [Act](#) of 2019,” the “Sexual Harassment Awareness and Prevention [Act](#) of 2018,” and the “Restoring Fair Housing Protections Eliminated by HUD [Act](#) of 2018.”

Learn more about the hearing at: <https://bit.ly/2K2ecc3>

House Passes ‘Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act’ with Housing Protections

The House of Representatives passed the “[Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act \(VAWA\) of 2019](#)” (H.R. 1585) by a vote of 263-158 on March 4. The bill builds upon the housing protections that were expanded when VAWA was last reauthorized in 2013. The bill protects survivors from evictions based on criminal actions of perpetrators, enhances the emergency-transfer process, and addresses the need for consistent implementation, compliance and accountability regarding VAWA’s housing protections. The bill also makes clear that crime victims have the right to seek law enforcement or emergency assistance on behalf of themselves or others and must not be penalized for doing so by being evicted. Instead of punishing survivors and their landlords, states and localities are permitted to use existing federal grant programs to identify more effective means of combating crime.

NLIHC joined a coalition of organizations in submitting [written testimony](#) for a hearing on the reauthorization of VAWA that was held by the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security. The testimony explains the history of the inclusion of VAWA’s housing protections and illustrates the need for specific housing priorities in H.R. 1585 through the stories of survivors. This bill is now headed to the Senate.

House Subcommittee Assesses Federal Response to Rural Housing Crisis

The House Finance Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development, and Insurance held its first hearing in the 116th Congress on April 2 to assess the federal response to the affordable housing crisis in rural America. The hearing focused on the issue of prepayment and maturation of Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Loans and Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Loans, as well as other proposals for addressing the risk of displacement of rural residents. Under Section 515, the USDA makes direct loans to build affordable rental homes. Direct loans for farm-worker housing are made through the Section 514 program. Witnesses spoke about affordable housing challenges for rural communities related to homelessness, rental housing, and homeownership.

Gideon Anders, senior attorney at the National Housing Law Project, testified that growing numbers of affordable rental properties are either reaching maturity or prepaying their Section 515 or Section 514 loans. Because the program is underfunded, it has been difficult to preserve the existing rental housing stock, let alone address the need for new construction. National Rural Housing Coalition President Stan Keasling urged members of Congress to reject the Trump Administration’s proposed FY20 budget for USDA Rural Housing and companion proposal to dramatically reduce program staffing. David Lipsetz, CEO of the Housing Assistance Council, asked the Subcommittee to carefully consider how affordable rural housing goals fit into ongoing discussions about housing finance reform, and he advocated for permanent “Duty to Serve” obligations, equity or equity-equivalent investments in CDFIs serving counties facing persistent poverty. He also advocated for increasing rural credit availability and secondary market access for small financial institutions. Many witnesses said USDA’s data collection processes and transparency could be improved.

Representative Axne (D-IA) asked witnesses if the lack of new construction was a factor in the declining populations in rural areas. She also brought up the recent flooding in the Midwest, and she asked witnesses if a shortage of affordable rural housing makes it more difficult for areas experiencing disaster to recover. David Lipsetz responded affirmatively, saying that household formation is a significant factor when younger generations choose where to live. He encouraged stakeholders to take the time to build the capacity of local organizations to be able to address their own needs in disaster scenarios.

Ranking Member Sean Duffy (R-WI) asked witnesses if they felt the USDA’s Rural Housing Service was a well-run agency. David Lipsetz of HAC responded that, while it does tremendous work with very few resources, it has been set up to fail through a lack of funding. Andres Saavedra, senior program officer for Local Initiatives Support Corporation, asserted that USDA was a critical structural component to housing program field work. When Representative Gonzalez expressed interest in moving USDA housing programs to HUD, several witnesses pushed back that HUD does not have experience operating direct loan programs.

Legislation discussed included the “Strategy for Rural Housing Preservation [Act](#) of 2019,” the “Rural Housing Preservation [Act](#) of 2019,” the “VAWA Protections for Rural Women [Act](#) of 2019,” “RHV [12](#),” and “Panett [09](#).”

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

Senate Committee Holds Two-Day Hearing on Housing Finance Reform

The Senate Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs Committee held a two-part hearing on Chairman Crapo’s (R-ID) outline for housing finance reform on March 26-27. Many witnesses spoke about housing affordability and how it can be most sustainably ensured through a new housing finance structure. The chairman’s outline proposes a multi-guarantor system that replaces the current affordable housing goals and “Duty to Serve” requirements with a new Market Access Fund (MAF), which would be funded along with the Capital Magnet Fund (CMF)

and the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) through an annual assessment of 10 basis points of the total annual loan volume guaranteed. Significantly increased funding to the HTF – the first new housing resource in decades targeted to the building, rehabilitating, preserving, and operating rental housing for extremely low-income people - must be ensured in housing finance reform.

The Committee heard from 12 witnesses. NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel’s written statement to the Committee urges Congress to increase funding to the national HTF to at least \$3.5 billion annually as part of a broader commitment to access and affordability throughout the housing market. NLIHC’s full statement can be found [here](#).

In his opening statement, NAACP Washington Bureau Director and Senior VP for Advocacy and Policy Hilary Shelton said that any housing reform proposal must also protect and increase funding for the HTF. President of the Housing Policy Council Edward DeMarco told the Committee he supports the approach of including a “housing finance mechanism to generate funds for the production and preservation of affordable rental housing and bolster homeownership assistance.” Mr. Adam Levitin of the Georgetown University Law Center urged the Committee to support affordable housing through cross-subsidization, rather than tax-and-transfer, as part of any approach to housing finance reform.

The written testimony of National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions Executive VP of Government Affairs and General Counsel Carrie Hunt encouraged a continued focus on manufactured housing, affordable housing preservation, and rural markets in the text of any future bill. Vince Malta of the National Association of Realtors advocated for supporting the affirmative obligations “as directed” in 2008, including the housing goals and dedicated funding to the Capital Magnet Fund and HTF.

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) expressed dissatisfaction with the elimination of affordable housing goals and with the small amount of funding for the HTF, CMF and MAF in Senator Crapo’s outline. She asked witnesses if low- and moderate-income borrowers and borrowers of color would be in a worse, better, or the same position relative to where they are now. Mr. Shelton of the NAACP asserted that they would be worse off.

Learn more about the hearing at: <https://bit.ly/2u1WvI> || <https://bit.ly/2Y9B2Bs>

Opportunity Starts at Home

Campaign Releases National Polling Results Finding Vast Majority Believes Housing Affordability Should Be “Top National Priority”

The [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) multi-sector affordable homes campaign released on March 28 at the NLIHC Housing Policy Forum the [results of a nationwide public opinion poll](#) it commissioned with Hart Research Associates. Among the poll’s many findings were that more than eight in ten Americans believe ensuring housing affordability should be a “top national priority.”

National Campaign Director Mike Koprowski kicked off the session with an update on the campaign and the reasons behind conducting the poll. “This poll is a call to action,” he said. “At a time when Republicans and Democrats can’t agree on much of anything, the issue of housing affordability appears to be a much-needed unifier.”

The poll is the first in several years to extensively assess the extent to which the general public considers housing affordability to be a problem in their communities, whether they have had to make sacrifices in other areas of life because of housing costs, whether they expect action from elected officials, whether they are more likely to vote for a candidate that has a detailed plan to address the problem, and their openness to the specific policy solutions outlined in the campaign’s [National Policy Agenda](#).

Hart Research Associates President Geoff Garin unveiled the polling results. Not only did the poll find that 85% of the public believe ensuring everyone has a safe, decent, affordable place to live should be a top national priority, it found this view is strongly held across the political spectrum – from 95% of Democrats to 87% of independents to 73% of Republicans.

[Click here](#) to view the full survey results, including the press release, fact sheet, questionnaire data, and the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign’s open letter to 2020 presidential candidates.

The campaign will host a congressional briefing at the Capitol Visitor Center on Thursday, April 11, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET to discuss the polling results. To register, [click here](#).



Research

Harvard Joint Center for Housing Releases Growth Projections of Homeowner and Renter Households

The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS) released growth projections of homeowner and renter households in a new report, [Tenure Projections of Homeowner and Renter Households for 2018-2038](#). With uncertainty in the future of homeownership rates, JCHS projects that the U.S. will add between 2.1 million and 6.2 million renter households by 2028, and between 5.9 million and 10.3 million by 2038.

JCHS projected the growth in homeowner and renter households under three scenarios. The “base” scenario assumes homeownership rates remain constant at 2018 levels for each age, race/ethnicity, and family type group. Under this scenario, the homeownership rate would rise from 64.3% to 64.5% between 2018 and 2028,

and then decrease to 64.1% by 2038. Changes in the homeownership rate would be the result of demographic changes. Household growth would include an additional 4.2 million renter households by 2028 and 8.1 million renter households by 2038.

The “high” scenario assumes homeownership rates will rebound to their 30-year average or current rate, whichever is higher, for each demographic subgroup. Under this scenario, the projected homeownership rate would increase to 65.9% in 2028 and decrease to 65.6% in 2038. Household growth would include an additional 2.1 million renter households by 2028 and 5.9 million renter households by 2038.

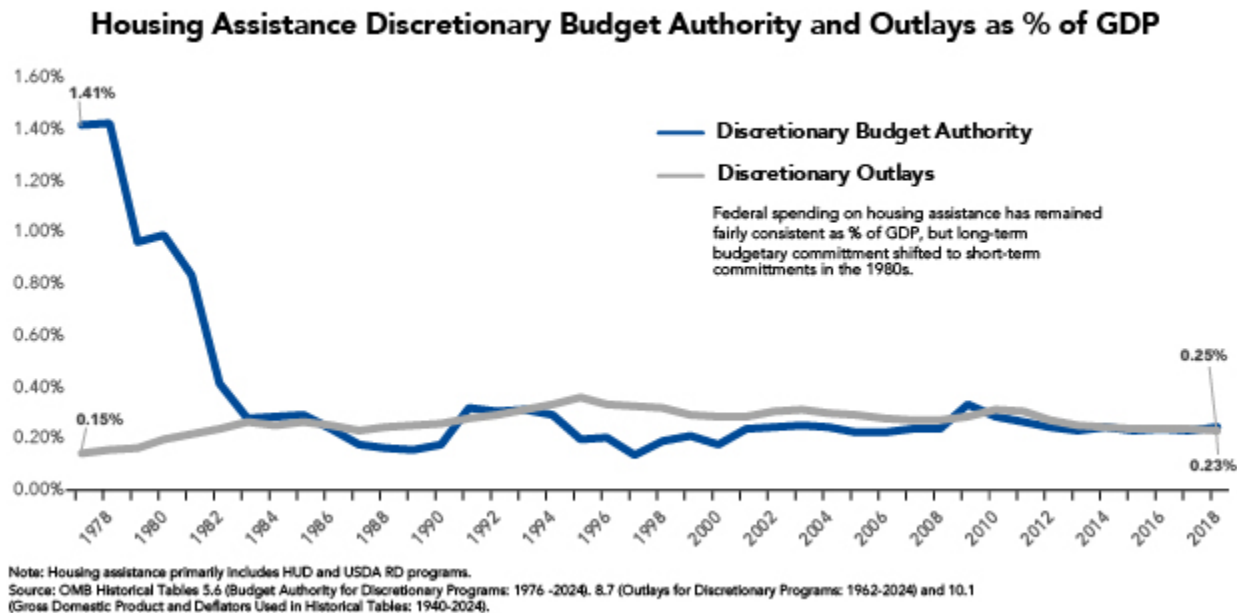
The “low” scenario assumes the recent homeownership uptick will reverse and the homeownership rate will fall proportional to the increases in the “high” scenario. Under this scenario, the homeownership rate would fall to 63% by 2028 and 62.6% by 2038. The number of renter households would increase by 6.2 million by 2028 and by 10.3 million by 2038.

The actual trajectory of homeownership rates and their impact on the number of renter households will depend on a number of factors, including households’ demand for housing, constraints on access to mortgage credit, and the supply of available homes for sale.

Tenure Projections of Homeowner and Renter Households for 2018-2038 is available at: <https://bit.ly/2UbXGuF>

Fact of the Week

Housing Assistance as a Share of GDP Has Declined Precipitously Since the 1970s



Source: OMB Historical Tables 5.1 (Budget Authority by Function and Subfunction) and 10.1 (Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in Historical Tables: 1940-2024).

HUD

HUD Proposes Major Changes to Section 3 Rule Regarding Employment Opportunities for Low-Income People

HUD published the long-awaited update to the 1994 interim Section 3 rule on April 4. Several potential improvements are proposed, such as using “labor hours worked” instead of “new hires” in many situations; adding to the cascade of priority categories of “Section 3 workers and businesses” residents with a Section 8 voucher or project-based assistance; and adding a “Targeted Section 3 worker” to consideration of an entity’s Section 3 obligations. A potential adverse change includes removing the monitoring and enforcement of Section 3 from the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) and transferring that responsibility to the HUD program offices responsible for the funding program that triggers Section 3, such as the Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) and the Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD). Another potential harmful change is establishing a \$200,000 per-project threshold before an entity has to comply with Section 3.

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. Public housing agencies (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 comply.

During the Obama administration, FHEO staff proposed significant changes to the interim rule. Many of those changes reflected input from advocates, including NLIHC, after numerous conference calls. That proposed rule never cleared the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The Trump administration replaced the previous proposed rule with the one now open for public comment.

Some of the key changes in the proposed rule are highlighted here. Not all terms are explained because this article is intended to be a brief summary and focuses on employment-related features, not the parallel contracting provisions. More details and analysis will be forthcoming.

Tracking and Reporting “Labor Hours”

The 1994 interim rule required PHAs and jurisdictions to have goals of 30% of “new hires” be so-called Section 3 residents. As advocates had long observed, some contractors would hire Section 3 residents for a short time so that they would “count” toward the 30% goal but lay them off in short order. In other cases, a Section 3 resident would be given only 20 hours or less of work per week. Some contractors would shift some of their existing workforce to a Section 3 project so that the contractor could claim that they did not need to hire anyone new for the Section 3 project.

As HUD rightly notes in the preamble to the proposed rule, a focus on labor hours worked instead of new hires will measure total actual employment by Section 3 workers and the proportion of that total employment performed by Section 3 workers. Using labor hours worked also emphasizes continued employment. HUD observes that with a new-hires standard, hiring five new workers for one or two months would be counted as more valuable than hiring one person for a full year. A full-time job sustained over a long period provides a Section 3 worker with the potential to gain skills that can lead to greater self-sufficiency.

Although HUD proposes moving to labor hours worked, some PHAs have said they prefer reporting new hires. HUD is consequently considering allowing PHAs use a new-hires as an alternative. (This alternative will be described in more detail in a future NLIHC summary.)

Section 3 Employment Priorities

The proposed rule would reflect the statute’s requirements for prioritizing categories of Section 3 workers.

A PHA must make “best efforts” to employ Section 3 workers in the following order of priority:

1. Residents of the project(s) funded with public housing money;
2. Residents of a PHA’s other public housing projects, or residents assisted with Section 8 project-based rental assistance or vouchers (the addition of Section 8 residents would be an improvement over the existing rule);
3. YouthBuild participants; and
4. People in the metro area with incomes less than 80% of the area median income (AMI).

Jurisdictions must “to the greatest extent feasible” ensure that Section 3 workers who live in the metro area are employed at projects assisted by funds that trigger Section 3. The proposed rule adds that “where feasible” jurisdictions “should” provide employment to Section 3 workers who live in a project’s “service area” or neighborhood and to YouthBuild participants. The existing rule is an improvement because it gives first priority to Section 3 residents living in the service area or neighborhood, second priority to YouthBuild participants, third priority to homeless people in the service area or neighborhood, and then consideration to other Section 3 residents in the metro area.

Targeted Section 3 Worker

The proposed rule defines a “Section 3 Worker” as someone who meets one of the following criteria:

1. The worker’s income is less than the income limit set by HUD for the program(s) triggering Section 3.
2. The worker lives in a “qualified census tract” (QCT), a term created for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. A QCT is a census tract with a poverty rate of 25% or more or with at least 50% of the households having incomes less than 60% of AMI. HUD officially designates QCTs each year.
3. The worker is employed by a Section 3 business (NLIHC will explain in a future summary.)

The proposed rule also would establish a “Targeted Section 3 Worker,” a subset of the “Section 3 Worker.”

For public housing a Targeted Section 3 Worker would be:

1. An employee of a Section 3 business; or
2. A resident of any of the PHA’s public housing projects, or residents assisted with a voucher or living in Section 8 project-based rental assistance or other projects the PHA manages that receive funds triggering Section 3, or a YouthBuild participant.

For other HUD programs, such as CDBG and HOME, a Targeted Section 3 Worker would be:

1. An employee of a Section 3 business; or
2. Someone with income less than 80% of AMI living in the service area or neighborhood the HUD-assisted project (for instance, a CDBG-assisted road improvement project), or a YouthBuild participant.

Section 3 Benchmarks

PHAs and jurisdictions will be considered in compliance with the Section 3 statute if they follow the employment priorities (listed above) and meet the Section 3 “benchmark.”

HUD proposes a benchmark of:

- 25% of the total number of hours worked by all Section 3 workers, divided by the total number of hours worked by all workers, plus
- 5% of the total number of hours worked by all Targeted Section 3 workers, divided by the total number of all workers.

Comments on the proposed rule are due June 3. NLIHC urges public housing resident organizations and other advocates to submit comments. To assist, NLIHC will provide sample letters they can use to tailor to their priorities and situations. NLIHC will also provide a more complete summary and more detailed analysis in the near future.

The proposed rule is at: <https://bit.ly/2IcFIkv>

The proposed benchmark is at: <https://bit.ly/2YP8td5>

An easier-to-read version of the proposed rule is at: <https://bit.ly/2TTTsCV>

An easier-to-read version of the proposed benchmark is at: <https://bit.ly/2VqufBK>

HUD Further Streamlines Process for Small PHAs to Convert Public Housing to Vouchers

HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) issued [Notice PIH 2019-05](#), further streamlining the process for a public housing agency (PHA) with fewer than 250 public housing units (“Small PHA”) to voluntarily convert public housing to vouchers as long as the PHA intends to convert its entire public housing stock to vouchers. The additional streamlining provision removes the requirement to submit a “conversion assessment.”

Previously, Notice PIH 2014-14 from 2014 allowed Small PHAs to submit an abbreviated conversion assessment that did not require:

- A cost analysis that compared the cost of providing vouchers to the cost of keeping units as public housing for the remainder of their useful life.
- A market-value analysis that assessed the worth of the public housing after it was converted if it was not repaired compared to what it would be worth after conversion if it underwent repairs.

Notice PIH 2014-14 still required a Small PHAs’ conversion assessment to contain:

- An assessment of rental market conditions to determine whether residents would be able to use vouchers. The assessment must consider:
 - The availability of decent, safe, and sanitary homes renting at or less than the PHA’s voucher payment standard.
 - The recent rate of households’ ability to rent home with vouchers.
 - The public housing residents’ characteristics that might affect their ability to find and use a voucher - for example, the ability of people with disabilities to find homes accessible them and the ability of families of different sizes to find homes with the correct number of bedrooms.
- An assessment of the conversion’s impact on the surrounding neighborhood by:
 - Determining the availability of other affordable housing in the neighborhood.
 - Estimating the potential concentration of poverty in the neighborhood.
- A description of how the property will be used after conversion.

Although Notice PIH 2019-05 eliminates the requirement for a Small PHA to submit a “conversion assessment,” the PHA must still submit a “conversion plan” with its Annual PHA Plan and conform to other Section 22 Voluntary Conversion requirements. Section 22 refers to the section of the Housing Act of 1937 that provides PHAs the authority to convert public housing to vouchers.

A November 13, 2018 HUD letter to PHAs announced HUD’s intention to “reposition” up to 105,000 public housing units by the end of September 2019 (see *Memo*, [11/19/18](#)). Repositioning entails streamlining voluntary conversions, streamlining the demolition/disposition process (see *Memo*, [4/2/18](#)), and expanding the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD).

Notice PIH 2019-05 is at: <https://bit.ly/2FKwY26>

More information about Section 22 Voluntary Conversion is at: <https://bit.ly/2HY8LZO>

More information about Section 18 Demolition and Disposition is at: <https://bit.ly/2TUNION>

More information about the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) is at: <https://bit.ly/2CZ4UYx>

HUD REAC to Collect Information about Carbon Monoxide Detectors at Federally Assisted Housing

HUD’s Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) sent [Inspector Notice No. 2019-01](#) to inspectors requiring them to collect information about carbon monoxide (CO) detectors in all federally assisted and insured housing. This information collection will not affect a property’s REAC physical inspection score, however. The requirement became effective on April 1, 2019.

Inspectors conducting Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS) inspections must determine whether a building being inspected has units with sources of carbon monoxide such as fuel-fired/burning appliances and/or an attached garage. If so, the inspector must determine whether the units have CO detectors and whether they are operating. If a CO source is present, the inspector must indicate the number of CO detectors missing, the number that are working, and the number that are not working. HUD stresses that this exercise is for data-collection purposes only, that the information will not affect a property’s REAC score.

NLIHC signed on to a March 11 letter from the National Housing Law Project urging HUD Secretary Ben Carson to require CO detectors at all HUD-assisted housing (see *Memo*, [3/11](#)). 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/2UfCv78>

The Carbon Monoxide Detection Data Collection Inspector Notice 2019-01 is at: <https://bit.ly/2UaMzSU>

HUD Announces Section 202 Capital Advance NOFA

HUD announced on April 4 that \$50 million in Capital Advance funding is now available under the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program Capital Advance program. These are the first funds for the construction of new elderly housing under the Section 202 program since 2010. The \$50 million in Capital Advance funding is for:

- The development and operation of supportive rental housing for people aged 62 years or older who have incomes at or less than 50% of the area median income.
- Project rental subsidies in the form of Project Rental Assistance Contracts (PRACs) to maintain on going affordability.

This funding, leveraged with other financing sources, will expand affordable housing opportunities and include supportive services such as transportation, continuing education, and health care services that will allow seniors to live independently and to age in place.

Only nonprofits are eligible to apply.

A Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is [posted on grants.gov](#).

HUD will host a webinar on April 25, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET to provide an overview of the NOFA. [Register here](#) for the webinar.

Fair Housing

National Fair Housing Alliance Reaches Settlement with Facebook

The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), Communications Workers of America (CWA), several regional fair housing organizations, and individual consumers and job seekers settled civil rights claims against Facebook on March 19. NFHA and the other plaintiffs asserted that Facebook’s advertising platform contained pre-populated lists that allowed advertisers to place housing, employment, and credit ads that could exclude certain groups protected by the Fair Housing Act, such as African Americans, Latinx, and Asian Americans. They also claimed the platform was not designed so that whites could be excluded in this manner.

The plaintiffs challenged:

- The ability of housing, employment, and credit advertisers to include or exclude Facebook users from receiving ads based on their sex or age, or based on interests, behaviors, or demographics that allegedly relate to or are associated with race, national origin, sex, age, disability, or family status;
- The ability of housing, employment and credit advertisers to set a narrow geographical area for ad viewership, which could have an adverse impact based on race or national origin; and
- Facebook’s “Lookalike Audience” tool that allegedly allowed advertisers to create audiences of Facebook users in a way that could have an adverse impact on various groups, including based on gender, race, and age.

NFHA and four local nonprofit organizations originally filed suit against Facebook in March of 2018 in the Southern District of New York, alleging that Facebook’s advertising platform created pre-populated lists that made it possible for landlords and real estate brokers to exclude people of color, families with children, women, people with disabilities, and other groups protected by the Fair Housing Act from viewing or receiving rental or sales ads. The fair housing groups conducted investigations that confirmed Facebook’s alleged discriminatory practices.

Because of the settlement, Facebook has agreed to establish a separate advertising portal for advertisers seeking to create housing, employment, and credit ads on Facebook, Instagram, and Messenger. The portal will limit advertisers’ targeting abilities to prevent them from illegally discriminating. Housing advertisers will no longer be allowed to target consumers based on race, ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, family

status, disability, or sexual orientation. Housing advertisers will also be prevented from advertising based on ZIP code. Instead, they will be permitted to advertise based on a 15-mile radius from a city center or address.

Facebook will restructure its “Lookalike Audience” feature, which formerly allowed advertisers to target ads to Facebook users who were similar to an advertiser’s existing customers. Facebook will restructure and rename this tool so that it will not consider users’ age, relationship status, religious or political views, school, interests, ZIP code, or membership in “Facebook Groups.”

Facebook will also create a page for consumers to view all housing ads placed on its platform, post a self-certification agreement that advertisers must agree to regarding all anti-discrimination laws, provide anti-discrimination and civil rights educational materials to advertisers, and continually work with scholars, organizations, experts, and researchers to examine algorithmic modeling and its potential for discriminatory impact and bias.

The Settlement Agreement is at: <https://bit.ly/2HUrHbW>

More information is on NFHA’s website at: <https://nationalfairhousing.org/facebook-settlement>

HUD Files Housing Discrimination Complaint against Facebook, Alleging Electronic Red Lining and Other Violations

HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) Anna Maria Farías filed a Charge of Discrimination against Facebook with HUD’s Office of Administrative Law Judges on March 28. HUD alleges that Facebook discriminates by enabling advertisers to restrict which Facebook users receive housing-related ads based on race, color, national origin, sex, familial status, disability, and religion – the protected characteristics under the Fair Housing Act. HUD asserts Facebook mines user data and classifies users based on their protected characteristics. Facebook’s ad-targeting tools invite advertisers to express unlawful preferences by suggesting discriminatory options, and Facebook provides housing-related ads to certain users and not to others based on users’ actual or imputed protected characteristics.

Some of the ways HUD alleges Facebook’s ad targeting tools enable advertisers of housing and housing-related services to discriminate include:

- Drawing a red line around majority-minority ZIP codes and not showing housing or housing-related ads to users who live in those ZIP codes (discrimination on the basis of race and color).
- Not showing ads to users Facebook characterizes as interested in “assistance dog,” “mobility scooter,” or “deaf culture” (discrimination on the basis of disability).
- Not showing ads to users Facebook characterizes as interested in “child care” or “parenting,” or by showing ads only to users with children above a specific age (discrimination on the basis of familial status).
- Not showing ads to users Facebook characterizes as interested in “Latin America,” “Southeast Asia,” “China,” “Honduras,” “Somalia,” or the “Hispanic National Bar Association” (discrimination on the basis of national origin).
- Showing ads only to users Facebook characterizes as interested in “Bible,” “Jesus,” or “Christian Church” (discrimination on the basis of religion).
- Showing ads only to men or only to women (discrimination on the basis of sex).

The official [Charge of Discrimination](#) details the many steps in the process Facebook uses that lead to housing discrimination. The last step in the process, determining the actual audience for an ad, entails Facebook combining data it has about user attributes and behavior on its platforms (including Instagram among others) with data it obtains about user behavior on other websites and in the non-digital world. According to HUD,

Facebook then uses machine learning and other prediction techniques to classify groups of users in order to project each user's likely response to a given ad. By grouping users who "like" similar pages unrelated to housing and presuming a shared interest or disinterest in housing-related advertisements, HUD asserts Facebook's mechanisms function in a manner similar to an advertiser that intentionally targets or excludes users based on their protected characteristics.

This secretary-initiated complaint of housing discrimination is the first to be issued by HUD during Secretary Ben Carson's administration.

HUD's Charge of Discrimination is at: <https://bit.ly/2OxXTCC>

A HUD media release is at: <https://bit.ly/2HL3uVq>

HUD Finds Los Angeles Continues to Violate Housing Accessibility Laws for People with Disabilities

HUD issued a [Supplemental Letter of Findings](#) to the City of Los Angeles on April 1 detailing the City's ongoing failure to provide accessible housing for low-income people with disabilities. The letter from HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) is based on on-site accessibility reviews conducted in June 2017 of 16 housing developments that received HOME Investment Partnerships and Community Development Block Grant funds from the City. HUD finds that the City continues to have significant and widespread accessibility violations throughout its affordable housing program and continues to violate the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against any individual with a disability solely on the basis of the disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. HUD's Section 504 regulation requires that new construction and the substantial alteration of multifamily housing projects assisted with federal funds have at least 5% of the units accessible for people with mobility disabilities, and an additional 2% of the units accessible for people with hearing or vision disabilities. The rule also requires other alterations to be made accessible to the maximum extent feasible.

Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the services, programs, and activities of public entities, including agencies of state and local governments. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Title II ADA regulation mirrors HUD's Section 504 regulation regarding units. Both Title II and Section 504 regulations also require that an entity operate each service, program, or activity so that they are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

In the fall of 2011, HUD conducted an on-site compliance review focusing on 22 properties, finding deficiencies related to the physical accessibility of individual housing units and property common areas. For example, HUD found bathrooms that did not allow wheelchairs to maneuver in them and kitchens with inaccessible sinks and counters. In addition, routes to units, the laundry room, and common areas were not accessible. HUD issued a Letter of Findings of Non-compliance with Section 504 and Title II on January 12, 2012. HUD announced on September 26, 2014 that it had reached a voluntary compliance agreement (VCA) focused on those 22 properties.

The April 1, 2019 Letter of Supplemental Findings claims, however, that HUD has repeatedly tried to negotiate with the City regarding a VCA that would remedy noncompliance in the City's current inaccessible affordable housing stock, ensure that future construction of affordable housing meets accessibility requirements, and establish policies, procedures, and practices to ensure its affordable housing program does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. HUD asserts that the City has been unwilling to finalize and execute a

VCA that would put the City on a path toward remedying its past, ongoing, and future violations of federal law. Therefore, FHEO issued the Supplemental Letter of Findings.

HUD claims none of the 16 developments FHEO surveyed complied with Section 504 or Title II, offering examples of specific violations:

- Developments lacked the minimum number of mobility-accessible units (5%) and sensory-accessible units (an additional 2%).
- Every designated accessible unit surveyed contained significant accessibility barriers.
- Public and common-use areas in developments did not comply with accessibility requirements.
- Widespread incidences of individuals who did not have a disability occupying designated accessible units while individuals with disabilities in the same development occupied non-designated, inaccessible units.
- Developments did not have practices in place that prioritized designated accessible units for tenants/applicants who need the accessible features.
- Failure to disperse designated accessible units throughout developments.

HUD also alleges the City continues to have deficient policies and practices, citing problems relating to monitoring occupancy of designated accessible units, failure to properly identify or require the use of the accessibility standards in its agreements with developers, and insufficient pre-completion onsite reviews or adequate post-construction onsite inspections

To remedy the deficiencies, HUD requires the City to:

- Resolve all findings identified in FHEO’s 2012 Letter of Findings and those identified in the current letter.
- Remediate housing in the City’s existing portfolio to ensure that the requisite number of designated accessible units are provided at each development and that those units as well as public and common-use areas meet accessibility requirements and standards.
- Ensure that all future developments, including those currently in the City’s affordable housing pipeline, meet accessibility requirements and standards.
- Revise and implement policies, practices, and procedures to fully comply with federal laws and regulations prohibiting disability discrimination, including but not limited to accessibility, occupancy, and effective communication requirements.
- Undertake a process to identify individuals with disabilities who have been harmed by the City’s violations of accessibility requirements and standards and provide redress for such harms by providing them with an accessible unit with the accessibility features they need in the appropriate unit size to accommodate their household.

HUD’s April 1 Supplemental Letter of Findings is at: <https://bit.ly/2CTB5bJ>

The 2014 Voluntary Compliance Agreement is at: <https://bit.ly/2uJkJOm>

Disaster Housing Recovery

House Subcommittee Discusses Proposal to Authorize Disaster Housing Recovery Grant Program

The House Financial Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a [hearing](#) on “The Administration of Disaster Recovery Funds in the Wake of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria” on March 26. The hearing focused on the Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program

and a draft proposal that would permanently authorize the program – which is currently administered on an appropriation-by-appropriation basis through the *Federal Register*. Both witnesses and members of the subcommittee expressed support for permanent authorization while discussing issues experienced related to the recovery process for the 2017 hurricanes. NLIHC supports the authorization proposal and submitted a [statement](#) for the record.

Subcommittee Chair Al Green (D-TX) stated that the proposal to authorize the program would create a reliable program and stop the current cycle of re-invention. Representative Ann Wagner (R-MO), who partnered with Chair Green on the bill, said that this federal funding should be spent on those most in need. Full Committee Chair Maxine Waters (D-CA) expressed her concern that CDBG-DR funding for 2017 disasters has not yet reached survivors and stated the need for the program to be fair, transparent and consistent. She noted the importance of recovery funding for long-term community vitality: “When the government does not prioritize the rebuilding of affordable housing, it pushes out low-income residents that once lived in those areas, which can deepen segregation in our neighborhoods.”

During their opening remarks, witnesses all expressed support for authorizing and standardizing the CDBG-DR program in a way that maintains program flexibility and decreases delays. Jeremy Kirkland, counsel to the HUD inspector general recommended codifying the program and creating model housing programs that grantees could use to quickly begin the recovery process. Marion Mollegen-McFadden, senior vice president at Enterprise Community Partners, said HUD needs additional staff dedicated to disaster recovery efforts.

Representative Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) addressed the inequitable distribution of disaster recovery funds and the obligation of HUD and grantees to affirmatively further fair housing by actively deconstructing racial segregation and promoting accessible housing. Ms. Mollegen-McFadden said the CDBG-DR program offers communities an opportunity to revisit equitability and fair housing issues and urged HUD to work with grantees to do so. She also suggested that staff working on disaster recovery at HUD work more closely with HUD homelessness personnel as well as local Continuum of Care (CoC) providers. People experiencing homelessness prior to disasters are often not eligible for disaster assistance, despite the devastating impact of disasters on their lives.

Members of the committee asked Mr. Kirkland and Puerto Rico Secretary of Housing Fernando Gil Enseñat specifically about the recovery efforts in Puerto Rico. Mr. Kirkland confirmed that the HUD inspector general is currently investigating whether the Trump administration has interfered with disaster recovery efforts in Puerto Rico.

Read NLIHC’s statement for the record at: <https://bit.ly/2uIF86c>

Learn more about the hearing including a recording of the hearing at: <https://bit.ly/2Jr0LSL>

Additional Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – April 8, 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 [3/25](#)).

Federal Action

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a new report, “[Disaster Recovery: Better Monitoring of Block Grant Funds Is Needed](#)” on March 25. The report details the slow spending of Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds for the 2017 hurricanes and recommends Congress permanently authorize the program. The GAO included additional recommendations for HUD to better administer the program.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General [found](#) that FEMA mishandled the personal information of disaster survivors who participated in the Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) program following the 2017 disasters. FEMA unnecessarily provided survivors' financial information to a contractor, although the agency [stated](#) it does not believe the data was comprised.

HUD published a [notice](#) in the *Federal Register* on March 25 stating their intention to store information about applicants for FEMA disaster recovery assistance in their Public and Indian Housing Information Center (IMS/PIC). This database contains information related to public housing authorities, HUD-assisted families, HUD-assisted properties, and various HUD programs.

Midwest Flooding

Nebraska

President Trump approved a Major Disaster Declaration for Nebraska ([DR-4420](#)) on March 21. Residents in 14 counties and the Santee Indian Reservation are [eligible](#) for Individual Assistance, and a total of 70 counties and Tribal governments are eligible for Public Assistance. FEMA provided a [fact sheet](#) on what assistance is available under these programs.

Iowa

President Trump approved a Major Disaster Declaration for Iowa ([DR-4421](#)) on March 23. Residents in 5 counties are [eligible](#) for Individual Assistance, and 56 counties are eligible for Public Assistance. More information on what assistance is available under this declaration can be found [here](#).

2018 California Wildfires

According to a data firm's [analysis](#) of home-sales data, housing affordability in Butte County has decreased after the fires more than in any other county in the state. The median sales price for a home has increased by 17% in the past six months.

Hurricane Michael

Florida

In anticipation of the six month anniversary of Hurricane Michael, the *Panama City News Herald* is publishing readers' first-person [stories](#) about the storm and the recovery.

Panhandle residents continue to struggle to find any form of temporary housing, and those who have secured a rental home face skyrocketing rents as a result of the increased demand. A [report](#) from *CBS News* provides images and the stories of survivors trying to rebuild their lives.

Hurricane Florence

North Carolina

Due to the delay of a supplemental disaster aid package, none of the [military housing](#) at Camp Lejeune and other bases in the state has been repaired six months following Hurricane Florence.

South Carolina

Marion County was hit by both Hurricane Michael and Hurricane Florence and certain areas are still struggling to recover. The county is facing pressure from the state and FEMA to enforce its Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, despite the [inability](#) of many residents to afford the cost of elevating their homes.

2017 Disasters

State Action

The Texas General Land Office released [Amendment 3](#) to its state action plan for the administration of \$5.676 billion in CDBG-DR funds for Hurricane Harvey recovery. The amendment re-allocates funds toward the Multi-Family Affordable Rental and Partial Repair and Essential Power for Sheltering (PREPS) programs in addition to outlining uses for direct allocations to Harris County and Houston. The amendment is open for public comment through April 20.

Local Perspectives and Resources

A *Washington Post* [article](#) details some of the U.S. Virgin Islands' (USVI) struggles with its housing needs, including houses still left without water, electricity, or roofs. The territory faced an affordable housing crisis before Irma that was worsened by the storm and exacerbated by the need to shelter the thousands of relief workers and contractors. FEMA and the Virgin Islands' government have relied on the Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power (STEP) program to provide home repairs, but about 700 households with the most serious issues continue to wait for assistance.

The USVI government [contracted](#) with two global engineering firms to complete repairs under the STEP program. These firms have completed repairs for about 7,000 households, but many homeowners who have received assistance experienced substandard work and persistent issues. Subcontractors to one of the firms, AECOM, state the company owes them millions of dollars for completed work. The USVI's Senate Finance Committee has subpoenaed AECOM after the company failed to attend a hearing about these complaints.

Our Homes, Our Voices

Advocates Begin Planning for *Our Homes, Our Voices* National Housing Week of Action

Advocates from around the country are beginning to plan how they will be involved in this year's [Our Homes, Our Voices](#) National Housing Week of Action May 30-June 5. Every state and congressional district across our country is impacted by the shortage of affordable homes available to those who need it most. Federal investments in proven affordable housing solutions benefit us all, but these investments have not kept pace with the need. It's time to raise our voices to protect and expand vital affordable housing programs.

There are many ways for people and organizations to participate in the *Our Homes, Our Voices* Week of Action. Last week, NLIHC held a planning webinar that covered best practices for planning and carrying out a Week of Action event or activity and the resources NLIHC provides to support you in these efforts. The webinar also shared examples of successful events that took place last year.

To listen to a recording of this webinar or to view the PowerPoint, visit: www.ourhomes-ourvoices.org/resources

Additional information and planning resources can be found at: www.ourhomes-ourvoices.org

Our Homes, Our Votes

Watch Video Compilation of 2020 Presidential Candidates Addressing Affordable Housing

They are talking about the crisis and their proposals to address it at their launch events, on campaign stops, and on nationally televised town halls. NLIHC has compiled a [short video](#) of these presidential candidates addressing affordable housing. As NLIHC president and CEO Diane Yentel said in her remarks to forum attendees (see article), this moment is a defining, once-in-a-generation inflection point for the affordable housing movement.

Advocates must continue to urge all presidential candidates to use their national platform to elevate bold solutions the nation's dire shortage of affordable homes. Not all candidates have addressed the issue - yet. NLIHC and our partners will continue to call on every candidate to speak up about the need for affordable housing for those with the lowest income – seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, veterans, and those experiencing homelessness – and solutions

If you see a presidential candidate talk about affordable housing, let us know! And be sure to lift it up on social media using the hashtag #OurHomesOurVotes2020

From the Field

Nevada Advocates Urge State Legislature to Take Action on Homelessness and Housing Poverty

As NLIHC's recently released [The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes](#) report demonstrates, Nevada has the greatest shortage of affordable housing for extremely low-income renters in the nation; the state has just 19 rental homes affordable and available for every 100 deeply poor renter households. Advocates from across the Silver State joined together at the state legislature on March 25 and 26 to sound the alarm and urge legislators to act.

The Statewide Homeless Vigil and Call for Housing Justice took place on March 25. People directly impacted by homelessness and housing poverty, faith leaders, homeless service providers, and legislative champions spoke in the state legislature in honor of the 408 Nevadans who passed away while experiencing homelessness in 2017-2018 in Clark and Washoe counties. This event set the tone for the following day when over 150 advocates from across state participated in advocacy activities for Housing and Homelessness Awareness Day.



*The 408 names of people honored and remembered at the Statewide Homeless Vigil and Call for Housing Justice.
Photo credit: MODAMyra*

In addition to having fewer than two affordable and available homes for every 10 extremely low-income renters, Nevada also ranks high in rates of homelessness. It is third in the nation for the rate of unsheltered homeless individuals and has had the highest rate of unsheltered, unaccompanied homeless youth in the nation since 2013, according to the 2018 HUD Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR). Advocates spent the day educating state legislators about these alarming statistics and advocating for legislation that would help address them.



Advocates bring housing and homelessness statistics to the Nevada State Legislature. Photo credit: MODAMyra

Advocates filled the committee chambers when Senate Bill 448 (SB448) and Assembly Bill 174 (AB174) were introduced during the Housing and Homelessness Awareness Day. SB448 would create the Nevada Affordable Housing Tax Credit Program, creating \$10 million over four years in dollar-for-dollar state tax credits available to private developers. AB174 would ensure homeless services stakeholders – such as state agencies and private businesses – work collaboratively by establishing the Nevada Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Other bills advocates pushed for includes ones that would increase funding for homeless services and affordable housing development, allow Medicaid to pay for some supportive housing services, enable cities and counties to vote on ordinances to increase the supply of affordable housing, and establish protections and eliminate barriers for homeless and foster youth.

The Housing and Homelessness Awareness Day events were organized by the Nevada Homeless Alliance and Acting in Community Together in Organizing Northern Nevada (ACTIONN). In addition to advocacy activities, Nevada Homeless Alliance Executive Director Emily Paulsen led a panel discussion on affordable housing and homelessness during a lunch reception. The panel included JD Klippenstein of ACTIONN, Arash Ghafoori of Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, Taisacan Hall of Young Adults in Charge, Fuilala Riley of Help of Southern Nevada, and Hilary Lopez of Praxis Consulting.

"We know what the solutions are to ending homelessness and housing poverty," said Ms. Paulsen. "What our state and communities need is the political will to invest in the solutions at the scale necessary."



Group photo of advocates joining at the Nevada State Legislature. Photo credit: MODAMyra

For more information on the Nevada Homeless Alliance, visit: <https://nevadahomelessalliance.org/>

For more information on ACTIONN, visit: <https://actionn.org/>

Event

Register for the April 9 Webinar on How to Use the National Housing Preservation Database

NLIHC and the Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation (PAHRC) will co-present a [webinar](#) hosted by the National Housing Law Project (NHLP), *Saving Multifamily Homes-- How to Use the National Housing Preservation Database (NHPD)*, on Tuesday, April 9 at 1:00 p.m. ET. The webinar will cover the basics of how advocates, public officials, and researchers can use the NHPD to identify and study federally-assisted housing at-risk of being lost from the affordable housing stock. Interested parties can register for the webinar at: <https://adobe.ly/2uoEbQv>

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of March 24

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

- “Orlando is the fifth most 'rent-burdened' city in the U.S.,” *Orlando Weekly*, April 5 at: <https://bit.ly/2KeOGQX>
- “Studies Show: These Are the Worst States for Your Retirement,” *Yahoo!Finance*, April 3 at: <https://yhoo.it/2G4JBqw>
- “Housing Chief Warns “time is Not Our Friend,” *Associated Press*, April 3 at: <https://bit.ly/2I1UoUw>
- “Evictions happen much too easily in Louisiana,” *NOLA.com*, March 31 at: <https://bit.ly/2JTaGRk>
- “Even with a portion of the rent guaranteed, some tenants in St. Louis can't find affordable housing,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 31 at: <https://bit.ly/2HT4ird>

NLIHC News

NLIHC Bids Farewell to Creative Services Manager Ellen Errico

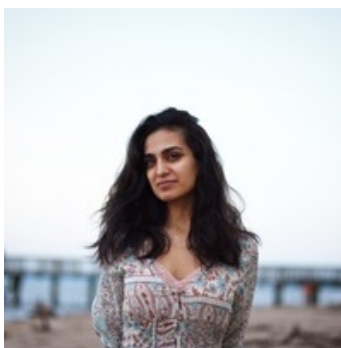
NLIHC bids farewell to Creative Services Manager Ellen Errico at the end of March. Ellen accepted a creative services position at the ALS Association.

Ellen joined NLIHC in July 2014 and contributed significantly to enhancing NLIHC's brand across both digital and print platforms. She was responsible for the design of NLIHC's signature publications—the *Advocates' Guide*, *Out of Reach*, *The Gap*, and *Memo to Members & Partners*. She also assisted with the redesign of nlihc.org and the creation of various microsites.

In July, the 2017, Ellen's design of the *Out of Reach* report won the prestigious APEX Award for Design and Illustration. It was the first time a product developed by NLIHC has received an award for design.

The NLIHC board and staff are grateful for her service and wish her the very best in her new position.

NLIHC Welcomes New Creative Services Specialist



NLIHC is pleased to welcome Ikra Rafi as its newest creative services specialist. Ikra first worked at NLIHC as a graphic design intern during the 2015-2016 fall and spring semesters. Ikra completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Arts and Visual Technology from George Mason University in 2017. Her interest in social justice stems from her freelancing and internships at various nonprofits, including NLIHC. Ikra will be responsible for all NLIHC's print and online graphic design efforts. Please join us in welcoming Ikra Rafi to the NLIHC team!

NLIHC Seeks Housing Policy Analyst

NLIHC seeks a housing policy analyst responsible for identifying, analyzing, advocating, and engaging the Coalition's membership and network in action on federal policy and regulatory activities related to the Coalition's mission and priorities, including disaster housing recovery. The policy analyst will report to the NLIHC senior director for public policy.

The policy analyst will:

1. Monitor legislative, regulatory, and administrative developments, as well as other activities or events of interest on Capitol Hill and at HUD, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other relevant agencies; ensure that local partners and the NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition are apprised of key developments and events.

2. Monitor disaster housing recovery efforts by maintaining frequent contact with local partners; hold regularly scheduled calls for local partners about implementation issues.
3. Advocate Coalition positions before members of Congress and the Administration; prepare letters, visits, phone calls, and e-mails to congressional members and their staff.
4. Develop materials that translate pending proposals and actions into an accessible and understandable format for Coalition members and partners. Respond to requests for information from members and other network participants.
5. Help facilitate communications and education with members of Congress and the Administration by drafting letters, scheduling and participating in meetings, and leading conference calls, and preparing and sending communications to members, Administration officials, and their staff.
6. Represent NLIHC before selected national partners; participate in the planning and implementation of NLIHC's Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition.
7. Coordinate regular meetings of NLIHC's Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition; coordinate and facilitate working group meetings, prepare materials, and make presentations. Attend meetings and events of other coalitions.
8. Work, together with NLIHC field staff and NLIHC partners and allies in impacted communities, to stay abreast of disaster recovery issues and other housing concerns.
9. Research and prepare articles for NLIHC's *Memo to Members and Partners* e-newsletter, including updates on Capitol Hill, HUD, and FEMA, through web-based and other research and attendance at hearings and briefings.
10. Develop materials that translate pending proposals and actions, as well as disaster housing recovery and rebuilding implementation issues, into an accessible and understandable format for NLIHC members and partners. Respond to requests for information from members and other network participants.
11. Represent NLIHC at meetings and conferences in Washington, DC and across the nation.
12. Plan and implement briefings, dialogues, and other informational forums on issues related to Coalition priorities and initiatives.
13. Monitor, and provide updates for, the Coalition website. Attend and report at all meetings of Board of Directors; participate in staff meetings, trainings, and events.
14. Participate in the planning and implementation of all aspects of Coalition's annual policy forum, including speaker recruitment. Other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Requirements include a bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred). A degree in Public Policy, Public Administration, Humanitarian Emergency Management or related area is a plus. Applicants should have at least two years of experience in project management, organizing, and/or public policy. Applicants should have a commitment to social justice and some knowledge of the fundamentals of affordable housing, homelessness, disaster recovery, or social service delivery. Candidates should be able to work in a diverse, high-paced environment and have strong writing and editing skills, oral and interpersonal communications, organizational skills, and attention to detail. Applicants should be proficient in the Microsoft Office suite and social media platforms.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. This is a full-time position located in Washington, DC. This is two-year grant-funded position with the possibility of extension.

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, and two writing samples to Paul Kealey, chief operating officer, and Sarah Mickelson, senior director of public policy, at: pkealey@nlihc.org and smickelson@nlihc.org

Where to Find Us – April 8

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

- [Housing California Annual Conference](#), Sacramento, CA, April 16
- [NACEDA People & Places 2019](#) Conference, Arlington, VA, April 16-17
- 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
- Day for Housing, Housing Alliance Delaware, Dover, DE, May 9
- Colorado NAHRO Conference, Vail, CO, May 15
- [National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies Conference](#), Denver, CO, May 16
- American Bankers Association Forum on Affordable Housing, Washington, DC, May 23
- 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 & 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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