

Volume 24, Issue 25
July 1, 2019

Memo to Members and Partners Takes One Week Hiatus. There will be no *Memo to Members and Partners* on Monday, July 8. *Memo* will return on July 15.

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Point of View

This is Our Moment – by NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel

This is a critical time for our housing movement and our country, when we face both extraordinary challenges and exhilarating possibilities. Despite the challenges – maybe *because* of them - I've never felt so hopeful, or so certain that we will achieve big, positive change together. In fact, we already are.

You know the challenges well - you live and breathe them every day. The housing crisis continues to worsen, most harming the lowest-income renters. Homelessness in some communities is increasing and becoming more visible than ever. The Administration proposes deep cuts to affordable housing and cruel policies that would *increase* homelessness. Our country's public housing infrastructure is crumbling, and some residents are living in unsafe, unhealthy, and unacceptable conditions. We face more frequent and more severe disasters, destroying homes, lives, and communities. The longest government shutdown in history threatened tens of thousands of renters with losing their homes and did long-term damage to critical housing programs, and the possibility of another government shutdown looms large.

And yet, despite it all, **together, we have achieved so much.**

Thanks to all of your organizing and hard work, we continue to maintain a 10% increase to HUD's budget, protect funding for the national Housing Trust Fund, enact bipartisan legislation to create more rental assistance, and defeat harmful proposals by the administration.

We often talk about our legislative wins in terms of percentages. Let's talk instead about people. Because of you and your advocacy to increase HUD's budget: 50,000 low-income people with disabilities, veterans and youth experiencing homelessness will have new housing vouchers; 30,000 people experiencing homelessness will have homes from increases to HUD's McKinney-Vento Grants; and 1,000 new homes for poor seniors will be built with the first new funding for Section 202 housing construction in 8 years. Protecting the national Housing Trust Fund will mean another 2,000-3,000 homes per year for deeply poor households across the country. Most recently, we worked together to enact and fund 5,000 new Housing Choice Vouchers for families with young children.

All told, **our work together over the last year means new housing for nearly 100,000 deeply poor renters** who would otherwise still be sleeping on streets, in shelters, or spending exorbitant amounts of their income to stay precariously housed. And, because of your fierce advocacy, 5 million low-income families living in subsidized housing can sleep a little easier knowing they won't be subject to the rent hikes proposed by HUD Secretary Carson.

These kinds of achievements don't happen on their own: they happen through organizing, advocating, telling your stories, and partnering with congressional champions through events like the *Our Homes, Our Voices* National Housing Week of Action. Two years ago, we held the first Week of Action when organizations and low-income residents across the country hosted 60 events - rallies, press conferences, letter-writing campaigns, and other events to let their members of Congress know the importance of affordable homes. During last year's *Our Homes, Our Voices* Week of Action we nearly doubled our impact. **This year, you held over 120 National Housing Week of Action events throughout the country** urging Congress to ensure that everyone has a safe, accessible and affordable home.

Events like these, and your work throughout the year to educate the public and policy makers about the crisis and its solutions, are having an impact. We are breaking through and elevating the housing crisis and its solutions in the national dialogue in powerful ways.

Together, we've changed the conversation of what's possible to achieve. We're working closely with members of Congress who are increasingly willing not just to work around the edges of the housing crisis, but instead to advance bold, ambitious solutions to tackle it head on. The size and scope of these housing bills are unlike anything we've seen in generations, where the scale of the proposed investments matches the scale of the crisis.

And just in time for the 2020 presidential election.

After decades of disinvestment by Congress, it's remarkable to now have presidential hopefuls using their platforms to talk about the housing crisis and advance bold solutions for the lowest-income people. In part because of the severity of the crisis itself and in large part because of our collective work to create pressure for solutions, **in these early months of the presidential campaign we've seen more attention on affordable housing policy than we have in entire presidential campaigns in history.**

Senators Warren, Gillibrand, Booker and Secretary Castro are each proposing over \$40 billion a year in annual funding for the national Housing Trust Fund. Senators Booker, Harris and Secretary Castro are proposing renters' tax credits, with Secretary Castro also proposing making rental assistance universally available to the lowest-income people. More big housing proposals are coming soon, and they are equally and refreshingly ambitious.

Through NLIHC's nonpartisan *Our Homes, Our Votes:2020* project, we're tracking and working with *all* presidential hopefuls in Iowa, New Hampshire and beyond to ensure the next president, whoever it may be, prioritizes ending homelessness and housing poverty when they're in the White House. And we're partnering with organizers, advocates and low-income people to ensure renters are a powerful voting bloc, because *housing is built with ballots.*

The American people are with joining our calls for action. According to a recent poll we commissioned, 85% of people in America believe that ensuring everyone has a safe, accessible and affordable home should be a top national priority, and 8 in 10 want major action from Congress and the White House. Seventy-six percent are more likely to vote for a candidate with a detailed plan on making housing more affordable. It's no wonder that presidential candidates are increasingly heeding the call for action.

We have powerful new partners joining us in our work, leaders in fields that go far beyond our world of housing. They know, as NLIHC's founder Cushing Dolbeare said so many years ago, "housing is too important to be left to housers alone." Through our *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign **we are galvanizing teachers, civil rights and anti-poverty activists, doctors, nurses, mayors, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ, faith based and criminal justice communities** - all joining us to advocate for big investments in the national Housing Trust Fund, rental assistance, public housing repairs, and other solutions to homelessness and housing poverty. And, after welcoming members of another organization to NLIHC, we now can count on **nearly 180,000 advocates and activists throughout the country** to receive, respond and act on our calls to action.

This is our moment, the one we've worked towards and prepared for years. Local and federal momentum, together with a national spotlight and powerful new allies, provide us **a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build broad-based bipartisan support and enact transformative solutions.** And that's exactly what we'll do.

We *can* end homelessness and housing poverty in America. We have the data, the solutions, and, as a country, the resources. We lack only the political will to fund the solutions at the scale necessary. Through our collective work, we are building the will, and policymakers are taking up the charge.

Together, we *will* end homelessness and housing poverty. [Join us.](#)

Diane

Keep Families Together

Successful Day of Action to *Keep Families Together*; Join Tweetstorm on July 8

Advocates across the country came together on June 26 for a Day of Action to *Keep Families Together* to oppose HUD's cruel proposal to force 25,000 mixed-status immigrant families – including 55,000 children who are U.S. citizens or have legal status – to separate or face eviction. Advocates held “commenting parties” and press conferences. NLIHC, the National Housing Law Project (NHLP), and the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities were joined by Patrick Bond, Representative Sylvia Garcia's (D-TX) legislative director, on a [webinar](#) to help rally support and share resources that can be used to stop the proposal. **The total number of comments submitted - the vast majority opposing the proposed rule - grew to 9,300!**



Staff at Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey participated in a lunch-time comment party and discussion.



NLIHC staff and partners participated in a comment party at the NLIHC office in Washington, DC.



Members of the Public Health Justice Collective submitted comments in Oakland, CA.

Several Los Angeles-based housing and immigration organizations joined with civic leaders during a press conference on the impacts the rule would have on local communities.



LA City Council member Bob Blumenfield speaks at press conference opposing HUD rule.

Shortly after the press event, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti [shared his letter to HUD](#) opposing the rule and encouraged others to submit comments.



Mayor Eric Garcetti
@MayorOfLA

L.A. welcomes people pursuing the American Dream. That's why I oppose @HUDgov's proposal that threatens immigrants and denies stable housing to tens of thousands of mixed-status families across our nation. #KeepFamiliesTogether



City of Los Angeles and 3 others

6:07 PM · Jun 26, 2019 · Twitter Web Client

49 Retweets 96 Likes

NLIHC and NHLP now invite advocates to join us for a **Keep Families Together tweetstorm on July 8 at 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. ET** for one final push to submit comments before the July 9 deadline. With your support, we can generate more than 10,000 comments opposing the proposal. Sample tweets and images can be downloaded at: <https://rebrand.ly/7vrc9l>

Submit comments in English and Spanish at: <https://www.keep-families-together.org/>

White House

President Trump Signs Executive Order on Deregulation and Housing

President Trump signed an [executive order](#) on June 25 establishing a White House Council on Eliminating Barriers to Affordable Housing Development to identify and remove obstacles that impede the development of new affordable housing. While it is critical for state and local governments to address restrictive zoning and land-use regulations that limit the supply of housing and drive up housing costs, the executive order was met with skepticism.

“An effort by this administration to address restrictive local zoning would be welcomed if it weren’t belied by other actions to gut affordable and fair housing in America,” stated NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel in a press statement. “It’s an attempt to achieve large-scale deregulation while distracting from other efforts to exacerbate the housing crisis through proposals to slash HUD’s budget, eliminate key housing production and preservation programs, increase rents, evict some of our country’s lowest-income and most vulnerable renters, and gut HUD’s existing rules that incentivize local governments to eliminate restrictive zoning.”

“One of HUD Secretary Ben Carson’s first acts in office,” Diane continued, “was to dismantle the agency’s Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule that gave local communities tools and guidance for overcoming restrictive local zoning. Before coming to HUD, [Carson decried efforts to “fundamentally change the nature of some communities](#) from primarily single-family to largely apartment-based areas,” a classic NIMBY sentiment.

Read NLIHC’s press statement at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5betqme>

Congress

Senator Schatz Introduces Bill to Block Changes to Equal Access Rule

Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI) and 11 other Democratic senators introduced on June 27 the “[Ensuring Equal Access to Shelter Act](#)” (S. 2007) that would block a HUD proposed rule to weaken the enforcement of its Equal Access Rule, which provides important protections for LGBTQ people experiencing homelessness and seeking emergency shelter. This legislation is a Senate companion to a bill ([H.R. 3018](#)) passed out of the House Financial Services Committee on June 11 (see *Memo* [6/17](#)).

Weakening 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 to experience homelessness than their non-LGBTQ peers, 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.

“Senator Schatz’s legislation is needed to stop the administration’s proposal to eliminate critical protections for LGBTQ people experiencing homelessness and seeking emergency shelter – a move that will literally put lives at risk,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel in Senator Schatz’s [press release](#) about the bill. “LGBTQ individuals, and especially youth, disproportionately experience homelessness in our country. By weakening the Equal Access Rule to allow federally-funded shelter providers to discriminate against LGBTQ people, HUD is abandoning its mission to end homelessness and ensure vulnerable people have a safe and decent home. We stand ready to work with Congress to enact this important legislation.”

Learn more about the bill at: <https://tinyurl.com/yycytfxy>

Read Senator Schatz’s full press release at: <https://tinyurl.com/y6rn2nx8>

Members of Congress Introduce Bill to Keep Housing Tax Credit Properties Affordable

A bipartisan group of policymakers – including Senators Todd Young (R-IN) and Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Representatives Joe Neguse (D-CO), Don Beyer (D-VA), and Jackie Walorski (R-IN) – introduced bipartisan, bicameral [legislation](#) to help preserve housing developments financed by the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (Housing Credit) by reforming the “qualified contract” process.

Currently, Housing Credit properties are subject to a 30-year affordability period, but federal law also allows property owners to request a qualified contract that allows them to convert properties to market rate after just 15 years. When a property owner requests a qualified contract, the state allocating agency has one year to find a qualified buyer to purchase the property and maintain it as affordable for the duration of the “extended-use” period (from 15 to 30 years). The purchase price for a qualified contract is set by statute, but because the purchase price is typically greater than the property’s market value, some property owners have used the qualified contract process as a loophole to shorten the affordability requirements. If no buyer is found, the property owner can convert the property to market-rate apartments.

As of 2017, approximately 50,000 affordable rental homes have already been lost nationwide, and in that year alone property owners served notice to state allocating agencies that they wanted to begin the qualified contract process on additional properties comprising approximately 18,000 affordable homes.

The “Save Affordable Housing Act” would help prevent the premature loss of affordable homes and ensure Housing Credit properties remain affordable for at least 30 years, as Congress intended. If enacted, the bill

would repeal the qualified contract option for future housing developments financed with the Housing Credit. The bill corrects the statutory purchase price for existing Housing Credit properties, making it based on a property's fair market value. The bill also provides an alternative to qualified contracts for "troubled properties" for which owners need to renegotiate their extended-use agreements to maintain the properties' financial feasibility.

NLIHC supports the Save Affordable Housing Act as an important reform to the Housing Credit program.

Read Senator Young's press release at: <https://tinyurl.com/y22vnerm>

Read the bill text at: <https://tinyurl.com/y6xajj4v>

Senator Young Introduces Bill Targeting Discriminatory Zoning

Senator Todd Young (R-IN) introduced on June 20 the "[Yes In My Backyard \(YIMBY\) Act](#)" (S. 1919), which aims to increase transparency and encourage affordable housing development in more communities by requiring Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) recipients to explain why they do not implement inclusive zoning practices that help increase housing opportunities for low- and middle-income residents.

The YIMBY Act would encourage the implementation of 20 anti-discriminatory land-use policies to facilitate the creation of new affordable housing in more communities. The list covers policies such as rezoning areas for high-density housing, encouraging mixed-use development and transit-oriented development, reducing minimum-lot-size requirements, allowing accessory dwellings, and reducing the number of historic buildings, among other provisions. The bill would require CDBG grantees to submit a report every five years stating: 1) if they have implemented anti-discriminatory land use policies 2) if they plan to implement the policies or 3) the reasons why they have not adopted the policies. These reports would have no impact on the amount of money grantees receive.

"Burdensome and discriminatory local zoning and land use policies drive up housing costs in communities across America," said Senator Young in his [press release](#). "These policies exacerbate the housing affordability crisis and stifle the ability of Americans to move to areas of opportunity. My legislation will require cities, towns, and rural areas across America to face this reality under a new level of transparency and encourage them to cut these harmful regulations."

Read more about the bill at: <http://tinyurl.com/y66qjblw>

Senator Kaine Reintroduces Bill to Expand Fair Housing Protections

Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) on June 26 reintroduced the "[Fair Housing Improvement Act of 2019](#)" (S. 1986) which would prohibit housing discrimination based on source of income, veteran status, and military status by adding them as protected classes under the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Senator Kaine introduced an earlier version of this bill during the previous congressional session.

Preventing discrimination based on source of income is particularly important for low-income households with Housing Choice Vouchers who are often turned away by landlords unwilling to participate in or unfamiliar with the program. Currently, just [one in three](#) voucher recipient families are protected by local and state anti-discrimination laws.

"Where you live has an enormous impact on the opportunities you and your children have in life - everything from educational attainment, to lifetime earnings, to better health to life expectancy," said NLIHC President and

CEO Diane Yentel in a [press release](#) with Senator Kaine. “For too long, discrimination has prevented low-income people from living in neighborhoods of their choice – including communities with jobs that pay decent wages, good schools, healthcare, and transportation – simply because they rely on federal housing benefits to make ends meet. This legislation is an important step towards righting this wrong.”

“I’ve seen firsthand the impact that discrimination has on a person searching for a home,” Senator Kane stated in his press release. “We can no longer allow these barriers to keep families and veterans from finding a stable place to live.”

Read more about the bill at: <http://tinyurl.com/y6yk8oeg>

Read Senator Kaine’s press release at: <http://tinyurl.com/yy5k639d>

House Committee Advances Bill to Protect Residents from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

The House Financial Services Committee approved on June 26 [legislation](#) introduced by Representative Chuy Garcia (D-IL) to protect residents of federally assisted housing from carbon monoxide poisoning. The “Safe Housing for Families Act of 2019” would require carbon monoxide detectors in all HUD-assisted homes, protecting the health and safety of residents.

Despite the well-documented dangers of carbon monoxide, the use of carbon monoxide monitors is not required in all HUD housing programs. At least 11 residents in federally assisted homes have died since 2013 from carbon monoxide poisoning. This new legislation addresses this failure by requiring all federally assisted housing developments to install and maintain carbon monoxide detectors.

NLIHC’s [letter of support](#) for the legislation was submitted for the congressional record during the committee vote.

Read NLIHC’s letter of support at: <https://tinyurl.com/y6pt9xum>

Read the bill text at: <https://tinyurl.com/y4h5ezvw>

Budget and Appropriations

House Passes Robust Spending Package for Affordable Housing

The House approved by a vote of 227-194 on June 25 a five-bill FY20 spending package that includes robust funding for affordable housing and community development investments at HUD and USDA, as well as several positive amendments. This outcome is due in no small measure to the work of advocates across the country and the leadership of strong congressional champions, including Transportation-HUD (THUD) Appropriations Chair David Price (D-NC) and Ranking Member Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL).

Before the spending bill can be enacted, Congress and the White House must reach a bipartisan agreement to lift the low spending caps on defense and domestic funding required by law under the Budget Control Act of 2011. Unless the caps are lifted, affordable housing programs may face devastating, across-the-board cuts of almost 10%. If an agreement is reached, additional housing funds may be possible.

The House spending package provides a robust increase in funding to housing programs that serve low-income people and communities. The bill provides enough funding to renew all existing Housing Choice Vouchers and Project-Based Rental Assistance contracts and increases funding for the Section 202 Housing for the Elderly,

Section 811 Housing for People with Disabilities, Native American Housing Block Grants, Homeless Assistance Grants, and other critical programs.

Several amendments were approved that would provide additional funding for Section 202 (\$1 million), tenant-based rental assistance (\$2 million), the Manufactured Housing Program (\$500,000), HUD-VASH (\$2 million), the Indian Community Development Block Grant program (\$5 million), and the Family Self Sufficiency program (\$5 million). The House approved two amendments to increased funding for Homeless Assistance Grants: an additional \$5 million to better serve youth experiencing homelessness and another \$1 million for a study on transitional housing grants.

Other amendments were approved that would provide funding to study alternative methods for calculating Fair Market Rents in markets with rapidly rising rents and for HUD's inspector general to investigate the Administration's ongoing 16-month delay in releasing Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery mitigation dollars.

Legislative provisions aimed at halting several harmful proposals from the Trump administration remain in the bill, despite attempts to remove the provisions through the amendment process. If enacted, the House bill would prevent HUD from implementing a cruel proposal to evict 25,000 mixed-status immigrant families from HUD-assisted homes – including 55,000 children who are U.S. residents or have legal status. The bill also prevents HUD from amending the Equal Access rule to allow homeless shelters to deny transgender people experiencing homelessness equal access to services – a move that would put lives at risk.

Read NLIHC's analysis of the THUD and Agriculture bills at: <https://bit.ly/2HwEvnC>

Review NLIHC's budget chart at: <https://bit.ly/2r17MZC>

Our Homes, Our Votes

First Democratic Debates Brings Little Discussion About Affordable Homes, But We're Just Getting Started

Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020, NLIHC's non-partisan candidate and voter engagement project, continues to monitor all 2020 presidential candidates' statements and proposals on affordable housing and the needs of the lowest-income people in America. While advocates were disappointed the first nationally televised debates did not feature a question on affordable housing, there were several mentions of the topic by the candidates:

- Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT) mentioned homelessness in his opening statement. He said, “500,000 people are sleeping out on the street.”
- South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg made the point that “you should be able to live well, afford rent . . . whether you went to college or not. That's one of the many reasons why we need to raise the minimum wage to at least \$15 an hour.”
- Andrew Yang, speaking in favor of universal basic income, said, “[By implementing universal basic income] we would save money on things like incarceration, homelessness services, emergency room healthcare.”
- Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) said, “No one should have to work more than one job to afford the roof over their head and food on the table.”

This is just the beginning. Every day, affordable housing gains momentum in the 2020 primary, being addressed by the candidates as in no previous elections in decades, if ever. Just a couple of the recent news articles discussing the candidates' positions on affordable housing:

- “Democrats Get Serious About Affordable Housing,” *American Prospect*, June 26 at: <https://rebrand.ly/sxt3zz>
- “Yes, Your Rent is Too Damn High. Here’s What 2020 Democrats Want to Do About It.” *Vice News*, June 26 at: <https://rebrand.ly/2lrtri>

Want to know what each of the 2020 presidential candidates has said about affordable housing to-date? NLIHC’s *Our Homes, Our Votes* project is keeping track: check out the [profiles](#) of all the 2020 candidates—and what they have said so far.

Research

Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies Releases Annual *State of the Nation’s Housing Report*

The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University (JCHS) released the [State of the Nation’s Housing Report](#) on June 24. The report’s authors found a continued shortage of affordable housing supply particularly for the lowest-income households and an increase in homelessness after years of decline, especially in certain areas of the country.

The researchers found the number of completed rental homes is near a 30-year high of 360,000 completed units, and construction began on 392,000 new homes in 2017. Despite overall increases in supply, however, the majority of these new homes are to serve higher-income households; low-rent housing continues to decline in metropolitan areas. The stock of homes renting for less than \$800 per month fell by 1 million from 2016 to 2017, a loss of almost 5%. New construction is not making up for this decline, as only 4% of unsubsidized multifamily buildings completed in the first quarter of 2018 had rents less than \$850. Low-rent homes are also increasingly older homes, which puts residents at greater risk of displacement if the homes are demolished to make way for new construction of high-end rentals.

The report cites NLIHC’s findings that there are only 37 affordable and available units for every 100 extremely low-income renter households with incomes less than the poverty rate or 30% of the area median income (AMI). For very low-income renter households, who earn less than 50% of AMI, there are 58 affordable and available units for every 100 renter households. Using data from the National Housing Preservation Database (a product of NLIHC and the Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation), the JCHS researchers estimate that affordability restrictions on 1.2 million rental homes could expire by 2029.

The share of housing cost-burdened households paying more than 30% of their incomes on their housing has declined for the seventh straight year to 31.5%, but this decline is largely driven by homeowners. Among homeowners, the share of cost-burdened households declined by 8% from 2010-2017. Although the number of cost-burdened renters also slightly decreased, 47.4% of renter households are still cost-burdened, and nearly 83% of renters earning less than \$15,000 a year were housing cost-burdened in 2017. Cost-burden rates were significantly higher for minority households than white households for both renters and homeowners. Compared to households able to afford their homes, cost-burdened households spent 13% less on food, 40% less on healthcare, and 23% less on transportation.

Despite significant reductions in homelessness over the past decade, homelessness increased by .3% to 552,830 in 2018. There was also a 2.3% increase in unsheltered homeless people, especially in high-cost western states. Unsheltered homelessness increased by 25% from 2014 to 2018 in California.

The report’s authors found that the number of renter households declined to 35.6% of all households in 2018, with decreases in the largest and most expensive metro areas. They found an increase, however, in older and

higher-income renting households, while the number of renter households making less than \$15,000 declined by 451,000. Rents rose 3.6% in 2018, with rent increases for both higher and lower-quality homes. This is partly due to low vacancy rates, which fell to 6.9%. Vacancy rates are lowest in the West and Northeast.

The authors also review the state of homeownership in the U.S. The homeownership rate increased to 64.4% of households, a departure from the 2007-2016 trends of renter household growth and homeowner household declines. The upturn in homeownership rates is present across all racial groups, but JCHS researchers found that the white-Hispanic homeownership gap was unchanged, and the white-black homeownership gap continues to widen. Home prices rose 3.9% in real terms, increasing the number of areas facing severe affordability challenges and making it harder for lower-income households, which are disproportionately black and Hispanic, to afford to buy a home.

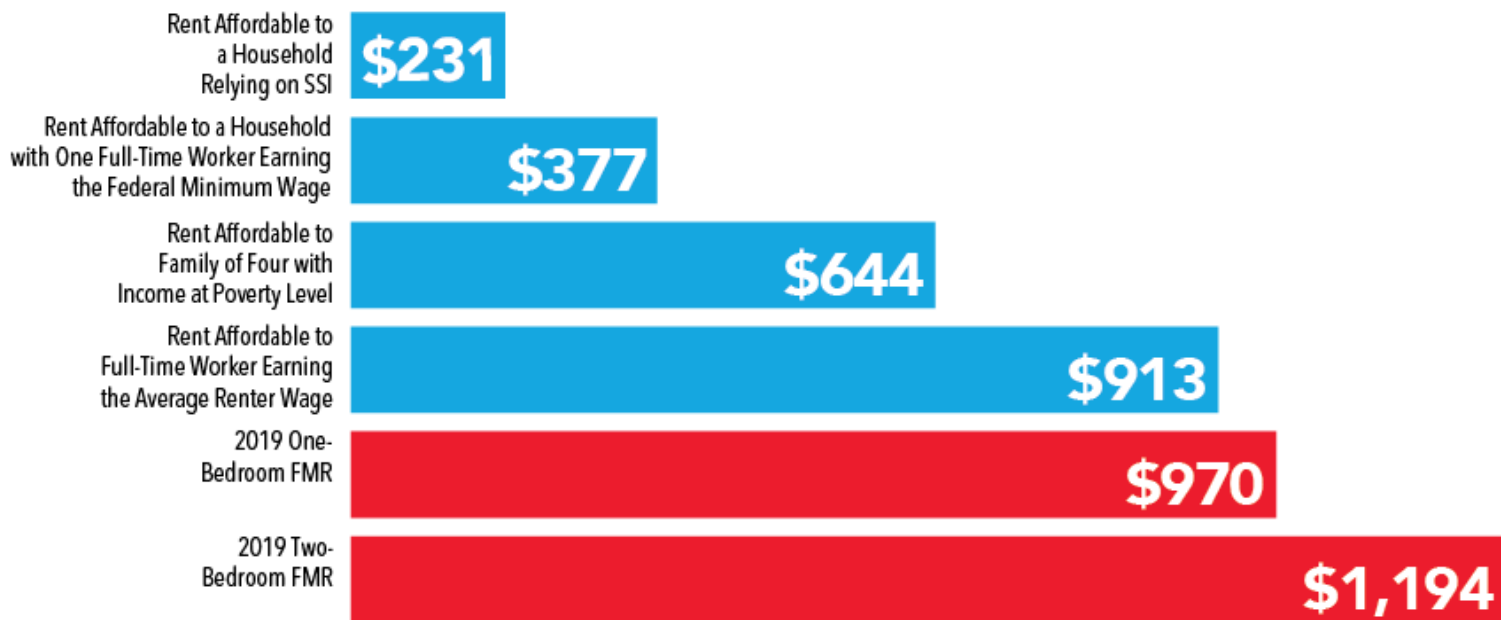
The *State of the Nation's Housing Report* is at: <https://bit.ly/2xd12Qc>

Fact of the Week

Rents Are Out of Reach, Especially for Renters with the Lowest Incomes

OUT of REACH

RENTS ARE OUT OF REACH FOR MANY RENTERS



Fair Market Rent = Fair Market Rent.

Source: NLIHC calculation of weighted-average HUD fair market rent. NLIHC calculation of affordable rents based on income and benefits data from BLS QCEW, 2017 adjusted to 2019 dollars; HUD 2019 Income Limits; and Social Security Administration, 2019 maximum federal SSI benefit for individual.

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Source: NLIHC's *Out of Reach* 2019.

Disaster Housing Recovery

House Spending Package Includes Funding and Provisions for Disaster Relief

The House passed on June 25 a five-bill spending package for FY20 that includes funding and provisions that would affect disaster housing recovery efforts.

The [spending package](#) created a Homeless Assistance Grant (HAG) Fund for recaptured homelessness assistance grants. At least 10% of these funds could be used to provide assistance to people experiencing homelessness prior to a presidentially declared disaster. Currently, those experiencing homelessness prior to a disaster are not eligible for FEMA assistance.

The bill also provides \$4.66 million for permanent HUD disaster recovery staff and includes a provision to promote data transparency to help localities address mitigation in their planning processes.

The House approved an amendment offered by Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) to add \$2 million to the HUD Inspector General to investigate the ongoing 16-month delay in HUD's release of over \$16 billion in Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Relief funding.

Review the text of the bill at: <https://bit.ly/2RDWw6J>

Read NLIHC's analysis of the Transportation-HUD and Agriculture bills at: <https://bit.ly/2HwEvnC>

Review NLIHC's budget chart at: <https://bit.ly/2r17MZC>

Additional Disaster Housing Recovery Updates - July 1, 2019

The following is a review of additional disaster housing recovery developments since the last edition of *Memo to Members and Partners* (for the article in the previous *Memo*, see [6/24](#)).

Federal

The House Committee on Oversight and Reform-Subcommittee on the Environment held a hearing on disaster recovery and resiliency on June 25. The Subcommittee members questioned emergency management officials from Texas, California, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, as well as FEMA mitigation officials, a climate-change expert and a skeptic. The Subcommittee asked about FEMA's position on climate change and how the agency can prepare for worsening disasters. View a recording of the hearing [here](#).

Administration officials [spoke to journalists](#) about preparations being undertaken in advance of the 2019 hurricane and wildfire season. Officials pointed to new resource distribution centers and stepped-up coordination with state and local governments as signs of progress. DHS Acting Secretary Kevin McAleenan noted that storms will strike areas still recovering from past disasters, calling it a "test of our resilience."

Midwest Flooding & Tornadoes

Ohio

As FEMA denial letters go out to victims of tornadoes in Dayton, some residents [question](#) the agency's reasons for denying aid.

California Wildfires

State Response

California Governor Gavin Newsom released proposed legislation to assist PG&E with future wildfire claims. PG&E has been struggling through bankruptcy proceedings while also setting aside money for 2018 wildfire victims. The bill would create a [separate compensation fund](#) containing both state and PG&E funds.

Local Perspective

The Paradise Town Council [adopted](#) a long-term recovery plan at a special meeting on June 25. The plan was released ahead of schedule due to robust community involvement. The [plan](#), which contains a list of 38 projects prioritized by community members, is required to receive further federal and state aid.

Hurricane Michael

Florida

Federal Response

The U.S. Department of Education [announced](#) on June 26 it would be awarding \$1.25 million in grants to school districts in the Florida panhandle. The funding would go to enhancing mental health services for students in areas hit by Hurricane Michael. Many mental health practitioners have left the area due to a rise in housing prices, dramatically impacting mental health services.

HUD led a [disaster recovery symposium](#) in Panama City. The symposium brought together experts, community members and administrators to focus on innovative disaster recovery housing strategies.

Local Perspectives

Officials in Bay County released their [long-term recovery plan](#). The plan outlines projects prioritized by the Bay County community as it works to recover from Hurricane Michael.

Hurricane Florence

North Carolina

Federal Response

Representatives Thom Tillis (NC-R) and David Rouzer (NC-R) [highlighted](#) recent efforts to bring federal disaster recovery funding to North Carolina after Hurricane Florence. Their op-ed also featured their work with Senator Burr (R-NC) to direct the Army Corp of Engineers to begin storm-mitigation projects in advance of this year's hurricane season.

Local Perspectives

Discussions regarding the [housing of aid workers](#) in Robeson County have stalled. Churches were deemed to have violated the fire code after inspectors found nearly 30 hurricane-recovery volunteers staying in a church rectory. With high local housing prices, churches are worried volunteers will stop coming to the area if no solution can be found.

2017 Disasters

West Virginia Flooding: A bill to allow open-ended contracts for disaster recovery projects is [raising concerns](#) in the West Virginia legislature. The state has built only 51 out of 400 homes destroyed by flooding three years

ago. With only one contractor currently active on the project, proponents of the bill say creating open-ended contracts would make contracting easier and speed up recovery. Some lawmakers are concerned about unintended consequences.

Hurricane Irma: On June 20, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis [announced](#) an agreement with the Florida Housing Finance Organization and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to provide over \$140 million in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds for the construction of new affordable housing in areas hit by Hurricane Irma.

Hurricane Maria: The Trump Administration has not yet sent the [\\$600 million in emergency food stamp aid](#) to Puerto Rico several weeks after President Trump signed the bill authorizing the funds. Around a million people rely on food stamps in Puerto Rico. The territory sent the USDA a revised plan detailing the use of the funds on June 24, but the agency has yet to approve the plan.

Opportunity Starts at Home

Criminal Justice & Housing Fact Sheet Now Available!

The [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) multisector affordable homes campaign collaborated with [JustLeadershipUSA](#) to publish a downloadable [“Criminal Justice/Housing” fact sheet](#) on its website. JustLeadershipUSA, which is dedicated to cutting the nation’s correctional population in half by 2030, is the latest organization to join the campaign’s national Steering Committee.

The fact sheet includes landmark research and infographics on the affordable housing needs of individuals transitioning out of the criminal justice system. Every year, over 600,000 people return to their communities from prison and face a myriad of challenges, especially profound housing insecurity. According to a 2017 study from the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, roughly 48,000 people entering shelters every year recently left prisons or jails. A study of recently incarcerated people and their families found that 79% of survey respondents were either ineligible for or denied housing because of their own or a loved one’s conviction history.

View and download the fact sheet [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](#).

From the Field

New York State Legislators Pass ‘Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019’

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the “Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019,” the strongest law protecting tenants in the state’s history, on June 14. The law permanently closes loopholes in New York’s rent-stabilization system, allows the system to expand to the entire state, and offers eviction protections to renters and manufactured-housing residents everywhere in New York.

NLIHC state partner New York State Tenants & Neighbors as part of the Housing Justice for All Campaign organized, marched, and lobbied to guarantee the state’s expiring rent-stabilization laws would be replaced by stronger protections for tenants.

Finding affordable housing in New York has long been difficult, despite the development of new multifamily homes. Loopholes in previous laws enabled landlords to discontinue rent regulation in their apartments, resulting in the loss of 300,000 affordable, rent-stabilized homes, while the cost of living has far outpaced residents' ability to pay rising rents. Renters' housing cost burdens throughout New York State are high, and gentrification with the displacement of long-term residents is growing in many communities due to the lack of affordable housing options in those communities.

Housing Justice for All campaign activists, including staff from Tenant & Neighbors and several other housing-justice organizations, strongly advocated for new rent regulations. They marched in the streets, met with city councils across the state urging them to pass resolutions supporting new rent regulations, called on key political leaders to sign onto the full slate of Housing Justice for All legislation sponsored by Speaker Carl Heastie and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Steward-Cousins, and visited the capitol every Tuesday to lobby the legislature to pass the legislation. Housing Justice for All advocates also delivered a pro-renter petition with 3,000 signatures to Governor Cuomo.

The "Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019" does the following:

- Extends rent regulation laws and makes them permanent.
- Expands the "Emergency Tenant Protection Act of 1974" across New York State, allowing all localities that fit certain criteria for rent stabilization to opt-in.
- Repeals high-rent and high-income "decontrol" statutes that allowed units to be deregulated upon vacancy if the rent reaches a maximum threshold.
- Allows preferential rents to be permanent for the life of the tenancy. This means the property owner cannot discontinue preferential rents (rents below the legal regulated rent) for tenants upon lease renewals. Landlords can charge any rent up to the full legal regulated rent once the tenant vacates the home only if the tenant did not vacate because of the landlord's failure to maintain the apartment.
- Repeals vacancy and longevity bonuses. The statutory vacancy bonus allowed landlords of rent-regulated units to collect an automatic increase in rent up to 20% upon vacancy. The vacancy longevity bonus allowed landlords of rent-regulated units that had not claimed a vacancy increase in over eight years to collect an additional increase.
- Reforms the system of overcharge complaints that previously allowed landlords to get away with fraud if the tenant did not complain quickly enough, and it extends the four-year "look-back" rule to six years. This extends the statute of limitation for when tenants can claim their landlord has overcharged them for rent; they can file such a claim on rents up to six years prior to their current lease year.
- Reforms and caps Major Capital Improvement (MCI) and Individual Apartment Improvement (IAI) increases.
- Establishes stronger tenant protections statewide. Landlords cannot evict tenants for making good-faith complaints to them about violating the warranty of habitability. Security deposits are limited to one month's rent and the eviction process was extended to give the tenant more time to pay rent and find a new home.
- Establishes protections for mobile- and manufactured-home tenants. It limits rent increases, establishes rent-to-own regulations to protect mobile- and manufactured-home tenants, and strengthens protections against evictions from parks for the purpose of changing land use.

Delsenia Glover, director of New York State Tenants & Neighbors and a spokesperson for the Housing Justice for All Campaign, said she is "thrilled and honored to be at the helm of this great organization to witness this historic legislation to protect rent-regulated tenants, including laws which do not sunset!"

"This bill is a huge step forward," said Ms. Glover, "in reversing decades of weakening amendments to the laws that govern rent regulation in New York state, like ending vacancy decontrol, vacancy bonuses, making preferential rents permanent, expansion of the 'Emergency Tenant Protection Act,' and moderating MCI's and

IAI's. This is the culmination of years of tenant activism and advocacy, and a great day for all New York. We applaud Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie for this courageous and necessary piece of legislation that will save communities across the state, particularly communities of color, and save many from homelessness caused by escalating rents.”

To learn more about the “Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019,” contact Delsenia Glover at: Dglover@tandn.org or 212-608-4320 ext. 400

Event

New Orleans Hosts NeighborWorks Training Institute, August 19-23

The next [NeighborWorks Training Institute \(NTI\)](#) will be held in New Orleans the week of August 19-23. In addition to offering a wide array of courses for nonprofit professionals in community development, affordable housing, and nonprofit management, the NTI will feature a special Wednesday symposium on the nexus between health and community development: [Closing the Life Expectancy Gap \(ML933\)](#). Register for the NTI online [here](#).

NTI courses lasting from one to five days each are offered in affordable housing development and financing; housing asset management; community engagement; community revitalization; community economic development; housing construction and rehabilitation; financial capability and homeownership education, coaching, and counseling; nonprofit management and leadership; Native American and rural community development; and single-family and small business lending.

Online registration is at: <https://bit.ly/1ATs8Ia>

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of June 23

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of June 23.

- “Rent Is Becoming Unaffordable For Many U.S. Workers,” *Forbes*, June 24 at: <https://rebrand.ly/up5xkx>
- “How Homeless Court helps clear up legal matters that could trip up people rebuilding their lives,” *The Arizona Republic*, June 24 at: <https://rebrand.ly/e1xjgj>
- “Until Further Notice: Hurricane Michael in Rural Florida,” *Medium*, June 25 at: <https://rebrand.ly/ak0ylm>
- “Trump wants to deregulate local zoning. Housing advocates are skeptical,” *Curbed*, June 25 at: <https://rebrand.ly/9qtuxs>
- “Full-time minimum wage workers cannot afford a 2-bedroom rental anywhere in the US,” *CNBC*, June 26 at: <https://rebrand.ly/md0c5p>
- “Yes, Your Rent Is Too Damn High. Here's What 2020 Democrats Want to Do About It.,” *Vice News*, June 26 at: <https://rebrand.ly/zalaoq>

NLIHC News

NLIHC Seeks Communications Specialist

NLIHC seeks a communications specialist who will be responsible for an array of communications coordination and project support for NLIHC's *Our Homes, Our Votes* nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement project, as well as other efforts such as compiling and publishing NLIHC's weekly e-newsletter *Memo to Member and Partners* and assisting the NLIHC media/communications coordinator on media outreach, response, and tracking.

Responsibilities

General/Project Coordination:

- Coordinating incoming project requests through intake, planning, and production pipeline, ensuring strong follow-through
- Coordinating key activities, and their timelines and deliverables, by contributing to an editorial/project calendar, staying on top of progress, addressing potential issues, and regularly communicating with NLIHC staff and partners
- Regularly liaising with project and communications partners in certain states
- Drafting and/or editing materials and correspondence; drafting copy for platforms, websites, and social networks
- Collecting and organizing information on Google Drive
- Reviewing content supplied by state partners and sorting it by certain criteria and posting on website(s)

Website (Content Management):

- Collaborating with NLIHC communications team update site content – assist with style and layout
- Publishing content to the *Our Homes, Our Votes* website on a regular basis, maintaining continuity of themes, designing layout, and increasing online presence to potential audiences
- Staying up-to-date with developments and generating new ideas to draw audience attention
- Using content management systems to analyze website traffic and user-engagement metrics

NLIHC E-Newsletter:

- Formatting NLIHC's weekly e-newsletter (articles are written by other NLIHC staff), preparing and sending in MailChimp, and posting e-newsletter articles onto NLIHC's main website (training will be provided)

Social Media:

- Supporting social media strategy in consultation with NLIHC communications team
- Preparing and posting social media content (Twitter, FB, Instagram)
- Monitoring and reporting social media progress using web analytic tools

Video Editing/Graphic Design:

- Creating compilation videos from clips supplied by partners and NLIHC staff
- Basic editing of video content
- Creating social media graphics and toolkits in coordination with NLIHC creative services specialist who is a graphic designer

Traditional Media:

- Helping maintain and keep track an editorial/project calendar

Organizational Support:

- Attend and report at all meetings of the Board of Directors and before Board committees, as needed
- Participate in staff meetings, retreats, trainings, and all Coalition events
- Other duties as assigned

Qualification Requirements

- Bachelor's degree, preferably in communications, marketing, graphic design, or related field
- Detail-oriented, well-organized
- Demonstrated experience coordinating and/or supporting projects from inception to completion
- Strong interpersonal communications and customer service skills
- Ability to deal with a high-paced environment with multiple projects happening simultaneously
- Ability to write clearly
- Ability to create and post social media images
- Some experience with basic video editing preferred
- Some experience with graphic design (e.g., InDesign) and Mailchimp or other e-mail system preferred
- Some experience with a website CMS (e.g. WIX, see: www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org) preferred
- Strong commitment to social justice and NLIHC's mission

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

Interested candidates should send a cover letter (with salary requirement), resume, and two writing/communications/design samples (examples of publications, links to online content, etc.) to Paul Kealey, COO, and Renee Willis, VP for Field and Communications, at: pkealey@nlihc.org and rwillis@nlihc.org

NLIHC Seeks Fall Interns

NLIHC is accepting applications for our fall internship positions. Interns are highly valued and fully integrated into our staff work. We seek students passionate about social justice issues, with excellent writing and interpersonal skills, to work as policy, research, field, and communications/media/graphic design interns from late August/early September until mid-December.

The available positions are:

Policy Intern. Tracks new legislation, reviews legislation and attends congressional hearings and writes summaries for NLIHC's *Memo to Members and Partners* e-newsletter, participates in visits to congressional offices, develops materials for use in advocating with House and Senate offices to achieve NLIHC's policy agenda and more.

Field Intern. Assists the NLIHC Field team in creating email campaigns focused on important federal policies, writing blogs and *Memo to Members and Partners* e-newsletter articles, managing our database of membership records, mobilizing the field for the legislative efforts, and reaching out to new and existing members.

Research Intern. Assists in ongoing quantitative and qualitative research projects, writes weekly articles on current research for the *Memo to Members and Partners* e-newsletter, attends briefings, and responds to research inquiries. Quantitative skills and experience with SPSS a plus.

Communications/Media/Graphic Design Intern. Prepares and distributes press materials, assists with media research and outreach for publication releases, works on social media projects, maintains a media database and tracks press hits. Also assists with sending out e-communications; revises collateral print material such as brochures, flyers, and factsheets; and updates content on the NLIHC website. Some graphic design experience is highly desired.

Fall interns are expected to work 25 hours a week. NLIHC provides modest stipends.

A cover letter, resume, and writing sample are required for consideration. In your cover letter, please specify the position(s)/semester for which you are applying. Applicants for the communications/media/graphic design internship should also submit examples of your graphic design work.

Interested students should send their materials to: Paul Kealey, chief operating officer, National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005 via email to: pkealey@nlihc.org

NLIHC Welcomes Summer Policy Intern

NLIHC is pleased to welcome kenia jimenez as its newest summer policy intern.

kenia is a recent graduate from the University of California, Los Angeles with a degree in sociology and minors in philosophy and urban and regional studies. Before UCLA, she attended Santa Monica Community College where she earned associate degrees in behavioral sciences and arts and humanities. During her studies, kenia shaped her education around how structural racism and discriminatory practices have created inequalities in the different neighborhoods we call home. While at UCLA, kenia was also very involved with the student group Underground Scholars Initiative, which worked to create a prison-to-school pipeline through recruitment, retention, and advocacy. kenia also worked with the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge and their community partners to create a StoryMap of the impact of gentrification and displacement in South Los Angeles, which sparked her interest in housing. She is excited to be interning at NLIHC where she hopes to gain substantive policy experience before she applies to Master of Urban and Regional planning programs.

Please join us in welcoming kenia to the NLIHC team.

Where to Find Us – July 1

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

- [RESULTS 2019 International Conference](#), Washington, DC, July 15
- NAACP State Economic Chairpersons Convening, Detroit, MI, July 18
- [Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development Home for Everyone Conference](#), Eau Claire, WI, July 18-19
- [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) Annual Conference 2019, Washington, DC, July 23
- [Utah Housing Coalition Conference](#), Park City, UT, August 27–28
- [Housing & Community Development Network of NJ Annual Conference](#), New Brunswick, NJ, October 18
- New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness Conference, Albuquerque, NM, October 24
- [2019 Housing Matters! Conference](#), Housing Action Illinois, Bloomington, IL, October 24-25
- Rural Housing Summit, San Jose, CA, November 7

NLIHC Staff

Sonya Acosta, Policy Analyst, x231
Kyle Arbuckle, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x227
Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245
Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244
Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
kenia jimenez, Policy Intern, x241
Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232
Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317
Joseph Lindstrom, Manager, Field Organizing, x222
Lisa Marlow, Communications Coordinator, x239
Sarah Mickelson, Senior Director of Public Policy, x228
Khara Norris, Director of Administration, x242
Noah Patton, Housing Policy Analyst, x227
Catherine Porter, Research Intern, x249
Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Specialist, x246
Catherine Reeves, Development Coordinator, x234
Brooke Schipporeit, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233
Nayasia Thomas, Graphic Design Intern, GDintern@nlihc.org
Taylor Washington, Field Intern, x252
Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Coordinator, x230
Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225