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Coronavirus, Homelessness, and Housing

Join NLIHC's Weekly "Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness" Call Today at 2:30 pm ET!

NLIHC hosts national calls every Monday at 2:30 pm ET on "Coronavirus, Homelessness, and Housing." Today's (May 11) call at 2:30 to 4 pm ET will feature Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), ranking member of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and Representative Denny Heck (D-WA) – two of the three principal authors of the "Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act" introduced on May 8 to provide \$100 billion in emergency rent relief (see related article in this *Memo*). Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>



Senator Sherrod Brown

Rep. Denny Heck

Other speakers on today's call include Lisa Sloan of the Technical Assistance Collaborative; Marie Claire Tran-Leung of the Shriver Center on Poverty Law; Elissa Margolin of Housing Action New Hampshire; Bob Palmer of Housing Action Illinois; Andrew Bradley of Prosperity Indiana, and more.

During the call, we will share new NLIHC research on the need for no less than \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance (see related article in this *Memo*), discuss advocacy needed to achieve it in the next coronavirus spending bill, and hear updates from our partners across the country. The call will also include the latest on how federal, state, and local governments are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic; the pandemic's impact on people experiencing homelessness and low-income households; and how you can advocate for needed resources.

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

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

Coronavirus – Congress

Representatives Heck and Waters and Senator Brown Introduce Bill to Provide \$100 Billion in Emergency Rental Assistance

Representatives Maxine Waters (D-CA) and Denny Heck (D-WA), along with 133 House cosponsors, Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and 24 Senate cosponsors, introduced the “Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act” on May 8. The bill would provide \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance to ensure that lower-income households remain stably housed during the coronavirus pandemic. NLIHC and 120 other national organizations sent a [letter](#) to congressional leadership in support of the bill.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, nearly ten million extremely and very low-income renter households were severely housing cost-burdened, spending more than half their incomes on rent. These households have little margin for unexpected expenses. Temporary declines in income or new medical bills as a result of the coronavirus can quickly lead to housing instability, eviction, and homelessness. NLIHC [estimates](#) that at least \$100 billion is needed to preserve housing for these renters, and the proposed bill would provide that level of support. Although expanded unemployment insurance and other provisions of the CARES Act provided critical resources to people experiencing homelessness and those on the brink, current levels of funding are insufficient to keep the lowest-income families stably housed during this ongoing public health and economic crisis.

The proposed act would provide emergency rental assistance to households experiencing homelessness and those at risk. Households at or below 80% of area median income (AMI) would be eligible for assistance, with 40% of the funds reserved for those below 30% AMI. The bill would allow state and local grantees to:

- Provide short- and medium-term rental assistance for up to 24 months;
- Cover up to 6 months of back rent and late fees; and
- Pay for housing relocation or stabilization activities such as utility deposits and payments, moving costs, and application fees.

Under the bill, HUD would be required to allocate 50% of funds to states and communities within seven days of enactment using existing formulas under McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants. These funds would be obligated and disbursed to grantees within 30 days. The remaining funds would be allocated to states and communities within 45 days of enactment using a formula developed by the HUD secretary based on need. The formula would consider severe housing-cost burdens among extremely and very low-income renters, as well as disruptions in housing, employment, and economic conditions caused by coronavirus.

Two percent of the funds would be allocated to Native American tribes and Native Hawaiians. If any funds are not expended after 3 years, 65% of the remaining resources would be directed to the national Housing Trust Fund. The other 35% would be directed to the Capital Magnet Fund.

Read “The Need for Emergency Rental Assistance During the COVID-19 and Economic Crisis” at: <https://tinyurl.com/vqyr29u>

View NLIHC’s factsheet on the bill at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybgx5v7q>

Read the letter from NLIHC and 120 other national organizations supporting the bill at: <https://tinyurl.com/y96z5e84>

Read a letter from 35 national non-housing organizations supporting the bill through the NLIHC-led *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign at: <https://bit.ly/2xQbXU2>

A House Financial Services Committee press release about the bill is at: <https://bit.ly/3511p5T>

A Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee press release about the bill is at: <https://bit.ly/2WdP3zk>

NLIHC Joins Sign-On Letter Urging Congress to Address the Reentry Needs of Formerly Incarcerated Individuals in Next Coronavirus Relief Bill

NLIHC joined 75 other organizations in signing a letter sent on May 5 urging congressional leadership to include resources for formerly incarcerated people in the next coronavirus relief package. Chronic overcrowding and unsanitary conditions place incarcerated individuals and those working in prisons, jails, and detention centers at elevated risk of coronavirus infection. To limit overcrowding, some institutions have begun releasing individuals with non-violent convictions. Resources are now needed to support their safe and effective reentry.

Access to safe, stable, affordable, and accessible housing poses a significant barrier for people who have been released from incarceration. While few federal restrictions prohibit people with a criminal record from accessing federally assisted housing, public housing agencies (PHAs) have broad discretion in determining whether to lease to someone with a criminal record. Federal assistance is needed to ensure that people exiting the criminal justice system can access housing after incarceration.

The letter calls on Congress to provide resources to help individuals leaving incarceration find affordable and accessible housing, including vouchers specifically targeted to the reentry population; \$11.5 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants funding; and \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance through McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants programs.

Read the full letter at: <https://bit.ly/3ccnGLn>

Coronavirus – New Resources

NLIHC Releases New Estimate of Need for Emergency Rental Assistance in Response to Widespread COVID-19 Job Disruption

NLIHC released on May 8 a second research note on the need for emergency rental assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis. This analysis, “[Emergency Rental Assistance Needs for Struggling Workers due to COVID-19](#),” focuses on the rental-assistance needs generated by the staggering job losses of March and April and additional projected losses, demonstrating the level of support needed to help nearly 13 million low-income households remain stably housed. The report confirms the need for Congress to include at least \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance in the next coronavirus relief package.

This global public health crisis has created an urgent need to provide rental assistance to low-income households. Surveys indicate that more than 40% of all households, and more than half of low-income households, have experienced a loss of employment or income as a result of the coronavirus. Using these survey data, NLIHC estimates that over 12.7 million renters are likely to be affected by job disruption and be in need of rental assistance, and that the cost of providing assistance to affected renters will be \$9.9 billion per month until employment recovers. For millions of low-income renters, many of whom could not afford their housing before the pandemic, job disruptions imperil their ability to remain in their homes.

NLIHC’s analysis shows that industries hardest hit by layoffs in the last seven weeks—retail, food services, and accommodations—are also ones in which the lowest-income renters are likeliest to work. The unemployment crisis is also disproportionately impacting people of color, since they are disproportionately represented in occupations impacted by the shutdowns.

While the timeline for economic recovery is uncertain, the analysis estimates how the need for rental assistance for employment-affected renters may decline gradually as employment rises. Extrapolating from recent employment projections from the Congressional Budget Office's, this analysis estimates \$116 billion in emergency rental assistance is needed through June 2021.

Read "Emergency Rental Assistance Needs for Struggling Workers due to COVID-19" at: <https://bit.ly/3clyOFW>

NLIHC Releases New Guide to Help Advocates Working With FEMA

NLIHC released a new guidance document, "[Getting to Yes: Working with FEMA to Fund Non-congregate Sheltering During COVID-19](#)," which provides information to help advocates and state governments ensure that FEMA resources serve as many people experiencing homelessness as possible. The document emphasizes the need for public health orders to cite decongesting shelters as a public health necessity, clear language surrounding eligibility, and regular contact with state public health and emergency management agencies.

FEMA's Public Assistance Program has been authorized to reimburse specific expenditures related to the COVID-19 crisis. Eligible costs include moving individuals experiencing homelessness, those living with disabilities, and others living in congregate settings into hotels and other non-congregate shelter situations. The scope of eligibility varies from state-to-state, with some states reimbursed non-congregate shelter costs for their entire shelter population. As shelters and congregate living facilities across the country experience financial hardship as a result of the pandemic, this program can provide much-needed financial relief.

This new guidance joins a suite of additional materials NLIHC has released on FEMA's Public Assistance Program and the Coronavirus Pandemic, including a fact sheet on Public Assistance Category B: Emergency Protective Measures, a Working with FEMA Toolkit, and a FEMA FAQ documents. All these materials can be found on NLIHC's dedicated COVID-19 [resource page](#).

Read NLIHC's "Getting to Yes: Working with FEMA to Fund Non-Congregate Sheltering During COVID-19" at: <https://bit.ly/2YKcnpW>

Read NLIHC's FEMA Public Assistance Fact Sheet at: <https://bit.ly/2SOmyG9>

Read NLIHC's Working with FEMA Toolkit at: <https://bit.ly/2LenoYJ>

Read NLIHC's FEMA FAQ documents at: <https://bit.ly/2WDtDdJ>

NLIHC Provides Additional New Resources on Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness

NLIHC recently released new resources on coronavirus, housing and homelessness, including an [FAQ](#) on immigrants' eligibility for assistance in the CARES Act, [guidance](#) for helping people experiencing homelessness access Economic Income Payments, and an [FAQ](#) on COVID-19 and racial equity.

NLIHC compiled [guidance](#) on how to ensure people experiencing homelessness can access Economic Impact Payments (EIPs), one-time direct payments from the federal government authorized in the CARES Act. Individuals with a valid social security number and an adjusted gross income of less than \$75,000 may be eligible for a one-time payment of up to \$1,200 plus \$500 per eligible dependent child under the age of 17. Those who had no income and those whose sole source of income is Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are

also eligible. People experiencing homelessness and unbanked individuals face multiple barriers to accessing payments. NLIHC’s guidance provides resources and best practices from groups working on the ground. Additional information about EIP, eligibility standards, and application process is outlined in this [FAQ](#).

NLIHC, the National Housing Law Project, and the National Immigration Law Center released a new [FAQ](#) regarding eligibility based on immigration status for CARES Act assistance. Some programs restrict eligibility based on immigration status and may have implications under the Department of Homeland Security’s new public charge rule, which determines if noncitizens seeking admission to the U.S. or applying for lawful permanent resident status (i.e., “green card”) are likely to become “primarily dependent on the government.” The FAQ provides information regarding immigrants’ eligibility for these programs and implications for public charge determinations.

NLIHC also released an [FAQ](#) about how the coronavirus is impacting communities of color. Emerging data indicate that the coronavirus is infecting and killing people of color at a disproportionately high rate. While COVID-19 can infect anyone, historically marginalized populations are more likely to experience acute and structural risk factors that increase the likelihood of contracting and experiencing severe cases of the disease. People of color are also more likely than white people to experience evictions and homelessness resulting from centuries of institutional racism and economic inequity. This FAQ explores the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities of color and provides policy recommendations to ensure an equitable response.

View *Guidance for Helping People Experiencing Homelessness Access their Economic Impact Payments* at: <https://bit.ly/2yrbbgB>

View *FAQ on COVID-19 and Racial Equity* at: <https://bit.ly/2YPgt0d>

View *FAQ on Eligibility for Assistance Based on Immigration Status* at: <https://bit.ly/2SLPyyf>

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac Release Lookup Tools for Renters in Multifamily Properties Protected by Eviction Moratoriums

The Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) announced on May 4 that both Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have created online multifamily [property lookup tools](#). Under the CARES Act, renters living in properties with mortgages backed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac are covered by a temporary eviction moratorium, and owners of these properties can enter forbearance as a result of lost income due to COVID-19. While the property lookup tools allow some renters to see if they are covered under the CARES Act eviction moratorium, the databases do not include information on properties with 1 to 4 units, which comprise about half of the portfolio. NLIHC sent a [letter](#) on April 23 urging FHFA Director Mark Calabria to release this information. NLIHC has also created a [searchable database and map](#), which includes data on multifamily properties supported by several federal programs. During this time of economic uncertainty, it is vital that renters know if they are protected under the federal moratoriums within the provisions of the CARES Act.

NLIHC’s database and map of multifamily properties help renters and their allies know if they are protected. The tool and map include data on affordable rental housing supported by the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, HUD and USDA programs, or multifamily housing with mortgages insured by FHA or securitized by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. While the database is not yet exhaustive, NLIHC will continue to update it as new data become available.

View the Freddie Mac tool at: <https://tinyurl.com/y7svkytc>

View the Fannie Mae tool at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybqvztsh>

View the NLIHC database at: <https://nlihc.org/federal-moratoriums>

Read NLIHC's letter to FHFA at: <https://tinyurl.com/y6ukeswu>

NHLP Releases New Resource on Tenant Rights for Domestic Violence Survivors during COVID-19

The National Housing Law Project (NHLP) released on May 4 an [overview](#) of the housing rights of domestic violence survivors during the coronavirus outbreak. The document reminds advocates that housing protections instituted in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) are still in effect during the pandemic and that public housing agencies (PHAs) can still process requests for VAWA protections.

The federal moratorium on evictions in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stability (CARES) Act bans evictions for nonpayment of rent in certain types of federally assisted housing. However, unless a state or locality specifies otherwise, tenants can still face eviction for criminal activity or other lease violations. Survivors of domestic violence sometimes face eviction because of crimes or lease violations related to their abuse, like damage to the unit or repeated calls to law enforcement.

VAWA housing protections ensure that survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who live in certain types of federally assisted housing will not face eviction or have their housing assistance terminated because of the violence committed against them. In many cases, survivors living in covered housing are able to complete a self-certification form to assert VAWA protections without obtaining a police report or restraining order. Despite the coronavirus crisis, PHAs are still able to process forms requesting VAWA protections. The guidance advises advocates that if a survivor receives an eviction notice during the pandemic, they should immediately connect the survivor to a housing attorney.

Read NHLP's full guidance at: <https://bit.ly/2YE6NFt>

Coronavirus - Administration

NLIHC Sends Letter to Federal Agencies Calling for Flexible Guidance on Assistance Funding

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel sent a letter to Treasury Department Secretary Steve Mnuchin, HUD Secretary Ben Carson, and FEMA Administrator Peter Gaynor, calling on the agencies to release guidance providing the broadest possible flexibility for federal funds deployed in the CARES Act. Such flexibility is needed to meet the severe health and housing needs of individuals experiencing homelessness during the coronavirus pandemic. The letter, sent on behalf of NLIHC and its Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (over 850 local, state, and national organizations involved in disaster housing recovery work), specifically asks for guidance allowing the funds to be used in combination with existing federal assistance programs. Such use of funds can be barred by current federal prohibitions on combining funding from different sources to pay for the same activity or assistance. Read the letter at: <https://bit.ly/2WBBOYg>

If the agencies release flexible guidance that negates issues with combining funding sources, state and local governments would be able to utilize the full range of assistance in HUD's Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), as well as FEMA Public Assistance grants and Treasury-administered Coronavirus Relief Funds to move individuals who live in shelters, encampments, or other congregate settings into spaces that allow for social distancing. Given the severe public health risks that

congregate living poses, moving individuals to non-congregate shelter can not only save the lives of vulnerable individuals, but also assist in slowing down the spread of COVID-19.

“Rigid adherence to typical protocol makes it difficult to respond to the diverse needs of communities,” wrote Yentel. “These exceptional times require exceptional measures to be taken in order to ensure the needs of the most marginalized and vulnerable people – including people experiencing homelessness – can be met quickly, effectively, and fully. For this reason, I urge you to issue guidance allowing state and local governments to layer funding from different federal programs without violating federal duplication of benefits standards.”

Read the full text of the letter here: <https://bit.ly/2WBBOYg>

Coronavirus – HUD

NLIHC, NHLP, and NAHT Send Follow-up Letter to Top HUD Officials Urging Income Recertification and Other Policy Actions

NLIHC, the National Housing Law Project (NHLP), and the National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT) sent a [letter](#) on May 6 to Brian Montgomery, HUD assistant secretary for housing and federal housing commissioner, and Hunter Kurtz, HUD assistant secretary for Public and Indian Housing (PIH). The letter follows up on a letter the three organizations sent on March 26 (see *Memo*, [3/30](#)) regarding HUD’s policies on interim income recertifications during the coronavirus crisis. While some earlier recommendations were incorporated in guidance, the new letter asserts that a number of key policies must still be addressed to protect resident health and safety. HUD’s decision not to issue guidance regarding interim income recertification puts some tenants at risk of paying rents incommensurate with their ability to pay, which could lead to eviction or subsidy termination. The organizations urge HUD to act swiftly on six recommendations:

1. Public housing agencies (PHAs) and private owners of properties receiving project-based rental assistance from HUD’s Office of Multifamily Programs (Multifamily) should assume a nonpayment of rent is due to the coronavirus pandemic and begin interim income recertification even if a resident has yet to request one. PHAs and owners must also increase efforts to inform families of their right to request an interim recertification and make all interim recertifications effective the first of the month following reduction in income.

If HUD is not willing to assume that nonpayment of rent automatically triggers an interim recertification during the pandemic, HUD must ensure that tenants are informed of their right to seek an interim income recertification. A HUD-prepared notice should be distributed to assisted families, posted prominently at assisted properties, and included in mailings to assisted families. The notice should be sent to resident advisory board (RAB) members, resident council officers, and tenant organizations.

When a request for interim recertification is received, PHAs and owners should immediately begin the process. As in Multifamily programs, PIH should establish a uniform effective date for interim income recertification as the first of the month following the event triggering a decrease in income.

2. HUD should amend the procedures for families to self-certify a decrease in income. In PIH’s recent Notice PIH-2020-05 (see *Memo*, [4/13](#)), PHAs have the option to allow residents to self-certify. The Multifamily program should extend this waiver to owners of private, HUD-assisted properties. Further, HUD should require PHAs and owners to accept a family’s self-certification via mail, email, or other electronic delivery.
3. Multifamily should amend its guidance for annual recertifications. PIH’s Notice PIH-2020-05 allows PHAs to delay annual recertifications until December 31, 2020. Multifamily should extend this waiver to owners

of HUD-assisted properties. Delaying annual recertifications will allow owners to prioritize interim recertifications.

If Multifamily will not allow owners to delay recertification, or in instances that a PHA elects not to use this waiver, HUD should direct owners and PHAs to allow families to complete recertification without penalty after the ordinary deadline. During the pandemic, HUD should direct owners and PHAs to presume an extenuating circumstance exists when a family does not provide the requested information on time.

4. HUD should set minimum rents for the project-based Section 8 program to zero and direct PHAs to set minimum rents to zero. If HUD decides not to accept this recommendation, HUD should direct PHAs and owners to inform immediately families to apply for a hardship exemption due to loss or interruption of income, and to assume that coronavirus-related hardships are long-term. If minimum rent is not paid when due during the pandemic, PHAs and owners should presume a family has a hardship and begin processing a hardship exemption.
5. HUD should extend the prohibition of nonpayment fees and "convenience" fees for the duration of the pandemic. If families have accumulated past-due rent or other debts not relieved by interim recertifications, owners and PHAs should work with residents to establish reasonable repayment plans. HUD should establish minimum standards for such repayment agreements, consistent with existing HUD guidance that total rent burdens be limited to 40% of adjusted income. In addition, HUD should require owners and PHAs to give households a reasonable grace period after the pandemic to meet past-due programmatic requirements.
6. HUD should require property owners and PHAs to post and distribute HUD-prepared tenant information. HUD-prepared tenant information such as "know-your-rights" brochures should be printed in bulk by HUD and distributed to families, posted prominently at properties, and included in mailings to families. HUD should also send a letter to owners and PHAs directing them to obtain and distribute the brochures at their developments. HUD-prepared tenant resources should also be sent to resident advisory board (RAB) members, resident council officers, and other tenant organizations. All HUD-prepared tenant information should be translated into appropriate languages and be accessible via printed copies and on HUD's COVID-19 webpages.

The letter is at: <https://bit.ly/2YJVX0J>

More information about public housing is on [page 4-30](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about the Housing Choice Voucher program is on [page 4-1](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about the Project-Based Rental Assistance program is on [page 4-61](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

HUD Posts FAQ on CARES Act HOME Program Eviction Moratorium

The Office of Affordable Housing Programs (OAHP) in HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) posted a May 1 document on [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ) on the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME). The FAQ provides guidance on the CARES Act temporary moratorium on evictions.

The FAQ reiterates CARES Act provisions that created a federal moratorium on evictions of tenants living in certain types of housing, including housing supported with HOME funds (see *Memo*, [4/13](#)). The federal moratorium took effect on March 27 and extends until July 25, 2020. (NOTE: While the FAQ indicates that the last day is July 24, OAHF issued a summary for residents that indicates the last day is July 25, and staff of the Office of Public and Indian Housing acknowledged conflicting dates on a public call. Consequently, HUD’s General Counsel concluded that July 25 is the appropriate date.) During this 120-day period, landlords cannot file new eviction actions for nonpayment of rent, nor can they charge late fees, penalties, or other charges related to nonpayment of rent. The FAQ states that such fees, penalties, or charges cannot be accumulated for residents to pay after the moratorium is lifted.

While the federal moratorium prohibits landlords from evicting tenants after the moratorium expires until the landlord gives a tenant a 30-day notice of intent to file for eviction, the HOME FAQ does not specify this statutory 30-day period.

HUD indicates that HOME participating jurisdictions (PJs) should provide written notice to owners of HOME-assisted projects (including single-family properties with rental units) and HOME tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA) units regarding the CARES Act prohibitions described above. PJs should direct project owners to provide tenants with information about their due process rights under HOME and local and state laws. PJs should encourage owners to provide as much flexibility as possible to tenants regarding repayment of delinquent rent after the moratorium ends.

Regarding “projects,” the FAQ states that the eviction moratorium applies to rental projects that receive HOME funding and are currently within the period of affordability (POA) specified in their HOME written agreement. The moratorium applies to rental projects that have HOME loans in their term of repayment that are secured on the property as a first or subordinate lien, regardless of whether the project is within the POA.

The moratorium also applies to homeownership projects with rental units that received HOME assistance currently within the POA, including POAs that are longer than the minimum period. The moratorium also applies to homeownership projects containing rental units that have a HOME loan within their term of repayment that is secured on the property as a first or subordinate lien.

Regarding “units,” the FAQ states that the eviction moratorium applies to HOME-assisted units in or on rental or homeownership property within the POA, including POAs that are longer than the minimum period. It also applies to residential rental units in or on properties (i.e., multifamily and multiunit single family) that have HOME loans secured on the property as a first or subordinate lien, regardless of whether the project is within its POA.

The HOME Program CARES Act Eviction Moratorium FAQs are at: <https://bit.ly/2xFcfgi>

More information about the HOME program is on [page 5-5](#) of NLIHC’s *2020 Advocates’ Guide*.

HUD Posts Waiver of 90-day Submission Deadline for CAPERs

HUD’s Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) posted a [Memorandum](#) dated May 7 from Acting Assistant Secretary John Gibbs. The *Memorandum* waives the regulatory requirement that jurisdictions submit a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) within 90 days of the end of a jurisdiction’s program year.

Existing regulations require jurisdictions receiving funding from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), Housing Opportunities

for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) must complete a CAPER within 90 days of the close of their program year. CPD considers the difficulties attendant to the coronavirus pandemic to provide cause to waive this regulatory requirement for jurisdictions' FY19 CAPER. However, jurisdictions must submit an FY19 CAPER within 180 days of the close of their program year.

The *Memorandum* is at: <https://bit.ly/2A6ZT1j>

Information about *Consolidated Plans* are on [page 7-51](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

HUD Updates “Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Coronavirus (COVID-19)”

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs, which oversees contracts with private owners of HUD-assisted properties, made a fifth update to its [“Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)”](#) (see *Memo*, [4/20](#)) on May 1.

Under “Moratorium on Evictions Under the CARES Act,” Q17 (page 13) is modified to emphasize that it is permissible to evict perpetrators of domestic violence and those with criminal activity or other lease violations. Q17 adds: “Protections under the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA) remain in effect, and owners/agents should consult Housing Notice 2017-05 for more information about the housing rights of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking under VAWA.” Q17 deletes: “Therefore, owners and agents may still undertake an eviction/termination of assistance action against a tenant, in accordance with allowable circumstances in accordance with the applicable provisions of the lease and related guidance in HUD Handbook 4350.3, Chapter 8, as long as the eviction/termination of assistance is unrelated to nonpayment of rent.”

Under “Asset Management Policy and Operations,” Q9 (page 18) confirms that a resident who is unemployed or furloughed can continue to receive an income deduction for childcare expenses.

Under “Staffing and Building Operations,” Q23 (page 22) states that multifamily owners and agents can access property operating accounts for all reasonable and necessary coronavirus-related preparedness and response actions, including supplies, staff hours, and overtime. Supplies include protective gloves and masks for staff and residents. Q26 (page 23) states that property owners or managing agents may close or only offer limited hours/access to rental offices and indoor common spaces (e.g., community rooms) based on guidance from local or state jurisdictions and the particular circumstances at their property. HUD defers to them to determine the best course of action, accounting for the importance of ensuring the safety of residents, staff, and the property.

“Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Coronavirus (COVID-19)” is at: <https://bit.ly/3ck73NO>

More information about Project-Based Rental Assistance is on [page 4-61](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

HUD PIH Posts List of Eligible Coronavirus-Related Voucher Activities

HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) posted on April 30 a one-page [“List of Eligible Coronavirus-Related Activities”](#) for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. The list includes nine eligible uses previously identified in [Notice PIH-2020-08](#) issued on April 28 (see *Memo*, [5/4](#)) and one new eligible use. The previous notice established eligible activities that public housing agencies (PHAs) may carry out to prevent,

prepare for, or respond to coronavirus with the \$380 million supplemental administrative fee amounts appropriated through the CARES Act. The one new eligible use is to hire temporary employees to maintain program operations due to coronavirus.

If a PHA wants approval to cover coronavirus-related activities not on the list and not currently eligible as regular HCV administrative costs, the PHA must send a request and an explanation of the proposed use to PIH.

As additional eligible activities are approved, PIH will post an updated list. The “List of Eligible Coronavirus-Related Activities” is at: <https://bit.ly/3djUEtw>

Notice PIH-2020-08 is at: <https://bit.ly/2W9tb88>

More information about the Housing Choice Voucher program is on [page 4-1](#) of NLIHC’s *2020 Advocates’ Guide*.

HUD Memorandum Describes CARES Act Provisions Streamlining Public Participation Requirements for ESG and HOPWA

HUD’s Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) posted a [Memorandum](#) from CPD Acting Assistant Secretary John Gibbs on May 4. It describes CARES Act provisions that streamline the Consolidated Plan public participation requirements for amending an Annual Action Plan for the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) programs.

The *Memorandum* advises ESG and HOPWA grantees to amend or prepare their Annual Action Plans as soon as possible. HUD suggests grantees submit a substantial amendment to their most recent Annual Action Plans to expedite access to CARES Act funding. ESG and HOPWA grantees should begin working on Annual Action Plan amendments now by adding the ESG-CV and HOPWA-CV allocations into their Annual Action Plan as available resources for the year. On April 1, CPD announced allocations of the first \$1 billion. Grantees should not wait for CPD to allocate the next \$1 billion allocation of ESG-CV that will be distributed using the same FY20 formula that distributed the first \$1 billion.

Another \$2 billion will be distributed by CPD using a unique formula that reflects coronavirus-related needs. Following the announcement of those ESG-CV allocations, grantees will then amend Annual Action Plans accordingly.

The CARES Act allows ESG recipients to omit the public participation and consultation requirements for substantial amendments and new Annual Action Plan submissions for ESG-CV. However, each grantee must publish how it has used and will use its allocation to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. The substantial amendment must be published, at a minimum, on the appropriate government website or through other electronic media.

A CPD *Memorandum* posted on [March 31](#) (see *Memo*, [4/6](#)) allowed HOPWA grantees to provide no fewer than five calendar days for public comment (rather than 30 days) for its substantial amendment, which should indicate how those funds will be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. Grantees should post the substantial amendment along with a summary of public comments on their official websites.

The *Memorandum* is at: <https://bit.ly/2zX2b2X>

More information about ESG is on [page 4-82](#) of NLIHC’s *2020 Advocates’ Guide*.

HUD Official Answers CDBG-CV Questions during Enterprise Community Partners Webinar

Jessie Handforth Kome, Director of the Office of Block Grant Assistance in HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) answered questions during a [webinar](#) conducted by Enterprise Community Partners on April 29. The webinar addressed the first \$2 billion allocation of Community Block Grant (CDBG) supplemental funding available to local governments and states through the CARES Act.

The webinar, "[How Communities Can Use CDBG Funds to Address Covid-19](#)," opened with remarks by Priscilla Almodovar, chief executive officer of Enterprise Community Partners. Patrick Jordan, vice president of Enterprise Advisors followed with an overview of CARES Act CDBG resources (CDBG-CV). John Gibbs, acting assistant secretary for CPD, then offered remarks. Marion Mollegen, Enterprise senior vice president of public policy, then moderated questions addressed to Ms. Handforth Kome. This article highlights selected responses from Ms. Handforth Kome.

Determining Income Eligibility

A household's income is determined at the time assistance is provided. However, a jurisdiction must have a policy and procedure for estimating future income. A household that had income greater than 80% of the area median income (the maximum to be eligible under the CDBG statute's "low- and moderate-income national objective") prior to the pandemic may be eligible if their income falls below the 80% AMI threshold due to reduced or lost income at the time CDBG assistance is provided. Presumably, if a jurisdiction reasonably thinks the reduced income is temporary, longer-term assistance might be an issue the jurisdiction's policy should address.

Emergency Rental Assistance

Emergency rental assistance has long been an eligible activity in the CDBG Entitlement Cities regulations. However, the provision allowing it is found in the "Ineligible Activities" section of the Entitlement regulations at 24 CFR part 570.207(b)(4):

(4) *Income payments.* The general rule is that CDBG funds may not be used for income payments. For purposes of the CDBG program, "income payments" means a series of subsistence-type grant payments made to an individual or family for items such as food, clothing, housing (rent or mortgage), or utilities, **but excludes emergency grant payments made over a period of up to three consecutive months to the provider of such items or services on behalf of an individual or family** (emphasis added).

NLIHC adds that emergency rental assistance is considered a "public service." The CDBG statute states that a jurisdiction cannot obligate more than 15% of its annual CDBG allocation and program income for public services during a program year. The CARES Act suspends the 15% cap, not only for a jurisdiction's CDBG-CV allocation, but also for FY19 and FY20 allocations provided the funds are used to prevent, prepare for, or respond to the coronavirus.

Ms. Handforth Kome noted that the States and Small Cities CDBG program has different regulations that do not have a similar emergency assistance provision. States must follow the text of the Housing and Community Development Act. However, because states are given "maximum feasible deference," as Ms. Mollegen noted, they may choose to use the CDBG Entitlement regulations as a "safe harbor." NLIHC adds that the State CDBG program has sub-regulatory guidance in "[Basically CDBG for States](#)" that reiterates this point a number of times.

Ms. Handforth Kome added that CPD will broadly interpret “prevent, prepare for, or respond to the coronavirus.” Jurisdictions simply need to be reasonable and explain how proposed uses will “prevent, prepare for, or respond to the coronavirus.” She said that CPD will be providing tools regarding use of CDBG for emergency rental assistance.

Duplication of Benefits

Ms. Handforth Kome commented that jurisdictions need to be strategic with how they use CDBG and ESG funds. If a project is to receive both, it is important to consider the best use of each. CDBG or ESG should not be used if the use is already covered by another source, nor should CDBG be used to pay for something some other source can cover. In essence, the goal is to maximize all available resources. Grantees should use CDBG and ESG strategically to fill gaps that other sources cannot cover. NLIHC adds that FEMA might be an important source for covering costs such as hotel/motel vouchers.

CPD does not have an “order of assistance” provision about duplication of benefits but is working to develop such guidance. CPD will be working with Enterprise to provide a tool regarding duplication of benefits.

Statutory Requirement to Use 70% of CDBG to Benefit Low- and Moderate-Income People

In response to a question, Ms. Handforth Kome said that CPD has no plans to waive the CDBG statute’s requirement that jurisdictions use at least 70% of their allocation to benefit people with low- and moderate-income (no greater than 80% of the area median income). She added that the CARES Act provides considerable funding for other federal programs, few of which are earmarked for lower-income people.

The webinar recording is at: <https://bit.ly/3dhYfs8>

The webinar slides area at: <https://bit.ly/3c6HqQD>

More about regular CDBG is on [page 8-3](#) of NLIHC’s *2020 Advocates’ Guide*.

Coronavirus – FEMA

NLIHC and DHRC Urge FEMA to Implement Program Changes, Authorize Greater Levels of Assistance in Response to COVID-19

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel sent a [letter](#) to FEMA Administrator Peter Gaynor expressing the need for greater assistance from FEMA in communities across the country as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The letter, sent on behalf of the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (comprised of more than 850 national, state, and local organizations, including many organizations working directly with disaster-impacted communities), calls on FEMA to adapt current programs and deploy its full range of disaster assistance tools to assist Americans, especially the lowest income households, during the pandemic.

FEMA moved quickly to utilize the agency’s Public Assistance (PA) programs to assist in coronavirus efforts and moving congregate housing residents into safe housing. However, the program relies on emergency orders and public health directives, many of which will expire as states lift stay-at-home orders. The letter states that FEMA must modify the program so that the most vulnerable individuals remain protected as the pandemic continues. The letter also calls on FEMA to make information on the non-congregate sheltering program more easily accessible to housing and homeless service organizations, which rely on up-to-date information to ensure the safety of the populations they serve.

In addition, the letter calls on FEMA to authorize its full range of assistance programs to address the pandemic. FEMA can implement a wide variety of assistance programs, ranging from direct rental assistance to funding for case management and legal services. As yet, it has neglected to do so, claiming that pandemic response is largely outside of the agency's role. "Your decision to apply an unnecessarily narrow scope to FEMA's role in responding to this public health crisis," writes Diane, "is deeply unfortunate and should be immediately reversed, given the magnitude and scale of its impact on low-income and other marginalized people. By activating these programs now to address housing, financial, and legal needs, FEMA can help ensure that low-income households are not pushed even deeper into poverty and homelessness as a result of the pandemic."

Read the full text of the letter at: <https://bit.ly/3cgjUAF>

Coronavirus – Other

Tenant Talk Live Webinar Today on Section 3 Opportunities during COVID-19 and More

Join NLIHC's *Tenant Talk Live!* [resident engagement webinar](#) today (May 11) at 6:00 pm ET (5 pm CT, 4 pm MT, 3 pm PT). Keith Swiney from Motivation, Inc., will discuss Section 3 opportunities for residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.



J. Keith Swiney

Register here: <https://bit.ly/2yOo0RY>

Tenant Talk Live! is a biweekly call/webinar for resident leaders from across the country. The sessions provide opportunities for residents to connect with NLIHC and one another, share best practices, and learn how to influence federal housing policies and lead in their community.

The agenda for the May 11 call is as follows:

WELCOME: NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel

SECTION 3: Keith Swiney will discuss Section 3 opportunities for residents during the COVID-19 pandemic and answer questions

COVID-19 POLICY UPDATES: NLIHC Senior Advisor Ed Gramlich

- Public and Indian Housing updates
- Multifamily Housing updates

FIELD: NLIHC Housing Advocacy Organizer Kyle Arbuckle

- NLIHC's upcoming *Tenant Talk* publication
- Updated on CARES Act-2

The last *Tenant Talk Live* [call](#) took place on April 27 and included updates from Danny Barber from New York Citywide Council of Presidents, Ms. Lorraine Brown from New York City, Mindy Woods from Seattle, WA, Dee Ross from Indianapolis, IN, and NLIHC staff.

NLIHC is committed to connecting and engaging with resident leaders. If you are a resident and have a topic you would like to propose for peer-sharing or if you want to be a speaker on an upcoming call/webinar, please email Kyle Arbuckle (karbuckle@nlihc.org) or Renee Willis (rwillis@nlihc.org).

Recording Now Available of NLIHC's May 4 National Call on "Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness"

More than 1,000 organizers, advocates, reporters, and legislative staff attended the weekly "Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness" national call hosted by NLIHC and our Disaster Recovery Housing Coalition (DHRC) on May 4. The call featured updates from national, state, and local advocates and service providers working to assist people experiencing homelessness, low-income households, and members of marginalized communities, all of whom are disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Register for today's (May 11) 2:30 pm ET call at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

On the May 4 call, Representative David Price (D-NC) spoke about the pressing needs of homeless and housing-insecure individuals during the pandemic and his work as the chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development to secure funding through a relief package and the FY21 appropriations process. Nan Roman, president and CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), spoke about a new [framework](#) for COVID-19 homelessness response to help providers and advocates understand how to leverage funding to address immediate needs while planning for recovery.

Joseph Geleta of the New Jersey Department of Human Services discussed using FEMA resources to fund non-congregate shelter, which is also discussed in a new [NLIHC resource](#) that includes New Jersey as a case study. Chandra Crawford, program and policy analyst at NAEH, discussed how existing racial inequities and structural racism have resulted in the pandemic's disproportionate impact on Black communities. She encouraged organizations and government agencies to gather and analyze data to understand disparities and adjust responses accordingly. Solomon Greene, senior fellow at the Urban Institute, provided a preview of [new research](#) on state and local rental assistance in response to COVID-19.

The call also included field updates from Ariadna Godreau-Aubert of Ayuda Legal in Puerto Rico, where communities are responding to the coronavirus while still recovering from devastating hurricanes and earthquakes. Joan Serviss of the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness and Pinky Clifford of the Oglala Sioux Tribe Partnership for Housing in South Dakota highlighted the specific vulnerabilities of Native Americans

living on reservations, which, due to systemic discrimination and chronic underfunding, often lack critical health, housing, and food infrastructure.

NLIHC will host national calls on the Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness every week on Mondays at 2:30 pm ET. Register for today's (May 11) call at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

Watch a recording of the May 4 call at: tinyurl.com/y8dnctzp

View May 4 presentation slides at: tinyurl.com/ybhrkmzd

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

Additional Coronavirus Updates - Monday, May 11, 2020

Please note that NLIHC hosts weekly national calls on COVID-19 and housing/homelessness every Monday afternoon. **The call is today (May 11) at 2:30pm to 4:00pm ET. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Representative Denny Heck (D-WA)** will join the call to discuss their new bill, "The Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act." NLIHC staff will share research on the need for \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance, discuss the unique needs of marginalized populations, and hear field updates from our partners in New Hampshire, Illinois, and Indiana! **Register for the call here:** <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

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

National Updates

Congress

Senator Tina Smith (D-MN) and 27 of her Senate colleagues sent a [letter](#) on April 7 urging Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin to take the steps necessary to ensure people experiencing homelessness receive coronavirus relief payments.

Department of Health and Human Services

HHS' Office of Minority Health announced on May 1 a [competitive funding opportunity](#) to provide up to \$40 million for development and coordination of a network of national, state, territorial, tribal, and local organizations to deliver COVID-19-related information to racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable communities impacted by the pandemic.

Department of Housing and Urban Development

HUD [announced](#) on May 4 that the department has allocated \$100,000 for HUD's *Foster Youth to Independence Initiative*, noting that the pandemic has underscored the importance of having a home.

HUD [announced](#) on May 5 the allocation of \$380 million in supplemental administrative fee funding to public housing authorities to fight COVID-19. Funds can be used for sanitation, transportation to health units and testing, food, childcare, and medical supplies.

HUD Secretary Ben Carson [announced](#) on May 1 that HUD will allocate \$685 million in CARES Act funding to keep low-income residents of public housing safe during the pandemic. The funds will be allocated through

the Public Housing Operating Fund and can be used for personal protective equipment, childcare costs, travel costs, and additional actions.

Department of Treasury

Treasury updated its “[Coronavirus Relief Fund: Frequently Asked Questions](#)” document on May 4. The new guidance permits state and local governments to use Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars on rental assistance to prevent evictions and homelessness.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt issued a [joint statement](#) on May 5 regarding the distribution of Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) dollars to Native American Tribes. According to the statement, \$4.8 billion (60%) of the CRF, will be made available to Tribal governments based on population data, while “the remaining 40 percent of the \$8 billion will be allocated “based on the total number of persons employed by the Indian tribe and any tribally owned entity, and further data to be collected related to the amount of higher expenses faced by the tribe in the fight against COVID-19.”

Department of Veterans Affairs

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [announced on May 6](#) that it has expanded support services enabled by the CARES Act to address the immediate needs of veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness due to the pandemic. Funding is provided for three VA programs: Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program, Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program, and Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program.

Federal Housing Finance Administration

FHFA [announced](#) on May 5 that it has extended several loan origination flexibilities currently offered by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac through June 30.

FHFA [announced](#) on May 4 that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have developed online multifamily property lookup tools to help renters find out if they are protected from evictions during the pandemic.

- Freddie Mac [Multifamily Loan Lookup Tool](#)
- Fannie Mae [Multifamily Loan Lookup Tool](#)

FEMA

FEMA Administrator Pete Gaynor [discussed](#) how the agency is adjusting to hurricane preparedness measures amid the coronavirus pandemic.

FEMA [announced](#) approval of 30 states and the District of Columbia for its Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training program. Crisis Counseling, part of FEMA’s Individual Assistance programs, is a mental health assistance program that provides short-term interventions, intake, and referral services to support the mental health of disaster survivors.

Advocacy

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

The National Alliance to End Homelessness and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities developed a [framework](#) that provides guidance for how homelessness systems can leverage the CARES Act and other funding sources to conduct emergency protective measures while also planning for recovery-oriented uses of these funds. All components of the “Framework for COVID-19 Homelessness Response: Responding to the Intersecting Crises of Homelessness and COVID-19” include a racial justice and equity lens.

The [National Alliance to End Homelessness’ Racial Equity Network](#) updated its original racial equity tool in light of the pandemic. The tool is designed to help homelessness systems gather data to identify and address racial inequities in COVID-19 testing, treatment, and appropriate service delivery.

The [Urban Institute](#) outlined several steps to improve access to high-quality, systematic data to ensure that rural communities are not left behind after the pandemic. Existing data sources for rural communities are inadequate, making it difficult to know the true impacts of the pandemic on rural workers and economies.

Reporting

Gretchen Sierra-Zorita, a founding member of the National Puerto Rican Agenda and member of the DHRC Puerto Rico Working Group, wrote an op-ed in [The Hill](#) urging the Senate to pass the [Puerto Rico Earthquake Supplemental](#) (H.R. 5687) or include it in the next coronavirus relief bill. The Earthquake Supplemental would provide \$4.89 billion in emergency spending to fund a broad range of disaster recovery activities. Puerto Rico has been devastated by three consecutive disasters: Hurricane Maria, the 2020 earthquakes, and COVID-19.

[Politico](#) discussed the need for the federal government to develop a long-term plan to keep renters stably housed after the eviction moratoriums expire. Ignoring the looming rental crisis will cost more in the long run and keep millions of renters from safely sheltering in place.

[HuffPost](#) examined how cities across the country have started to move people experiencing homelessness from shelters into larger spaces and hotels. The article cited NLIHC’s “[Getting to Yes](#)” document in its discussion of how states can request funds from FEMA to reimburse hotel rooms.

According to an article in [Nature](#), researchers have discovered that coronavirus outbreaks in shelters are spreading below the radar. Researchers are collecting data on the prevalence of COVID-19 and modeling its spread under different group living situations, hoping that this will guide policies to protect people residing in congregate living settings.

The [Sightline Institute](#) outlined six bills that Democrats have proposed to protect renters and workers in the next stimulus package, including the “Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act” and the “Emergency Rent and Mortgage Cancellation Act.”

The [Baltimore Sun](#) editorial board examined why federal solutions to the housing crisis exacerbated by the pandemic must include assistance for both tenants and landlords.

An article in the [Washington Post](#) explored how the pandemic has demonstrated the need to treat housing as human right, not a commodity. Governments are responding by enacting measures like eviction moratoriums, rent caps, and assistance for people experiencing homelessness. While these measures are steps in the right direction, structural reforms are required to build a more just housing environment.

A [Human Rights Watch](#) article discusses how the measures that some governments have taken to acquire housing for people experiencing homelessness demonstrate what can be achieved through political will, resources, and a focus on both individual worth and collective good. These steps pave the way for longer-term solutions to eradicating homelessness.

The pandemic has revealed how easy it is to fall from the middle class and into poverty, according to a [Washington Post article](#). For years, economists and advocates have warned that many Americans live paycheck to paycheck, and that even a slight downturn could devastate many lives.

[Forbes](#) discussed the “Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act” introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and its companion bill in the House of Representatives, sponsored by Representatives Maxine Waters (D-CA) and Denny Heck (D-WA).

[E&E News](#) examined the impact that a natural disaster would have on people experiencing homelessness amid the coronavirus pandemic. “An extreme weather event will affect [the homeless] in a much more impactful way than the population at large, and this year is going to be even worse with COVID-19,” said Eric Samuels, executive director of the Texas Homeless Network, an NLIHC state partner.

[Nonprofit affordable housing providers](#) are committed not to evict their tenants, but they are hoping that relief comes soon to help their organizations and their tenants.

[Next City](#) examined how community-driven development rooted in collaboration can ensure an equitable and inclusive recovery from COVID-19.

The [Washington Post](#) examined the traumatic experiences that people experiencing homelessness in New York City face amid the coronavirus pandemic.

[Politico](#) explored the pandemic’s potential impact on the racial wealth gap, highlighting racial disparities in homeownership. The article also discussed proposals from Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and House Financial Services Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) to include billions of dollars in rental assistance in the next relief package.

A group of Native American tribes is [suing the Treasury Department](#) for failing to distribute \$8 billion in federal coronavirus relief that was allocated for tribes in the CARES Act. The Treasury Department missed its April 26 deadline to distribute the funds 30 days after the CARES Act passed.

Many landlords are bracing for a wave of [non-payments](#) due to the pandemic.

[Vox](#) explored the impact of the coronavirus on rural America, discussing the uptick of outbreaks in certain areas and the factors that place rural communities at risk.

State and Local News

NLIHC’s list of local eviction and foreclosure moratoriums is available [here](#)

NLIHC’s list of state and local emergency rental assistance programs is available [here](#)

NLIHC’s list of local shelter closings is available [here](#)

Alabama

The [Alabama Department of Public Health](#) expanded coronavirus testing criteria to include certain asymptomatic, high-risk groups and individuals. The expanded criteria include people without symptoms who are residents of congregate housing settings, such as homeless shelters.

Arizona

Eighteen people in the [Flagstaff Shelter Service](#) have tested positive for the coronavirus, including two staff members. The shelter has been serving 40 to 65 people in their main location and another 75 people who were placed in motels using funds provided by the city.

Arkansas

[Arkansas nonprofits and community members](#) have partnered to provide rental assistance to low-income renters impacted by the pandemic. Seven nonprofits have created a [donation website](#) and a housing assistance hotline to prevent families from becoming homeless.

California

[San Francisco Mayor London Breed](#) faces growing criticism from city officials and advocates for not doing enough to move people experiencing homelessness into hotel rooms. While more than 1,000 people have been moved into hotel rooms, approximately 1,700 hotel rooms remain vacant.

[Landlords in the Bay Area](#) are still beginning the eviction process and threatening to remove tenants despite California's eviction moratorium. After a tenant who lost employment as an onsite property manager was threatened with eviction, the city of Alameda issued a [press statement](#) reiterating that state and local laws prohibit evictions during COVID-19.

[Tenant and landlord groups across the Bay Area](#) are urging federal and state officials to provide billions of dollars in rental assistance to prevent a wave of evictions and widespread housing insecurity. Amie Fishman, executive director of the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California, an NLIHC state partner, highlighted the need for a bold federal aid package to address the needs of low-income tenants and future housing development.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti announced that over the weekend that LA County officials have acquired an [additional 505 motel rooms](#) for people experiencing homelessness, bringing the total number of rooms to 2,711.

[Two San Diego activists](#), with support from the community, have raised over \$30,000 for [Hotel Vouchers 4 All](#). They have acquired housing for 70 people experiencing homelessness and provided 30 additional individuals with critical services.

[Homeless activists in Los Angeles](#) are urging Mayor Eric Garcetti to use emergency powers to commandeer hotels and motels to provide much needed shelter for people experiencing homelessness amid the pandemic.

Colorado

The [Denver Department of Public Works](#) cleaned several homeless encampments on May 7. City crews moved the belongings of people staying in the encampments into a nearby parking lot, picked up trash, and power washed the sidewalk. The city allowed people to return to the areas because of the CDC's guidance to refrain from sweeping encampments during the pandemic.

Colorado awarded a total of [\\$3 million to 20 organizations](#) to provide short-term rental and mortgage assistance for low-income families. Nonprofits across the state expect the funds to be spent quickly. Governor Jared Polis established the \$3 million fund in a March 20 executive order to ensure that Colorado residents did not lose housing due to the pandemic.

COVID-19 has created opportunities for [novel legal strategies](#) to challenge cities and states in ensuring that all residents have access to safe housing. An attorney representing advocacy groups and two people experiencing homelessness argues that Colorado should provide safe housing for people experiencing homelessness, citing

the existence of an equal protection violation since housed residents are better able to obey the state's stay-at-home order.

Florida

The [City of Miami Emergency Rental and Utilities Assistance Program](#) will provide one-month rental and utility assistance to low-income residents who have lost jobs due to the pandemic. The program began accepting applications on [May 4](#).

[Homeless shelters in Florida](#) have adjusted operations amid the pandemic, including imposing social distancing measures, increasing food outreach, and limiting new intakes in certain cases.

Illinois

[Housing Action Illinois](#), an NLIHC state partner, released a blog post discussing the importance of how advocates frame requests for additional affordable housing and homelessness resources during the pandemic. The post includes messaging that members, partners, and allies may find helpful to adopt or adapt.

[Chicago advocates](#) are working to ensure that housing and homelessness are prioritized in the city and state's response to COVID-19 but are frustrated by the Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA) slow response. Reports from the CHA show that there are 372 vacant public housing units ready for immediate occupancy and an additional 797 units that have recently become vacant.

Organizations in [McHenry County](#) are working to protect people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic, making adjustments to their operations to adhere to guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and orders from the governor.

Indiana

Prosperity Indiana, an NLIHC state partner, and key collaborators have formed the [Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition](#) to advocate housing policy solutions that ensure an equitable response and recovery to the pandemic. The Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition is focusing its efforts on recommendations for short-term emergency rental assistance and homelessness prevention.

A group of [17 Indiana housing providers and advocacy groups](#) sent a letter to Senator Todd Young (R-IN) urging him to support \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance in the next coronavirus relief package.

Kentucky

Adrienne Bush, executive director of the [Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky](#), an NLIHC state partner, discussed the critical need for emergency rental assistance to keep renters stably housed. "If Kentucky is going to come out of this COVID-19 state of emergency stronger," Bush said, "renter's protection and rental relief have to be a critical part of the equation."

The [Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky \(HHCK\)](#), an NLIHC state partner, has worked to help people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless during the pandemic. With a grant from NLIHC, HHCK started an [Eviction Prevention Fund](#) and is currently accepting donations.

Louisiana

A program will be extended to provide hotel rooms for people experiencing homelessness at an encampment in [New Orleans](#). Nearly 200 people have been housed in two hotels since state and city officials began the 30-day hotel program after discovering a rodent infestation at the New Orleans encampment.

Maryland

The director of the [Baltimore Mayor's Office of Homeless Services](#), Jerrienne Anthony, has been placed on extended personal leave and the office's deputy director is no longer a city employee. The office's chief of staff has resigned, effective later this month. A spokesman for Mayor Bernard "Jack" Young did not provide a reason for these personnel changes.

Michigan

More people experiencing homelessness have been moved from a [Kalamazoo](#) shelter into hotel rooms. Approximately 150 people are occupying 105 rooms at the hotel. While the hotel program is only for people not showing any symptoms of the coronavirus, Kalamazoo County has created a separate quarantine location for people who have tested positive for the coronavirus or who are symptomatic.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer [announced](#) that the state received approval from FEMA to provide housing alternatives, including hotels and motels, for people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.

A caterer from [Ann Arbor](#), Stacy Williams, has been delivering meals to frontline medical staff at Michigan Medicine and St. Joseph Mercy hospitals. Williams has also teamed up with Pastor Vicky Lovell to provide food to people experiencing homelessness at four sites providing 24-hour shelter.

Minnesota

The director of the [Olmstead County Housing and Redevelopment Authority](#) (HRA) announced that it will focus on developing a housing strategy to find permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness. The HRA has been working with local hotels to house veteran, families, and people at high-risk of severe illness.

[Ramsey County](#) allocated up to \$1.8 million on March 17 to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 at local homeless shelters. The county and local nonprofits have partnered to acquire 60 hotel rooms and three meals a day for seniors experiencing homelessness and are working to acquire additional hotel rooms.

[Hennepin County](#) and Minnesota health officials have been working to protect people experiencing homelessness by acquiring local hotel rooms for temporary shelter. The effort has reduced crowding by more than 50% at Hennepin County's largest shelters. The county has spent \$4.3 million on the relocation efforts and projects monthly ongoing costs of \$1.6 million to continue the program.

More than 300 physicians, nurse practitioners, psychiatrists, and social workers signed a petition urging state and local officials to address the immediate survival needs of people experiencing homelessness. Read the *Star Tribune* op-ed [here](#).

After issuing an executive order on March 25 prohibiting law enforcement from clearing encampments, Governor Tim Walz [reversed his position](#) on April 29. [Emergency Executive Order 20-47](#) allows homeless encampments to be swept if they pose health and safety risks.

Missouri

[Governor Mike Parson](#) highlighted the housing assistance available to Missourians during the pandemic. The state will use Community Development Block Grant and Emergency Solutions Grants to help meet the housing needs of Missouri residents.

St. Louis officials cleared an [encampment with approximately 100 tents](#) over the last several days. Although a lawsuit was filed to stop the city from sweeping the encampment, a federal judge denied the request.

Montana

Montana established an [emergency rental assistance program](#) to provide rent, security deposits, mortgage payments, and hazard insurance assistance for residents who have lost jobs or income due to the pandemic. The \$50 million program is funded through the state's allocation of the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund.

Nevada

The number of people at a joint city-county isolation and quarantine complex in [Las Vegas](#), which houses people experiencing homelessness who have tested positive for the coronavirus or have been exposed, tripled in just two days. The "ISO-Q" [complex](#) has been open since April 13 and has served approximately 133 people experiencing homelessness.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire is spending [\\$3 million](#) in federal funding to help people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic. The money will be used to provide stipends for homeless shelter staff, cover additional shelter expenses, and support agencies helping people find permanent housing.

[Manchester Mayor Joyce Craig](#) announced new measures on April 30 to protect people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic, including a city-sanctioned temporary camp. City officials have provided portable toilets and sinks and have started delivering meals to an encampment. In a [letter](#) to the community, the mayor emphasized the importance of strengthening partnerships to expand services for people experiencing homelessness in Manchester and across New Hampshire.

New Jersey

[Union City](#) passed a measure prohibiting evictions of residential or commercial tenants during its state of emergency, including for nonpayment of rent. Union City's legislation creates a moratorium on all evictions whether the property is mortgaged or owned by the landlord.

[Jersey City Council](#) unanimously passed an ordinance ([Ordinance No. 20-036](#)) that prohibits any rent increase and any penalty for late rent payments until August 1 in all rent controlled and non-owner occupied 1-4 unit dwellings.

[Newark](#) started testing people experiencing homelessness for the coronavirus on May 4. The testing occurs at an airport hotel acquired by the city last month to provide housing for Newark residents experiencing homelessness. The city has accommodations to quarantine anyone who tests positive for the coronavirus.

The city of [Passaic](#) is increasing efforts to test people experiencing homelessness for the coronavirus, including opening a testing site at its North Hudson Community Center. The city recently opened Dignity House, a resource center for people experiencing homelessness.

Advocacy groups and shelter providers in New Jersey are preparing for [increased demand for their services](#) once the state reopens and the eviction moratorium is lifted. Over the last month in Morris County, there has been a 30% increase to the coordinated entry list for shelters.

New York

Governor Cuomo [extended the statewide moratorium on evictions](#) through August 20. The moratorium was set to expire June 20. The governor said that he will [reassess the situation](#) at the end of August.

The New York Police Department [deployed 1000 police officers](#) to remove people experiencing homelessness from the city's subway system as train cars and platforms are disinfected. Governor Andrew Cuomo said that the [subway shutdown](#) to clean the trains offers an opportunity to engage with people experiencing homelessness who have been using the subway as shelter.

Letters from FEMA reveal that the [de Blasio administration received federal approval in late March](#) to acquire hotel rooms for people experiencing homelessness, raising questions about the city's recent announcement that it needs more time to acquire a method of reimbursement to expand its hotel program.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio is [opposing legislation](#) introduced by the city council that would offer people experiencing homelessness the option to stay in vacant private hotel rooms across the city. While de Blasio's administration argues that the city does not have the funds to afford this, FEMA would likely cover the cost of the program.

North Carolina

[Wake County](#) commissioners approved \$2 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds to prevent evictions and homelessness, but the county is asking to use more of its \$5 million share for housing.

Ohio

[Cleveland](#) launched three new relief programs to assist residents facing unemployment or eviction due to the pandemic. \$11.3 million out of the \$18 million in aid will be spent on rental assistance.

Oregon

[Chair of the Multnomah County Commission Deborah Kafoury](#) expressed support for including \$100 billion in rent assistance in the next federal relief package: "The rent crisis in our county requires the kind of national response that only the federal government can and should provide."

Pennsylvania

[Pennsylvania released new guidance](#) for people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic, including a temporary suspension on evictions and foreclosures. The Department of Human Services is establishing a Sheltering Taskforce to provide services to people who are unable to self-isolate. Rental assistance is available through the Housing Assistance Program, and the Department of Community and Economic Development plans to issue multiple Emergency Solution Grants.

Rhode Island

[Governor Gina Raimondo](#) announced that her administration is seeking permission to use \$5.1 million in federal Medicaid funds to pay for food, rent, and mobile phones for people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.

Tennessee

Health officials announced that [119 people experiencing homelessness](#) who were staying at the Nashville fairgrounds and the Nashville Rescue Mission had tested positive for the coronavirus.

Texas

[Rental assistance programs in Texas](#) are unable to meet the overwhelming demand for financial assistance needed to prevent a wave of evictions and homelessness. Most Texas cities do not offer this support, and for the cities that do, the money is quickly running out.

The [Houston City Council](#) approved a proposal introduced by Mayor Sylvester Turner to allocate \$15 million for emergency rental assistance. The program will use federal relief funding and will be managed by a local nonprofit. At least 6,818 Houston residents are expected to benefit.

Housing advocates in Texas are concerned about a [potential surge of evictions and homelessness](#) after the state moratorium on evictions is lifted. While the statewide moratorium halts trials, hearings, and eviction procedures, it does not suspend payments or late fees.

The city of [Dallas](#) began accepting applications for rental and mortgage assistance through an online portal on May 4. Due to high volume, however, many people reported difficulties in accessing the online rental and mortgage assistance website.

[Chow Train](#), a food truck and nonprofit founded in 2011, has cooked nearly 45,000 meals for people experiencing homelessness in San Antonio.

Utah

[Utah advocates](#) expanded efforts to test people experiencing homelessness, low-income renters, and Latino community members for the coronavirus. The Midtown Community Health Center, which operates clinics and shelters, pre-screens individuals before they enter the shelter and has begun drive-through testing.

Washington

The threat of COVID-19 has led local leaders in Western Washington to take [drastic actions to address homelessness](#). Seattle and King County have moved people experiencing homelessness into hotels, installed hygiene stations, and prohibited encampment sweeps. Advocates hope this new approach will continue even after the acute crisis has passed.

West Virginia

Across West Virginia, advocates are mobilizing to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness amid the pandemic. The [West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness](#), an NLIHC state partner, has been leading efforts to ensure that shelters have the supplies needed to protect residents and keep people living in encampments safe. Advocates hope the pandemic will shine a light on the state's homelessness crisis and encourage communities to pursue long-term solutions.

Guidance

Department of Agriculture

[Actions Taken by USDA Rural Development to Help Rural Residents, Businesses, and Communities Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) - May 4, 2020

Department of Housing and Urban Development

[IDIS Instructions for CDBG-CV, ESG-CV, and HOPWA-CV for Setting Up a Substantial Amendment for CARES Act Funding](#)

[CDBG-DR COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#) - Updated May 4, 2020

[CARES Act Flexibilities for ESG and HOPWA Funds Used to Support Coronavirus Response and Plan Amendment Waiver](#) - May 5, 2020

Department of Labor

[COVID-19 Dislocated Worker Grants](#)

Department of Treasury

[Coronavirus Relief Fund - Frequently Asked Questions](#) - Updated May 4, 2020

FEMA

[Fact Sheet: How to Appeal FEMA's Decision on Eligibility](#) - May 7, 2020

[Fact Sheet: Federal Support to Expand National Testing Capabilities](#) - Updated May 6, 2020

[COVID-19: FEMA Assistance for Tribal Governments](#) - May 1, 2020

New State and Local Partner Resources

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

- [Guidance on Proper Grouping \(Cohorting\) of Residents](#)
- [Guidance on Social Distancing and Bed Positioning for Residential and Congregate Settings](#)
- [Isolation Tracking Log](#)
- [Quarantine Tracking Log](#)

Massachusetts Department of Public Health: [COVID-19 and Homelessness: The Massachusetts Response](#)

Opportunity Starts at Home

Take Action! Urge Congress to Include the “Emergency Rental Assistance Act” in the Next COVID-19 Relief Package

The [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) multisector affordable homes campaign on May 7 launched a "[Take Action](#)" page where advocates can send pre-formatted letters to their federal elected officials urging them to include the "Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act" in the next coronavirus relief package. Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA), chair of the House Financial Services Committee, Representative Denny Heck (D-WA), and over 120 cosponsors introduced the bill, which would provide \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance to avert a surge in evictions and homelessness during the coronavirus pandemic. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), ranking member of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, introduced companion legislation in the Senate.

Please encourage your networks to use the Take Action page to reach out to their federal elected officials. To send the letter, simply type in your street address, click "submit," and the letter automatically goes directly to your senator and representative. To take action today, [click here](#).

Additionally, members of the campaign's Steering Committee and Roundtable sent a [letter](#) on May 6 to Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy urging Congress to include the "Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act" in the next coronavirus relief package. Signatories included leading national organizations from health, education, civil rights, child welfare, faith, and environmental protection.



Follow the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign on all social media platforms: [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Be sure to [sign up](#) for our e-newsletter to get the latest updates about the campaign, including new multi-sector partners, [calls to action](#), events, and [research](#).

Campaign Welcomes the Minnesota Chapter of Opportunity Starts at Home

The [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) multisector affordable homes campaign is pleased to announce a new state-based campaign, the Minnesota Chapter of *Opportunity Starts at Home* (OSAH-MN). The Minnesota Chapter was selected through the campaign's "[Endorsement Application](#)," which enables state-level organizations pursuing multi-sector housing policy efforts to earn a formal endorsement from the national campaign. The application was led by NLIHC state partner the [Minnesota Housing Partnership \(MHP\)](#).

OSAH-MN is supported by Homes for All MN and MHP and is working to broaden its housing coalition to include healthcare, education, civil rights, and anti-poverty. These multi-sector partnerships will influence national policymakers who represent the state to advance more robust and equitable federal housing policies. In its application, OSAH-MN demonstrated a strong track record of bringing non-housing groups into the work of housing advocacy and a readiness to engage its federal delegation around the campaign's federal [policy priorities](#).



The Minnesota Chapter will be joining other state-based campaigns in California, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Utah. Together, they will participate in peer-to-peer learning and gain access to resources, networks, and technical assistance from the national campaign.

"We are thrilled to welcome the Minnesota Chapter of OSAH," said national campaign director Mike Koprowski. "The Minnesota Chapter has been doing a great job bringing a diverse array of sectors to join in the movement for affordable homes. This partnership will accelerate our collective efforts to advance increased federal housing resources for the lowest income people."

"Minnesota's *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign reflects the deep understanding of how essential housing is to our community's infrastructure and strength," said Anne Mavity, executive director of the Minnesota Housing Partnership. "Our partners recognize that success in mental health, health disparities, and building strong communities are grounded in safe, accessible, affordable housing. This campaign will align our efforts among stakeholders in Minnesota to advance housing policies and investments at the federal level."

"Now more than ever, housing is health care," said Wendy Underwood, vice president of social justice advocacy and engagement at Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. "As the gap between safe, affordable housing and incomes continues to grow, a significant and coordinated cross-sector effort is needed to advance policy solutions and increase federal investments to prevent homelessness and promote housing stability. We are proud to partner with *Opportunity Starts at Home* to accelerate action on policy priorities that will serve those most in need."

"OSAH-MN aligns the efforts of multi-sector organizations in Minnesota to advance policy and promote change in housing to create more equitable opportunities," said Ann Henderson, LICSW, executive director of Mental Health Resources. "Access to safe, affordable housing is vital to the overall health and well-being of the individuals and families in our communities. This campaign shines a spotlight on these disparities and provides a cohesive platform for furthering the work in addressing them. MHR is a proud member of OSAH-MN."

Follow the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign on all social media platforms: [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Be sure to [sign up](#) for our e-newsletter to get the latest updates about the campaign, including new partners, [calls to action](#), events, and [research](#).

FEMA

GAO Reports Highlight Ongoing Issues with FEMA and National Disaster Response

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released two reports highlighting ongoing issues with staffing and capacity-building reform at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The [first report](#) details deficiencies surrounding FEMA's efforts to reform their employee qualification tracking and deployment system. The [second report](#) addressed gaps in national emergency response.

The [first report](#) describes FEMA's response to questions regarding the agency's response to disasters in 2017 and 2018. The GAO held focus groups with over 100 FEMA staff members and interviewed field and regional officials. Through these interviews and focus groups, the GAO was identified significant issues with how FEMA staff qualifications are evaluated and deployed to disasters. These deficiencies can result in FEMA staff being deployed to handle programs (including the agency's housing assistance programs, with which they have little familiarity). For example, "in one supervisory-level focus group with FEMA incident management officials, a participant described encountering staff members who were designated as qualified in the system but did not know how to use the information system for FEMA's Individual Assistance program, the eligibility requirements for applicants to receive housing assistance, or what documentation and information needed to be

included in the applicant’s file.” The report finds that while FEMA has made efforts to improve its systems, the reforms do not address issues with existing staff qualifications.

The [second report](#) identifies disaster housing recovery as an area where large capacity gaps remain. The report finds that a majority of states from 2013-2017 reported housing as the area of disaster recovery where they had the lowest response capability. The report categorizes how disaster preparedness grants designed to improve state-level disaster response were utilized from 2013 to 2018. The use of these grants does not line up with the areas cited by states as areas for improvement. For example, only 3% of preparedness grants were used to improve states’ ability to address disaster housing recovery. The report explains the gap between how states used disaster preparedness grants and self-identified areas of weakness: “Both FEMA and state officials told us that sometimes jurisdictions do not use these grants to strengthen capabilities such as housing because they consider the federal government responsible for filling the gaps. For example, preparedness data from 2013 to 2017 showed the percent of jurisdictions identifying the federal government as responsible for providing housing solutions to disaster survivors increased from 46 to 53 percent. According to state officials from North Carolina, it would not be a prudent use of grant funds for the state to purchase and store temporary housing units that may not be needed inside the borders of the state for several years.”

The conclusions of both reports are troublesome as the nation prepares for a hurricane season in the midst of an ongoing pandemic.

Read the GAO Report on the FEMA workforce here: <https://bit.ly/2SOrg6W>

Read the GAO Report on gaps in national disaster response here: <https://bit.ly/2LctpFg>

Research

Study Finds Changes to Inclusionary Housing Policy Increase Affordable Production

In an article in *Housing Studies*, “[Harnessing the Real Estate Market for Equitable Affordable Housing Provision: Insights from the City of Santa Monica, California](#),” researchers find that changes to Santa Monica’s inclusionary housing policy produced a 15% increase in inclusionary housing production in the city. The authors found that Santa Monica did better than Los Angeles and San Diego in increasing production of affordable housing when market-rate production increases, suggesting Santa Monica’s inclusionary housing policy is working more efficiently.

Inclusionary housing policies connect the development of affordable homes for low- and moderate-income households to market-rate developments, generally by requiring or rewarding developers to set aside a small portion of their units for households unable to afford market-rate housing. Such requirements and bonuses vary considerably across jurisdictions.

The City of Santa Monica first adopted its Affordable Housing Production Program (AHPP) in 1998, a program substantially altered by the 2010 Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE). Santa Monica’s inclusionary housing program has a mixture of mandatory and optional elements. All developers have an affordable housing obligation. For small projects, developers can satisfy the obligation by including affordable units onsite, developing affordable units at another location, paying in-lieu fees, or dedicating land to the city or to a non-profit developer. Developers of larger projects must provide onsite or offsite affordable units. They may also volunteer to opt into higher affordable-housing requirements that impose further restrictions on properties in exchange for greater height, density, and Floor Area Ratio (the ratio of a building’s total floor area to the size of the land on which it is built). AHPP aims to capture increases in land value that result from these allowances. Whereas with a density bonus, the developer is required to provide affordable housing equivalent to the value of

the additional units gained from density increases, Santa Monica's land-value-capture method connects affordable-housing requirements to an estimate of the increase in land value. Economic analyses performed during the planning phase determine the increase in land value from higher density, an analysis that informs the city's decision about what level of community benefits to require.

The authors evaluated the program's success since 2010. They collected data on market-rate and affordable housing construction in Santa Monica (2003-2017) and Los Angeles and San Diego (2009-2017); conducted interviews with 10 local city officials, academics, developers, and community advocates; and sent 85 questionnaires to residents of inclusionary-housing projects.

In the seven years prior to AHPP revisions, 85% of for-profit developers paid in-lieu fees. Since the 2010 revisions, only 55% of for-profit developers have opted to pay in-lieu fees instead of developing affordable housing. The authors observe that the persistently high percentage of developers paying in-lieu fees is due to the predominance of smaller projects: 83% of projects that paid in-lieu fees had 1 to 5 units. Regardless, the decline of in-lieu fees is likely an indicator of more affordable homes being build, since city policy makers reported that the in-lieu fees on their own are not sufficient to cover construction costs. Between 2003 and 2010, market-rate developers produced 223 affordable units and 1,106 market-rate units. Between 2010 and 2017, they produced 259 affordable units and 974 market-rate units. The authors found a positive correlation between affordable housing production and the presence of the 2010 LUCE requirements, even after taking account of variation in housing demand, the cost of credit finance, housing prices and rents, land prices, and construction costs. Interviewees suggested that faster approval times, removal of paying in-lieu fees as an option for higher bonuses and required economic feasibility studies were critical in increasing affordable housing production.

The authors compared housing outputs from the Santa Monica program with outputs in Los Angeles and San Diego (which also have inclusionary-housing programs), finding that the trend in Santa Monica affordable housing production is notably different from that in Los Angeles and San Diego. While in the latter cities the production of affordable housing units is fairly level between 2009 and 2017, in San Diego affordable housing production rises and falls with the construction of market-rate units.

Questionnaires sent to residents of inclusionary housing projects found that residents were highly satisfied with the services in their neighborhoods, including access to schools and parks. Sixty percent of market-rate occupants were not aware of affordable units within their buildings. Among residents living in affordable units, 90% reported never having experienced bias in their buildings.

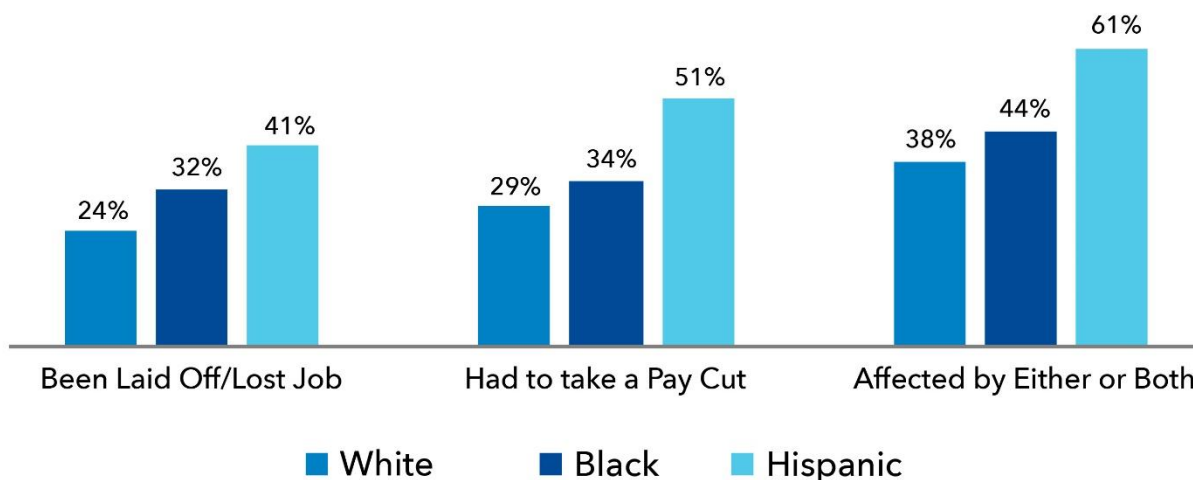
The article can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3fnn5EM>

For more on inclusionary housing policies, see [p. 6-12](#) of the *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

Fact of the Week

Hispanics and Blacks More Affected than Whites by COVID-19 Job Disruptions

Households with Job Disruption, By Race or Ethnicity



Source: Pew Research Center, American Trends Panel 2020. Survey conducted April 7-12. Respondents were asked whether they or anyone in their household had been laid off or had pay cut because of the coronavirus outbreak.

Source: Pew Research Center, American Trends Panel, 2020.

From the Field

Montana Provides \$50 Million in Emergency Housing Assistance in Response to COVID-19

Montana is an early leader in using Coronavirus Relief Fund resources to provide emergency rent assistance for renters and homeowners struggling to meet housing costs during the pandemic. The Emergency Housing Assistance program now provides rent, security deposit, and mortgage payment support for Montanans who have suffered a loss in household income as a result of COVID-19. The \$50 million might expand, as only a small portion of the state's overall Coronavirus Relief Fund allocation is currently included.

The housing assistance can address arrears back to April and cover the difference between 30% of a household's current income and the amount of monthly rent up to \$2,000. Initial grants will cover two months of housing costs, with an opportunity for recipients to apply for continued assistance. Payments will be distributed directly to the landlord, property owner, or mortgage servicer. Owners of manufactured housing or mobile homes will be able to access emergency rent assistance to help pay lot rent, which is important in Montana where this type of housing is common for lower-income households. Income eligibility for housing assistance varies by family size, with income caps ranging from \$75,000 to \$125,000.

Renters with income-based federal assistance such as public housing or Housing Choice Vouchers will not be eligible for the program. Instead, public housing agencies (PHAs) in Montana have expedited income recertifications as a result of COVID-19 to avoid rent arrears among the households they serve.

The Emergency Housing Assistance program was established recently by Montana Housing using surplus Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) funds. Coronavirus Relief Fund resources will bolster this new emergency grant infrastructure. The additional \$50 million comes in response to recommendations from Governor Steve Bullock's (D) Coronavirus Relief Fund Advisory Council. The 20-person council did not

include housing advocates, but the public participation process enabled 26 housing organizations to provide detailed information on the urgent need for housing assistance to prevent a wave of evictions and foreclosures. The Montana Housing Coalition, an NLIHC member, was essential in mobilizing feedback to guide the council's recommendations.

The Coronavirus Relief Fund spending announced on May 7 accounts for only a fraction of the resources allocated to Montana. Affordable housing advocates in the state are eager to see more resources for housing assistance as many households will require ongoing assistance while they recover from lost income and strive to find new employment.

“We are grateful for the leadership provided by Governor Bullock,” said Sheila Rice, a Montana Housing Coalition board member. “Housing assistance payments are needed immediately to stabilize struggling Montanans, and the rapid deployment of these resources helps us get a strong start on meeting the need.”

For more information on advocacy to expand housing assistance resources in Montana, contact Sheila Rice at sheilaricemt@outlook.com

NLIHC News

NLIHC Seeks Housing Policy Analyst/Senior Housing Policy Analyst

NLIHC seeks a housing policy analyst/senior housing policy analyst (depending on experience) responsible for identifying, analyzing, advocating, and engaging the Coalition's membership and network in action on federal policy and regulatory activities related to the Coalition's mission and priorities. The policy analyst will report to the NLIHC vice president for public policy. The position is located in Washington, DC, but NLIHC will be flexible about location for the first year.

The policy analyst/senior analyst will:

1. Monitor legislative, regulatory, and administrative developments, as well as other activities or events of interest on Capitol Hill and at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other relevant agencies.
2. Help develop policy strategies and advocate Coalition positions before members of Congress and the Administration by drafting letters, scheduling and participating in meetings, and leading coalitions, and preparing and sending communications to Congress, Administration officials, and their staff.
3. Develop advocacy materials that translate pending proposals and actions into an accessible and understandable format, including factsheets, briefs, white papers, testimony, and other resources.
4. Complete other policy projects, as assigned.
5. Represent the Coalition before selected national partners.
6. Coordinate and facilitate working group and coalition meetings, prepare materials, and make presentations. Attend meetings and events of other coalitions.
7. Work together with NLIHC field staff and NLIHC partners and allies in impacted communities to stay abreast of housing concerns.
8. Research and prepare articles for NLIHC's *Memo to Members and Partners* e-newsletter, including updates on Capitol Hill, HUD, and other federal agencies, through web-based and other research and attendance at hearings and briefings.
9. Develop advocacy communications for a wide variety of Coalition members and partners.
10. Plan and implement briefings, dialogues, and other informational forums on issues related to Coalition priorities and initiatives.
11. Monitor and provide updates for the Coalition website.

12. Participate in the planning and implementation of all aspects of Coalition’s annual policy conference, including speaker recruitment.
13. Attend and report at all meetings of Board of Directors; participate in staff meetings, trainings, and all Coalition events. Other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS:

A bachelor's degree (master's degree or law degree preferred). A degree in Public Policy, Public Administration, Humanitarian Emergency Management or related area is a plus. Applicants should have at least two years of experience in public policy or legislative affairs for the policy analyst position and at least five years of experience for the senior policy analyst position. Applicants should have a commitment to social justice and knowledge of affordable housing, homelessness, fair housing, or social service delivery. Candidates should be able to work in a diverse, high-paced environment and have strong writing and editing skills, oral and interpersonal communications, organizational skills, and attention to detail. Applicants should also be proficient in the Microsoft Office suite and social media platforms.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. This is a full-time position located in Washington, DC, but NLIHC will be flexible about location for the first year.

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, and two writing samples to Paul Kealey, chief operating officer, and Sarah Saadian, vice president for public policy, at: pkealey@nlihc.org and ssaadian@nlihc.org

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of May 3

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of May 3:

- “Opinion | There’s a Rental Crisis Coming. Here’s How to Avoid It.,” *Politico*, May 8 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y9lddra3>
- “Put Homeless People In Hotels,” *The Huffington Post*, May 5 at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybenf25q>
- “More than 30 million Americans filed for unemployment since mid-March,” *Univision News*, May 5 at: <https://tinyurl.com/ycapbq75>
- “A New Senate Bill Proposes \$100 Billion For Emergency Rent Relief,” *Forbes*, May 4 at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybvr3w7h>
- “With rent due, millions of Americans can't -- or won't -- pay,” *ABC News - Go.com*, May 1 at: <https://tinyurl.com/yb3nvxgc>
- “Opinion: Rent is due. Texas must do more to protect tenants during the COVID-19 crisis” *Houston Chronicle*, May 1 at: <https://tinyurl.com/yc755kwf>

NLIHC Staff

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Jordan April, Research Intern, x249

Kyle Arbuckle, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x227

Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245

Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244
Alayna Calabro, Policy Analyst–COVID-19 Response, x252
Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Kim Johnson, Housing Policy Analyst, x243
Mia Juliana, Graphic Design/Communication Intern, x240
Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232
Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317
Joseph Lindstrom, Director, Field Organizing, x222
Mayerline Louis-Juste, Communications Specialist, x201
Lisa Marlow, Manager, Media Relations and Communications, x239
Tyra Reed, Policy Intern, x241
Sarah Saadian, Vice President, Public Policy, x228
Khara Norris, Director of Administration, x242
Noah Patton, Housing Policy Analyst, x227
Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Specialist, x246
Catherine Reeves, Development Coordinator, x234
Brooke Schipporeit, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233
Dan Threet, Research Analyst, x202
Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Coordinator, x230
Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225