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Budget and Appropriations

House Republicans Pass Disastrous Budget Proposal Gutting HUD Affordable Housing and Homelessness Resources – Take Action!

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the “Limit, Save, and Grow Act” ([H.R.2811](#)) on April 26 by a party-line vote of 217-215. If enacted, the bill would lift the federal debt ceiling in exchange for massive spending cuts to federal domestic programs in fiscal year (FY) 2024, including HUD’s vital affordable housing and homelessness programs.

Unveiled in the chamber last week by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) and officially introduced by House Committee on the Budget Chair Jodey Arrington (R-TX), the bill proposes cutting federal domestic spending for fiscal year (FY) 2024 to FY22 levels, resulting in at least a 23% reduction in funding for key programs, depending on how cuts are designed. The proposal would also limit future spending increases to just 1% annually for 10 years, rescind unspent COVID-19 relief funds, and put in place rigid work requirements for some anti-poverty programs. In exchange for these drastic proposals, the bill would raise the federal debt ceiling until March 31, 2024, or by \$1.5 trillion, whichever comes first, putting Congress in the position to restart debt ceiling negotiations all over again next year.

If enacted, the proposal – which some Democrats are calling the “Default on America Act” – would make it impossible for HUD to stave off mass evictions, according to a letter sent by HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge to House Appropriations Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT). In the letter, the Secretary suggests that the bill’s drastic cuts to HUD’s programs would cause nearly 1 million households currently being served by the department’s rental assistance programs to lose their housing assistance, putting them at risk of housing instability and evictions, and nearly 120,000 fewer people experiencing homelessness to receive services.

Capping future spending at a paltry 1% per year would likewise have a tremendously negative impact on the people served by affordable housing and homelessness programs. These programs must receive increased funding from year-to-year just to maintain the number of households being served. Even with recent funding increases to federal programs, many are still being impacted by the austere spending caps put in place by the “Budget Control Act of 2011.” HUD’s cumulative appropriations since FY10 are [still slightly lower](#) than they would be if annual appropriations had remained at FY10 levels and been adjusted only for inflation.

Speaker McCarthy has touted the bill as a “starting point” for debt ceiling negotiations, and while the bill will not pass the Democratic-controlled Senate, without continued pushback the draconian cuts and policies in the proposal may appeal to moderate Democrats, weakening their demand for a “clean” lift to the debt ceiling.

Take Action!

It is unacceptable to balance the federal budget by demanding cuts to programs that help the lowest-income households survive. There is a national shortage of approximately 7.3 million affordable, available homes for people with the lowest incomes, and only one in four households who qualify for federal housing assistance receives the help it needs. Without adequate funding

for vital federal affordable housing and homeless assistance programs, households with the lowest incomes will continue to live precariously, only one missed paycheck or unexpected emergency away from housing instability, eviction, and, in the worst cases, homelessness.

In addition to scheduling in-district meetings with their members of Congress, advocates can continue to take action:

- [Sign your organization on to the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding's \(CHCDF\) annual budget letter](#), calling on Congress to reject spending cuts and instead provide the highest possible allocation for HUD's and USDA's affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs in FY24.
- [Email your members of Congress today](#) and urge them to increase – not cut – resources for affordable housing and homelessness in FY24 and to support NLIHC's top appropriations priorities:
 - \$32.7 billion for the TBRA program to renew existing vouchers and to expand the program to an additional 200,000 households.
 - \$5.4 billion for public housing operations and \$5 billion for public housing repairs.
 - \$3.8 billion for HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants program.
 - \$100 million for legal assistance to prevent evictions.
 - \$3 billion for a permanent Emergency Rental Assistance program.
 - \$300 million for the competitive tribal housing grants, targeted to tribes with the greatest needs.
- [Check out NLIHC's advocacy toolkit](#), “Oppose Dramatic Cuts to Federal Investments in Affordable Housing,” for talking points, sample social media messages, and more!

Start Planning Now for NLIHC's May 8-19 “Spring into Action” Advocacy Campaign

NLIHC invites advocates to “Spring into Action” from May 8 to 19 during a two-week mobilization effort to oppose deep cuts in the federal budget and urge Congress to invest in affordable housing and homelessness programs at the scale needed to ensure everyone has a safe, affordable, accessible place to call home!

Be creative! Make a visual art piece, write a haiku, record a video, highlight data showing the impact of proposed cuts, or come up with your own idea to educate congressional leaders about why affordable housing and homelessness programs are important to your community, and how the proposed budget cuts would harm your family, friends, and neighbors.

Post your work on social media using the hashtags #CutsHurt and #SpringIntoAction between May 8 and May 19, and be sure to tag your members of Congress and @NLIHC!

NLIHC also has other resources you can use to start planning:

- Use [NLIHC's Legislative Action Center](#) to host an email campaign to send a message to members of Congress. The tool allows advocates to customize the email template with a poem or other creative written message.

- Facing writer’s block? Use the prompts in NLIHC’s storytelling resource, “[Storytelling Tips and Tricks](#),” to find a topic for your creative piece.
 - If you have a multimedia piece you would like to share with your congressional office but cannot submit via the online form, please send it to outreach@nlihc.org.
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NLIHC Joins National Partners in “Care, Not Cuts” Rally Opposing Disgraceful Cuts Proposed by House Debt Ceiling Plan

NLIHC joined national partners on April 26 for a rally and press conference on Capitol Hill opposing the [severe cuts to domestic spending programs](#) – including HUD’s and USDA’s vital affordable housing and homelessness programs – proposed by U.S. House of Representatives Republicans in their debt ceiling plan.

Organized by leading faith-based organizations, including the Friends Committee on National Legislation and NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, the rally brought together faith leaders, service providers, and advocates from across sectors who are united in opposition to the “Limit, Save, and Grow Act,” the debt ceiling plan proposed by House Republicans. The plan would enact massive spending cuts to domestic programs in exchange for temporarily lifting the nation’s debt ceiling.

“Across the nation, rents are exorbitant, eviction filings have increased, homelessness is on the rise, and millions of the lowest-income renters are just one financial shock away from falling behind on rent and losing their homes,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel in a press release for the event. “Yet House Republicans propose to slash funding for programs that help households with the lowest incomes keep a roof over their heads. It is unacceptable to cut critically needed affordable housing and homelessness resources for the households who need them most.”

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), ranking member of the House Committee on Appropriations, joined the rally as well, calling on advocates to “push back on what [Democrats] are calling the ‘Default on America Act’” by letting leaders in Congress “know the full brunt of what their districts face if these cuts go through.”

Kim Johnson, public policy manager at NLIHC, offered remarks on behalf of the organization, laying out the impact of the proposed cuts on HUD’s affordable housing and homelessness programs: “If this dangerous bill were enacted, nearly 1 million households currently receiving rental assistance through HUD’s programs would lose the assistance they need to keep a roof over their heads; nearly 120,000 fewer people experiencing homelessness would receive the help they need to find safe, stable, affordable, accessible housing; and millions of families with young children, older adults, veterans, and people with disabilities would lose the critical assistance they rely on for stable housing, pushing them into eviction and, in the worst cases, homelessness.”

In addition to its devastating impact on affordable housing and homelessness programs, the debt ceiling proposal would have a tremendously negative effect on other national priorities,

including access to healthcare, food assistance, and income security and would further exacerbate existing racial and social inequities.

Watch a recording of the “Care, Not Cuts” rally at: <https://bit.ly/3oS40HR>

Learn more about the devastating impacts the proposed cuts would have on HUD’s affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs at: <https://bit.ly/3Lxqc34>

HoUsed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes

“Spring into Action” with NLIHC to Oppose Budget Cuts!

“Spring into Action” with NLIHC from May 8 to May 19 in a two-week mobilization effort to oppose deep budget cuts and urge Congress to invest in affordable housing and homelessness programs at the scale needed!

Be creative! Make a visual art piece, write a haiku, record a video, highlight data showing the impact of proposed cuts, or come up with your own idea to educate congressional leaders about why affordable housing and homelessness programs are essential to your community and how proposed budget cuts would harm your family and neighbors.

Post your work on social media using the hashtags #CutsHurt and #SpringIntoAction between May 8 and May 19, and be sure to tag your member of Congress and @NLIHC!

NLIHC is also offering additional resources you can use to start planning:

- Use [NLIHC’s Legislative Action Center](#) to host an email campaign to send a message to members of Congress. The tool allows advocates to customize the email template with a poem or other creative written message.
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Please contact outreach@nlihc.org with questions.

Recap of 4/24 National HoUsed Campaign Call

In the most recent (April 24) call for the National HoUsed Campaign, we discussed state housing finance agency screening policies for people with conviction histories; heard about a grassroots housing justice tour led by community leaders; received an update on how the affordable housing crisis is affecting people in Colorado; learned about initiatives to support Arizonans; discussed House Republicans’ debt ceiling proposal and its potentially devastating effects; and shared how advocates can take action.

John Bae of the Vera Institute for Justice shared findings from his [recent report](#), *Opening Doors to Affordable Housing: The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and People with Conviction Histories*. Released as part of Vera's [Opening Doors to Housing Initiative](#), the report highlights screening policies enacted by state housing finance agencies (HFAs) for people with conviction histories. The study found that 34 HFAs have no guidance on the use of criminal backgrounds in tenant screenings, while seven have policies permitting the use of conviction histories to deny people admission to housing.

Access to housing is fundamental to successful reentry, but due to barriers to housing for people with conviction histories, those who have been previously incarcerated are more likely to be unhoused, highlighting the cyclical relationship between homelessness and incarceration. Bae also announced that Vera will be launching technical assistance training to HFAs across the country in the coming months to provide assistance as they change their policies to support this population.

Kayla Gilchrist and Jennifer Cossyleon from Community Change discussed an effort led by community leaders to bring attention to efforts to decriminalize homelessness, support low-income renters, and hold landlords accountable. Called the [Grassroots Housing Justice Tour](#), the effort calls on community leaders to create narrative changes around homelessness and housing justice, with the goal of furthering care for those experiencing homelessness, upholding health and safety standards in all HUD subsidized housing, and uplifting and extending the right to organize, with an emphasis on racial justice. After the tour, the community leaders will travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge and other HUD decision makers to advance their policy goals.

Cathy Alderman of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless joined the call to discuss the housing crisis in Colorado. On any given night in the state, between 10,000 and 53,000 people experience homelessness, a number that has been increasing. While people with the lowest incomes are most impacted, Alderman noted that this housing crisis is hurting people across the housing spectrum, exacerbating the state's rural and urban divide, and increasing the number of elderly people losing their housing.

Next, Joanna Carr of the Arizona Housing Coalition provided an update on the worsening affordable housing crisis in Arizona. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified housing needs across the state, increasing the number of unhoused people, and rural communities in Arizona have seen an increase the number of people experiencing visible homelessness. Carr stressed the negative impacts of the proposed federal budget cuts to a system already spread thin to accommodate the heightened number of people experiencing housing instability. Advocates in the state have utilized a storytelling approach in advocacy with their congressional representatives, which has been effective in conveying the seriousness of the issue and amplifying community members' experiences.

NLIHC Senior Vice President of Policy and Field Organizing Sarah Saadian warned listeners of the impact of House Republicans' proposal to slash domestic spending in fiscal year (FY) 2024 in exchange for increasing the federal debt ceiling. Known as the "Limit, Save, and Grow Act" – or the "Default on America Act," as some Democrats have called it – the bill would lift the debt ceiling until March 31, 2024, or until the ceiling reaches another \$1.5 trillion, whichever comes

first, in exchange for capping FY24 spending at FY22 levels and limiting federal spending on domestic programs to 1% per year for 10 years. In a [letter](#) to the House Committee on Appropriations, HUD Secretary Fudge estimated that 1 million people would lose housing assistance if the harmful bill were enacted.

In response to the threat of spending cuts, Brooke Schipporeit, NLIHC's manager of field organizing, shared an upcoming opportunity for advocates to contact their members of Congress about the devastating harms the proposed budget cuts would create. NLIHC's [Spring into Action Week](#) (May 8-19) will provide a chance for advocates to creatively weigh-in with members of Congress by writing poems, creating artwork, and otherwise creatively expressing the importance of federal housing and homelessness resources. Participants are encouraged to share their art on social media, tagging their members of Congress and using the hashtags #CutsHurt and #SpringIntoAction.

National calls take place every other week. The next call will be held on May 8 at 2:30 pm ET. Register for the call at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

Congress

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel Testifies before Senate Banking Committee on Bipartisan Legislation to Address the Affordable Housing Crisis

The U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs held a [hearing](#), "Building Consensus to Address Housing Challenges," on April 26. The hearing addressed bipartisan proposals to help solve the nation's affordable housing crisis. Witnesses included NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel; Lou Tisler, executive director of the National NeighborWorks Association; and Vanessa Brown Calder, the director of opportunity and family policy studies at the Cato Institute.

Chair Sherrod Brown (D-OH) opened the hearing by highlighting the severe shortage of affordable housing, the rising gap between incomes and housing costs, and the impact of the housing crisis on education, healthcare, and economic growth. Chair Brown highlighted several NLIHC-supported bills and emphasized the importance of the Committee's work to build consensus on legislation to address the housing challenges facing people and communities across the country.

In her [testimony](#), Diane advocated for an array of bipartisan bills designed to ensure that the lowest-income and most marginalized renters have access to stable, safe, affordable housing. "Rents have skyrocketed, eviction filings are rising and surpassing pre-pandemic levels, and homelessness is increasing," said Diane in her testimony. "The country's lowest-income people are struggling to stay housed, and Congress's inaction costs us all. But quick, bipartisan action by this Congress can – just as it did during the pandemic – save lives, save money, and provide housing relief for many. I urge this Committee and this Congress to act quickly and, at minimum, advance the multitude of bipartisan housing bills before us."

Two of the bipartisan bills that Diane advocated for – both championed by NLIHC’s [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) and [HoUSed](#) campaigns – were re-introduced on April 25: the “Fair Housing Improvement Act” ([S.1267/H.R.2846](#)) introduced by Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Representative Scott Peters (D-CA) and the “Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act” ([S.1257](#)) introduced by Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Todd Young (R-IN).

The [Fair Housing Improvement Act](#) expands housing choice by prohibiting housing discrimination by landlords on the basis of “source of income,” “military status,” and “veteran status.” While [several states and localities](#) have passed source-of-income protection laws, federal law does not provide protections against this type of discrimination, leaving [half](#) of all households with housing vouchers unprotected from discrimination.

The [Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act](#) would create 250,000 new housing vouchers, paired with mobility-related services, to help low-income families with young children move to communities of their choice, including neighborhoods with high-performing schools and high-quality childcare and early education programs. In response to a question from Senator Van Hollen on the impact of the Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act, Diane explained that the bipartisan bill could “significantly address family homelessness and housing instability for households and communities across the country.”

Diane also urged Congress to invest in cost-effective eviction prevention tools by enacting the bipartisan “[Eviction Crisis Act](#).” Introduced in the last session by Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Rob Portman (R-OH), the bill would provide emergency, short-term assistance to help stabilize households in crisis, building on lessons learned from and the infrastructure developed during the pandemic to keep families stably housed. Additionally, she called on Congress to improve and streamline existing housing programs with the “Choice in Affordable Housing Act” ([S.32](#)); build housing for people with the lowest incomes through the “Yes In My Backyard Act” ([S.1614/H.R.3198](#)); improve oversight of federal disaster resources with the “[Reforming Disaster Recovery Act](#)” ([S.2471/H.R.4707](#)); and build more affordable housing by [expanding and reforming](#) the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program, among other bipartisan opportunities.

In response to a question from Senator JD Vance (R-OH) about Housing First, Diane highlighted that approach is an [evidence-based practice](#) backed by multiple, national studies. Additionally, she emphasized that the root cause of homelessness is the lack of access to decent, stable, affordable housing. “The evidence and data are clear that Housing First does work. We know how to end homelessness. Individuals have their homelessness ended every day – in Ohio and throughout the country,” explained Diane. “What we can’t do is stem the tide of people newly falling into homelessness as rents increase much faster than incomes do.” Learn more about Housing First [here](#).

View a recording of the hearing and read the witnesses’ testimony at: <https://bit.ly/43VhORW>

Read Diane’s written testimony at: <https://bit.ly/3oEuo84>

Bipartisan “Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act” Reintroduced in Senate

Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Todd Young (R-IN) reintroduced the “[Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act](#)” (S.1257) in the U.S. Senate on April 25. The bipartisan legislation would create 250,000 new housing vouchers, paired with mobility-related services, to help low-income families with young children move to communities of their choice, including neighborhoods with high-performing schools and high-quality childcare and early education programs. The Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act has been championed by NLIHC’s Opportunity Starts at Home (OSAH) campaign, which worked with the bill’s sponsors to shape the legislation.

The bill would create new vouchers for low-income, high-need families with children under age 6 who have a history of homelessness or housing instability, live in an area of concentrated poverty, or are at risk of being pushed out of a well-resourced area. The new vouchers would be paired with customized counseling and mobility-related services to help families move to neighborhoods of their choice.

Access to safe, affordable housing is linked to nearly every quality-of-life measure, including better [educational](#) and [health](#) outcomes, [housing stability](#), [racial equity](#), and [economic mobility](#). A [landmark study](#) by Harvard economist Raj Chetty demonstrates the enormous positive impact that affordable housing can have on upward economic mobility for children in low-income families.

More than 60 national organizations have [endorsed](#) the Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act.

Opportunity Starts at Home Campaign Leaders Support the Legislation

“With exorbitant rents and increased homelessness in many communities, our nation is in the grips of an affordable housing crisis that forces three out of every four of America’s lowest-income families to make impossible tradeoffs between paying rent and putting groceries on the table or meeting their other basic needs,” stated Diane Yentel, president and CEO of NLIHC. “Ongoing structural racism, discrimination, and segregation in our communities exacerbates the challenges, impacting health outcomes, educational attainment, and in some cases, life expectancy. The Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act is a critical first step toward housing justice by providing 250,000 families with young children the breadth of opportunities that start with affordable homes in safe, thriving communities with access to good schools, jobs, healthcare, and transit.”

“Low-income children facing housing instability and growing up in neighborhoods of extreme poverty are more likely to struggle in school, more likely to experience adverse health outcomes, and less likely to climb the income ladder as adults,” said Mike Koprowski, national director of the Opportunity Starts at Home campaign. “Research clearly shows that Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers can dramatically improve the life trajectories of low-income children by expanding access to stable, affordable housing located in safe, well-resourced communities. This

legislation contains one of the most research-based and cost-effective policy tools available to the federal government to dramatically improve upward mobility for the next generation.”

“Early childhood is a critical window of brain and body development,” said Dr. Megan Sandel, pediatrician and Co-Lead Principal Investigator for Children’s HealthWatch. “Our Children’s HealthWatch research and my experience as a pediatrician show a stable home early in life is the foundation for good health. Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers give children and families a fair shot at healthy development during this important period and will have a positive impact on health for generations to come.”

“We can’t effectively address hunger without addressing its root causes, including housing instability,” said Luis Guardia, president of the Food Research & Action Center. “That’s why we fully support the Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act. This critical piece of legislation would help build brighter futures for children and families by tearing down systemic barriers that lead to inequality. We call on lawmakers to support this bill to ensure everyone has the foundation and resources they need to thrive.”

Read the text of the bill at: <https://bit.ly/42IUICL>

Read a press release issued by Senator Van Hollen for additional quotes from OSAH campaign leaders and a list of national organizations that have endorsed the bill: <https://bit.ly/4456937>

Learn more about the bill at: <https://bit.ly/3VdLaaq>

Tell Congress to enact this critical bipartisan legislation at: <https://p2a.co/uf3pc4a>

Senator Kaine and Representative Peters Introduce “Fair Housing Improvement Act”

Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Representative Scott Peters (D-CA) [introduced](#) the “Fair Housing Improvement Act” ([S.1267](#), [H.R. 2846](#)) in the U.S. Congress on April 25. The bill would expand housing choice by prohibiting source-of-income discrimination as well as discrimination based on military or veteran status. While rental assistance programs help families find safe and stable places to live, too often landlords discriminate against households that receive assistance through programs like the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) or Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) programs. If passed, the bill would prohibit housing discrimination based on “source of income,” “military status,” and “veteran status” by adding each to the list of classes protected under the “Fair Housing Act.” In addition to aiding voucher holders and other low-income renters, the legislation would advance racial equity and strengthen economic mobility. The bill is supported by NLIHC and leading national organizations from the housing, faith, civil rights, food security, health, and anti-poverty sectors represented in the [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) (OSAH) campaign.

“Access to safe, affordable housing provides individuals with stability and opportunity, but too often, individuals have been denied housing because of how they pay rent,” said Senator Kaine,

who is a former fair housing attorney. “I’m proud to reintroduce this bill to protect veterans and low-income families from discrimination and expand access to housing for all Americans.”

“I applaud Senator Kaine and Representative Peters for introducing this important legislation to help combat housing discrimination, segregation, and inequity,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel. “Where you live has an enormous impact on the opportunities we have in life – everything from educational attainment, to lifetime earnings, better health, and life expectancy. For too long, discrimination has prevented people with low incomes from living in neighborhoods of their choice – including communities with access to jobs, high performing schools, healthcare, and transportation – simply because they rely on federal housing benefits to make ends meet. This legislation is an important step towards righting this wrong.”

The Fair Housing Improvement Act has been endorsed by more than 70 national organizations, and its passage is a top priority for NLIHC’s HoUsed and Opportunity Starts at Home campaigns. Advocates can support this legislation by urging their members of Congress to cosponsor the bill via this link: <https://p2a.co/5hqHbkY> Additionally, organizations can join a national letter urging enactment of the bill via this link: <https://p2a.co/9n8zrld>

Read a press release about the bill and see a full list of its endorsers at: <https://bit.ly/3LF9FKC>

Read a fact sheet on the Fair Housing Improvement Act at: <https://bit.ly/3AzjrYi>

Bipartisan Bill Increasing Housing Protections for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking Is Reintroduced

Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), along with Representatives Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) and Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), reintroduced the “Fair Housing for Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Survivors Act” in the U.S. Congress on April 26. If enacted, the bipartisan bill would add survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and sex trafficking to the list of classes protected under the “Fair Housing Act,” which would help ensure that people who are survivors of these crimes do not face eviction or other forms of retaliation for crimes committed against them. NLIHC has endorsed the bill.

Domestic and intimate partner violence is a leading cause of homelessness among women and families. As many as 57% of women and children experiencing homelessness cite escaping intimate partner violence as the primary reason for their homelessness. The nation’s severe shortage of affordable housing often leaves survivors with few options for keeping a roof over their children’s heads, forcing them to make an impossible choice between staying with an abuser, or leaving and risking the dangers of homelessness.

Some localities have also enacted [“nuisance” or “crime-free” ordinances](#) and policies, which target households in which alleged “nuisance” activity – including calls to emergency services or noise disturbances – occurs. While in theory these policies aim to hold tenants and owners responsible for disturbances accountable by threatening them with fines, eviction, or other penalties, the broadness of such policies often results in incidents of domestic violence being

labeled “nuisance” activity, discouraging survivors from calling for assistance for fear of facing retribution or eviction.

“Access to safe housing is a serious issue for survivors and their families, which is increasingly more difficult in New Hampshire as we face a housing crisis,” said Senator Shaheen in a [press release](#) for the bill. “This bipartisan legislation would be an important tool to break down barriers and protect already vulnerable populations. This bill is a commonsense but big step we can take in Congress to enhance safety measures for victims of violence and trafficking by providing them with fair housing protections.”

“For far too long, survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking have been forced to choose between confinement with their abusers or homelessness,” said Congresswoman Wasserman Schultz in [a press release](#). “Even as they are victimized, they can – and have been – evicted on the grounds of involvement in criminal activity. I am proud to introduce legislation that will remedy this injustice, expanding the protections granted by the Fair Housing Act to allow people to escape abusive situations.”

“Every survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking deserves a safe place to call home,” said Congresswoman Malliotakis. “I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing the Fair Housing for Survivors Act to ensure survivors have the necessary resources to rebuild their lives free from abuse, protect them from unfair discrimination in the private housing market, and provide them with support to escape abusive environments.”

Housing for People with Disabilities

Senator Casey Introduces “VITAL Act” to Increase Accessible Housing Development

Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), Chairman of the U.S. Senate’s Special Committee on Aging, [introduced](#) the “Visitable Inclusive Tax Credits for Accessible Living (VITAL) Act” ([S.1377](#)) on April 27. The bill would address the housing affordability and accessibility crisis for people with disabilities by increasing the overall funding for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program and encouraging development of accessible housing for seniors and people with disabilities. NLIHC endorsed the bill and looks forward to working with its sponsors to further refine the bill to ensure greater affordability standards for people with disabilities.

The LIHTC program is a federal program providing tax credits to developers who build new housing for low-income renters. According to a 2011 HUD [study](#), fewer than 6% of housing units are designed to be accessible. (Accessible homes typically offer specific features and technologies, such as lowered kitchen counters and sinks, widened doorways, grab bars, and no step showers.) The VITAL Act seeks to address the problem by increasing the overall funding for LIHTC, increasing funding for accessible developments, requiring states to set aside at least 20% of units for people with disabilities and in walkable or rollable neighborhoods, establishing LIHTC resource centers for nonprofit developers, and creating a national housing advisory council on national LIHTC trends and best practices.

Read Senator Casey's press release on the bill at: <https://bit.ly/40LM0fx>

Read a fact sheet on the bill at: <https://bit.ly/3ADbKAs>

Read the bill text and see a list of cosponsors at: <https://bit.ly/44cHBoR>

Rural Housing

Senate Banking Housing Subcommittee to Hold Hearing on Rural Housing

The U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs will hold a [hearing](#), “Rural Housing Legislation,” on Tuesday, May 2, at 2:45 pm ET. Witnesses will include Anne Mavity, executive director of the Minnesota Housing Partnership and NLIHC board member; Natalie Maxwell, managing attorney at the National Housing Law Project; and David Lipsetz, president and CEO of the Housing Assistance Council.

This year's “Farm Bill” presents an opportunity to preserve deeply needed affordable housing in rural communities. Properties in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) housing portfolio are nearing the end of their mortgage maturity periods, and renters in these properties will be left with few options for decent, safe, and affordable housing. While the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture are tasked with creating the Farm Bill, the Senate's Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and the House's Committee on Financial Services oversee USDA's housing programs.

Watch the upcoming hearing and read witnesses' testimony at: <https://bit.ly/3VhsV43>

Read more about the rural housing mortgage crisis in a recent article featuring NLIHC staff at: <https://bit.ly/3LCyLJP>

Tribal Housing

House Appropriations Subcommittee Holds Hearing Addressing Tribal Perspectives on Housing and Transportation

The U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development held a [hearing](#), “Tribal Perspectives on Housing and Transportation,” on April 28.

Witnesses included Gary Bohnee (Gila River), special assistant at the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs for the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in Arizona; Barbara Little Owl (Standing Rock Sioux), executive director of the Standing Rock Housing Authority; Tonya Plummer (Assiniboine, Sioux, and Cree), director of Native American housing programs, Enterprise Community Partners; Leo Sisco (Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi), chairman, Santa Rosa Indian Community of the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe; Russell Sossamon

(Choctaw), executive director, Comanche Nation Housing Authority; and Alex Wesaw (Potawatomi), treasurer, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians. The Subcommittee Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) focused the hearing on Congress's oversight of HUD, particularly the Office of Native American Programs (ONAP), as well as other federal agencies that provide federal funding to Native American Tribes.

Witnesses discussed the benefits of federal funding to Tribes, including the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG), IHBG Competitive Grant, Native CDFI lending programs, and the Veterans Affairs Native American Direct Loan Program (VA NADL), among others. Barbara Little Owl represented the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, a member of the United Native American Housing Association ([UNAHA](#)), NLIHC's first [Tribal partner](#). Little Owl testified to the benefits of the Indian Housing Block Grants made available through the "Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996" (NAHASDA) but drew attention to the program's outdated funding structure. Under the current formula funding, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is only able to serve approximately 12% of its population. "Funding to repair or replace current collapsing service lines to occupied units is critically needed," said Little Owl. "In some locations on the Reservation, we currently have water and sewer lines in place and ready for new home development but have not been able to complete any new construction since the 1990s due to lack of funding for home development." Little Owl also noted the Tribe's efficient usage of Emergency Rental Assistance Program funding, which NLIHC evaluated in a [report](#).

The witnesses recommended that the committee reauthorize NAHASDA; make NAHASDA funding mandatory, not discretionary; require federal agencies serving Native Americans to coordinate and align service requirements; and follow through on treaty obligations and trust responsibilities. Chairman Cole noted that "we've historically underfunded these functions" and that the problems would not be fixed through one year's appropriations alone.

Watch the hearing and read witnesses' testimony at: <https://bit.ly/3oUfH0G>

Fair Housing

NLIHC Tenant Leader Cohort Submits Comment Letter on Proposed AFFH Rule

The NLIHC Tenant Leader Cohort submitted a comment [letter](#) to HUD's Office of General Counsel, Regulation Division, on April 24 in response to a request for comments on [FR-6250-P-01 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing](#), the proposed rule to implement the obligation to affirmatively further the purposes and policies of the "Fair Housing Act" (Title VIII of the "Civil Rights Act of 1968").

In the letter, the Tenant Leader Cohort commended the Biden-Harris administration for its unprecedented interest in advancing tenant protections through the proposed Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule. While the Tenant Leader Cohort acknowledged the vastly enhanced community engagement provisions in the proposed rule, it raised serious concerns regarding proposed changes to the ConPlan Citizen Participation Regulations and the PHA Plan Resident Participation Regulations.

In an effort to strengthen the Equity Plan, the Tenant Leader Cohort offered the following recommendations: (1) clarify the meaning of “affordable housing opportunities”; (2) strengthen accessibility guidelines; (3) assess program participants’ environmental impacts on protected groups; (4) collect robust data for Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs; (5) clearly explain public housing authority (PHA) controlled policies; (6) provide critical sub-regulatory guidance for both Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs; (7) extend the timeframe for public review of the Equity Plan; (8) require program participants to submit revised Equity Plans to ensure AFFH principles are applied to planning associated with disaster-related funding; and (9) strengthen a number of key definitions.

“Housing justice and racial justice are inextricably linked,” reads the Tenant Leader Cohort letter. “As such, large-scale, sustained investments and anti-racist reforms are critical to ensure that people with the lowest incomes have quality homes that are accessible and affordable in communities of their choice.”

NLIHC’s Tenant Leader Cohort is comprised of tenant advocates and community leaders with lived experience of housing insecurity who work towards housing justice and racial equity in their neighborhoods and greater communities. NLIHC collaborates with the Tenant Leader Cohort to inform policy priorities so that these priorities best reflect the needs of low-income renters.

Read the letter [here](#).

NLIHC Submits AFFH Comment Letter, Signs On to Housing Justice Network Letter

NLIHC submitted a [comment letter](#) to HUD on April 24 supporting the proposed Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule while also suggesting improvements. NLIHC also signed on to an AFFH [comment letter](#) submitted to HUD by the Housing Justice Network (HJN), an informal network of housing attorneys and advocates hosted by the National Housing Law Project (NHLPP).

As noted previously in *Memo (2/13, 4/3)*, NLIHC is in general pleased with the proposed AFFH rule and considers the rule an improvement over the 2015 AFFH rule, which was abruptly removed by the Trump administration. NLIHC’s comment letter highlights six overarching features that are especially endorsed by NLIHC, while also suggesting ways to improve each. These six features are (1) enhanced community engagement, (2) greater public transparency, (3) a public complaint process, (4) a stronger link between the (new) Equity Plan goals and Consolidated Plans and PHA Plans, (5) an annual evaluation of progress toward achieving fair housing goals, and (6) clarification of and emphasis on the need for a “balanced approach” to affirmatively furthering fair housing.

NLIHC’s letter includes an extended section regarding needed improvements to the community engagement provisions. NLIHC urges HUD to specifically require community engagement at

four stages of the Equity Plan process: identifying fair housing issues, establishing which fair housing issues to prioritize, setting fair housing goals, and commenting on a draft Equity Plan before it is submitted to HUD for review.

NLIHC strongly urges HUD to remove all provisions inviting participating jurisdictions (cities, counties, and states that submit Consolidated Plans (ConPlans) and public housing agencies (PHAs) that submit PHA Plans) to “combine” the AFFH rule’s community engagement provisions with the ConPlan’s citizen participation rules and the PHA Plan’s resident and public participation rules because they are incompatible. Instead, NLIHC asserts that the AFFH community engagement requirements must be separate from and in addition to the ConPlan and PHA plan provisions. NLIHC is concerned that as proposed, the AFFH rule and modified ConPlan and PHA Plan regulations do not provide for genuine, “reasonable opportunities” for public involvement in the process of “incorporating” an AFFH Equity Plan’s goals, strategies, and actions in a ConPlan or PHA Plan.

In the letter, NLIHC suggests improvements to the Equity Plan, especially relating to the content for PHAs, reviewing an Equity Plan, and revising an accepted Equity Plan. In the definitions section, NLIHC includes an extended set of recommendations to improve the definition of “affordable housing opportunities” along with improvements for seven other definitions.

The HJN letter also endorses the proposed AFFH rule. It adds many suggestions for improvements, including requiring more data to inform fair housing analysis, addressing concerns that the rule conflates “affordable” housing with “fair” housing, providing a standalone definition of “accessible” or “accessibility,” adding immigrants and sexual assault survivors to the definition of “underserved communities,” adding an analysis of environmental hazards to the Equity Plan, and adding an analysis of HUD’s public housing “repositioning” policies, along with numerous other additions to the content of PHA Equity Plans.

Read NLIHC’s AFFH comment letter at: <https://bit.ly/41Ht5Uw>

Read the HJN AFFH comment letter at: <https://bit.ly/41Z2WjG>

Read NLIHC’s “Overview of Key AFFH Definitions” at: <https://bit.ly/3JQkFSY>

Read NLIHC’s “Revised Overview of AFFH Community Engagement and Complaint Processes” at: <https://bit.ly/3zie6E0>

Read NLIHC’s “Overview of the AFFH Equity Plan” at: <https://bit.ly/3K4QN5v>

Read NLIHC’s “Preliminary Overview of AFFH Equity Plan Submission and HUD Review and Compliance Procedures” at: <https://bit.ly/3ZB2Spm>

Read NLIHC’s “[Preliminary Highlights of Five Positive Overarching Features of the Proposed AFFH Rule](#),” first provided in *Memo*, [2/13](#).

Read NLIHC’s “[Key Provisions of the 2023 Proposed AFFH Rule: Based on the Executive Summary and Background Sections of the Preamble](#),” first provided in *Memo*, [1/23](#).

More information about Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing is on [page 8-12](#) of NLIHC's newly released *2023 Advocates' Guide* and on NLIHC's [Racial Equity and Fair Housing website](#) of the [Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing webpages](#).

Find HUD's easy-to-read preview version of the proposed AFFH rule at: <https://bit.ly/3wWsRLH>

Find the *Federal Register* version of the proposed AFFH rule at: <https://bit.ly/3RIYfa1>

NLIHC Signs On to Joint Press Statement on AFFH Rule

NLIHC signed on to a joint press statement led by the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) in support of the proposed Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule and urging HUD to move quickly in adopting a final AFFH regulation following the end of the proposed rule's comment period on April 24.

“Our organizations commended HUD’s leadership for releasing its updated Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) proposed rule this year, an important step toward expanding fair housing,” the joint statement reads. “Now that the proposed rule’s comment period has closed, we call on HUD to move swiftly in adopting a final rule that creates more equitable, well-resourced, and inclusive communities in which all residents can thrive. In order for the final rule to accomplish this, a number of elements must be strengthened, such as:

1. Local fair housing outreach and enforcement capacity should be a fair housing goal category.
2. The requirements of the community engagement process must be clarified.
3. HUD must increase transparency in the equity planning process.”

The letter was signed by the following organizations: the National Fair Housing Alliance, American Civil Liberties Union, Justice in Aging, National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals, National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development, National Community Reinvestment Coalition, National Housing Law Project, National Low Income Housing Coalition, PolicyLink, The Arc of the United States, and UnidosUS.

Read the statement at: <https://bit.ly/421bMgQ>

HUD

HUD FHEO Seeks Input before Updating Section 504 Regulations Prohibiting Discrimination on the Basis of Disability

HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) published an [Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) (ANPRM) on April 25 seeking public input in advance of updating the regulations implementing Section 504 of the “Rehabilitation Act of 1973.” Section 504 prohibits

discrimination on the basis of disability in all programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance and in programs and activities conducted by executive agencies. The current regulations were published in 1988. FHEO requests public feedback in regard to 13 questions and intends to draft a Notice of a Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) proposing an updated accessibility standard. The background section of the ANPRM and the questions provide a basic primer on Section 504 and various issues that might confront people with disabilities. Comments are due by July 24.

Short Background on Section 504

Section 504 of the act provides that “no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by an executive agency.”

All recipients and subrecipients of federal financial assistance from HUD must comply with Section 504 of the act and its implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 8. The act and regulations cover all programs and activities of recipients of funds from HUD, including, for example, eligibility criteria, application processes, site selection, admission to and continued participation in programs, tenancy, service delivery, and accessibility of programs and facilities. The regulations contain general prohibitions against discrimination and offer examples of discriminatory actions.

Section 504 requires recipients to administer programs and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of individuals with disabilities; make reasonable accommodations that adjust, modify, or make exceptions to policies or practices and structural modifications to facilities that may be necessary for an individual with a disability; and distribute accessible dwelling units throughout assisted projects and sites. Recipients must also take appropriate steps to ensure effective communication with applicants, beneficiaries, and members of the public who have disabilities.

Questions Posed by the ANPRM

The ANPRM poses 13 questions about which FHEO seeks public input. These include the following:

- Should the definition of “individual with disabilities” be revised, and if so, how?
- To what extent are people with disabilities at serious risk of entering institutional settings or being unable to transition from institutional or group home settings?
- Are there specific examples of discrimination that individuals with mental health or substance use disabilities have experienced?
- Are there specific examples of discrimination that individuals with intellectual, cognitive, or developmental disabilities have experienced?
- What types of auxiliary aids and services do individuals with disabilities need in housing and community development programs and activities? (Recipients must ensure effective communication with applicants, beneficiaries, and members of the public who have

disabilities and are required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services when necessary to afford people with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, a program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.)

- What challenges exist in using a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) in the private rental market to secure a unit that meets a household's disability-related needs? For example, is the process to seek an extension of the search term due to the lack of accessible housing effective, or is the process to seek exception rent under the exception payments standard for accessible housing units effective?

Read the ANPRM at: <https://bit.ly/3LDaB1K>

Find an easier-to-read version of the ANPRM at: <https://bit.ly/3VaJ1X>

NLIHC Signs On to NHLP Letter Urging Congress Not to Expand RAD and to Promote Alternatives to Public Housing Demolition

NLIHC signed on to a [letter](#) submitted by the National Housing Law Project (NHLP) to U.S. Senate and House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee leaders, urging Congress to oppose lifting the current, expanded cap on the number of public housing units that can be converted to Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs) or Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) through the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) until critical issues identified in the letter are fully addressed. The letter also urges Congress to direct HUD to promote alternatives to public housing demolition, disposition, voluntary conversion to vouchers, RAD/Section 18 blends, Faircloth-to-RAD transactions, or mixed-finance redevelopment that replaces or rehabilitates existing affordable units.

Any future expansion of RAD beyond the current statutory cap of 455,000 units must be informed by the statutorily required evaluations of the “demonstration” program, including one on the impact of RAD conversion on public housing tenants that must include an analysis of whether the resident rights and protections guaranteed under the RAD statute were implemented and enforced during conversion and are being implemented and enforced by the new owners after the conversion.

Congress must prioritize funding for public housing preservation programs and activities while guiding HUD on how best to spend such investments by strengthening HUD's oversight and proper implementation of RAD and by eliminating health and safety hazards.

In instances requiring public housing demolition, disposition, or voluntary conversion to vouchers, Congress should direct HUD to require a market analysis and civil rights assessment to determine whether there are other affordable housing units available in the community and whether residents will be able to use issued vouchers in opportunity neighborhoods.

Read the NHLP sign on letter at: <https://bit.ly/443vsme>

Read more about the Public Housing program on [page 4-32](#) of NLIHC's *2023 Advocates' Guide* and on NLIHC's [public housing webpage](#).

Read more about the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) on [page 4-46](#) of NLIHC's *2023 Advocates' Guide* and on NLIHC's [public housing webpage](#),

Read more about Section 18 Demolition and Disposition and Section 22 Voluntary Conversion of public housing to vouchers on [page 4-69](#) of NLIHC's *2023 Advocates' Guide* and on NLIHC's [public housing webpage](#),

NLIHC Submits Comment Letter Regarding Proposed NSPIRE Scoring Model

NLIHC submitted a [comment letter](#) endorsing all but one provision in HUD's [proposed](#) National Standards for Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) physical inspection scoring and ranking methodology. NLIHC also offered several suggested improvements and explained its disagreement with one proposed practice. In addition, the letter strongly urged HUD to require inspectors to provide residents with all draft and final inspection reports at the same time that reports are provided to owners and/or managers. NLIHC also urged HUD to include additional opportunities for residents to engage with the NSPIRE inspection process.

As proposed, NSPIRE scoring will focus on the health and safety of the housing units where residents live, as well as on the functional defects of buildings, while reducing scoring based on the appearance of building exteriors (see *Memo*, [4/3](#)).

HUD published a [proposed NSPIRE rule](#) on January 13, 2021, to formally align housing quality and inspection standards across all HUD programs (see *Memo*, [1/19/21](#)). On April 27, a final version of that rule cleared the [Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs \(OIRA\)](#), a division of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The rule will be published in the *Federal Register* in the coming weeks.

The NSPIRE scoring notice will apply to all HUD housing currently inspected by HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC), including public housing and Multifamily Housing programs such as Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance, Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities, and FHA Insured multifamily housing. The proposed scoring notice does not apply to the Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Voucher programs.

NLIHC supported a proposed Scoring Model that among other things would:

- Eliminate defect-specific point caps in order to more fully measure the extent of deficiencies.
- Score physical deficiencies according to the location and scarcity of a deficiency at three (instead of five) "inspectable areas": the dwelling "unit" itself, "inside" non-unit portions of buildings (e.g., community rooms, laundry rooms, corridors, and stairs), and "outside" (e.g., building exteriors, parking lots, and play areas).
- Assign greater weight to the location of a deficiency, heavily weighing in-unit deficiencies.
- Deduct more points for a given deficiency based not only on its location but also the severity of the deficiency: Life Threatening, Severe, Moderate, and Low, as detailed in the draft NSPIRE Standards published in the *Federal Register* on June 17, 2022.

- Give a property a failing physical inspection score if it receives an NSPIRE score that is less than 60 or has 30 or more points deducted due to in-unit deficiencies – even if the property receives a score greater than 60 overall.

NLIHC strongly urged HUD to specifically state in the final Scoring Model that residents and resident organizations must receive draft and final scoring reports and any list of health and safety items that must be corrected within 24 hours of inspection. The final Scoring Model should also clearly state that residents must receive these at the same time as PHAs and owners and/or managers.

NLIHC urged the final Scoring Model to include additional opportunities for residents to engage with the NSPIRE inspection process. For example, the Scoring Model should include in the scoring the five units recommended by residents and resident organizations added to the random sample of units to inspect. Residents and resident organizations should have an opportunity before an inspection begins to inform NSPIRE inspectors of physical condition problems that might not emerge due to the limitations of the inspection sample size (ranging from one unit to 32 units depending on the number of units in a property). A resident representative should be allowed to accompany an inspector in a unit, if the occupant agrees, and at the very least in common areas.

NLIHC disagreed with the proposal to only inspect the outside of buildings that contain units selected for inspection through sampling and urged HUD to require inspections of both the exterior and interior of all buildings that contain residential units.

Read NLIHC’s comment letter regarding the proposed NSPIRE Scoring Model at: <https://bit.ly/3oTmc3R>

Read the proposed NSPIRE scoring notice at: <https://bit.ly/3zekmwC>

Find an easier-to-read version of the notice at: <https://bit.ly/3lTT63n>

Find HUD’s NSPIRE website at: <https://bit.ly/2V9qvV3>

Disaster Housing Recovery

House Financial Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance Holds Hearing on National Flood Insurance Program Reform

The U.S. House of Representatives’ Committee on Financial Services’ Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance held a hearing, “[The Reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program: FEMA’s Perspective](#),” on April 28. The hearing, which featured David Maurstad, assistant administrator of FEMA’s Federal Insurance Directorate, covered recommendations submitted last year by FEMA to improve the affordability and sustainability of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), clear the program’s existing debt, and reauthorize the program for 10 more years.

The NFIP is a government-sponsored provider of flood insurance. Because of the threat of repeat flooding, many private insurance companies find it difficult to maintain policies regarding flood risk, which initially prompted the creation of the FEMA-run NFIP. In recent years, the program has suffered from significant debt, a lack of affordability provisions for households with low incomes, and confusion over flood mapping and mandatory requirements for purchasing.

Remarks by committee members focused on the affordability of the program. Assistant Administrator Maurstad pointed to FEMA's proposal for linking affordability provisions to the ability of a household to pay, which the agency holds it is unable to do without a change in law. In addition, committee members touched on the relationship between flood insurance held by property owners and the renters who occupy a property, the importance of informing renters and homebuyers of a home's flood risk, and how recent mapping changes have affected the premiums of flood insurance policy holders in their districts.

Notably, several members of the Subcommittee's Democratic minority lambasted committee leadership for failing to hold hearings on housing affordability and the housing crisis. The hearing was the second hearing on NFIP already held this year.

Read Assistant Administrator Maurstad's opening statement at: <https://bit.ly/3AAdB95>

Listen to the hearing at: <https://bit.ly/41OsvV3>

Opportunity Starts at Home

OSAH Urges Advocates to Tell Congress to Reject Budget Cut Proposal

The U.S. House of Representatives voted on April 26 to pass a harmful budget proposal that would lift the debt ceiling in exchange for dramatic cuts to domestic spending, including funding for affordable housing and homelessness programs. The "Limit, Save, and Grow Act," which was introduced by House Republicans, would cut federal domestic spending for fiscal year (FY) 2024 to FY22 levels, resulting in at least a 23% reduction in funding for key programs, depending on how cuts are designed. The proposal would also limit future spending increases to 1% annually for 10 years, rescind unspent COVID-19 relief funds, and put in place rigid work requirements for some anti-poverty programs, among other harmful provisions. The Opportunity Starts at Home (OSAH) campaign urges advocates to tell their senators to reject this disastrous proposal.

Research shows clearly that investments to make housing more affordable generate multiplying returns across many sectors. Stable, affordable housing options located in neighborhoods of opportunity are associated with better educational outcomes, better physical and mental health outcomes, lower healthcare expenditures, greater food security, stronger upward economic mobility and growth, greater racial and gender equity, fewer encounters with the criminal legal system, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and other benefits. Unfortunately, years of underinvestment in affordable housing solutions have contributed to our current housing crisis. For example, although it is well-documented that housing vouchers and other rental assistance

are highly effective in addressing homelessness and housing instability, reducing domestic violence, and improving other outcomes, three out of every four people eligible for rental assistance do not receive it due to inadequate funding.

OSAH urges advocates to let their senators know that they oppose any cuts to funding for essential housing and homelessness programs. Advocates can send a letter opposing cuts to their senator [here](#).

From the Field

Maryland Counties Introduce Legislation to Strengthen Rent Control

Elected officials in Maryland’s Montgomery County Council introduced the “Housing Opportunity, Mobility, and Equity (HOME) Act” on March 2. The act would limit rent increases to an amount determined by the “Voluntary Rent Guidelines,” or 3%, whichever is lower. The purpose of the act is to keep renters in their homes by preventing rent gouging, reducing displacement, and creating cost predictability for tenants and landlords. A similar measure – the “Rent Stabilization Act of 2023” – was passed in February by Maryland’s Prince George County.

In addition to the HOME Act, Montgomery County councilors introduced the “Tenant Assistance and Protection Package.” The legislation would cap maximum rental increases in multi-unit buildings at 8% plus the rate of inflation. The act would also increase funding for Montgomery County’s Rental Assistance Program to \$30 million, representing a 150% increase compared to pre-pandemic levels. The act likewise aims to increase homeownership opportunities in historically underserved communities by creating a \$3-million fund to support first-time homebuyers and allocating an additional \$1.5 million to homeowners who are most at risk of losing their homes.

In introducing the legislation, members of the Montgomery County Council are replicating the successful efforts of housing advocates in Prince George County. The Rent Stabilization Act, which became law on April 17, temporarily amends the “Landlord-Tenant Code” to limit rent increases to 3% over a 12-month period. The passing of the measure makes Prince George County the most populated county in Maryland to have rent control measures in place.

Both bills are now in committee, where they will be the focus of scheduled hearings.

Learn more about the HOME Act [here](#).

Learn more about the Tenant Assistance and Protection Package [here](#).

Join Today’s (May 1) “Tenant Talk Live” Webinar on Section 9 Public Housing

NLIHC will host the next session of “Tenant Talk Live” – a webinar with and for tenant and resident leaders – today, May 1, at 6 pm ET. During the webinar, NLIHC staff will be joined by advocates from [Save Section 9](#), a tenant-led organization that works to educate and mobilize public housing tenants around the preservation of public housing. Join the webinar to learn more about the history of public housing, the status of public housing today, and opportunities for future advocacy. Register for today’s Tenant Talk Live webinar at: <https://bit.ly/361rmy2>

[Section 9 public housing](#) is owned by HUD and administered by local public housing authorities (PHAs). Because additional public housing units have not been built in decades, advocates are primarily focused on preserving the remaining public housing stock, especially as HUD aggressively pursues public housing “[repositioning](#).” Joining the webinar will be Ramona Ferreyra, Tekina Guatu Ke Ini Inaru, an advocate with [Save Section 9](#) and the founder of Ojala Threads. Ramona is a doodler, historian, poet, advocate, and defender. Ramona identifies as Hispanic, Indigenous, and disabled. She impacts policymaking in the areas of criminal justice reform, public housing, and public transportation. Ramona honed her leadership style at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and Center for Creative Leadership. She previously led outreach efforts for the FBI and the U.S. Department of Defense, where she focused on community engagement and environmental resilience.

Tenant Talk Live webinars are held the first and third Monday of every month at 6 pm ET. For more information on future topics, view our website: <https://nlihc.org/tenant-talk-live-webinar>. Stay up to date on Tenant Talk Live events and connect with other attendees via the [Tenant Talk Facebook group](#).

NLIHC is currently recruiting members for the 2023-2024 Tenant Leader Cohort. The Cohort is a group of tenant advocates and community leaders with lived experience of housing insecurity who work towards housing justice and racial equity in their neighborhoods and greater communities. NLIHC collaborates with the Tenant Leader Cohort to inform our policy priorities so that they best reflect the needs of low-income renters. If you’re interested in being a part of next year’s cohort, please fill out this [interest form](#). We will also host an information session about the cohort on Tuesday, May 9, at 4 pm ET. Join the session using this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86167856246>. Selections for the cohort will be made on an ongoing basis through early summer 2023.

Remember, Tenant Talk Live would not be possible without tenants like you! We strive to engage with tenants and tenant leaders through our webinars. If you are a low-income tenant and have a topic you would like to propose for an upcoming Tenant Talk Live, or if you would like to participate as a speaker on an upcoming call or webinar, please email: sbetancourt@nlihc.org. Webinars like Tenant Talk Live would not be possible without the support of our members. Become an NLIHC member [here](#)!

NLIHC Invites Cover Art Submissions for Summer Edition of *Tenant Talk*!

NLIHC invites artistically inclined advocates (and anybody else!) to [submit your original artwork](#) for a chance to be featured on the cover of this summer’s edition of *Tenant Talk*! Entries

should address the theme of this summer's edition: the role of LGBTQ+ issues in housing and homelessness. The deadline for submissions is Friday, May 26, and participants must be 18 or older. The winning submission will be featured on the cover of the forthcoming edition of *Tenant Talk*, and its creator will be awarded \$250. Submissions can be made [here](#). Please contact outreach@nlihc.org with any questions.

Research

Research Finds Increased Risk of Death and Hospitalization Associated with Encampment Sweeps

Research recently published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, "[Population-Level Health Effects of Involuntary Displacement of People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness Who Inject Drugs in U.S. Cities](#)," examines the impacts of involuntary displacement on people experiencing homelessness who use drugs. Involuntary displacements, also known as "sweeps" or "clearings" of homeless encampments, can disproportionately affect people who engage in intravenous drug use, as they can limit the ability to obtain clean injection equipment, naloxone, and medications to treat opioid addiction. The authors find evidence that such displacements lead to an increase in deaths and hospitalizations among intravenous drug users experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The findings warrant re-evaluation of local practices of involuntary displacement and suggest the need to advocate for expanded access to housing and supportive services for those who engage in intravenous drug use.

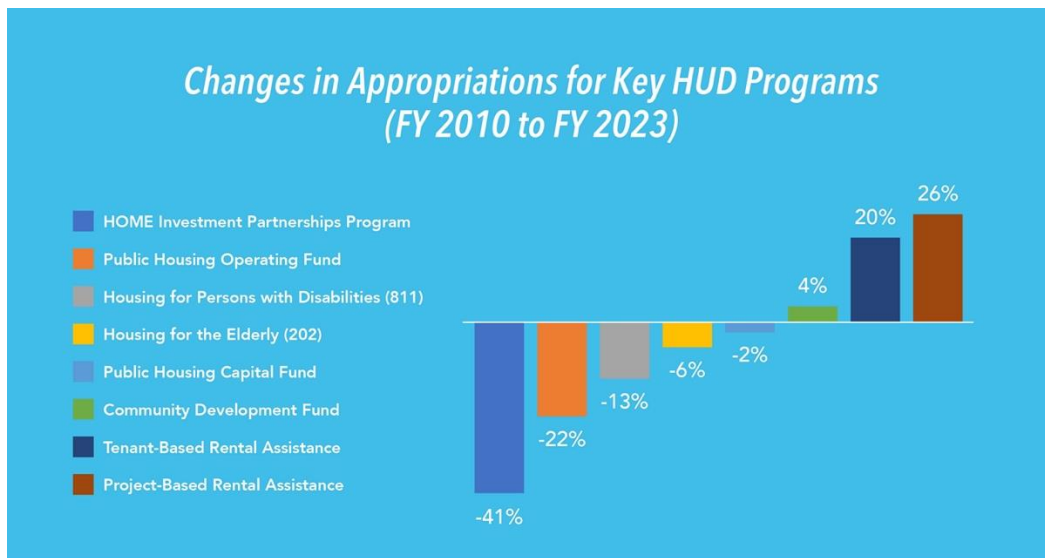
Using simulation modeling, the authors compared scenarios in which hypothetical intravenous drug users were and were not subject to continuous displacement over a 10-year period. In the scenario in which people faced involuntary displacement, there were estimated to be between 974 and 2,175 additional overdose deaths per 10,000 people experiencing homelessness at 10 years compared to the scenario in which there was no displacement. There was also an increase of 611 to 1,360 hospitalizations of people experiencing homelessness who injected drugs in the displacement scenario. Further, the displacement version of the model estimated that, per 10,000 people, 3,140 to 8,812 fewer people would be administered medications to treat opioid use disorder.

The authors qualified their findings by noting that many assumptions had to be made to model the scenarios, such as the assumption that an individual would remain homeless over the course of 10 years. However, given scant high-quality data concerning this research area, the authors contend that modeling can be an effective way for policymakers to evaluate risks. The authors encourage cities to halt the practice of involuntary displacement to help alleviate certain health-related issues linked to homelessness. They also emphasize the importance of promoting increased availability of housing and supportive services.

Read the article at: <https://bit.ly/41YfoR2>

Fact of the Week

Funding Declined for Most Key HUD Programs in FY2023 Relative to FY2010



Source: NLIHC federal housing appropriations data.
Note: Adjusted for inflation.



Source: NLIHC federal housing appropriations data.

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of April 23

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of April 23:

- “Waitlists grow as developers plan, build and fill affordable housing” *Yahoo News*, April 23: <https://bit.ly/41ZBJ0m>
 - “NLV backs off plan to buy Texas Station land for mixed use development” *Nevada Current*, April 26: <https://bit.ly/3NmGD3G>
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Where to Find Us – May 1

- [NeighborWorks Training Institute](#) – San Francisco, CA, May 3 (Courtney Cooperman)
- [National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies conference](#) – Tampa, FL, May 4 (Kim Johnson)

- United Tenant Council of Councils Town Hall – Detroit, MI, May 24 (Courtney Cooperman)
 - [Maryland Emergency Management Association 2023 Symposium](#) – Ocean City, MD, June 1 (Noah Patton)
 - South Dakota Housing for the Homeless Consortium, Annual Homeless Summit – Pierre, SD, June 13-14 (Diane Yentel and Courtney Cooperman)
 - [A Home for Everyone](#) – Oshkosh, WI, July 19-20 (Courtney Cooperman)
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