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## Point of View

### **Housing Justice is Racial Justice – by *Diane Yentel, NLIHC President and CEO***

This is an extraordinarily challenging time: police killings of Black men and women, a global pandemic disproportionately harming and killing people of color; Depression-era unemployment levels disproportionately harming people of color; police and military responding with violence to protests against police brutality; a president continuously stoking division. And, if we don't act immediately, millions of Black and brown people may be evicted from their homes in the coming months.

Now more than ever, we must say clearly and unequivocally: Black Lives Matter. We must recognize that calling for racial justice, while important, is not enough – we must work to create it through actions, policies and programs that protect and value Black lives and make racial equity a reality.

We in the housing field have essential work to do. America's history of racist housing and transportation policies - redlining, blockbusting, restrictive covenants, restrictive zoning, highway systems built to isolate Black communities – resulted in over-policing and disinvestment in Black and brown communities. These decades of structural racism created tremendous racial disparities in housing and homelessness. African Americans represent thirteen percent of the general population but are forty percent of people experiencing homelessness and more than fifty percent of homeless families with children. Black families are twenty-six percent of all extremely low-income renters.

The housing crisis and its disproportionate harm to low-income people of color deepened over the last several decades; at the same time, Black homeownership declined, and the country's yawning racial wealth gap widened. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, people of color were denied the federal resources created to help white families become homeowners and build wealth. As a result, the wealth of the median-income white family is *twelve times* larger than the wealth of the median-income Black family.

Now, Black and brown renters are at immediate risk of losing their homes. Because, in addition to everything else happening in our country, rent was due last week and millions of people can't afford to pay. Black and Native Americans are bearing the brunt of COVID-19 infections and fatalities, and Latinos and Black people are bearing the brunt of historic job losses. Eviction moratoriums are expiring and back rent is due. Unless Congress intervenes soon, there will be a rash of evictions and a spike in homelessness across the country and, once again, people of color will be most harmed.

Congress must act to prevent this tragic, costly, and entirely preventable outcome by quickly enacting the essential housing and homelessness provisions in the House-passed "HEROES Act." Each day of inaction in the Senate puts more low-income renters — mostly people of color — at immediate risk of losing their homes.

In the months and years ahead, we have essential work to do to dismantle racist systems and structures and rebuild them equitably – from creating a true criminal *justice* system to ensuring that everyone has a safe, affordable and accessible home. Right now, we must push Congress to prevent millions of low-income Black, Latino and Native people from being forced out of their homes during a global pandemic.

Housing justice is racial justice. [We need rent relief now.](#)

In solidarity,



## Coronavirus, Homelessness, and Housing

### Senate Minority Leader Schumer to Join Today's National Call on Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) will join [today's national call on Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness](#) at 2:30-4 pm ET, to talk about the next coronavirus relief package and the importance of ensuring [essential housing and homelessness components](#) in the "HEROES Act" are included.

This is our opportunity to thank Minority Leader Schumer for the important homelessness and housing resources and provisions included in the CARES Act and to hear from him on what more we need to do to achieve \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance, a national uniform eviction moratorium, and other critical housing/homelessness investments in the next spending package.

On today's call we will also explore addressing anti-blackness and achieving racial equity, hear about efforts to secure equitable COVID-19 housing responses, get updates from the field, and more.

Register [here](#) for the call and encourage your networks to register! See the full agenda [here](#).

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### **ACTION NEEDED: Add Your Organization to National Letters Urging Congress to Keep People Stably Housed!**

Millions of our country's lowest-income renters were struggling to make rent even before the pandemic hit. Now, more than 40 million people have applied for unemployment benefits since March. Without immediate action from Congress, a wave of evictions and a spike in homelessness throughout the country will ensue.

NLIHC is calling on Congress to enact immediately the critical housing resources and protections contained in the House-passed "[HEROES Act](#)," including: [\\$100 billion](#) in emergency rental assistance; a uniform, national moratorium on evictions; and \$11.5 billion to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

[Add your organization](#) to two national letters today urging Congress to act to keep people stably housed. One letter urges congress to immediately enact all of the housing provisions in the HEROES Act, and the other focuses more specifically on the need for emergency rental assistance.

To sign the letters, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y9hc8oj7>

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## Coronavirus – Congress

### Senator Warren and Representative Waters Introduce Bills to Combat COVID-Related Housing Insecurity and Homelessness

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and 18 senate co-sponsors introduced on June 1 legislation ([S.3856](#)) to authorize \$11.5 billion for HUD's Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program for communities addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness during the coronavirus pandemic. Separately, Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) introduced [H.R.7084](#), which would authorize \$10 billion for new emergency vouchers targeted specifically to people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness and those fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

An estimated \$15.5 billion is needed to respond to coronavirus among people experiencing homelessness. This amount includes \$11.5 billion to help local communities minimize the number of people living in homeless encampments and identify space for isolation and self-quarantine, and \$4 billion for short-term financial assistance and housing stabilization services. Congress provided \$4 billion in ESG funding in the CARES Act, but must provide an [additional \\$11.5 billion to adequately respond to and prevent outbreaks](#) among people experiencing homelessness.

While this funding is vital to address the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness, individuals who have moved into safer temporary housing may face homelessness again when ESG assistance runs out. Funding new Housing Choice Vouchers [would ensure](#) these individuals and families can remain housed in the private market until they can afford housing on their own.

Learn more about S.3856 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y8bbhfgz>

Learn more about H.R.7084 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y9kyanan>

Read NLIHC's legislative recommendations for the next coronavirus relief package at: <https://tinyurl.com/y9mmz9hv>

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## House Subcommittee to Hold Virtual Hearing on the Impact of COVID-19 on Evictions

The House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development and Insurance will convene a hearing titled "The Rent Is Still Due: America's Renters, COVID-19, and an Unprecedented Eviction Crisis." The hearing will be held virtually. The coronavirus pandemic presents a deep financial challenge for renters and homeowners across the country. In May, the House passed the "HEROES Act," which includes [\\$100 billion](#) in emergency rental assistance to prevent widespread evictions from occurring once eviction moratoria are lifted and back rent is owed.

The HEROES Act also includes a [national, uniform moratorium](#) on evictions and foreclosures to ensure people are able to remain stably housed at a time where the health and well-being of our communities relies on the ability to stay at home.

A livestream of the hearing will be available at: <https://financialservices.house.gov/live/>

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## NLIHC Sends Letter to Congressional Committee Leadership Requesting Action to Ensure Access to FEMA Resources

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel sent a [letter](#) to leaders of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee calling for the inclusion of

language requiring FEMA to publish immediate guidance regarding compliance with duplication of benefits requirements, increase transparency of the Public Assistance (PA) program, and provide full reimbursement to state and local governments for PA emergency protective measures. A lack of clarity and transparency from FEMA has slowed efforts to protect people experiencing homelessness from the pandemic. Fully reimbursing localities for emergency protective measures would better cover the costs for homeless service providers to move individuals experiencing homelessness, individuals living with disabilities, and others living in congregate environments into non-congregate shelter.

The letter, sent on behalf of NLIHC and its Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition, specifically asks for guidance allowing 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. In addition, the letter asks that language raising the current federal cost-share for non-congregate sheltering (75%) to 100% be included in the next coronavirus stimulus package. This not only would alleviate the need for state/local governments and providers to navigate a complex system of grant restrictions and rules but would also ensure that these jurisdictions have the tools they need to ensure the most vulnerable members of our society are safe.

The letter also requests that Congress pass legislation to improve FEMA’s confusing and daunting Individual Assistance (IA) process, which provides support to households recovering after a natural disaster. The DHRC-supported “Housing Survivors of Major Disasters Act” ([H.R. 2914](#)) passed unanimously out of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in February 2020 and would reform the IA program to allow survivors to navigate the application process more easily. While IA has not been activated in connection with the coronavirus pandemic, it is active in several states and territories in connection with other natural disasters and is expected to see heavy use during the 2020 hurricane season, which began on June 1.

“Congress must take every action to save lives and prevent outbreaks of coronavirus among people experiencing homelessness and other individuals living in congregate settings,” wrote Diane in the letter. “Including these key FEMA provisions in the next coronavirus relief package would help state and local governments meet the urgent and severe health and housing needs of people experiencing homelessness and other marginalized survivors and reform long-standing barriers to FEMA assistance.”

Read the full text of the letter at: <https://bit.ly/2zXCqQJ>

Read the full text of the Housing Survivors of Major Disasters Act at: <https://bit.ly/3gZAojC>

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## Coronavirus – HUD

### HUD PIH Posts New Version of COVID-19 FAQs for Public Housing Agencies

HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) posted *COVID-19 FAQs for Public Housing Agencies Version 4* on May 29. This version of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) updates 12 earlier FAQs and adds 60 new FAQs, including seven new questions about the CARES Act Eviction Moratorium; 22 in the category of Operational Concerns, 29 under Eligible Activities; and two under Resident Health. This article highlights updated and new FAQs likely to be of interest to residents and advocates.

#### Eviction Moratorium

Under the category of “Eviction Moratorium,” EM14 and EM15 (page 9) represent a major improvement from earlier language in Version 3 wrongly suggesting that not all units in a property assisted with the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) were subject to the CARES Act eviction moratorium. The National Housing Law Project and NLIHC sent a letter to HUD Secretary Carson on April 30 urging HUD to revise this guidance (see *Memo 5/4*). The letter also applied to guidance issued by HUD’s Office of Multifamily Housing Programs on April 16 (Q&A #7 on page 10).

EM14 now correctly states that properties with LIHTC-financed units are subject to the CARES Act eviction moratorium, and EM15 states that the CARES Act eviction moratorium applies to tenants in LIHTC properties (not only to tenants in LIHTC-assisted units). That moratorium prohibits evictions, fees, and penalties related to non-payment of rent during the 120-day period beginning on March 27, and it prohibits landlords from filing for eviction before providing tenants a 30-day notice that cannot be provided before July 25 (see *Memo, 4/13*).

EM8 (page 8) states that because fees related to nonpayment of rent cannot be charged, if utilities are included in the lease agreement as part of rent, then fees for unpaid utilities cannot be charged and cannot accrue during the moratorium. Fees not related to rent may be charged during the moratorium.

EM16 (page 10) states that for any unpaid rent after the moratorium has ended, a family can repay unpaid rent in a lump sum to avoid eviction. If a family cannot make a lump sum payment, a public housing agency (PHA) has the discretion of setting up a repayment agreement. If a PHA decides to have a repayment agreement with a household, the PHA should follow guidance in Section 16 of [Notice PIH 2018-18](#).

EM17 (page 10) indicates that if a landlord issues a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) household an eviction notice for nonpayment of rent during the moratorium, the household should reach out to a local legal aid organization or the PHA as soon as possible. PHAs should remind participating HCV landlords of the legal restrictions on evictions for nonpayment of rent.

### Operational Concerns

OC38 (page 22) updates an earlier FAQ. In addition to restricting visitors to a senior high-rise, the updated FAQ adds that PHAs may require people to wear face coverings in common areas or the office.

OC45 (page 25) allows the use of Remote Video Inspection (RVI) to meet inspection requirements for the HCV and Public Housing programs. RVI is a regular Housing Quality Standards (HQS)/public housing inspection performed remotely with the PHA HQS/PH inspector remotely directing the inspection. PIH will issue additional guidance on best practices for PHAs. PIH envisions that once there is more experience with RVI, it could be used by PHAs in the future and not just during the pandemic.

OC47-OC51 (pages 25-26) address a variety of issues related to the Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration.

OC54 (page 27) indicates that a PHA can accept a copy of an applicant’s Social Security card at lease up.

OC55 (page 27) acknowledges that while some applicants might have trouble obtaining identifying documents such as Social Security numbers or birth certificates, a PHA cannot allow households to move in and verify documents later. The FAQ states that PIH will consider adjusting this policy. OC56 (page 28) likewise does not permit PHAs to allow an applicant to self-certify income when applying for public housing or voucher assistance. Waiver PH/HCV-3 in [Notice PIH 2020-05](#) does allow self-certifications for annual income verification for households already assisted. These two FAQs seem to contradict language in Notice PIH 2020-05 that encourages PHAs to continue critical operations, including processing Requests for Tenancy Approvals (RFTAs), so families can be approved to move into a unit.

OC60 (page 28) clarifies that a PHA or owner may continue to provide the deduction for childcare expenses if a parent, guardian, or caretaker is unemployed due to the pandemic. HUD regulations permit a childcare expense to be deducted from income calculations to enable a family member to seek employment, be employed, or further their education. Being furloughed or receiving unemployment benefits as a result of coronavirus does not alone show that the family is not seeking employment.

*COVID-19 FAQs for Public Housing Agencies, Version 4* is at: <https://bit.ly/3eHnGE8>

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

More about housing choice vouchers is on [page 4-1](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

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## **HUD HOME Webinar to Provide Guidance on Using Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Waivers during Coronavirus Pandemic**

HUD's Office of Affordable Housing Programs (OAHP) will conduct a webinar about "Designing and Implementing an Emergency HOME TBRA Program" on June 10 at 1 pm ET. The webinar will provide guidance on implementing the HOME Investment Partnerships Program's Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program using waivers announced on April 10 (see Memo, [4/20](#)). These waivers are intended to make it easier to use TBRA to meet urgent housing assistance needs for households experiencing financial hardship due to the coronavirus pandemic. While HOME funds are primarily a resource for construction of affordable housing, OAHP recognizes that the coronavirus pandemic has caused widespread economic damage and an unprecedented need for housing assistance.

The webinar is oriented to HOME Participating Jurisdictions (PJs), but advocates might also find the information useful to encourage their PJs to take advantage of the HOME TBRA waivers. OHAP notes that initial pre-planning is crucial to determine whether and how to implement TBRA. The webinar will address multiple topics: identifying and segmenting priority needs, assessing available resources, approaches to program administration, seeking needed approvals, and policy clarifications.

The "Designing and Implementing an Emergency HOME TBRA Program" webinar will take place on June 10 at 1 pm ET. Register at: <https://bit.ly/3gMjvZw>. To register, attendees must have a HUD Exchange account. Follow these [instructions](#).

More information about HOME is on [page 5-3](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

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## **HUD Office of Multifamily Housing Announces \$800 Million from CARES Act for 16,500 Section 8 PBRA Properties**

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs (Multifamily) posted a [Memorandum](#) dated May 28 announcing action to provide \$800 million of the \$1 billion CARES Act supplemental appropriation to approximately 16,500 properties with Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) contracts. This funding will enable properties to maintain normal operations. This CARES Act supplemental funding will compensate owners for decreased tenant rent payments resulting from reduced tenant income. It will also address increases in vacancy payment claims that occur due to pandemic-related delays in moving new tenants into units.



The Memorandum indicates that a notice is forthcoming to address the allocation methodology and requirements governing the remaining \$200 million of PBRA CARES Act supplemental funding. It also states that owners and owner agents should follow current Multifamily protocols for interim income recertifications when a tenant reports a loss of income (see Q9 under “Policy and Operations” in the latest [Multifamily Q&A](#) dated May 21).

The Memorandum is at: <https://bit.ly/2XsDG71>

More information about the Section 8 PBRA program is on [page 4-46](#) of NLIHC’s *2020 Advocates’ Guide*.

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## Coronavirus – Other

### Recording Available of NLIHC’s June 2 National Call on “Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness”

NLIHC’s last national call on “Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness” took place on June 2. The call featured an opening conversation with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), as well as 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 call (June 8 at 2:30 pm ET) at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

On the June 2 call, Speaker Pelosi issued a call to action and expressed her commitment to addressing housing instability in the next coronavirus response package. She encouraged advocates to increase visibility around the housing provisions in the “HEROES Act” and make their voices heard around the urgent need for rental assistance. The Speaker also shared that an infrastructure package would be unveiled soon and noted public housing and affordable housing would be central to the legislation.

Zach Neumann and Sam Gilman, co-founders of the COVID-19 [Eviction Defense Project](#), shared their [research](#) on national eviction risk estimates, demonstrating the urgent need for rent relief and extended moratoriums. Illinois State Representative Delia Ramirez described how her state is using \$396 million in funding from the Coronavirus Relief Fund for emergency rental and mortgage assistance. Mike Koprowski, director of NLIHC’s [Opportunity Starts at Home campaign](#), shared the results of a recent poll conducted to gauge public perception of the need for emergency rental assistance in the next coronavirus relief package. [Results](#) indicate that people are highly concerned about the housing instability that may result from the coronavirus pandemic and expect Congress to take action to prevent people from falling into homelessness.

Dev Wakeley of Alabama Arise, Martie North of the Arkansas Coalition of Housing and Neighborhood Growth for Empowerment, and Phyllis Chamberlain of the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania provided updates from the field. NLIHC’s Vice President of Public Policy Sarah Saadian and Director for Field Organizing Joey Lindstrom provided Hill updates and outlined needed advocacy actions.

NLIHC hosts national calls on the Coronavirus, Housing, and Homelessness every week. On today’s call, we will be joined by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY). Register for today’s call (Monday, June 8 at 2:30 pm ET) at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

Watch a recording of the June 2 call at: [tinyurl.com/ydfsdm7u](https://tinyurl.com/ydfsdm7u)

View June 2 presentation slides at: [tinyurl.com/yatlszac](https://tinyurl.com/yatlszac)

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

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## **Additional Coronavirus Updates – Monday, June 8, 2020**

### **National Updates**

#### *Congress*

The [Colorado Sun](#) published an op-ed by Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) urging Congress to address the housing crisis in the next relief package. In addition to drawing from proposals in the “Evictions Crisis Act,” which he introduced with Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) in December, 2019, Senator Bennet proposed including \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance, \$20 billion to fight homelessness and expand vouchers, and increased resources for state and local governments.

[Senator Sherrod Brown](#) (D-OH) spoke at a virtual roundtable on the “Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stability Act” hosted by the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO), an NLIHC state partner.

#### *Department of Housing and Urban Development*

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) [announced](#) on June 4 a [temporary new policy](#) that provides guidance for lenders to obtain FHA insurance endorsement on mortgages in which the borrower has requested or obtained a COVID-19 forbearance.

#### *FEMA*

FEMA Administrator Peter Gaynor [released a letter](#) to emergency managers announcing a new “[All-Hazards Preparedness in a Pandemic Exercise Starter Kit](#)” to help communities prepare for hurricane season and other hazards during the coronavirus pandemic.

#### *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. For more information, see DHRC’s [full list of recommendations](#).

A [Reuters](#) article explores how protests over race and policing are driven in part by housing inequities exacerbated by COVID-19. “A direct line connects America’s history of racist housing policies to today’s over-policing and disinvestment in black and brown communities,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel. “That same line connects to racial inequities in housing and to people of color being disproportionately harmed by disasters.”

[MarketWatch](#) quoted NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel in an article on the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on people of color and how COVID-19 will create even more racial disparities in housing. “Without focused action, the pending tsunami of evictions and homelessness will disproportionately affect Black and brown people,” said Yentel.

NLIHC Vice President of Public Policy Sarah Saadian joined the [Power Station podcast on June 1](#), addressing how NLIHC mobilizes a diverse constituency of residents, local housing and homeless coalitions, and state, local, and national leaders to ensure critical housing and homelessness resources are included in federal coronavirus relief packages.

### *Reporting*

An article in [Forbes](#) on housing inequality and racism in the U.S. quotes House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's comments during NLIHC's national call on June 2. "Housing security is a matter of justice, as structural racism puts communities of color unfairly at risk of being rent burdened or homeless," said Speaker Pelosi. The piece outlines a brief history of racial discrimination in U.S. housing policies.

An article in [Nonprofit Quarterly](#) examines the impending eviction crisis. "Small landlords and renters depend on each other," said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel, "and both need emergency assistance to stay afloat during this time."

[Yahoo! News](#) examines how the coronavirus pandemic highlights housing inequality faced by Black Americans. Black communities are disproportionately impacted by the virus and by its economic fallout. Job losses from COVID-19 risk exacerbate housing inequities already faced by Black communities.

An article in the [Nation](#) discusses how cities across the country have established rental assistance programs using a mix of federal, state, and local funding. In nearly every instance, the need for assistance has significantly overwhelmed supply. The article discusses the \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance included in the HEROES Act.

An article in [Quartz](#) discusses how COVID-19 has upended Florida's long, slow recovery from the 2018 hurricane season. The article examines how Bay County's recovery from Hurricane Michael demonstrates how natural disasters leave low-income communities exposed to a range of compounding impacts.

[NPR](#) discusses how millions of Americans are struggling to pay rent, mortgage, auto loans, and other critical bills. Federal relief has kept some impending financial disasters at bay for now, but a tidal wave of evictions and mortgage defaults looms.

[New York Times](#) reports troubling signs that renters are increasingly struggling to come up with money for rent, creating significant challenges for tenants and landlords. "Small landlords and renters depend on each other, and both need emergency assistance to stay afloat during this time," said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel.

[Washington Post](#) posted an article answering frequently asked questions that renters and homeowners have about eviction and foreclosure moratoriums.

An article in [Forbes](#) examines how the enhanced unemployment benefit of \$600 per week is critical to helping people in low-paying jobs afford their rent. The HEROES Act would extend the \$600 per week supplement until next year and provide \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance for low-income tenants.

[Houston Chronicle](#) reports that renters and mortgage holders are often unaware of federal aid.

[CNN](#) reports a looming surge in evictions as state eviction moratoriums expire. While some states have established rental assistance programs, significant federal rental assistance is needed to prevent a housing crisis for renters and property owners.

An article in [Foreign Policy](#) examines whether hotels are the most effective solution to the U.S. housing and homelessness crisis.

[USA Today](#) spoke with policy associates at the Urban Institute about the estimated 10 million people across the country who are entitled to federal stimulus checks but have not been able to access the money. People in this hard-to-reach category do not make enough money to file a tax return and do not receive federal benefits, so the government has no contact information for them.

More than a dozen states have allowed eviction proceedings to resume, and by the beginning of June, more than half of states will have no tenant protections in place. According to *Marketplace*, [without an additional federal stimulus package](#) that includes critical housing provisions, the U.S. will experience a sharp increase in housing instability and homelessness.

An article in [CityLab](#) examines how the expiration of state eviction moratoriums has revealed the limits of tenant protections at the local, state, and federal level. The moratoriums are expiring before federal interventions are in place, and without immediate action, the U.S. will be facing a housing crisis significantly larger than the one that existed prior to the pandemic.

## **State and Local News**

### *Alabama*

The City of Gadsden established a new [utility assistance program](#) to help residents who have fallen behind on utility payments due to COVID-19. The program will be funded by Community Development Block Grant-Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds.

### *Alaska*

The Ben Boeke Ice Arena in [Anchorage](#), which has served as an emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic, closed on June 1. The Dempsey-Anderson Arena, which had been converted to an isolation and quarantine facility for people experiencing homelessness, was also demobilized on June 1.

### *Arizona*

The [Tucson City Council](#) approved a plan to distribute \$95.7 million in federal CARES Act funding, including \$5 million for utility, rent, and mortgage assistance. The city also approved \$5 million in federal funding to provide isolation and quarantine housing for people experiencing homelessness and to install wash stations and portable toilets.

Eviction hearings in Pima County resumed on June 1, with nearly 600 scheduled over the next several weeks. While Arizona Governor Doug Ducey's March 24 executive order allows tenants facing eviction due to COVID-19-related hardships to ask judges for a temporary reprieve, advocates are expressing the [urgent need for emergency rental assistance](#).

[Nearly 11,000 Arizona renters](#) have applied for assistance from the state's COVID-19 Rental Eviction Prevention Assistance Program that was established two months ago. To date, only 600 have received assistance, according to the Arizona Department of Housing. Joan Serviss, executive director of the Arizona Housing Coalition, an NLIHC state partner, fears that if people are evicted now, affordable housing will simply not be available.

## *California*

An article in the [Los Angeles Times](#) discusses how curfews put in place due to the protests over police brutality have created additional challenges for people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles. Although Los Angeles County's notice exempted people experiencing homelessness from the curfew, alerts provided contradictory and confusing information.

The University of California San Francisco (UCSF) will offer [free COVID-19 testing to people experiencing homelessness](#) in southeast San Francisco. The effort is part of UCSF's collaboration with the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the state of California, and impacted communities. Organizers hope to test 1,000 people over two days.

The Gospel Center Rescue Mission quickly transformed a home in Stockton that was originally purchased as housing for people experiencing homelessness into an [eight-bed, temporary facility](#) for men experiencing homelessness who have tested positive for the coronavirus.

The [North Westwood Neighborhood Council](#) urged the city and state to increase the use of hotels and motels to shelter people experiencing homelessness. The council believes that Project Roomkey is moving too slowly, and that Los Angeles should take steps to expedite the room-securing process.

An op-ed in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) discusses that while the coronavirus itself does not discriminate in who it infects, our social structures do. The authors argue that providing shelter in vacant hotel rooms is the most effective way to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

[Sacramento County](#) has, without completing the typical process of seeking public input and City Council approvals, converted three motels into temporary shelters for people experiencing homelessness. While the leases for the motels do not contain purchase agreements, local officials are working on a plan to provide permanent housing for the individuals staying in motels after the pandemic is over.

Several weeks after [Oakland](#) opened 67 trailers on a vacant lot to house people experiencing homelessness, some residents are complaining of water, electrical, and safety issues that have sent two people to the hospital. An Oakland spokesperson said that the city and service providers are working to fix these issues.

The Fullerton Armory's replacement shelter has become the [second homeless shelter in Orange County](#) to experience an outbreak of coronavirus cases. People who tested positive were moved into the county's motel sheltering program.

## *Colorado*

Cathy Alderman of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, an NLIHC state partner, wrote a [letter to the editor of the Sentinel Colorado](#) urging Congress to provide emergency rental assistance to keep Coloradans safe and stably housed.

While every state in the [Mountain West](#) has some type of rental assistance program in place, housing advocates hope that these programs receive funding to keep pace with the ongoing need.

## *Florida*

Brevard County's Board of County Commissioners allocated [\\$4.4 million in federal CARES Act](#) funds to help eligible residents with mortgage, rent, utility, and security deposit assistance. The financial assistance was made available on May 21.

The City of Palm Bay implemented an [Eviction Prevention/Rental and Utility Assistance Program](#) for residents impacted by COVID-19. The city's Housing and Community Development Division will administer the program.

Governor Ron DeSantis [issued an executive order](#) on June 1 that extends Florida's eviction moratorium until July 1, 2020.

### *Illinois*

COVID-19 is challenging the capacity of [Covenant House Illinois](#), a Chicago shelter that serves teens experiencing homelessness. The number of individuals served has increased by about 50% amid the pandemic.

### *Indiana*

An editorial in the [Journal Gazette](#) calls on Indiana officials to establish a statewide rental assistance program using a portion of the \$2.4 billion in federal Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars. Fort Wayne invested \$150,000 from its CARES Act allocation to launch the [Tenant Assistance Legal Clinic](#) to prevent evictions. The city also has a \$200,000 rental assistance fund.

Prosperity Indiana, an NLIHC state partner, released an update on the [COVID-19-related housing and rental assistance needs of Hoosiers](#). The report urges state policymakers to establish and fund a rental assistance program to prevent a wave of evictions and homelessness when the state eviction moratorium expires on June 30.

The [City of Terre Haute is using \\$300,000 of its CARES Act funding](#) to establish a day center for people experiencing homelessness. Modeled after a program in Illinois, the Pathways Day Center will offer people experiencing homelessness a range of services provided by several service organizations.

### *Iowa*

Governor Kim Reynolds announced creation of the [COVID-19 Iowa Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Program](#), which will be funded through the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund. Iowa will [allocate \\$2.15 million toward relief for businesses and families](#).

[Cedar Rapids allocated \\$623,757 in Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus \(CDBG-CV\)](#) funds to establish an eviction prevention program that launched on May 29. "The Mayor and City Council recognized early on that housing assistance would be a critical need for many Cedar Rapids residents during this time," said Cedar Rapids City Manager Jeff Pomeranz.

[Cedar Falls will receive an additional \\$160,000](#) in Community Development Block Grant and HOME funding to help maintain affordable housing and prevent homelessness during COVID-19.

### *Kentucky*

Louisville, Lexington, and the Commonwealth of Kentucky will receive more than [\\$23 million](#) in Emergency Solutions Grants - Coronavirus (ESG-CV). "We commend Congress' allocation of COVID-19 resources from the CARES Act to support people experiencing homelessness with shelter, prevent families from losing their

homes to eviction, front-end rental assistance,” said Adrienne Bush, executive director of the Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky, an NLIHC state partner.

### *Louisiana*

HousingNOLA, an NLIHC state partner, launched the [COVID-19 Short Term Rental Pilot Program](#) to provide temporary housing and supportive services to people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity during the pandemic.

The Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center has COVID-19 housing resources available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Vietnamese](#).

Representative Garret Graves (R-LA) announced that Baton Rouge will receive [\\$1.65 million](#) in Emergency Solutions Grants - Coronavirus (ESG-CV) funding to support people experiencing homelessness. Statewide, Louisiana has received nearly \$21 million in ESG-CV funding.

The city of Monroe allocated approximately [\\$436,000 in Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus \(CDBG-CV\) funding](#) to a small business assistance program and an emergency rental/mortgage assistance program. The city has received over 100 requests for small business assistance and over 450 applications for rental and mortgage assistance. The director of Monroe’s Planning and Urban Development said that if the HEROES Act is passed, the city may receive additional funds that would allow it to reopen the assistance programs.

### *Maine*

Maine is collaborating with housing and homeless advocates to [restructure the state’s network of emergency housing programs and shelters](#). According to the director of MaineHousing, COVID-19 has demonstrated the inadequacy of the state’s shelter system.

### *Massachusetts*

Boston launched a \$3 million emergency rental assistance two months ago, and more than 8,000 people have applied for assistance. [Boston Mayor Martin Walsh will allocate an additional \\$5 million to the city’s Rental Relief Fund](#), with the additional funds coming from 50% of Boston’s Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds. The other 50% of the city’s CDBG-CV funds was allocated to small businesses.

[Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey issued guidance](#) to protect individuals who are living in long-term hotels and motels from being removed during state of emergency. She stated that hotels, motels, and other establishments that are housing at-risk populations, such as people experiencing homelessness, should not force these guests to leave for non-essential reasons during the pandemic.

A [Boston homeless shelter](#), Pine Street Inn, reported a far lower rate of positive coronavirus tests in its latest round of testing. After testing found a 36% positive rate for the 408 people tested at the shelter in April, city officials have worked with Health Care for the Homeless and the state to test all residents at the city’s emergency shelters.

### *Minnesota*

[Minneapolis community activists](#) have turned a former Sheraton hotel into a shelter for people experiencing homelessness who have been displaced by the protests and curfews. Many of the residents came from a nearby encampment that was cleared last Thursday due to its proximity to the protests.

### *Missouri*

St. Louis County is making available an additional [\\$5 million](#) in federal CARES Act funding to provide rental assistance, mortgage assistance, and support to people experiencing homelessness.

### *Nevada*

[Las Vegas advocates](#) are concerned that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on an important piece of Nevada legislation that would have secured millions of dollars to fight homelessness.

### *New York*

The New York state legislature approved the “[Emergency Rent Relief Act of 2020](#)” (S. 8419), which would establish a [\\$100 million rental assistance fund](#) using resources from CARES Act. The bill heads to Governor Andrew Cuomo for his signature.

New York City has implemented a citywide curfew through the morning of Monday, June 8. The Coalition for the Homeless, an NLIHC state partner, and the Legal Aid Society prepared a “[Know Your Rights](#)” flyer about the curfew for people experiencing homelessness.

An article in [Curbed](#) discusses the challenges facing New York renters who are vulnerable to eviction. Governor Andrew Cuomo [extended New York’s eviction moratorium](#) until August 20, but the two-month extension of the moratorium, beginning June 20, only applies to renters who qualify for unemployment benefits or have suffered financial hardship due to COVID-19.

An [opinion piece in City Limits](#) calls on New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio to address the short- and long-term safety and housing needs of people experiencing homelessness, instead of policies that criminalize and pathologize these individuals. The #HomelessCantStayHome campaign is urging Mayor de Blasio to provide a minimum of 30,000 hotel rooms for people experiencing homelessness, which could be paid for primarily through federal funding.

The [New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development](#) (HPD) has asked developers to voluntarily rent out additional apartments to families experiencing homelessness. Nine developers have agreed to rent units, resulting in 200 families who will receive their own apartments. HPD commissioners have expressed that COVID-19 has pushed the city to develop solutions to move families experiencing homelessness out of the shelter system.

### *North Carolina*

Advocates are calling on local, state, and federal officials to provide rental assistance as the Guilford County Sheriff’s Office resumes serving eviction notices after a 10-week moratorium. [Local organizations are urging the Guilford County Board of Commissioners](#) to fund a rental assistance program using some of its \$93 million in CARES Act funding.

### *North Dakota*



The YWCA Cass Clay began [weekly mass testing of residents and staff](#) at the Emergency Shelter on June 4, and it will continue to do so each week for the foreseeable future. The YWCA Emergency Shelter is the largest shelter serving women and children in North Dakota and northwest Minnesota.

### *Ohio*

Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz announced the establishment of the [Toledo COVID-19 Emergency Renter Assistance Fund](#) (ERAF) on May 28. The city is allocating \$1 million in Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funding and an additional \$1 million from the COVID-19 Emergency Solutions Grant to fund the rental assistance program. The ERAF will [assist approximately 700 eligible households](#) with up to three months of rent payments.

The Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio, an NLIHC state partner, held a [housing and homelessness roundtable with Senator Sherrod Brown](#) (D-OH) on June 3 to discuss the impact of COVID-19 and the importance of supporting renters who are struggling to maintain housing during the pandemic.

The [Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund](#) coalition awarded another round of biweekly grants totaling \$977,000 for 19 local nonprofit groups. One nonprofit received \$50,000 to provide emergency rental assistance, and another received \$70,000 to provide housing and related support to at-risk individuals and families experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

### *Oregon*

The Portland City Council unanimously approved an allocation of [\\$8.35 million for rental assistance](#) to residents impacted by the pandemic. The emergency assistance was approved as part of the mayor's budget, which reallocates \$4.5 million in existing federal funds to rent assistance and an additional \$3.85 million in Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds.

### *Pennsylvania*

Governor Tom Wolf signed legislation on May 29 [allocating \\$175 million in Coronavirus Relief Fund](#) dollars for a [COVID Relief Mortgage and Rental Assistance Program](#) and an additional \$10 million for Homeless Assistance Grants.

The [Philadelphia City Council](#) held its first public hearing on the "[Emergency Housing Protection Act](#)" (EHPA) on May 29 and will hold an additional public hearing session on June 5. The EHPA is a combination of six bills and one resolution to protect renters from losing their homes as a result of COVID-19. The Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development, and Homelessness will also vote on presenting the package to City Council at-large.

Protesters staged a [funeral procession on May 31](#) outside the home of the director of the Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services to urge the city to take action to protect people living with disabilities and people experiencing homelessness from COVID-19. The protest was organized by the Philadelphia chapters of Disabled in Action/ADAPT and ACT UP.

### *Texas*

Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) announced that the City of Lubbock will receive [\\$1.38 million](#) in Emergency Solution Grants - Coronavirus (ESG-CV) funding. The funds will support additional homeless assistance and

homelessness prevention activities. [San Antonio and Bexar County](#) will receive a total of \$14.8 million in ESG-CV funding.

The [City of Waco](#) and the Economic Opportunities Advancement Corporation have established a rental assistance program to provide families impacted by COVID-19 with up to three months of rent or mortgage payments.

The [Bryan City Council](#) allocated an additional \$148,459 from the CARES Act to provide direct relief services to low- and moderate-income households. The city also reallocated \$75,000 in Home Investment Partnership Program funds to the [Tenant-Based Rental Assistance program](#) to help tenants impacted by the pandemic.

### *Washington*

Governor Jay Inslee announced on June 4 that Washington has enough COVID-19 tests to [expand testing to new populations](#), including those living in congregate settings, such as agricultural sites, long-term care facilities, low-income housing, and homeless shelters.

On June 2, Governor Inslee modified and [extended Washington's eviction moratorium](#) through August 1. Read [Proclamation 20-19.2](#).

The [Grays Harbor County Board of Health](#) decided that the temporary encampment behind Aberdeen City Hall does not qualify as a necessary public health response to COVID-19 and, as a result, does not qualify for any of the \$390,000 that the state provided the county for housing relief.

### *West Virginia*

[Advocates in West Virginia](#) note that COVID-19 has brought communities together to address housing instability and homelessness. The West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness, an NLIHC state partner, has focused on meeting the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic, and on the longer-term solutions.

West Virginia will be awarded [\\$7.1 million](#) in Emergency Solutions Grants - Coronavirus (ESG-CV) to prepare and respond to COVID-19 among individuals experiencing homelessness. The city of Huntington will also receive \$559,361 in ESG-CV funds.

### *Wisconsin*

[Nearly 50 eviction filings were filed in Wisconsin courts](#) on May 26, even though the statewide eviction and foreclosure moratorium was still in effect until the end of the day. Governor Tony Evers announced the creation of the [Wisconsin Rental Assistance Program](#), a \$25 million program funded through the CARES Act.

### *Wyoming*

Governor Mark Gordon approved allocation of [\\$15 million in federal Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars](#) to establish an [eviction prevention program](#) overseen by the Wyoming Community Development Authority.

## **Guidance**

### *Department of Agriculture*

[USDA Rural Development COVID-19 Resources - Updated May 29](#)

*Department of Housing and Urban Development*

[HOPWA Program CARES Act Eviction Moratorium FAQs](#) - June 4

[FAQs for Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities](#) - updated June 1

[How Does the Federal CARES Act Eviction Moratorium Impact the ESG and CoC Programs? FAQs and Flyer](#) - June 1

[Office of Native American Programs: COVID-19 FAQs for Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities, Round 5](#) - updated June 1

[COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Landlord Engagement](#) - June 1

[COVID-19 FAQs for Public Housing Agencies, Version 4](#) - updated May 29

[COVID-19 FAQs for Public Housing Agencies](#) - updated May 29

[Multifamily Memorandum: Update on Allocation of PBRA Cares Act Funding](#) - May 28

[Rehousing Activation: Planning and Implementation Tips](#)

[Untapped Expertise: Strategies for Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement When Developing Your Coordinated Investment Plan](#)

[Landlord Engagement in the Time of COVID-19](#)

[Upcoming Webinar: Targeting Homeless Prevention in the Midst of COVID-19](#) - June 10 from 3:30-5 pm ET.

*FEMA*

[Preparedness in a Pandemic Exercise Starter Kit](#) - June 1

[COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season](#) - May 20

*Mental Health America*

[Mental Health and COVID-19: Information and Resources](#)

*Disaster Response Rehousing*

[Disaster Response Rehousing - Multiple Resources](#)

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## **Opportunity Starts at Home**

**Leading Organizations from Health, Education, Civil Rights, Faith, and Environment Urge Senate to Adopt Housing Provisions in HEROES Act**

The [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) multisector affordable homes campaign sent a [letter](#) on June 1 urging the Senate to adopt vital housing provisions contained in the “HEROES Act” and move with urgency towards passage of a final COVID-19 relief bill. The letter was signed by an array of leading national organizations from multiple sectors, including the American Psychological Association, Healthcare Anchor Network, National Education Association, NAACP, Natural Resources Defense Council, and many more.

The letter contains findings from the campaign’s recent [public opinion poll](#). The poll found that 87% of the public agrees that our elected leaders in Washington should “take major action to make sure everyone has stable, affordable housing during the coronavirus outbreak.” The poll also found that the vast majority of people across party lines believes the government should:

- Provide emergency rental assistance for people who are struggling to afford the rent and are at serious risk of eviction as a result of the coronavirus outbreak (93% favor);
- Expand funding for homeless assistance programs that minimize the number of people living in large shelters by providing them with alternative individual spaces for isolation and self-quarantine (90% favor); and
- Enact a uniform, nationwide policy that stops all evictions during the coronavirus outbreak (89% favor).

Read the campaign’s letter [here](#).

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](#).

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## Congress

### Secretary Carson and Director Calabria to Testify Before Senate Committee on Oversight of Housing Regulators

The Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs will conduct a virtual hearing, “Oversight of Housing Regulators,” on June 9 at 10 am ET. Witnesses will be HUD Secretary Ben Carson and Mark Calabria, director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency. Watch a webcast of the hearing at: <https://tinyurl.com/y7v573wb>

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## HUD

### HUD Proposal to Weaken LGBTQ Access to Emergency Homelessness Services Clears OIRA

A HUD [proposal](#) to weaken enforcement of the Equal Access to Housing rule component that provides protections to LGBTQ people experiencing homelessness and seeking emergency shelter cleared the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on June 4. The proposal’s title, “Revised Requirements Under Community Planning and Development Housing Programs,” hides its malicious intention. The proposal has been at OIRA since April 24, 2019 and has drawn [widespread criticism](#) from NLIHC and others. The proposed rule now goes to the appropriate congressional committees for

a 15-day courtesy period, after which it will eventually be published in the *Federal Register* for public comment.

Weakening this component of the Equal Access rule and its enforcement mechanisms is unacceptable. Access to shelter is a basic, fundamental necessity. LGBTQ youth are more than twice as likely than their non-LGBTQ peers to experience homelessness, and black LGBTQ youth have the highest rates of youth homelessness. One in three transgender people will experience homelessness in their lifetime, and 70% of trans people who have used a shelter have experienced harassment. Further, increasing the potential for LGBTQ and transgender people to experience homelessness for the first time or to endure longer periods of homelessness in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic is unconscionable.

This component of the Equal Access to Housing Rule and related guidance was designed to give service providers the information they need to serve transgender people well. The rule is meant to provide a modicum of protection for LGBTQ people.

According to a summary in HUD's [Fall 2019 Regulatory Agenda](#), HUD intends to propose revisions to HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) Equal Access rule. It would allow shelter providers to:

- Consider an individual's sex to determine whether to admit and accommodate someone in a single-sex or sex-segregated shelter or facility with shared bathrooms or shared sleeping quarters.
- Consider a range of factors when deciding whether to admit or accommodate someone, including privacy, safety, religious beliefs, and an individual's sex as reflected in official government documents, as well as the gender which a person identifies with. [Note: the "religious beliefs" element of the proposal aligns with a more recent proposed rule, the so-called "[Equal Participation of Faith-Based Organizations](#)" (see *Memo*, [2/18](#))]

### Background on the Existing Rule

HUD published a [final rule on September 21, 2016](#) that requires housing, facilities, and services funded through programs administered by CPD to have policies and procedures that ensure equal access to programs, benefits, services, and accommodation for individuals based on their gender identity, without intrusive questioning or documentation requirements. The 2016 rule requires recipients and sub-recipients who receive assistance from CPD, along with owners, operators, and managers of shelters, buildings, and facilities with shared sleeping quarters or shared bathrooms, to accommodate individuals according to their gender identity.

CPD administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME, Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), Continuum of Care (CoC), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) programs.

The 2016 rule addressed the more comprehensive [February 3, 2012 "Equal Access Rule"](#) that ensures all housing assisted by all HUD programs is open to all eligible people without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. HUD did not adopt a policy regarding the placement of transgender and gender nonconforming persons in temporary, emergency shelters with shared sleeping quarters or shared bathing facilities. Instead, HUD intended to conduct research and monitor its programs to determine whether additional guidance or national policy was needed. Prior to issuing the 2016 rule, HUD published interim guidance through [Notice CPD-15-02](#) on February 20, 2015. This guidance is no longer applicable.

A summary of HUD's current proposal, "Revised Requirements Under Community Planning and Development Housing Programs," is in its Fall Regulatory Agenda at: <https://bit.ly/3gUDpS5>

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## Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020

### Webinar on June 18 to Focus on “Overcoming Obstacles to Voting”

Join an NLIHC *Our Homes, Our Votes 2020* webinar on “Overcoming Obstacles to Voting,” taking place on June 18 at 3 pm ET. Register for this webinar and NLIHC’s entire 15-month “[Third Thursdays at Three](#)” webinar and podcast series on nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement, free to the public, at: <https://bit.ly/2Luj0F3>

Low-income renters are disproportionately impacted by common barriers to voting, such as prior felony convictions, polling locations that are inaccessible to people with disabilities, and language barriers. This session will review laws governing these common obstacles and present tactics for overcoming them.

NLIHC provides [an array of nonpartisan resources, tools, and training](#) on increasing voter registration and turnout among low-income renters and on engaging candidates leading up to the 2020 elections, including these webinars and podcasts covering many facets of voter and candidate engagement, featuring experts and advocates with frontline experience.

The presentations take place at 3 pm ET on the third Thursday of each month. All sessions are recorded and posted to the *Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020* website for those who cannot attend the live broadcasts. The full list of webinar topics:

- Session 1: Legal Considerations for Election Engagement for 501 (c3) organizations, September 19. (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 2: Developing an Effective Plan for Voter Engagement Work, October 17. (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 3: Helpful Tools and Partners for Election Engagement, November 21 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 4: Voter Registration Part 1 – Messaging, Events, and Canvassing, December 19 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 5: Voter Registration Part 2 – Finding and Registering Residents of Subsidized Housing, January 16 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 6: The Role of Housing Providers in Registering and Mobilizing Voters, February 20 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 7: Getting Candidates on the Record, March 19 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 8: Educating Voters, April 16 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 9: Housing Issues and Ballot Initiatives, May 21 (Watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- **Session 10: Overcoming Obstacles to Voting, June 18**
- Session 11: The Challenge of Voting While Homeless, July 16
- Session 12: Voter Mobilization Part 1 – Early Voting and Vote-by-Mail, August 20
- Session 13: Voter Mobilization Part 2 – Protecting Low Income People from Voter Intimidation and Voter Caging Tactics, September 17
- Session 14: Election Day! Getting Out the Vote, October 15
- Session 15: After the Vote – Holding Candidates to their Promises, November 19

Register once for all webinars/podcasts and receive reminders at: <https://bit.ly/2Luj0F3>

Watch recordings of previous webinars at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>

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## Research

### Reports Detail Expansion of Neighborhood Poverty

Two reports released by the Economic Innovation Group detail the growth and persistence of high-poverty neighborhoods in the U.S. over the last 40 years. The reports, “[The Expanded Geography of High-Poverty Neighborhoods](#)” and “[The Persistence of Neighborhood Poverty](#),” find that since 1980, the number of high-poverty neighborhoods has increased, the income gap between high and low-poverty neighborhoods has widened, and the share of Hispanic individuals in high-poverty neighborhoods is growing.

Neighborhood poverty has far-reaching implications for numerous economic, social, and health outcomes. High-poverty neighborhoods can limit economic opportunity and mobility, making it difficult for subsequent generations to accumulate wealth, and the average median household income in high-poverty neighborhoods is less than half the national average, leading to a high proportion of residents who are rent-burdened and housing poor.

To assess the changing landscape of high-poverty neighborhoods, the authors use both decennial census data and American Community Survey (ACS) data to compare the poverty rate in all metro area census tracts in 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2018. The authors use the federal government’s Official Poverty Measure as the primary measure for poverty, classifying neighborhoods as “high poverty” if their poverty rate is at or above 30%.

According to the analysis, the number of high-poverty neighborhoods has seen a steady increase since 1980. Though the number of high-poverty neighborhoods decreased slightly during a period of economic growth in the 1990s, the number of high-poverty neighborhoods grew from 3,558 in 1980 to 6,547 in 2018. Neighborhoods are also experiencing more concentrated poverty. In 1980, 42% of poor Americans lived in a neighborhood where the poverty rate exceeded 20%. By 2018, the proportion of Americans living in these neighborhoods was 49%.

The income gap between low- and high-poverty neighborhoods has also increased. Adjusted for inflation, the median household income in high poverty neighborhoods increased slightly from approximately \$25,000 in 1980 to \$29,000 in 2018. Neighborhoods with poverty levels less than 10% saw a much larger increase, rising from \$72,000 in 1980 to \$92,000 in 2018.

The reports find that while the demographics of high-poverty neighborhoods are changing, stark racial disparities remain. In 2018, Hispanics accounted for 35% of people living in high-poverty neighborhoods, an increase from 20% in 1980. Black individuals accounted for 34% of people living in high-poverty neighborhoods in 2018, a fall from 58% in 1980. Despite these changing demographics, Black and Hispanic Americans are respectively six and four times more likely than white Americans to live in a high poverty neighborhood. In 2018, 23% of all Black individuals, 16% of Hispanic individuals, and 4% of non-Hispanic white individuals lived in high-poverty neighborhoods.

Over the last four decades, the number of high-poverty neighborhoods in the United States has risen significantly. These neighborhoods have experienced limited income growth, and they are disproportionately comprised of racial minorities. Living in a high-poverty neighborhood can impact a person’s economic mobility, perpetuating generational poverty and other adverse life outcomes. The authors call on policymakers

to use this information as the country looks ahead to recover from the current economic crisis. Recovery efforts should focus on mitigating the negative effects of the pandemic and bolstering economic opportunity in high-poverty neighborhoods.

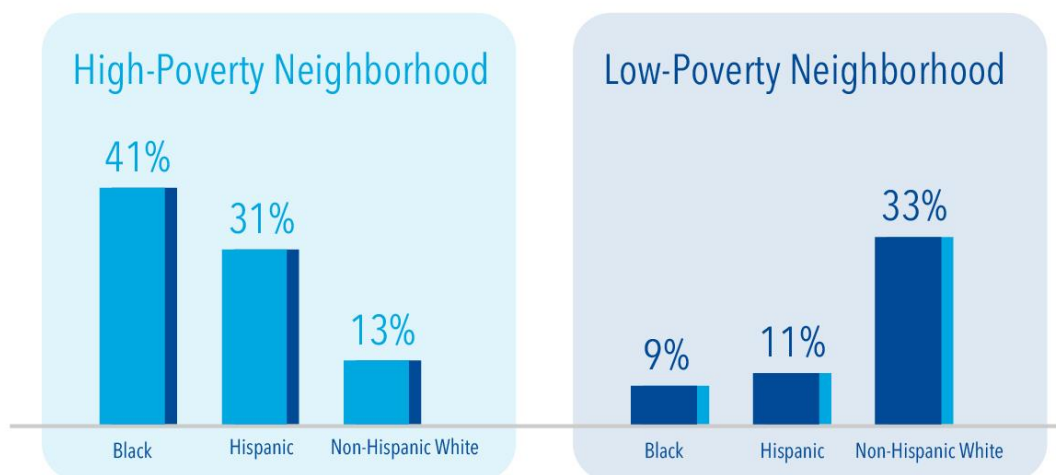
The reports can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3cmS6tD>

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## Fact of the Week

### Poor Black and Latino Households Likelier than Poor White Households to Live in High-Poverty Neighborhoods

#### Share of Poor Population Living in High and Low-Poverty Neighborhoods, by Racial Group



Note: High-poverty neighborhoods have a poverty rate greater than 30% and low-poverty neighborhoods have a rate lower than 10%. Source: EIG, The Expanded Geography of High-Poverty Neighborhoods (2020).



Source: EIG, The Expanded Geography of High-Poverty Neighborhoods, 2020.

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## Resource

### HUD's HOME Program Announces *Building HOME* Online Training

HUD's Office of Affordable Housing Programs (OAHP) sent a HUD Exchange email reminding stakeholders of the online version of [Building Home, a 12-module training program](#) about the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME). The *Building HOME* online training is a guide providing the HOME program's regulatory requirements and practical advice for implementing HOME activities at the state and local levels. The training presents real-world scenarios and includes challenge questions and exams. It is designed to help those new to the HOME Program or those who want to deepen their knowledge.



Module 9 about the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) option is particularly useful because OAHP issued waivers on April 10 in order to make it easier to use TBRA to meet urgent housing assistance needs for households experiencing financial hardship due to the coronavirus pandemic (see *Memo*, [4/20](#)).

OAHP suggests taking the first three modules in order because they are core modules that cover program-wide basics. OAHP indicates the importance of completing these core modules before taking the remaining modules, but this is not required. Users can skip ahead to Module 9 TBRA if that is of immediate importance in order to meet coronavirus pandemic housing needs. See an article in this issue of *Memo* regarding a June 10 webinar on pandemic-related TBRA program waivers.

The 12 modules are: Overview, Program Requirements, Program Administration, Homeowner Rehab Programs, Homebuyer Programs, Rental Housing Activities, Rental Housing: Long-term Compliance, CHDOs (Community Housing Development Organizations), TBRA (tenant-based rental assistance), Match Requirements, Reporting and IDIS, and Other Federal Requirements.

The online version builds upon the very helpful 2008 PDF version of *Building HOME*, still on the HOME HUD Exchange website at: <https://bit.ly/2RI76Qs>

Access to the *Building HOME* online training is at: <https://bit.ly/2U7hc9T>

More information about HOME is on [page 5-3](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

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## Webinar

### **National Housing Law Project to Hold Webinar on Housing Rights for Survivors of Domestic Violence Who Have Disabilities**

The National Housing Law Project (NHLP) will hold a [webinar](#) to address the housing rights for survivors of domestic violence who have disabilities. NHLP staff will provide a review of the law regarding reasonable accommodations and how such accommodations can be used to assist survivors who have a disability in obtaining and maintaining housing. The presentation will include scenarios to walk attendees through the process of requesting a reasonable accommodation for a survivor of domestic violence. The webinar will take place on Monday, June 22 at 1:30 pm ET and will be closed captioned.

Domestic violence survivors with disabilities face barriers to housing access and continued occupancy due to housing providers' rules, policies, or practices. Survivors may seek reasonable accommodations that require a housing provider to change a rule, policy, or practice, in order to give survivors with a disability an equal opportunity to access housing.

Register for the June 22 webinar at: <https://adobe.ly/2XvBNXf>

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## From the Field

### **Pennsylvania Advocates Secure \$175 million in COVID-19 Recovery Funds for Rental Assistance**

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf signed legislation on May 29 allocating \$175 million of coronavirus relief funds for a COVID-19 Relief Mortgage and Rental Assistance Program and an additional \$10 million for Homeless Assistance Grants. The funding will support communities in preventing evictions, stabilizing landlord small businesses, and ensuring adequate support for those who are one paycheck away from homelessness. Members of the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, a NLIHC state partner, launched the Come Back Strong Campaign to advocate for this program and to address significant structural and systemic barriers to opportunity for low income individuals and people of color.

Rental assistance is necessary because fewer than 1 in 3 renters have enough money set aside for a three-month emergency. Too many households are on the brink, living paycheck to paycheck. The need for rental assistance and other support for low-income families has only grown since the onset of the pandemic. Pennsylvania is experiencing one of the highest rates of job loss in the country, both in terms of total number of unemployment claims and per capita job losses. Initial estimates indicate that 15% of (or 200,000) renter households are impacted by COVID-19 employment loss or wage reduction. While an eviction moratorium is in place until July 11, rent is still due, and this new funding will help households avoid eviction once the moratorium is lifted.

The COVID-19 Relief Mortgage and Rental Assistance Program will be administered by the Pennsylvania State Housing Finance Agency. Rental payments through this program will be made based on tenant needs but paid directly to landlords. Eligible renters include those who became unemployed after March 1, 2020 or had their annual household income reduced by 30% or more due to reduced work hours and wages related to COVID-19. Eligible households must have current income below 80% of the area median income (AMI) in order to receive assistance. The entire rent payment can be covered by the program but cannot exceed \$750. Payments can be paid for up to six months, until November 30, 2020.

The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania engaged advocates and landlords through the Come Back Strong Campaign, an effort to ensure that Pennsylvania's economic recovery includes the needs of the lowest income renters. They worked with the Pennsylvania Apartment Association to make the case that rental assistance programs prevent an increase in evictions, stabilize tenants in their homes, and ensure landlords can meet their financial and operational obligations.

The Come Back Strong Campaign engaged advocates from a variety of endeavors. Campaign members wrote op-eds, helped draft and review the legislation, gathered endorsements, and collected stories on how rental assistance would help the lowest-income households who are disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania will continue to engage in COVID-19 recovery efforts. The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, Hunger Free Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations, Pennsylvania Alliance of YMCAs, and United Way of Pennsylvania are co-hosting a Virtual Summer Town Hall Series for key state leaders to speak with nonprofits about COVID-19 recovery and their partnership with the nonprofit sector. Each town hall will be a moderated question and answer session with each leader. The [first conversation](#) will be with the Department of Human Services, Secretary Teresa Miller, and will be held on Friday, June 5, at 11 am ET, moderated by Kristen Rotz, president of the United Way of Pennsylvania.

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## NLIHC News

### NLIHC Welcomes Xavier Arriaga as Policy Analyst

NLIHC is pleased to welcome Xavier Arriaga as a policy analyst. Xavier will work with the policy team to identify, analyze, and advocate federal policy on housing and immigration, Native American housing, rural housing, fair housing, and COVID-19 as it relates to Tribal housing, immigration, and regulatory language.

Xavier recently completed a nine-month position as a Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Public Policy Fellow with the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee for Transportation and Housing and Urban Development. In this role, Xavier supported professional staff with passage of the 2020 appropriations bill and supplemental appropriations related to disaster relief for Puerto Rico and the COVID-19 pandemic. Xavier has previously worked in his hometown of Hartford, CT on the development of the Swift Factory, an economic and community development project spearheaded by the nonprofit organization Community Solutions. He also conducted state level data analysis on racial disparities in child and family welfare with the State of Connecticut's Department of Children and Families. Xavier is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, where he earned a Bachelor of Economics. Please join us in welcoming Xavier to the NLIHC team!



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## NLIHC Welcomes New Field Intern Emma Jewell

NLIHC is pleased to welcome Emma Jewell as the Coalition's 2020 summer field intern. Emma is a rising junior at Smith College pursuing a degree in the Study of Women and Gender. Her passion for equitable, accessible, and affordable housing stems from her academic studies centered on systematic inequity at the intersection of income, race, ability, and gender. She strongly believes that fair and affordable housing is a human right and is eager to learn more about actualizing this right for all. Prior to interning at NLIHC, she interned at a legal advocacy and community organizing nonprofit in Nebraska, where she studied federal policy. Emma is excited to join the team at NLIHC and to experience housing justice advocacy on a national level. Please join us in welcoming Emma to the NLIHC team!

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## NLIHC in the News

### NLIHC in the News for the Week of May 31

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of May 31:

- “Rent assistance key to people staying in their homes, groups say,” *KUNC*, June 4 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y8sq4y2r>
- “In light of George Floyd protests, a look at housing inequality,” *Forbes*, June 3 at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybcregxg>
- “‘One paycheck away’ from homelessness: housing inequality fuels U.S. protests,” *Reuters*, June 3 at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybnj77gd>
- “Tenants largely stay current on rent, for now,” *New York Times*, May 31 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y72jzrxn>
- “These Americans are entitled to stimulus checks if you can find them,” *USA Today*, May 31 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y8322mrw>

- “‘The housing emergency most harms people of color:’ Black Americans face an unequal housing market — and coronavirus could make it worse,” *MarketWatch*, May 30 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y79esfj4>
  - “Landlords lining up to evict hundreds once freeze expires,” *US News & World Report*, May 30 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y92734gn>
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## **NLIHC Staff**

Kyle Arbuckle, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x227  
 Xavier Arriaga, Policy Analyst, x---  
 Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245  
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