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Fair Housing

HUD Issues Guidance to Curb Potentially Discriminatory Tenant Screening Practices by Third-Party Companies and Housing Providers

HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) issued [guidance](#) on May 2 aimed at protecting rental housing applicants from discriminatory tenant screening practices that could violate the "Fair Housing Act" (FHA). NLIHC joined partner organizations in commending the new guidance in a [joint press release](#).

Landlords and housing providers almost always perform some type of screening process for potential tenants, often involving a screening report that includes information on an applicant's conviction history, eviction records, and credit history. These reports are usually generated by third-party screening companies – sometimes with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) – and provide the landlord with a score or recommendation for leasing to the tenant.

Research shows that the use of AI can worsen discriminatory practices because of racial disparities in the data used to generate AI algorithms. Moreover, these reports often contain inaccurate, outdated, or misleading information that can create unnecessary barriers to housing access.

"FHEO's guidance clarifying tenant screening practices must abide by the Fair Housing Act is another important step forward in the Administration's work advancing tenant rights," said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel in the [joint press release](#). "The power imbalance between renters and landlords is exacerbated by the unscrupulous practices of tenant screening companies. FHEO's guidance provides needed clarification for fair housing advocates, housing providers, and tenant screening companies alike to ensure more equitable access to housing for all."

The guidance clarifies that housing providers and tenant screening companies are expected to abide by the provisions of the FHA and provides clear guidelines that providers and companies should follow in order to ensure their screening practices are fair and equitable. The guidance notes providers should only screen applicants for information that is relevant to predicting whether they would be a good tenant and that they should allow applicants to dispute any inaccurate information. The guidance also states screenings should only include accurate records and that companies and landlords should make their screening policies publicly and readily available to applicants.

Read FHEO's [guidance](#).

View [HUD's press release](#) for the guidance.

Read the [joint press release](#) issued by NLIHC and our partners at the National Consumer Law Center, National Housing Law Project, PolicyLink, and UpTurn.

Chairs of Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, Black Caucus, and Hispanic Caucus Send Letter to President Biden Urging Action on Fair Housing

The chairs of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) sent a [letter](#) to President Biden urging the White House to follow through on its commitment to advancing racial equity by immediately releasing the final “Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing” (AFFH) rule. The letter highlights racial disparities in housing access and notes the president’s publicly expressed commitment to advancing racial equity, which aim would be promoted by the release of the new rule.

In the letter, the three caucuses – known collectively as the Tri-Caucus – draw attention to the impact of racial discrimination in housing and the importance of implementing the fair housing rule. The letter references congressional testimony by National Fair Housing Alliance Executive Vice President Nikitra Bailey from March 2024, noting that “Bailey underscored the historical legacy of discriminatory laws and policies that have perpetuated a dual housing market, favoring White households while marginalizing Black, Latino, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI).” Historical injustices persist today, as evidenced by disparities in housing affordability, “particularly among Latino and AANHPI renters and homeowners living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line, who face severe housing cost burdens.”

According to the letter, research shows that implementing the AFFH rule would help address the gaps in affordability and housing access and benefit members of every demographic. By implementing the AFFH rule, the Biden administration would foster social justice and promote the economic potential of every individual and community. Likewise, the letter notes that the proposed AFFH rule, if implemented, would help provide local leaders with “the tools and incentives they need to set ambitious goals to address fair housing issues in consultation with the communities they serve.”

Read the letter [here](#).

Budget and Appropriations

Senate Appropriations Chair Murray Pledges to Ensure Any Increases to Defense Spending in FY25 Are Paired with Equal Increases in Domestic Spending

U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) pledged to pair any increase in fiscal year (FY) 2025 defense spending above the 1% allowed by the “Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023” (FRA) with an equal increase to FY25 domestic spending. Appropriators must draft FY25 spending bills according to the limitations of the FRA, which raised the federal debt ceiling for two years in exchange for capping FY24 spending at approximately FY23 levels and allowing for a spending increase of only 1% in FY25.

In the previous fiscal year, Chair Murray and Senate Appropriations Vice-Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) led the charge for a side funding deal that provided almost \$70 billion in extra funds for

vital federal programs. To maintain the number of households served and services offered, HUD's budget must increase from one year to the next. It is extremely likely that additional funding above what would be provided under the FRA will be required to meet the increased cost of HUD's programs in 2025.

Take Action: Tell Congress to Provide Significant Funding Increases for HUD in FY25

Your advocacy makes a difference! It is thanks to the hard work of advocates that in FY24 – at a time when [programs faced cuts of up 25%](#) – HUD received increased funding in the final spending bill.

Congress needs to keep hearing from you about the importance of affordable housing and homelessness programs! **NLIHC is calling on Congress to provide the highest possible funding for HUD's affordable housing and homelessness programs in FY25, including significant funding for NLIHC's top priorities:**

- Full funding to renew all existing contracts for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and expand assistance to 20,000 more households.
- \$6.2 billion for public housing operations and \$5.2 billion for public housing capital needs.
- \$4.7 billion for HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) program.
- \$100 million for the Eviction Prevention Grant program.
- At least \$1.3 billion for Tribal housing programs, plus \$150 million for competitive funds targeted to tribes with the greatest needs.

Advocates can continue to engage their members of Congress by:

- **Emailing or calling members' offices** to tell them about the importance of affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources to you, your family, your community, or your work. You can [use NLIHC's Take Action page](#) to look up your member offices, or call/send an email directly!
- **Using social media to amplify messages** about the country's affordable housing and homelessness crisis and the continued need for long-term solutions.
- **Sharing stories** of those directly impacted by homelessness and housing instability. Storytelling adds emotional weight to your message and can help lawmakers see how their policy decisions impact actual people. Learn about [how to tell compelling stories with this resource](#).

National, state, local, tribal, and territorial organizations can [also join over 2,200 organizations on CHCDF's national letter](#) calling on Congress to support the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY25.

Acting HUD Secretary Todman Testifies before House and Senate Subcommittees on President's FY25 Budget Request

Acting HUD Secretary Adrienne Todman appeared before both the U.S. [Senate's](#) and U.S. [House of Representatives'](#) Committees on Appropriations' Subcommittees on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) last week for hearings on President Biden's fiscal year (FY) 2025 appropriations request for HUD programs. The president's budget requests \$72.6 billion in discretionary spending and \$81.3 billion in mandatory spending to fund HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness programs in FY25.

“At HUD, we understand that our homes represent more than four walls and a roof,” said Secretary Todman in her opening statement. “A good home can serve as a platform for economic opportunity, good health, and strong families. How can a person hold down a job or take care of their health or children if they do not have a bed, shower, or stove?” Secretary Todman subsequently warned, “we are in the midst of a tough housing market and the need has never been greater.”

Members of both House and Senate subcommittees highlighted the importance of HUD's programs and recognized that the budget request – drafted largely before the FY24 budget was finalized by Congress and constrained by the limitations of the “Fiscal Responsibility Act” – would not provide nearly enough money to fund all HUD's needed programs.

During the April 30 Senate hearing, Subcommittee Chair Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Senator John Kennedy (R-LA) urged HUD to do more to support disaster survivors and renters in Maui following the deadly wildfires that impacted the island in August 2023. Chair Schatz highlighted the impact of the disaster response on Maui's rental market, noting that Hawaii already struggled with a small and expensive rental market before the fires. In the wake of the fires, FEMA provided landlords willing to shelter wildfire survivors with rent subsidies significantly above market value. This in turn inflated the cost of rental housing across the island and incentivized landlords not to renew their existing tenants' leases, resulting in massive displacement not only of wildfire survivors but also existing renters.

Members voiced their support for the NLIHC-endorsed “[Reforming Disaster Recovery Act](#),” a bipartisan bill that would permanently authorize HUD's Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program, which provides flexible grants to help presidentially declared disaster areas rebuild affordable housing and other permanent infrastructure and makes critical reforms to ensure a more efficient and equitable disaster recovery.

Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) argued for increased funding for the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF), the nation's only federal affordable housing program dedicated to the construction, preservation, and operation of deeply affordable housing for people with the lowest incomes. While the HTF receives funding outside of the regular appropriations process, Senator Reed argued that sufficient funding for the HTF could make the program a “one stop shop” for developers interested in building deeply affordable units and mixed-income housing that includes deeply affordable units.

Acting Secretary Todman returned to Capitol Hill on May 1 for a hearing with the House Appropriations THUD Subcommittee. Newly appointed Subcommittee Chair Steve Womack (R-AR) noted in his opening remarks the importance of HUD's programs while also arguing that the

constraints under which the committee is operating require that every dollar provided to HUD “be well-spent and purposeful.”

Ranking Member Mike Quigley (D-IL) emphasized the worsening affordable housing and homelessness crises communities across the country are facing, including the steep increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness reported in HUD’s [2023 Point-in-Time \(PIT\) count](#). “Local leaders know what works to end homelessness,” said the Ranking Member, highlighting the importance of maintaining funding to vital community programs and the widespread impact of housing instability “felt far beyond the housing system.”

Appropriations Committee Chair Tom Cole (R-OK), formerly the THUD subcommittee chair, was visiting his district after devastating tornadoes tore through the Midwest last weekend and was unable to join the hearing. Committee Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) was in attendance and made an impassioned plea for increased affordable housing and homelessness assistance funding, noting that housing should be “a central focus of this Congress.”

Members once again voiced their support for the NLIHC-endorsed “[Reforming Disaster Recovery Act](#),” emphasizing the need for improved disaster response time and additional funding for long-term recovery efforts.

View recordings of the [Senate](#) hearing the [House](#) hearing.

Homelessness and Housing First

More Than 50 Mayors Visit District of Columbia to Address Housing and Homelessness Crisis

A [bipartisan group of nearly 50 mayors](#) from across the country visited Washington, D.C., last week to advocate for solutions to address the affordable housing and homelessness crisis in America. The two-day event – led by the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) – spotlighted the housing and homelessness crisis, which mayors identified as their [top concern](#) for 2024, according to a USCM survey.

The delegation was led by USCM President Reno (NV) Mayor Hillary Schieve, USCM Homelessness Task Force Chair Los Angeles (CA) Mayor Karen Bass, USCM 2nd Vice President Oklahoma City (OK) Mayor David Holt, and Toledo (OH) Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, chair of the USCM Committee on Community Development and Housing.

The mayors met with several cabinet secretaries in the Biden administration and members of Congress, including congressional leadership. Top White House officials reported that President Biden is committed to developing a comprehensive housing program for the country and wants mayors to play a significant role in creating it. The mayors advocated for increased funding for the Housing Choice Voucher program, lifting certain caps for project-based vouchers, and more robust housing assistance for veterans.

Read the USCM press release at: <https://tinyurl.com/bpbx94ew>

Disaster Housing Recovery

House Committee Hearing Reveals Bipartisan Support for Directing Disaster Mitigation Funds to Communities in Need

The U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a hearing, "Disaster Mitigation: Reviewing the Effectiveness and Costs of FEMA's Resilience Programs," on May 1. The primary witness was Deputy Administrator Victoria Salinas of FEMA's Resilience Office. The hearing examined the costs and benefits of FEMA's many disaster mitigation programs and revealed bipartisan support for directing disaster mitigation funds to those communities most in need. View a recording of the hearing and witness testimony [here](#).

"FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters, and our agency is spearheading efforts to bolster communities' ability to understand, and fulfill, their roles related to increasing their own local disaster resilience," said Deputy Administrator Salinas in her opening statement. "Improved resilience saves lives; results in less complex disaster recoveries; and helps break the cycle of disaster damage, rebuilding, and repeated damage. But, if we, as a Nation, are going to help prepare our communities for a future in which they continue to be tested by hazards, then we need to invest in these communities before a disaster strikes." Deputy Administrator Salinas emphasized that all of FEMA's mitigation programs are oversubscribed, a clear sign that states and localities want to mitigate their risk in the face of increasing extreme weather. To meet this challenge, she urged Congress to invest equitably in mitigation.

Members of the committee highlighted concerns about how FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program (BRIC) distributes competitive grants. The members also emphasized that these problems are not unique to BRIC but impact other FEMA's mitigation programs. Many of FEMA's mitigation programs favor larger, wealthier states and localities, as these jurisdictions have greater capacity and resources to acquire funding. Members and Deputy Administrator Salinas expressed hope that the problem might be remedied following passage of the "[Community Disaster Resilience Zones Act](#)," which establishes resilience zones that include the most at-risk and in-need communities in all states and territories. By creating such zones, FEMA hopes to better direct assistance and resources to these areas.

Several members and Deputy Administrator Salinas discussed the economic benefit of investing in mitigation before disaster strikes. Research suggests that for every dollar invested in mitigation, 13 dollars are saved. Representative Dina Titus (D-NV) highlighted that it is much harder to measure the impacts of potential disasters that were avoided because of mitigation efforts rather than it is to measure the impacts of actual disasters that do take place because mitigation efforts were not in place.

Many committee members discussed the need to channel FEMA money to states and localities as quickly as possible. Often, lags exist between when a state or locality is awarded funding and

when it receives that funding. These lags can be especially burdensome for small states and localities in need of critical funding.

View a recording of the hearing and witness' testimony [here](#).

Rural Housing

NLIHC Joins Letter to House Financial Services Committee in Support of “Rural Housing Service Reform Act”

NLIHC joined a [letter](#) along with 15 other national organizations in support of the “Rural Housing Service Reform Act of 2023” ([H.R.6785](#)), which would modernize and improve the administration of housing programs run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Rural Housing Service (RHS). NLIHC has endorsed both the [House](#) and [Senate](#) versions of the bill.

The bill proposes several reforms to the existing RHS program, including decoupling rental assistance from maturing mortgages, permanently establishing the Multifamily Housing Preservation and Revitalization Demonstration (MPR), improving USDA’s Section 542 voucher program to better serve voucher holders, permanently establishing the Native Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Relending pilot program, and improving staff training and capacity within RHS. In addition to offering endorsements, NLIHC provided feedback on both the [House](#) and [Senate](#) versions of the bill.

The letter states that “the legislation would allow for the decoupling of the Section 521 Rental Assistance (RA) program when the Section 515 mortgage loan expires. While RD has been given authority in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 to implement a demonstration program for 1,000 units in properties where a mortgage will expire, H.R. 6785, would permanently allow decoupling and allow RA to continue on the properties, preserving an important source of housing for low-income residents in rural communities throughout the country.” The letter specifically calls for House Financial Services Committee leadership to support the RHS Reform Act and urges the committee to hold a hearing and then schedule a mark-up on the bill before the end of May.

In addition to NLIHC, the letter was signed by Council for Affordable and Rural Housing, Enterprise Community Partners, Housing Assistance Council, Institute of Real Estate Management, LeadingAge, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Mortgage Bankers Association, National Affordable Housing Management Association, National American Indian Housing Council, National Apartment Association, National Association of Home Builders, National Council of State Housing Agencies, National Housing Law Project, National Leased Housing Association, and National Multi Family Housing Council.

Read the letter [here](#).

Our Homes, Our Votes

Become a Civic Holidays Partner!

NLIHC's *Our Homes, Our Votes* campaign urges advocates to become Civic Holidays partners! [Civic Holidays](#) are nonpartisan days of action that strengthen and celebrate our country's democracy. The four Civic Holidays – National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, and Election Hero Day – activate nonprofits, campuses, businesses, and other organizations to engage voters in their communities. Each holiday focuses on a different aspect of voter engagement: registration, education, mobilization, and celebration of voting. Nonpartisan organizations are invited to [partner](#) with the Civic Holidays. Partners will receive state-by-state FAQs and voter engagement guides, online voter tools, multilingual resources, swag, and other giveaways. Learn more and sign up to become a Civic Holidays partner [here](#).

Opportunity Starts at Home

OSAH Campaign Releases Updated Fact Sheets on Connections between Health, Environment, and Housing

The Opportunity Starts at Home (OSAH) campaign has released two updated [fact sheets](#) describing the connections between health, the environment, and affordable housing. Research shows that stable, affordable housing leads to better health care access and improved health outcomes for people in every stage of life. Stable housing and health care access also lower health care costs by reducing the need for more expensive emergency health interventions. Meanwhile, environmental research shows that a lack of affordable housing and low-density housing development contribute to climate change. Environmentally thoughtful building upgrades for existing affordable housing and construction of new affordable housing can both reduce climate emissions and improve residents' health. The updated fact sheets were developed with the help of campaign partners in the health and environment sectors, including Children's HealthWatch and Natural Resources Defense Council.

In total, the campaign has posted 16 multi-sector fact sheets to its website. Each fact sheet compiles landmark research to help policymakers, opinion leaders, and the public understand the deep connections between housing and other national priorities, from healthcare to education to economic growth. Housing advocates are encouraged to download the fact sheets to support efforts to reach out to allies in other fields and make the case for cross-sector collaboration. To broaden the movement for housing justice, we must ensure allies in other sectors fully appreciate the extent to which housing influences their own priorities and goals.

Find a full list of fact sheets [here](#).

Research

Partnerships between Housing and Criminal Justice Agencies Can Help Disrupt Homelessness-Carceral Cycle

A joint report by the Center for Justice Innovation and the Housing Solutions Lab at New York University's Furman Center, "[Housing Is Justice: Exploring State and Local Innovations](#)," explores how partnerships between the criminal justice and housing sectors can help disrupt the reinforcing relationship between housing insecurity, homelessness, and criminal justice involvement (known as the "homelessness-carceral cycle"). The report explores innovative approaches to such partnerships taken by criminal justice system actors and housing agencies, as well as the challenges these partnerships have faced and the characteristics of successful partnerships.

Research has consistently demonstrated a strong relationship between housing insecurity, homelessness, and criminal justice system involvement. In many parts of the country, people experiencing homelessness receive citations, fines, and even jail time for having no other option but to sleep and carry out other essential life activities in public settings, as shown in the current U.S. Supreme Court case [Johnson v. Grants Pass](#). At the same time, people with criminal justice system involvement face many barriers to obtaining and keeping housing after being released, including strict tenant screening practices that often render people with arrest or conviction histories ineligible for housing. Justice-involved individuals may also struggle to find stable employment or secure financial assistance due to their conviction histories, which can make it [difficult to afford rent](#) and other housing costs. Furthermore, in some jurisdictions, courts refuse to parole individuals who will be unstably housed or homeless after release, prolonging their incarceration. These challenges disproportionately impact Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American/Alaska Indian individuals.

The report's authors sought to understand the extent to which partnerships between criminal justice system actors and housing agencies can or could help disrupt the homelessness-carceral cycle. The researchers first conducted a literature review to better understand the connections between housing instability, homelessness, and the criminal justice system, as well as a program scan of more than 50 existing partnerships at the nexus of these sectors. On the basis of this knowledge, they developed and distributed a web-based survey to programs involved in the Center for Justice Innovation's technical assistance network and similar justice-focused national networks. The survey asked questions about the link between housing instability and the criminal legal process, programs' past and current partnerships with the housing sector, and potential areas for future collaboration. The researchers received responses from 66 different agencies and later conducted detailed interviews with 32 practitioners associated with some of these agencies.

The researchers identified several types of existing partnerships that use creative approaches to address different points of the homelessness-carceral cycle. Some programs aim to prevent individuals from entering the cycle in the first place – for example, by connecting people with unmet behavioral or social needs to supportive services that can help them both achieve housing stability and avoid interactions with the criminal justice system. Other partnerships identified by the researchers help justice-involved individuals avoid homelessness by providing housing navigators that can help people find and secure housing, operating "problem-solving courts" that

provide supportive services to people struggling with substance use disorders or other challenges, or creating new transitional or permanent housing solutions that serve people leaving incarceration. Still other partnerships strive for systemic change by implementing state or local policies that limit private landlords' access to certain information in tenant screening reports and their ability to turn down potential tenants based on criminal records, amending eligibility criteria for public or supportive housing, and providing financial incentives to housing developers to prioritize housing access for justice-involved individuals.

Through survey responses and interviews with housing and criminal justice system actors, the researchers identified several challenges to cross-sector collaboration, as well as the characteristics of successful partnerships. Respondents shared that it is often difficult to overcome fundamental differences between housing and justice system agencies, including different goals, approaches, and even language used to communicate about the experiences and needs of affected communities. The report notes that “justice agencies are not designed to, and typically don’t, think about housing or work closely with housing partners.” Deeply ingrained social stigmas about people who experience homelessness and/or have been involved with the criminal justice system – as well as a belief that these challenges are too big to be solved – can contribute to institutional inertia in pursuing alternatives to the status quo. Even when there is mutual interest and will to initiate a partnership, the bureaucratic nature of some of these agencies can slow progress on the creation of innovative partnerships, especially when funding and staff capacity are already strained.

The researchers found that partnerships between housing agencies and criminal justice system actors were more effective when they invested in building trust and strong relationships with staff at partner agencies. When strong interagency relationships were in place, it became easier for these partnerships to align their goals and plans of action, build collaborative teams with the right staff, and better engage with key stakeholders to ensure the success and longevity of the partnership. However, the report notes that these partnerships alone are not enough to fully disrupt the vicious cycle of housing instability and criminal justice system involvement. The authors emphasize that increased funding for housing assistance and the development of new affordable housing units is essential to conquering this cycle.

Read the report at: <https://bit.ly/49YuKZ7>

From the Field

Maine Governor Signs Supplemental Budget with Historic Funding for Affordable Housing and Rent Relief and Provisions Advancing Racial Justice

Advocates in Maine are celebrating the state’s commitment to housing stability and affordability following the enactment of a supplemental budget with historic housing investments that was approved by the legislature on April 18 and [signed](#) into law by Governor Janet Mills on April 22. Among [several housing provisions](#), the budget invests \$20 million in new funding for affordable housing development and \$18 million to pilot a rent relief program to prevent evictions and keep more residents stably housed. Additional provisions in the budget bill aim to strengthen [Tribal](#)

[sovereignty](#) and better support [immigrants](#), further advancing racial justice in Maine. Advocates worked tirelessly for over a year to build strong coalitions of impacted tenants and other stakeholders and engage with champions in the legislature to ensure approval of the new investments and policy proposals.

The [Maine Affordable Housing Coalition](#) (MAHC), an NLIHC state partner, prioritized funding for the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program and Maine’s Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program in the supplemental budget, which, they argued, would result in the construction of 150 new homes across the state. During the short 2024 legislative session, MAHC issued many calls to action to members of its diverse coalition of more than 145 private and public sector organizations, sending dozens of emails to legislators and recruiting more than 50 people to testify in favor of housing funding in the supplemental budget. Ultimately, \$10 million was approved for both programs.

“Even in the most trying times, this shows that Maine prioritizes the wellbeing of all Maine people for generations to come, by providing children, seniors, and others the foundation for success – a place to call home,” said Laura Mitchell, executive director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. “We are grateful to our elected officials that know a legacy of building homes that will last for generations of Maine people matters.”

The rent relief pilot program, funded through one-time General Funds, would provide eligible renters with up to \$800 per month in rental assistance paid directly to the landlord for a period of up to 24 months. An additional \$2 million was approved for a subsidy program for students under 18 experiencing homelessness, and \$21 million was approved for the Emergency Housing Relief Fund to continue operations of low-barrier shelters and transitional housing programs.

[Maine Equal Justice](#) (MEJ), a nonprofit civil legal aid and economic justice organization, worked for years to build a strong coalition that included impacted tenants, policy advocates, legal services, and a group called [Housing Justice Maine](#). In 2022, impacted tenants in MEJ’s [Equal Justice Partners’ Circle](#) prioritized the high costs of rent, voucher discrimination, evictions, and homelessness in their advocacy efforts. They then worked with policymakers to draft the “[HOME Act](#)” to create a rent relief program. The Housing Justice Maine coalition brought together more impacted tenant leaders and allies to organize for rent relief and other [tenant protections](#). In 2023 over 100 people testified in support of the HOME Act, hundreds of signatures of support were gathered, and dozens of meetings were held with legislators. Advocates continued their push in the short 2024 legislative session, bringing in the business community, delivering postcards to the governor, and holding a press conference to bring more media attention to the issue of rent relief. Subsequently, the Housing Committee and the Health and Human Services Committee recommended including rent relief funding in the supplemental budget, which was ultimately passed. Organizers believe their collaborative efforts helped elevate the issue of housing as a whole with lawmakers, resulting in the inclusion of \$18 million to pilot the rent relief program and new investments in affordable housing.

“It is not easy for any renter right now; we want to bring tenants together from all backgrounds to fight for housing justice,” said Magalie Lumiere Yangala, a resident renter of Portland, Maine, and member of MEJ’s Housing Leadership Team. “Tenant support for rent relief helped show legislators the struggle everyday people face around housing, and they heard us! This rent relief

program will provide help to many people in Maine. To be among the leadership that worked to pass this bill and bring attention to this issue makes me proud to be a renter and to help represent my community. We will keep fighting until everyone has a home.”

In addition to the wins for affordable housing, the supplemental budget also established the first [Maine Office of New Americans](#) (ONA) and strengthened [self-determination](#) for the Wabanaki Nations, both efforts that can support populations disproportionately impacted by the housing crisis and help Maine advance racial justice.

“Immigrants and grassroot organizations often feel disconnected from government agencies and resources in a way that small, community-based organizations cannot resolve on their own,” said Dina Malual, policy advocate for Maine Equal Justice. “By building relationships with immigrant Mainers and the organizations already serving them, the Maine Office of New Americans can bridge the support between community-based organizations and our state agencies. The office is an opportunity to centralize and streamline immigrant support across Maine. Amid an aging population and workforce shortages in key sectors, the office can directly improve the participation and retention of immigrants in the workforce by providing consistent and accessible resources for all.”

Meanwhile, [LD-2007](#) modernizes several provisions to the controversial “[Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act of 1980](#)” (MICSA). In addition to settling some land claims for the Wabanaki Nations, MICSA empowered the state to block the applicability of federal Indian policy in Maine, including laws concerning housing, health care, and managing disasters. Advocates have long argued that MICSA has [stunted](#) economic and social development for the Wabanaki Nations. For example, a 2022 [report](#) found that the Wabanaki Nations faced significantly higher rates of child poverty and overcrowding and lower per capita incomes than Maine as a whole. Due to the legacy of colonization and ongoing discrimination, Native Americans living in tribal communities have some of the [worst](#) housing needs in the country, and NLIHC’s [Gap report](#) shows that American Indian or Alaska Native people are more likely to be extremely low-income renters than Black, Hispanic, Asian or white households. Though LD-2007 excludes many [changes](#) to MICSA recommended by advocates, it strengthens tribal courts and restores their jurisdiction for misdemeanor and some felony crimes that occur on tribal lands and that only involve members of the tribal community. [Native advocates](#) believe LD-2007 will enhance the peace, prosperity, and safety of Native people in Maine and that it represents great progress in restoring the recognition of their inherent tribal sovereignty.

Read more about the housing and other provisions approved in the supplemental budget [here](#).

Apply to Join the 2024-2025 Cohort of NLIHC’s Collective!

NLIHC is currently recruiting members of its next Collective cohort! The Collective 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. The group convenes regularly to discuss shared concerns, chart an advocacy path, and ensure that NLIHC addresses the needs of low-income people and families throughout the country.

NLIHC is accepting applications to join the next Collective cohort from now until May 31. During June and July, NLIHC will review applications, interview candidates, and select members of the next cohort. Apply to join NLIHC's Collective [here!](#)

Those interested in joining the Collective are encouraged to view this [application guide](#). **Please note:** The application guide is **NOT** the application. Only applications completed through the application form will be considered. This document instead provides an overview of the questions included in the application. Please feel free to use the document to help prepare your answers for the online application. If you have any questions, please contact Sid Betancourt at sbetancourt@nlihc.org.

Members of past Collective cohorts have had the opportunity to visit the White House, inform NLIHC's policy priorities, receive assistance with submitting federal comments, and more!

Every Collective cohort begins with an annual inaugural event, the Tenant and Community Leader Retreat, which is focused on racial trauma and healing and held in Albany, Georgia. This year's retreat will take place on October 10-14. Members of the Collective also play an important role in developing the [Tenant Session](#) of NLIHC's Annual Housing Policy Forum.

Learn more about the history of NLIHC's Collective through these resources:

- [NLIHC Holds Tenant and Community Leader Retreat](#) (Oct 2022)
- [Tune in to "The Home Front" Podcast's Latest Episode on NLIHC's Tenant and Community Leader Cohort!](#) (Oct 2022)
- [NLIHC's Tenant Leader Cohort Visits the White House](#) (Feb 2023)
- [NLIHC Tenant Leader Cohort Sends Letter to White House Calling for Strengthened Renter Protections](#) (Dec 2022)
- [HUD Sec. Marcia Fudge to Join Fireside Chat with Tenant Leaders at 2023 Housing Policy Forum](#) (March 2023)
- [NLIHC Tenant Leader Cohort Submits Comment Letter on Proposed AFFH Rule](#) (May 2023)
- [NLIHC, Tenant Leader Cohort, Partnership for Just Housing, and 17 Senators Submit Comments to FHFA in Support of Federal Tenant Protections](#) (Aug 2023)
- [NLIHC Holds Second Tenant and Community Leader Retreat](#) (Oct 2023)

If you are interested in becoming part of the next Collective cohort, please fill out this [online application form](#). For any questions about the Collective or the application, please email Sid Betancourt at: sbetancourt@nlihc.org.

You can support the Collective and other NLIHC resources such as [Tenant Talk](#) by becoming a member. NLIHC is a membership organization open to individuals, organizations, corporations, and government agencies. [Join NLIHC today!](#)

Join Today's (5/6) "Tenant Talk Live" on Securing Your Security Deposit

NLIHC will host the next session of “Tenant Talk Live,” a meeting geared toward tenant and resident leaders, today (Monday, May 6) at 6 pm ET. The meeting will feature guest LaKita Steel, who will lead a discussion about how best to ensure the return of a security deposit. Register for the meeting [here](#).

Whether you’re a tenant receiving federal subsidies or someone renting in the private market, navigating the process of paying for and reclaiming your security deposit can be difficult. In this session, Ms. Steel will share valuable tips about how best to secure the return of a deposit. While this month’s session will focus on strategies to retain a security deposit, NLIHC remains committed to advocacy efforts aimed at relieving renters of undue financial burdens. These efforts include endorsement of the “[Delivering Essential Protection, Opportunity, and Security for Tenants \(DEPOSIT\) Act](#),” which, if enacted, would enable the Section 8 and HOME programs to provide assistance with security deposits and moving costs for individuals utilizing Housing Choice Vouchers.

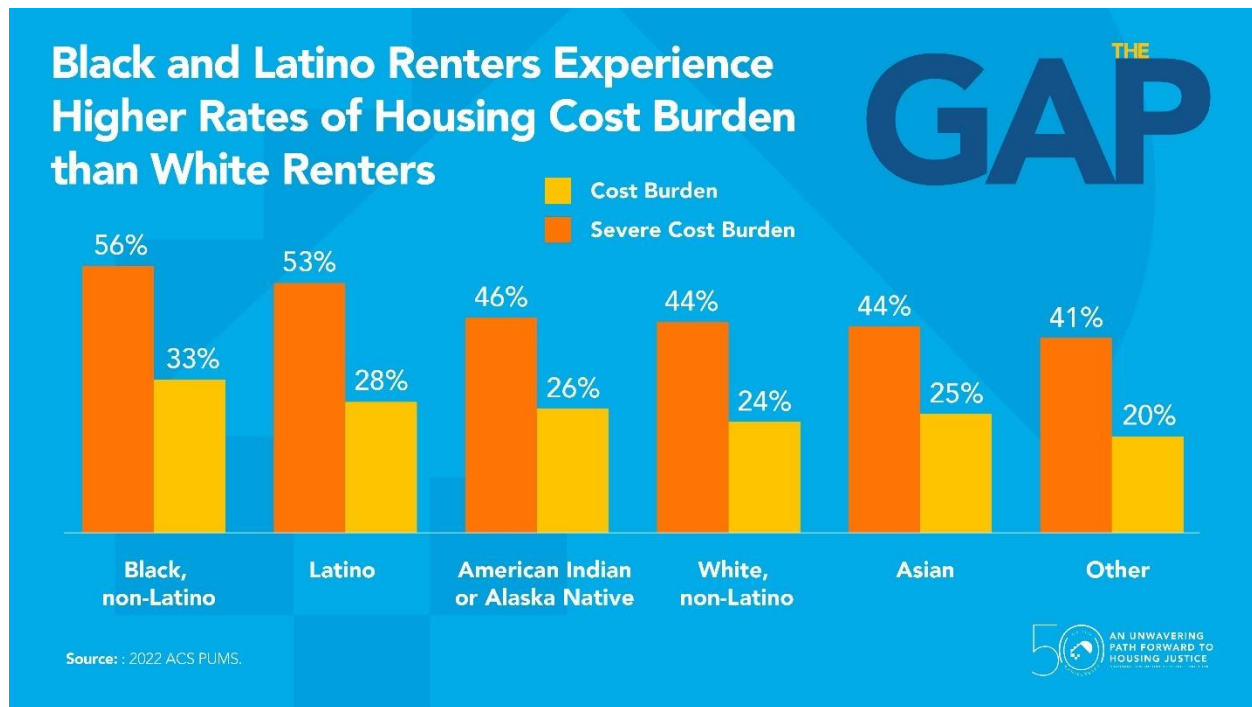
“Tenant Talk Live” meetings are held the first Monday of every month at 6 pm ET. If you are unable to attend Monday’s meeting, you can still view upcoming or past Tenant Talk Live recordings on our [Working Group webpage](#). To stay up to date on “Tenant Talk Live” events and connect with other attendees, join the [Tenant Talk Facebook group](#).

Register for today’s Tenant Talk Live meeting [here](#).

Meetings like “Tenant Talk Live” depend on the support of our members. Become an NLIHC member [here](#)!

Fact of the Week

Black and Latino Renters Experience Higher Rates of Housing Cost Burden Than White Renters



Source: 2022 ACS PUMS.

NLIHC Careers

NLIHC Seeks Policy Coordinator/Analyst

NLIHC seeks a policy coordinator or policy analyst with a portfolio focusing on federal legislative policy and regulatory action related to the Coalition's mission and priorities. The policy coordinator/analyst will be responsible for identifying, analyzing, and summarizing legislative and regulatory activities in plain language to inform and encourage advocacy by members of the Coalition and its network. The policy coordinator/analyst will report to NLIHC's policy manager. The position will last two years.

The policy coordinator/analyst will lead NLIHC's work related to supporting the construction and preservation of deeply affordable housing, including expanding and strengthening the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF), expanding and reforming the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), preserving public housing, and other policies aiming to increase the supply of affordable homes. The policy coordinator/analyst will also work to expand job and training opportunities for HUD tenants, including through HUD's Section 3 program.

Core Role and Responsibilities

- Monitor legislative, regulatory, and administrative developments, as well as other activities or events of interest on Capitol Hill and at HUD, the U.S. Department of the

Treasury, and other relevant agencies, and ensure that Coalition staff and membership are apprised of key developments and events.

- Build and maintain relationships with members of Congress, national and state partners, Coalition members, and other housing and homelessness advocates to advance NLIHC policy priorities related to the construction and preservation of deeply affordable housing.
- Advocate for the Coalition's policy priorities before members of Congress, the administration, and their respective staff, including by drafting letters, organizing meetings, writing emails, planning Hill briefings, and other advocacy efforts.
- Develop advocacy materials, including factsheets, white papers, issue briefs, and advocacy toolkits, among other resources, that translate legislative and administrative proposals and actions into an accessible and understandable format for Coalition members and partners.
- Respond to requests for information from members of Congress, the administration, and other policymakers and Coalition members and partners.
- Draft action alerts and eblasts in coordination with NLIHC's field and communications teams to engage and activate NLIHC's members to take action on policy priorities.
- Write formal comment letters on behalf of the Coalition in response to proposed rules or other administrative requests for information, as well as draft sample comment letters and other advocacy materials for the Coalition's members and partners.
- Assist in coordinating Coalition meetings; coordinate and facilitate working group meetings, prepare materials, and make presentations. Attend meetings and events of other coalitions and represent NLIHC at conferences and at other events.
- Research and prepare articles for the Coalition's weekly *Memo to Members and Partners* e-newsletter, including updates on relevant legislative or administrative actions, through web-based and other research and attendance at hearings and briefings.
- Annually update the Coalition's *Advocates' Guide* articles that pertain to the policy coordinator/analyst's issues portfolio.
- Monitor, and provide updates for, the Coalition website.
- Attend and report (as requested) at meetings of NLIHC's Board of Directors, State and Tribal Partners meetings, internal staff meetings, trainings, and other events.
- Support planning and implementation of NLIHC's annual Housing Policy Forum, including speaker recruitment and organizing participants of Capitol Hill Day.
- Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

A policy coordinator/analyst will hold a bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred) and have up to two years of experience in public policy or legislative advocacy. A degree in public policy, public administration, or a related area is a plus. People with lived experience of housing instability or homelessness with an interest in shaping housing policy at a national level and experience in lieu of a degree are encouraged to apply.

A policy analyst will hold a master's degree and at least two years of work experience in policy advocacy. An additional three years of work experience in lieu of a master's degree will be considered.

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 have a strong commitment to social, racial, and housing justice and knowledge of the fundamentals of affordable housing or homelessness.

Applicants should have a demonstrated ability to cultivate positive relationships with marginalized individuals, including those with lived experiences with housing insecurity and homelessness.

Applicants should have a demonstrated experience and ability to recognize and respond to the ways race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity intersect to further promote racial equity and social justice.

Applicants should be proficient in the Microsoft Office suite, Zoom, and social media platforms.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive benefits package.

The salary range for a policy coordinator is \$67,000-\$90,000, dependent on experience. The salary range for a policy analyst is \$87,000-\$102,000, dependent on experience.

This is a full-time position located in Washington, D.C., on a hybrid work schedule. Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter, and two writing samples to Jamaal Gilani, director of people and culture, at: jgilani@nlihc.org.

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of April 28

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of April 28:

- “Homelessness is at an all-time high again, in Columbus, Franklin County” *The Columbus Dispatch*, April 30, at <https://tinyurl.com/3bpzyzz9>
- “States take aim at local basic income programs” *Route Fifty*, April 29, at <https://tinyurl.com/4v4wb8kp>
- “Zoned Out: How Oklahoma Zoning Laws Contribute to the Housing Crisis” *Oklahoma Watch*, April 30, at <https://tinyurl.com/5ddzej9z>

NLIHC News

Where to Find Us – May 6

- [2024 National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster Conference](#) – Phoenix, AZ, May 6 (Noah Patton)
- The Housing Ohio Conference – Columbus, OH, May 7-8 (Diane Yentel; Courtney Cooperman)
- [Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future \(SAHF\)/NAHT Retreat](#) – May 15 (Diane Yentel)
- [2024 National Mass Care Exercise](#) – Shippensburg, PA, May 23 (Noah Patton)
- Mississippi Center for Justice Social Justice Empowerment Dinner (Keynote Speaker) – Washington, D.C., June 5 (Diane Yentel)
- [22nd Annual New York Supportive Housing Conference](#) – New York, NY, June 20 (Sarah Saadian)
- A Home for Everyone Conference (Keynote Speaker) – Madison, WI, July 17 and 18 (Diane Yentel)
- Rainbow 16th Annual Awards Banquet – Scottsdale, AZ, October 17 (Diane Yentel)
- Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York annual conference - Poughkeepsie, NY, October 22 (Lindsay Duvall)

NLIHC Staff

Sarah Abdelhadi, Senior Research Analyst
 Lindsey Aramah, Communications Intern
 Andrew Aurand, Senior Vice President for Research, x245
 Sidney Betancourt, Project Manager, Inclusive Community Engagement, x200
 Victoria Bourret, Project Manager, State and Local Innovation, x244
 Jen Butler, Vice President, External Affairs, x239
 Alayna Calabro, Senior Policy Analyst, x252
 Billy Cerullo, Housing Advocacy Organizer
 Matthew Clarke, Director, Communications, x207
 Courtney Cooperman, Project Manager, Our Homes Our Votes, x263
 Lindsay Duvall, Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy, x206
 Dan Emmanuel, Manager, Research, x316
 Sarah Gallagher, Vice President, State and Local Policy Innovation, x220
 Jamaal Gilani, Director of People and Culture
 Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
 Raquel Harati, Research Analyst
 Danita Humphries, Senior Executive Assistant, x226
 Nada Hussein, ERASE Project Coordinator, x264
 Kim Johnson, Public Policy Manager, x243
 Kayla Laywell, Housing Policy Analyst, x231
 Mayerline Louis-Juste, Senior Communications Specialist, x201
 Meghan Mertyris, Disaster Housing Recovery Analyst
 Steve Moore Sanchez, Development Coordinator, x209
 Khara Norris, Vice President of Operations and Finance, x242
 Noah Patton, Manager, Disaster Recovery, x227

Mackenzie Pish, Research Analyst
Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Manager, x246
Benja Reilly, Development Specialist, x234
Dee Ross, Tenant Leader Fellow
Gabrielle Ross, Project Manager, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, x208
Sarah Saadian, Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Field Organizing, x228
Craig Schaar, Data Systems Coordinator
Brooke Schipporeit, Director, Field Organizing, x233
Lauren Steimle, Web/Graphic Design Specialist, x246
Tia Turner, Housing Advocacy Organizer
Julie Walker, OSAH Campaign Coordinator
Chantelle Wilkinson, OSAH Campaign Director, x230
Renee Willis, Senior Vice President for Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, x247
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225