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Disaster Housing Recovery

Tropical Storm Hilary Causes Devastating Flooding in Southern California

Tropical Storm Hilary, which formed as a hurricane in the Pacific Ocean last week, [traveled](#) north along Mexico's Baja Peninsula before beginning to impact southern California on August 20. Parts of the southwestern U.S., which had not experienced a tropical storm since 1939, were inundated with historic rains that brought about catastrophic flooding in several areas and life-threatening situations across the region.

The storm passed through San Diego and the Los Angeles area before reaching Las Vegas and the Nevada high desert. [News reports](#) suggest that devastating floods severely impacted Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley, while flash flood warnings covering wide swaths of southern California were issued at various times during the storm. Normally dry arroyos were filled with torrents of water, as mountainous and desert areas of the state received a year's-worth of water in just a few hours.

Individuals experiencing homelessness were among the residents most at risk from the floods. Advocates in L.A. and San Diego moved quickly to help individuals living on the street avoid the worst impacts, and homeless service providers moved to open emergency shelters to boost capacity in advance of the storm. According to [FEMA](#), several homeless encampments were cleared by authorities due to flooding risk in Ventura and other L.A. counties, while five encampments in Orange County were evaluated for removal but ultimately left in place. Evacuation warnings were also issued, and approximately 9,000 residents were evacuated from impacted areas.

NLIHC facilitates the [Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition](#) (DHRC), a group of more than 850 local, state, and national organizations working to ensure that all disaster survivors receive the assistance they need to recover. We will continue to track the impact of this tropical storm on households with low incomes and work to ensure the availability and accessibility of disaster assistance.

Find out more about the DHRC at: <https://bit.ly/2NOHusW>

Hawaii Grapples with Scale of Catastrophic Wildfires, Deadliest of Modern Times

The death toll following the wildfires that tore through portions of the Hawaiian island of Maui earlier this month has [reached](#) 114, while the mayor of Lahaina has suggested that more than 850 people are still unaccounted for. The Lahaina fire, one of several fires [fanned](#) by winds from nearby Hurricane Dora, has now become the deadliest fire in modern U.S. history, surpassing the 2018 Camp Fire, which rapidly destroyed the California town of Paradise, killing 85. Like the Camp Fire, the Lahaina fire moved with terrifying speed, destroying up to 75% of the town in just minutes.

The response to the fire has met with severe criticism from survivors. Although Hawaii maintains one of the largest networks of emergency alert sirens, those warnings were not activated in advance of the fire. Instead, authorities chose to utilize cell phone alerts that may have been sent after communications and power in the town were cut off. In addition, gaps in firefighting equipment and capacity meant that island firefighters were quickly overwhelmed by the speed and extent of the blaze. The state's top emergency management official [abruptly resigned](#) following the disaster.

In addition to the lives lost, the fire destroyed 2,700 structures in Lahaina, 86% of which were homes. As many as 4,500 people are now estimated to be in need of shelter. President Biden quickly approved a major disaster declaration following the fire, approving individual assistance for impacted individuals and support for the state's response efforts. [Currently](#), nearly 2,000 individuals are residing in hotel rooms across the island, with many households that escaped damage from the fire hosting those who are now homeless. Search and rescue efforts are continuing in impacted areas.

Lahaina is one of the largest cities on the island of Maui and is home to a large population of Native Hawaiian residents. Although once a wetland area, the land around the town was drained by missionaries and businesses from the continental U.S., displacing Indigenous villagers in the effort to establish tourist facilities. The town had served as a cultural and service hub for the surrounding area, with several large affordable housing developments and shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness.

NLIHC facilitates the [Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition](#) (DHRC), a group of more than 850 local, state, and national organizations working to ensure that all disaster survivors receive the assistance they need to recover. The DHRC and its members have reached out to members on the island as well as the state's congressional delegation. We will continue to track the impact of this wildfire on households with low incomes and work to ensure the availability and accessibility of disaster assistance.

Find out more about the DHRC at: <https://bit.ly/2NOHusW>

Budget and Appropriations

Congressional Leaders Agree Temporary Measure Will Be Needed to Fund Government and Avoid October Shutdown – Take Action!

Even while adjourned for August recess, leaders in Congress have continued discussions over fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations, including how to avoid a government shutdown when the new fiscal year begins on October 1. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) have reportedly agreed that a short-term spending measure – known as a continuing resolution (CR) – will be necessary to keep the federal government funded until at least early December, giving members of Congress more time to reach a final agreement on an FY24 spending bill.

CRs maintain the previously appropriated year's level of funding for federal programs for a specified period of time. Because the cost of housing and development rises every year, [it is crucial](#) that HUD's affordable housing and homelessness assistance programs receive increased annual appropriations just to maintain the current number of people and communities served. Members of the far-right House Freedom Caucus (HFC) are inviting a shutdown and vowing to oppose a CR unless it includes drastic cuts to spending and other harmful provisions that would not pass the Senate. HFC members are still strategizing on how to exact even steeper funding cuts from the fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget, after pressuring Republican leaders in the House to write FY24 spending bills to roughly FY22 levels, which would result in cuts of more than \$131 billion to domestic spending.

Thanks to the determined, relentless work of housing advocates around the country – and at a time when domestic programs were facing prospective cuts of up to 30% – the House draft FY24 appropriations bill ultimately proposed a 10% increase to HUD funding. While still insufficient to cover the level of need, this increase is a testament to the power of our collective voice.

Together, we can – and have – [achieved historic protections and resources](#) for renters with the lowest incomes, and together we can continue to fight the ongoing threat of cuts to HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness resources. Advocates can use NLIHC's [Legislative Action Center](#) to call or email their members of Congress and urge them to expand – not cut – funding for HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness programs in the FY24 budget.

NLIHC also released an updated [Congressional Recess Toolkit](#) that provides advocates with ideas, advice, and tips on how to set up in-district meetings with their members of Congress, along with talking points, sample op-eds, sample social media messages, and more. Advocacy over August recess will be crucial in setting the stage for resumed negotiations on the federal budget when Congress returns in September and to warding off ongoing threats to HUD's vital programs.

Background

Members of Congress adjourned for recess on July 27 after months of contentious budget negotiations that culminated in vastly different spending proposals in the [House](#) and [Senate](#). The discrepancies between the House and Senate appropriations bills set the stage for what will likely be a tumultuous September on Capitol Hill. Congress only has until September 30 – the start of the new federal fiscal year – to enact all 12 appropriations bills or pass a continuing resolution (CR) in order to keep the federal government funded and avoid a shutdown. Given how far apart the House and Senate are on their FY24 spending bills, and with far-right members of the House already refusing to vote for a clean CR that does not cut federal spending, members are raising alarms about a likely government shutdown on October 1.

While advocates across the country have done tremendous work to ensure that neither the House nor Senate FY24 spending bills drastically cut funding for vital HUD programs, including rental assistance and Homeless Assistance Grants, the road to enacting a final FY24 spending bill with sufficient HUD funding is steep. With members of Congress back in their home states and districts, August recess is the perfect time for advocates to set up in-district meetings with their

members to stress the impact and importance of increased HUD funding in any final appropriations bill.

Take Action!

Thanks to the hard work of advocates across the country, who mobilized to weigh in with their elected officials, HUD's vital rental assistance, homelessness assistance, and tribal housing programs were spared from cuts in both the House and Senate bills. We still have work to do to ensure these funding levels remain in a final bill and that other critical programs, such as Public Housing, are also fully funded.

Keep making your voice heard, and tell Congress that it cannot balance the federal budget at the expense of people with the lowest incomes! Advocates can take action TODAY in the following ways:

- [Contact your senators and representatives](#) to urge them to expand – not cut – investments in affordable, accessible homes through the FY24 spending bill!
- August recess is the perfect time for advocates to schedule in-district meetings with their members of Congress to urge them to support higher funding for affordable housing and homelessness programs. Check out NLIHC's updated [Congressional Recess Toolkit](#) for information on how to set up in-district meetings, meeting tips, talking points, and more!
- Join over 2,000 organizations by signing on to a [national letter](#) from the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding ([CHCDF](#)), calling on Congress to oppose budget cuts and instead to support the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY24.

Want to Support NLIHC's Work? Become a Member!

One way to support NLIHC and this work is by becoming an NLIHC member. NLIHC membership is open to individuals, organizations, corporations, and government agencies, and annual membership dues are suggested amounts, meaning you can join at any amount that works for you.

You can join easily online at nlihc.org/membership – or contact outreach@nlihc.org with any questions.

Homelessness and Housing First

HUD PD&R Quarterly Publication Explores Role of Housing First Model in Addressing Homelessness

HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research's (PD&R) Spring/Summer 2023 issue of [Evidence Matters](#), a quarterly publication covering evidence-based policymaking, examines the role of the Housing First model in addressing homelessness. The issue reviews the evidence establishing Housing First as an effective method for ending homelessness, spotlights successful

case studies from Boston and Chattanooga, and makes the case that homelessness can be solved if evidence-based practices are aligned with political will.

The lead article, "[Housing First Works](#)," provides an overview of the Housing First model and counters common mischaracterizations about the model. Despite what some critics claim, Housing First is not a one-size-fits-all approach, nor is it a "housing only" approach. Housing First combines permanent housing with flexible services that can be adapted as clients' needs change. Some critics claim that Housing First is ineffective because homelessness has increased in many communities. The article explains that the scarcity of affordable housing is the primary cause of homelessness and that rates of homelessness are increasing in areas where rental costs are rising and vacancy rates are decreasing.

According to HUD Senior Advisor Richard Cho, "the increase in homelessness from 2016 to 2020 is not because the Housing First approach is ineffective; in fact, more people were exiting homelessness into permanent housing during this period than ever before. Rather, it is because housing market conditions and other factors were leading more people to become newly homeless than were being exited from homelessness into housing in the prior years."

The lead article notes that experts agree on the fact that homelessness is a solvable problem that requires helping people exit homelessness faster than people enter homelessness. To do this, policymakers must scale up the Housing First model to help those currently experiencing homelessness and invest in prevention strategies to help people stay in their homes. Increasing the supply of deeply affordable and accessible housing is key to accomplishing these goals. Additional eviction prevention initiatives, fair housing enforcement, and higher wages can also help stem the inflow into homelessness.

The "[Research Spotlight](#)" article examines research supporting the Housing First model. Overwhelming evidence from multiple rigorous studies demonstrates that Housing First programs decrease rates of homelessness and increase housing instability. Several studies have found that, compared with the "treatment first" model, Housing First offers greater long-term housing stability, particularly among people experiencing chronic homelessness. Research indicates that Housing First programs effectively house people with intersecting challenges, such as veterans, survivors of domestic violence, individuals experiencing mental health issues or substance use, and people with chronic medical conditions like HIV/AIDS. Additionally, some studies have found that Housing First programs may reduce public costs associated with emergency room visits and hospital stays, nursing homes, and prisons or jail.

The "[In Practice](#)" article, "Housing First in Action," highlights two successful case studies from Boston and Chattanooga. Both cities have adopted a Housing First approach that has successfully reduced long-term, chronic, and veteran homelessness. The article explores how Boston and Chattanooga have developed low-barrier housing, streamlined data systems, and targeted action plans that contribute to their programs' successes. Collaborating with service providers and housing navigators has helped both cities streamline the process of moving people experiencing homelessness into housing and ensuring that agencies meet the specific needs of each household. The article also highlights how both cities have established landlord incentive programs to increase the supply of housing available to people transitioning out of homelessness.

Read HUD's *Evidence Matters* at: <https://tinyurl.com/4dmjpm5>

Read more about Housing First at: <https://bit.ly/3VOXI7K>

Learn more about the evidence supporting Housing First at: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8889jv>

Recap of 8/14 Homelessness and Housing First Webinar

More than 12,700 people registered for the Homelessness and Housing First webinar hosted by NLIHC, the National Alliance to End Homelessness (the Alliance), and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) on August 14. The webinar, “Keeping Faith with Housing First in Turbulent Times: Findings from Recent Research,” examined how we can build support for humane, evidence-based practices and policies despite the unrelenting nature of the affordable housing crisis and growing calls for ineffective and punitive measures for addressing homelessness. The panelists addressed the affordable housing crisis, efforts undertaken by HUD and local homelessness systems to house people experiencing homelessness, and recent research from the field.

Nicole DuBois, senior research analyst and coordinator at the Alliance, moderated the webinar. In her opening remarks, Nicole highlighted the record numbers of people homeless service providers across the country have housed in the past several years and urged advocates not to lose sight of these successes. She explained that while our country's homelessness response systems are effective, we are experiencing new influxes of people falling into homelessness due to underlying structural causes and an inadequate social safety net.

NLIHC Senior Research Analyst Dan Emmanuel provided an overview of the nation's affordable housing crisis, highlighting research from NLIHC's [The Gap](#) and [Out of Reach](#) reports. He explained that housing is central to a structural explanation of homelessness and emphasized that addressing the housing affordability crisis is key to ending homelessness. Dan discussed the federal, state, and local interventions needed to establish a housing safety net and address the structural housing issues underlying the affordable housing and homelessness crises.

Dr. David Gonzalez Rice, policy advisor in HUD's Office of the Secretary, shared recent [HUD data](#) on the state of homelessness in the U.S. and discussed how pandemic-era resources and safety net enhancements play a key role in reducing the inflow of people into homelessness. He explained that despite the [effectiveness of the Housing First model](#), Housing First programs are under-resourced and not widely available. Dr. Gonzalez Rice called for increased resources for Housing First, a stronger safety net, and robust tenant protections.

Dr. Tiana Moore, policy director of the Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative at the University of California San Francisco, provided an overview of the [California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness](#), the largest representative sample of homelessness in the U.S. since the 1990s. She addressed several key findings from the report, including participants' entrances and trajectories to homelessness, mental health and substance use challenges, barriers to exiting homelessness, and more. Dr. Moore addressed the rigorous evidence supporting the

effectiveness of Housing First across multiple populations, including individuals with severe behavioral disabilities.

Tasha Gray, executive director of the Homeless Action Network of Detroit, the lead agency for the Detroit Continuum of Care, discussed how the trends identified by the other panelists are playing out in her community. She explained how an influx of resources and the mobilization of partnerships during the pandemic helped reduce homelessness in Detroit but that homelessness is now increasing as these emergency resources are depleted. Tasha described the vital role Housing First plays in addressing homelessness in her community, including for people with greater barriers and higher needs. She stressed the importance of investing in Housing First and ensuring that providers maintain fidelity to the model.

John Threlkeld, senior congressional affairs manager at the Alliance, discussed Representative Andy Barr's (R-KY) "[Housing Promotes Livelihood and Ultimate Success Act](#)" (H.R.3405), legislation that would undermine federal investments in proven solutions to homelessness. John encouraged advocates to speak with their members of Congress about how Housing First is working in their community and reviewed common arguments advocates might hear when educating their lawmakers about Housing First. Learn more about the evidence supporting Housing First [here](#).

During the moderated discussion, panelists explored the intersections between homelessness and affordable housing, how Housing First supports different populations among people experiencing homelessness, solutions to the housing and homelessness crises, and more.

We have uploaded a [recording](#) of the call, as well as the [presentation slides](#).

Did you miss the previous webinars on homelessness and Housing First? Check out the [webinar recaps](#), including links to the recordings and presentation slides.

The next webinar will be held on Monday, September 11, from 2:30 to 4 pm ET. Register for the series at: <https://bit.ly/3vIbn5o>

Read more about Housing First at: <https://bit.ly/3vHf8YR>

End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions

Register Now for Final (8/24) Webinar in ERASE Summer Series

[Join us](#) on August 24 from 3 to 4:15 pm ET for the final webinar in NLIHC's three-part End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) summer webinar series. The webinar, "Efforts to Sustain Emergency Rental Assistance," will highlight ERASE cohort members' work maintaining and building upon components of the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program in their jurisdictions. Webinar attendees will learn how members of the [Minnesota Housing Partnership](#) successfully advocated for the passage of \$115 million for the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program and how the [King County Bar Association](#) managed not only to increase funding for ERA in King County, Washington, but

also ensure that funding was targeted to serve renters in the process of being evicted. The webinar will also feature the [Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania's](#) work to create court mediation programs in various counties throughout Pennsylvania. [Register for the webinar today.](#)

The 2022-2023 ERASE cohort comprises state and local nonprofit partners that are conducting on-the-ground partnership development, capacity building, outreach and education, policy reform, and systems change work to ensure that the gains made in setting up systems to provide emergency rental assistance and prevent evictions are sustained. Each of the webinars in the series focuses on members' unique efforts to enact and enforce tenant protections and extend emergency rental assistance while also highlighting the strategies used to accomplish these goals.

Learn more about the ERASE project at: <https://nlihc.org/erase-project>. Learn more about the disbursement of Treasury ERA funds on NLIHC's Emergency Rental Assistance Dashboard at: <https://nlihc.org/era-dashboard>.

Our Homes, Our Votes

Celebrate Civic Health Month!

Our Homes, Our Votes is NLIHC's nonpartisan campaign to boost voter turnout among low-income renters and educate candidates about housing solutions. NLIHC is proud to join over 300 organizations nationwide in recognizing [Civic Health Month](#) this August, which celebrates efforts to ensure that every eligible voter has access to the ballot.

Just like housing security (see [Memo, 2/27](#)), voting is a key social determinant of health, according to the American Medical Association. Civic Health Month, led by the nonpartisan civic engagement organization Vot-ER, highlights the links between voting and health and promotes nonpartisan voter engagement.

To learn more about the intersections of health and voting, sign up to attend Vot-ER's [Civic Health Month conference](#), which will be held virtually on August 25 from noon to 4:15 pm ET. The conference will include hands-on training sessions and discussions about building a healthier democracy, as well as a panel discussion featuring practitioners at the forefront of health equity and a keynote address by Dr. Bayo Curry-Winchell. Participants will prepare to mobilize for the November 2023 elections and think ahead to the 2024 electoral cycle.

For more information about Civic Health Month, visit: <https://vot-er.org/civic-health-month/>

For more information about *Our Homes, Our Votes*, visit: <https://www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org/>

Events

Join Today's (8/21) "Tenant Talk Live" on Forming a Tenant-Based Group

NLIHC will host the next session of “Tenant Talk Live” – a webinar geared towards tenant and resident leaders – today, August 21, at 6 pm ET. The webinar, “How to Form a Tenant-Based Group: Resident Councils, Tenant Associations, Tenant Unions, and Beyond!,” will discuss tips for forming a new group, including how to talk to your neighbors, organize, and address the threat of retaliation. NLIHC staff will be joined by Ryan Bell, Southern California regional coordinator at Tenants Together, and Santra Denis, executive director of the Miami Workers Center. Register for today’s Tenant Talk Live webinar [here](#).

Tenant Talk Live audience members have frequently asked how they can start a housing justice movement in their community. If you find yourself asking this question, this webinar is for you! Join the upcoming session of Tenant Talk Live to learn about the first steps to take when forming a tenant group in your community, as well as the different types of tenant groups you can form, including tenant unions, resident councils, and tenant associations. Attendees will also learn how to manage threats of retaliation from landlords.

Ryan Bell has been involved in organizing housing justice and other social justice campaigns in Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley for the past 17 years. Today, he supports almost 30 Southern California member organizations with Tenants Together, a statewide organization dedicated to defending and advancing the rights of California tenants to safe, decent, and affordable housing. He is also a member organizer with the Pasadena Tenants Union and the Chair of the Pasadena Rental Housing Board, which was established by the rent control charter amendment he helped get passed in November 2022. Ryan has also been the director of community engagement at PATH (People Assisting the Homeless) and was a pastor for many years. He received his master of divinity degree from Andrews University and his doctorate from Fuller Theological Seminary. Though now a secular humanist, he still draws on the experience he gained in pastoral ministry in his organizing work.

Santra Denis is the executive director of the Miami Workers Center, a member-led organization that helps domestic workers, tenants, and families in Miami achieve dignity, power, and self-determination. She previously served as the senior vice-president for the Urban League of Broward County Young Professionals, where she spearheaded the first Annual State of Young Black Broward Forum on health, criminal justice, and economics. Santra also founded Avanse Ansanm, which engages, connects, and builds power among Haitian-American millennials. She has also worked with the Catalyst Miami, Shands Healthcare, Care Resource, and Bay Pines VA Healthcare System. Santra is a fellow with the New Leaders Council, the premier leadership and professional development network for cross-sector changemakers, and a fellow with Sant La, a Haitian-American leadership program for young adults in Miami Dade County. She also serves as a member of the Community Advisory Board at Florida International University Research Center in Minority Institutions, a board member for Miami Dade County’s Office of New Americans, and a member of the Black Mothers Care Plan Advisory Board. Trained as a public health professional, Santra holds bachelor of health science and master of public health in policy and management degrees from Florida International University.

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

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

From the Field

Quality Housing Coalition Launches Maine’s First Direct Cash Assistance Program Targeting Formerly Homeless Mothers

Last month, the Maine-based [Quality Housing Coalition](#) (QHC) launched [Project HOME Trust](#), the first direct cash assistance program of its kind in the state of Maine. Project HOME Trust was developed in partnership with people with lived experience of housing insecurity and seeks to support the long-term housing stability of participants, all of whom are single mothers who have experienced homelessness. Participants receive an unrestricted \$1,000 monthly cash assistance payment for one year along with an array of supportive housing services. Community connection and resilience are further strengthened through the use of a cohort model. QFC is working with partners to evaluate the pilot program this year and hopes to use the lessons learned to influence policy change at the state level.

The Quality Housing Coalition was created to fill gaps in the housing sector. After several years of managing [Project HOME](#), a scattered-site supportive housing program, staff identified common barriers for their clients – 70% of whom were asylum seekers and a majority of whom were single mothers – to achieving long-term housing stability and independence. While stable and affordable housing was critical for every household, it was not enough to sustain their stability as they entered the workforce and subsequently lost access to public assistance benefits, a phenomenon known as the “benefits cliff.” Additionally, childcare costs were out of reach and seldom covered by other benefits programs. When Quality Housing Coalition’s clients were asked what would help them most to sustain their housing, the consistent answer was unrestricted cash assistance.

Meanwhile, advocates were mobilizing around policy solutions to support housing stability, particularly through the pandemic. The [Corporation for Supportive Housing](#) led QHC and other advocates to push the Maine State Legislature to establish the [Frequent Users Systems Engagement](#) (FUSE) Collaborative in 2021 to better understand the total costs of Maine’s current homeless response system. A FUSE Collaborative [report](#) was released in 2022 detailing challenges and opportunities for reducing this cost in Maine, which advocates say helped open the door to new and innovative strategies such as direct cash assistance. In 2020, the [Maine Affordable Housing Coalition](#) (MAHC), an NLIHC state partner, produced a [report](#) on evictions, which found that most non-payment evictions in Maine were filed for arrearages of less than \$1,500, similarly demonstrating the high costs to families and communities that could be avoided through short-term cash assistance programs.

In addition to incorporating client feedback, Project HOME Trust was inspired by [Magnolia Mother's Trust](#), a direct cash assistance program created in Jackson, Mississippi. QHC received funding for staffing the project through the City of Portland's Community Development Block Grant program, and the cash assistance is privately funded.

The first cohort comprises 20 households headed by single mothers who have experienced homelessness, a population QHC identified as having additional barriers to housing stability, such as childcare costs, that could be alleviated through the cash assistance payments. In addition to stable, affordable housing and ongoing supportive services, each participant receives a monthly cash payment of \$1,000 with no restrictions and no reporting requirements. Trust is a core value of the program, which is inspired in part by studies that show investments with no strings attached create the most meaningful outcomes for families. Participant-led monthly meetings help create an additional support network and further participants' resilience and independence.

Quarterly evaluations of the Project HOME Trust pilot program will help QHC ascertain the impact of the program on participants and their families. QHC hopes to use data gathered about the program to educate state lawmakers about the benefits and efficiency of direct cash assistance programs and hopes to see models like it expanded across the state.

"We developed [Project HOME] Trust after years of identifying systemic barriers that prevent people from accessing the resources they need to exit poverty," said Victoria Morales, executive director for the Quality Housing Coalition. "And we believe that direct cash assistance will change the way benefit programs are designed from here on out."

"MAHC is so pleased to see this innovative approach to keep people in their homes launch in Maine," said Laura Mitchell, executive director for the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. "We know people need to work 50 to 60 hours a week at a minimum wage job just to afford a one-bedroom apartment here. This program allows hard working Maine people to afford necessities like childcare, medicine, and food while staying housed."

Peace Mutesi, Project HOME Trust's coordinator, is a former QHC client and has been involved in the development of Project HOME Trust since its inception several years ago. She notes that "when approached with an opportunity to give back to mothers who face many of the same barriers I faced with the strategy I had hoped for, I just couldn't say no."

More information about Project HOME Trust is available on the QHC [website](#).

NLIHC Releases Summer Issue of *Tenant Talk*

NLIHC released on August 17 the summer 2023 issue of *Tenant Talk*, our semiannual newsletter designed to engage residents in housing advocacy. The new issue, *Tenant Talk: Taking Pride into Our Work*, explores the efforts of LGBTQ+ individuals to overcome housing discrimination and ensure access to safe and affordable homes for members of their community. Download a digital copy of the new issue [here](#), or [register to receive a free physical copy](#) in the mail. Digital copies will soon be available in Spanish.

Over the last two decades, members of the LGBTQ+ community in the U.S. have achieved tremendous successes in securing their rights, including through the legalization of same-sex marriage. Even so, the community continues to face obstacles to equality, like the more than [80 new pieces of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation passed already in 2023](#). It is essential for tenant advocates everywhere to stand in solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community, and particularly those members of the community who are disproportionately affected by discrimination, such as Black and Indigenous people and other people of color.

The new issue of *Tenant Talk* focuses on the intersections of the fight for LGBTQ+ rights and housing advocacy by celebrating recent achievements, revealing new challenges, and offering policy recommendations. Readers will learn about the history of the LGBTQ+ movement, ongoing advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights, and various barriers faced by LGBTQ+ people trying to access safe and affordable housing. As always, readers will hear directly from individuals with lived experience of housing insecurity, including housing advocates who identify as LGBTQ+. The goal of the new issue is to educate readers about the importance of uplifting different communities, especially members of the LGBTQ+ community, as they navigate new challenges during an unprecedented era in our country's history.

Download the new issue [here](#).

Opportunity Starts at Home

Research Reveals Impact of Residential Segregation on Work of Community-Based Organizations in Black Communities

A new paper, "[From Redlining to Resilience: How Residential Segregation Molded the Work of Community-Based Organizations in Historically Black Communities](#)," explores the impact of redlining and other forms of institutional discrimination on the efforts of community-based organizations (CBOs) in formerly redlined neighborhoods. The paper proposes a definition of redlining and discusses its connections to the practices of equity-conscious CBOs, while also exploring whether current funding practices lead to optimal outcomes for these organizations. The paper finds that many organizations were developed by advocates and residents in response to neighborhood shocks and that for many organizations, limiting gentrification, maintaining affordability, and reducing displacement are key priorities. Read the paper [here](#).

Research

Negative Exits from Housing Programs Associated with Homelessness

An article published in *Housing Policy Debate*, "[Associations Between Exit Type From Federal Housing Assistance and Subsequent Homelessness](#)," examines the associations between exits from federal housing assistance programs and subsequent homelessness in King County, Washington. The authors find that exiting housing assistance for a negative reason was

associated with a higher risk of becoming homeless within a year, while exiting for a positive reason was associated with a lower risk of homelessness.

The researchers analyzed administrative data associated with 16,301 individuals who exited from federally subsidized housing in King County, Washington. Reasons for exit were classified as positive, negative, or neutral. Positive exits included homeownership, increases in income, and moves to unsubsidized housing. Neutral exits included moving in with family or friends or to unknown locations. Negative exits included evictions and lease violations.

Of the 16,301 individuals, 18% (2,946) had a positive exit, 50% (8,189) had a neutral exit, and 33% (5,531) had a negative exit. Across all exit types, 16% (2,703) of individuals experienced homelessness within one year of exit. However, homelessness occurred for a greater share of individuals who experienced negative exits (25%) compared to those who experienced neutral (14%) or positive exits (3%). After adjusting for household demographics, the researchers found that, within one year of exit, individuals with negative exits were 75% more likely to experience homelessness than individuals with neutral exits, and individuals with positive exits were 81% less likely to experience homelessness than individuals with neutral exits.

The researchers also considered the length of time between exit and homelessness and found that the time was shortest for individuals who experienced negative exits (296 days), compared to individuals who experienced neutral exits (325 days) and individuals who experienced positive exits (358 days). Across all exit types, the highest risk of experiencing homelessness occurred within the first 50 days.

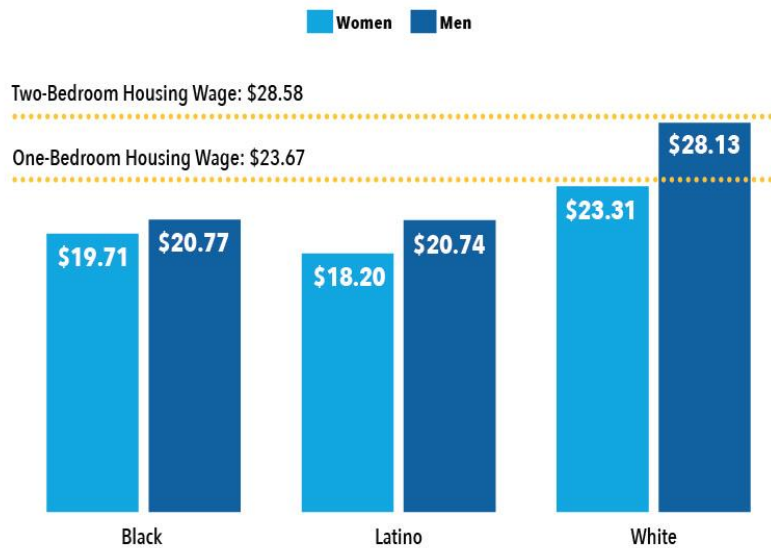
The authors note limitations about the generalizability of their findings because the two public housing authorities (PHAs) in the study had unique resources and administrative flexibility due to their participation in the Moving to Work (MTW) program. They conclude that additional steps are needed to better understand and prevent negative exits. PHAs could provide financial literacy and skills training to prevent negative exits and connect tenants with wrap-around services when negative exits occur. Further, given that neutral exits are also associated with higher risk of homelessness, the researchers encourage PHAs to establish programs and policies that will promote increased income, long-term rental opportunities, and homeownership to facilitate positive exits from assistance.

Read the article at: bit.ly/3YA3Kv9

Fact of the Week

Differences between Median Hourly Wage and Housing Wage Greatest for Women and People of Color

MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES BY RACE, ETHNICITY, AND GENDER



Source: Housing wages based on HUD Fair Market Rents. The hourly wages by percentile are drawn from the Economic Policy Institute State of Working America Data Library 2022, adjusted to 2023 dollars.



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Source: Housing wages based on HUD Fair Market Rents. The hourly wages by percentile are drawn from the Economic Policy Institute State of Working America Data Library 2022, adjusted to 2023.

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of August 13

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of August 13:

- “Eagle Reels: Andrew Aurand, with National Low Income Housing Coalition, talks about America’s affordable housing crisis” *The Berkshire Eagle*, August 18 at: <https://tinyurl.com/3pdnyyy9>
- “Can Office-to-Housing Conversions Dent the Housing Crisis?” *NerdWallet*, August 16 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y7pfapz8>
- “Sky-High US Housing Costs Fuel Record Surge in Homelessness” *Common Dreams*, August 15 at: <https://tinyurl.com/2fzn8cw4>

NLIHC News

NLIHC Welcomes Lakesha Dawson as Director of Operations

NLIHC is pleased to welcome Lakesha Dawson as director of operations. Working closely with NLIHC's vice president for finance and operations, Lakesha will draw on her deep expertise and broad range of experience to implement and enhance the financial, human resources, and administrative processes that enable the Coalition to effectively fulfill its mission.

Lakesha boasts an extensive track record in non-profit operations, with more than 26 years of experience in the sector. Prior to joining NLIHC, she served for nearly a decade as a finance specialist at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. In this role, she oversaw the day-to-day operations of the accounting department, showcasing her exceptional skills in financial processes.

Lakesha's career has encompassed roles at esteemed organizations such as the Population Reference Bureau, where she served as an accounting coordinator, and the Associate of University Programs in Health Administration, where she was Staff Accountant for 12 years. Her background enables her to bring a wealth of dedication and expertise to her work at NLIHC.

Lakesha's leadership and commitment to our mission will empower NLIHC to make meaningful strides towards the realization of socially just affordable housing policies. Her presence serves as a testament to the professionalism and expertise embodied by NLIHC as we advance the cause of accessible and affordable housing for all.

Adelle Chenier Joins NLIHC as Director of Events

NLIHC is excited to welcome Adelle Chenier as our new director of events. An expert in event operations, production, planning, project management, and VIP services, Adelle has been centrally involved in events direction for more than 18 years, overseeing activations for professional and collegiate sports teams, serving as lead operator for national conferences, and planning events for 25,000-person audiences. In her new position, Adelle will play a key role in advancing NLIHC's mission by increasing our visibility and expanding public engagement through our events.

Adelle developed her passion for directing live events at the sports marketing and event firm Octagon, where she supported activations under the NASCAR, National Football League (NFL), National Hockey League (NHL), National Basketball Association (NBA), and regional collegiate sponsorships. Her 10-year tenure as senior event manager with Events DC – the Convention and Sports Authority for Washington, D.C. – included managing and executing the AT&T Nation's Football Classic and serving as project manager for the SXSW conference in Austin, Texas, where she spearheaded operations in conjunction with the mayor's office for the District of Columbia.

Adelle is a proud graduate of Hampton University and a champion for positive change.

NLIHC Welcomes Millen Asfaha as Operations Coordinator

NLIHC welcomes Millen Asfaha as operations coordinator. Millen will work closely with the vice president of operations and finance and the director of operations to ensure efficient operations in support of NLIHC's mission to achieve racially and socially equitable public policy for those with the lowest incomes. Her responsibilities will include assisting with financial management, organizational record-keeping, HR and IT, and logistics for meetings and events.

Millen gained extensive experience in administrative, operational, and finance support in her previous non-profit roles. She served as a member services coordinator at First Book, where she engaged the organization's member network to help distribute books and other educational resources to children in need. She also provided exceptional administrative support to the Association of American Medical Colleges and MedStar Washington Hospital Center.

Millen holds a master of public administration degree from Pace University and a bachelor of international relations and diplomacy degree from Seton Hall University.

Where to Find Us – August 21

- [Florida Housing Coalition Statewide Affordable Housing Conference](#) – Orlando, FL, August 28 (Dan Emmanuel)
 - [Annual Utah Housing Matters Convention](#) – Midway, UT, August 28-30 (Sid Betancourt)
 - Ability Housing, Inc. Annual Summit – Kissimmee, FL, September 12-13 (Diane Yentel)
 - [National Alliance of Resident Services in Affordable and Assisted Housing \(NAR-SAAH\) Conference 2023](#) – New Orleans, LA, September 12-15 (Sid Betancourt)
 - [New York Downstate Independent Housing Forum](#) – Virtual, September 13 (Lindsay Duvall)
 - [Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York Annual Conference](#) – Saratoga Springs, NY, September 19 (Lindsay Duvall)
 - New York Regional Housing Collaborative – New York, NY, September 20 (Lindsay Duvall)
 - National Coalition for the Homeless Conference – Washington, DC, September 30 (Diane Yentel)
 - [Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing](#) – Los Angeles, CA, November 3 (Sarah Saadian)
 - [Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency](#) Conference – Hershey, PA, December 7 (Sarah Saadian)
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