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HoUsed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing

President Biden Signs Scaled-Down Reconciliation Bill into Law

President Biden signed the “Inflation Reduction Act of 2022” into law on August 16. The reconciliation package is a significantly scaled-down version of the “Build Back Better Act,” which would have provided \$150 billion in funding for targeted affordable housing investments. The Inflation Reduction Act does not include resources to address the nation’s limited housing supply, skyrocketing rents, or the needs of an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness.

In a [message](#) regarding the bill, NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel thanked NLIHC’s members, partners, and allies for their “indefatigable advocacy” over the last 17 months. “Ultimately, our collective advocacy helped ensure that Build Back Better passed through the House with \$150 billion in funding for housing – an amount that would have been the largest single federal investment in safe, stable, affordable homes for the lowest-income people in our country’s history,” wrote Diane. “As a movement and as a country, we have never been so close to bringing about the kind of transformative investment that is necessary for achieving housing justice. And our collective advocacy is what made it possible.” (Read Diane’s full statement [here](#).)

After passing the House, the “Build Back Better Act” ultimately stalled in the Senate when West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin (D) objected to the price tag of the bill (see *Memo*, [12/20/21](#)). However, as Diane notes in her statement, due to the efforts of advocates, “we are that much closer to the finish line the next time we create a window of opportunity. Together, we moved the Democratic Party’s stance on affordable housing to one that is much more ambitious, more willing to call for and fund solutions on the scale necessary, and more focused on solutions that are deeply targeted to the lowest-income people. For the first time ever, we have a president and HUD secretary who frame housing as a human right and who have committed to achieving universal housing vouchers and ending homelessness. And we have built Republican support for many of our solutions.”

While NLIHC and our members, partners, and allies will continue pushing Congress to enact essential long-term solutions to the nation’s affordable housing crisis, in the absence of Congressional action we are [calling on the Biden administration](#) to protect renters with the lowest incomes from rent hikes and to ensure the safety and well-being of people experiencing homelessness.

With the reconciliation package signed, Congressional lawmakers will focus their attention once they return from the August recess on enacting a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the federal government funded after the current fiscal year (FY) ends on September 30. A CR maintains the current level of funding for federal programs and buys congressional appropriators more time to reach a bipartisan agreement on an FY2023 spending package.

Enacting a new FY2023 spending package with increased funding for HUD’s affordable housing and homelessness programs is necessary to maintain the number of people served by these vital programs. NLIHC and our partners in the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding ([CHCDF](#)) are leading our [annual 302\(b\) letter](#) to demand that Congress provide the highest possible level of funding for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY2023. Advocates should contact their members of Congress and urge them to support significant funding for NLIHC’s top priorities:

- \$32.13 billion for the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program to renew all existing contracts and expand housing vouchers to an additional 200,000 households.
- \$5.125 billion for the Public Housing Capital Fund to preserve public housing, and \$5.06 billion for the Public Housing Operating Fund.
- \$3.6 billion for HUD’s Homeless Assistance Grants program to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

- \$100 million for legal assistance to prevent evictions.
 - \$300 million for the competitive tribal housing program, targeted to tribes with the greatest needs.
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Join Upcoming NLIHC, NAEH, and CBPP Webinar on Homelessness and Housing First

NLIHC, the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) invite advocates nationwide to register for “Homelessness is a Housing Problem,” the second webinar in our four-part webinar series on homelessness and Housing First. Decades of learning, experience, and research have proven that [Housing First](#) is the most effective approach for ending homelessness. Housing First recognizes that affordable and accessible homes are the foundation on which people thrive, and by combining housing with access to supportive services, Housing First can help people exit homelessness and live stably in their communities. The upcoming webinar will be held on August 29 at 2:30 pm ET. Register at:

<https://bit.ly/3vIbn5o>

Urgent action is needed at all levels of government to end America’s housing and homelessness crisis. In communities across the nation, however, some misguided policymakers are responding to this crisis by advancing dangerous rhetoric and harmful, dehumanizing measures that will make it even harder for people to exit homelessness. It is critical that advocates nationwide are unified in pushing back against stigmatizing and counterproductive efforts that seek to criminalize homelessness, impose punitive requirements, and even prevent the development of affordable housing.

The upcoming webinar will feature NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel; Gregg Colburn, assistant professor of real estate at the University of Washington’s College of Built Environments; Ana Rausch, vice president of program operations at the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County; Jessica Preheim, vice president of strategic planning & public affairs at the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County; Dora Leong Gallo, president and CEO of A Community of Friends; Sarah Owsley, policy and advocacy director at Empower Missouri; Bonnie Harper, a HUD grant housing specialist with Partners Behavioral Health Management; Michele Knapp, executive director of Diakonos/Fifth Street Ministries; Ryan Fehrman, executive director at North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness; and Steve Berg, vice president for programs and policy at NAEH.

Following the August 29 webinar, two additional webinars will be held. The third webinar, “Long-Term Solutions and Successful Strategies,” will be held on Monday, September 12. The final webinar, “How to Address Unsheltered Homelessness,” will be held on Wednesday, September 28. Each webinar will take place from 2:30 to 4:00 pm ET.

Register for future webinars in the series at: <https://bit.ly/3vIbn5o>

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

Take action during the August congressional recess using this toolkit: <https://bit.ly/3d8XNSd>

Disaster Housing Recovery

Five Years After Hurricane Harvey, Recovery Continues in Southeastern Texas

Five years ago this week, Hurricane Harvey devastated communities across Southeastern Texas. The first major storm to make landfall in the U.S. since Hurricane Wilma in 2005, Hurricane Harvey slowly moved across southern Texas, dropping more than 40 inches of rain – and in some cases as many as 60 inches – and becoming

the wettest tropical cyclone on record in the U.S. Experts estimate that up to 30% of all land in Harris County, TX, was submerged following the storm. Across the region, 107 people were killed and almost 307,000 homes were damaged or destroyed.

Houston is one of the nation's most economically and racially segregated areas. Historically Black and Latino neighborhoods in Houston have suffered from decades of disinvestment. As a result, low-income communities and communities of color have lacked the basic infrastructure needed to protect residents from the impact of major disasters like Hurricane Harvey. For example, [nearly](#) 90% of Houston's open-ditch drainage systems are in low-income communities, which exposed residents to health and safety risks during and after the hurricane. Despite having the greatest needs, survivors with the lowest incomes have faced barriers in receiving FEMA assistance. More than 45% of households with annual incomes of less than \$15,000 were denied FEMA individual assistance after Hurricane Harvey, while fewer than 14% of households with annual incomes of more than \$45,000 were denied assistance.

More recently, additional mitigation funds were approved by HUD for use in the most impacted areas. The funds are meant to stave off the worst effects of storms like Harvey in the future. However, the distribution system designed by the Texas General Land Office (GLO) was found to have funneled funds to inland, majority white counties in violation of civil rights laws, after an investigation prompted by a [filing](#) by NLIHC partners Texas Housers and the Northeast Action Collective. The Texas state government has until the end of August to decide whether to comply with an order to redistribute the funds.

Meanwhile, many Texans are still awaiting housing repairs or replacement homes. While groups of community-based [recovery](#) and [advocacy organizations](#) are still hard at work pushing for recovery resources and actively assisting neighborhoods in recovering, HUD funds for long-term recovery have been only slowly dispersed, in part because the disbursement program is [not permanently authorized](#) at the federal level.

The Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) will continue to support the work being undertaken by disaster survivors and their advocates in Southeastern Texas and to share the lessons learned from their work to help other areas across the country prepare for storms like Hurricane Harvey when they occur in the future.

FEMA Announces Five-Year National Tribal Strategy

FEMA unveiled a new strategic document on August 18 outlining the agency's plan to develop its relationships with Tribal Nations. The "[2022-2026 FEMA National Tribal Strategy](#)" addresses FEMA's responsibilities to federally recognized Tribal Nations and identifies actions the agency plans to take to build closer ties with these tribes, including improving disaster mitigation, response, and recovery efforts in tribal communities.

For any type of assistance to be provided by the agency following a disaster, FEMA requires that a disaster or emergency declaration be requested and approved by the President. Although the system has been in place for decades, Tribal Nations were only granted the ability to request such declarations independently from neighboring states in 2013. Even then, the process remained burdensome and included arbitrary requirements that blocked many tribes from receiving assistance after disasters, such as arbitrary minimum damage requirements that disqualified many tribal disasters from eligibility for assistance. Tribal representatives have been [pushing](#) for reforms to the disaster declaration system since that time.

The new roadmap from FEMA states that the agency will begin working on a variety of projects to improve relationships and the capacity of tribal emergency management. These include translating FEMA documents into Native American languages, reinforcing connections between FEMA and tribal leadership, providing cultural competency training for FEMA employees concerning the unique status of Tribal Nations, and providing technical assistance to tribes to help them access FEMA funds before and after disasters. The

document also includes a commitment to “conduct an internal review of programs and policies that may inhibit equitable Tribal Nation access to FEMA programs and resources and commit to affecting legislative, regulatory, and policy changes that will enhance tribal access.”

The document follows the release of FEMA’s overall five-year plan [late last year](#). That plan for the first-time prioritized equitable access to disaster assistance as a central goal.

Read the “2022-2026 FEMA National Tribal Strategy Plan” at: <https://bit.ly/3K6emdV>

Coronavirus Updates – August 22, 2022

End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) Project

Please join NLIHC in Washington, D.C., for our [ERASE National Convening](#) on October 17, 2022. The convening, “Emergency Rental Assistance: A Path to a Permanent Program,” will provide attendees the opportunity to share lessons learned from the implementation of emergency rental assistance (ERA); understand the programmatic, policy, and system changes needed at the local, state, and federal levels to ensure sustainability and meet the needs of all renters; and develop a blueprint for advancing ERA and tenant protections into the future. For more information, please contact Tori Bourret at vbouret@nlihc.org.

National Updates

Department of the Treasury

Treasury released the [June ERA report](#) on August 10. Read [NLIHC’s analysis](#) of the June spending data.

Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo convened a roundtable with local and tribal governments on August 3 to discuss how they are deploying State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to effectively serve communities of color and marginalized communities. Learn more [here](#).

Reporting

The [Associated Press](#) reports that eviction filings across the country have steadily risen in recent months and are approaching or surpassing pre-pandemic levels in many cities and states. Federal emergency rental assistance (ERA) – which has helped keep millions housed during the pandemic – has been expended in many jurisdictions and is increasingly rejected by landlords. Housing advocates are urging lawmakers to enact robust renter protections and create a permanent emergency rental assistance program. The NLIHC-supported “[Eviction Crisis Act](#)” and “[Stable Families Act](#)” would create a permanent rental assistance program funded at \$3 billion annually. The article cites NLIHC’s [Out of Reach](#) report and [ERA tracking](#) efforts.

[NPR](#) reports that despite COVID-19 eviction protections and emergency rental assistance, racial disparities in evictions have persisted. Peter Hepburn of Princeton University’s Eviction Lab notes that eviction protections enacted during the pandemic have varied widely by state, meaning that where one lives has a profound impact on how well one is protected from eviction.

According to [Forbes](#), a [survey](#) conducted by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, [NPR](#), and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that minority communities have been disproportionately harmed by the spike in consumer prices and housing costs. High percentages of Black, Latino, and Native American families reported serious financial problems and even threats of eviction. “Unless some sort of emergency help

is provided, a substantial number of minority populations are going to be evicted over the next year,” said Robert J. Blendon, co-director of the survey.

State and Local News

Alabama

After [significant delays](#) in distributing federal emergency rental assistance (ERA), housing advocates assert that Alabama has improved its distribution of ERA. According to Jay Williams from the Low-Income Housing Coalition of Alabama, the state implemented programmatic changes and increased the visibility of the program. While the program has improved, Alabama has distributed less than half of the federal ERA funds it received.

Arizona

[Arizona News](#) reports that eviction filings in Maricopa County, Arizona’s largest county, hit a 13-year high in July, with more than 6,400 evictions filed. July marks the second month in a row that eviction filings in Maricopa County surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Inflation and the lack of affordable homes have directly impacted the number of people facing eviction.

California

The [California Globe](#) reports that the Los Angeles City Council voted 11-1 on July 27 to extend the city’s eviction moratorium – one of the last COVID-19-era eviction moratoriums in the state. Smaller “mom and pop” landlords criticized the decision, arguing that the relief is financially hurting them, forcing others to sell their properties, and leaving room for private owners and/or equity firms to purchase properties. The Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) urged lawmakers to extend the eviction moratorium due to the ongoing pandemic and concerns about a potential surge in evictions.

Colorado

The number of [evictions filed in Denver](#) in June was about 24% higher than it was three years ago. “I really think this is the tip of the iceberg,” said Shannon MacKenzie, executive director of the Colorado Poverty Law Project. “Our numbers of evictions are increasing every month at an astonishing rate, and I just don’t see that abating any time soon.”

Florida

One of the largest homeless service providers in [central Florida](#) is warning of a potential crisis, as an increasing number of people are becoming homeless and seeking shelter. “With the uptick of evictions, the lack of affordable housing in this community, and the unprecedented increase in rents, it is a trifecta for potential chaos,” said Allison Krall, president and CEO of the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida.

Some Floridians who were approved for emergency rental assistance (ERA) through the Our Florida program have been [waiting months to receive the assistance](#), and some fear they will be evicted before the funds arrive.

Idaho

A new [report](#) from the Idaho Center for Fiscal Policy found that emergency rental assistance (ERA) distribution in Idaho disproportionately benefited families with higher incomes compared to national distribution trends in 2021, reports the [Idaho Press](#). Idaho was among the bottom five states for distributing assistance to renters earning less than 30% of the area median income (AMI), suggesting that many renters with the greatest needs in Idaho may not have received assistance in 2021. Kendra Knighten of the Idaho Asset Building Network notes

that ERA programs are most effective when outreach efforts and application processes are visible and accessible to all eligible households.

Maryland

United Way of Central Maryland is seeing a [growing demand for housing assistance](#) as evictions resume. Statewide eviction protections were lifted last year, but courts have been backlogged from anywhere from three to eight months. The increase in eviction cases is putting more demand on United Way's Strategic Targeted Eviction Prevention Program.

As of August 4, approximately \$30 million in emergency rental assistance (ERA) funds was available through the [Montgomery County COVID-19 Rent Relief Program](#). The county has distributed about \$79 million in rent relief to about [10,600 households](#) since the program launched in April 2020.

Minnesota

According to [MPR News](#), housing advocates in Hennepin County fear that rising eviction rates following the expiration of eviction protections and dwindling emergency rental assistance (ERA) funds could reverse homelessness prevention efforts achieved throughout the pandemic. Evictions averaged 600 per week statewide in June 2022 – a rate that is 73% higher than pre-pandemic levels. Most of those eviction filings were in Hennepin County, and Black and Indigenous families with children are most affected by the eviction crisis. Housing advocates contend that they need more federal and state funds to support rental assistance programs.

Mississippi

At the direction of Governor Tate Reeves, the Mississippi Home Corporation will close [Mississippi's emergency rental assistance \(ERA\) program](#) and return \$130 in federal ERA funds. The program stopped accepting new applications on August 15. The governor claims that the ERA program, which has helped millions of families avoid eviction throughout the pandemic, "encourage[s] people to stay out of the workforce." [NBC News](#) notes that Governor Reeve's decision to end the program comes as rental prices in Mississippi surge and a large percentage of people behind on their rent or mortgage report being at risk of losing their homes in the next two months.

Missouri

As of August 5, the Missouri State Assistance for Housing Relief (SAFHR) Program has distributed over [\\$314 million](#) in federal emergency rental assistance to Missourians.

Nevada

[Nevada Appeal](#) reports that the Siegel Group, a Las Vegas-based corporate owner of thousands of rental properties across the country, is being investigated concerning whether it improperly evicted tenants during the pandemic while receiving millions of federal dollars to keep people housed. According to a [report](#) from the U.S. House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, Siegel engaged in egregious and potentially unlawful eviction practices even while it received at least \$5.5 million in federal assistance to offset pandemic costs and tenant rental arrears.

Oklahoma

According to the [Oklahoman](#), residents have until August 31 to apply for emergency rental assistance (ERA). With over 30,000 applications being processed and more expected to be submitted before the deadline, the need for assistance will likely exceed available funding. Oklahoma County landlords continue to file evictions at

above-average rates, creating concern among advocates and community members about a rise in evictions and homelessness.

Oregon

[Street Roots](#) reports that tenants in Oregon are struggling to keep up with skyrocketing rents as COVID-19 emergency rental assistance and eviction protections end. Eviction rates are steadily increasing, and advocates predict that they will continue to rise and surpass pre-pandemic levels. Advocates anticipate two large waves of evictions: in October, when all emergency eviction protections expire, and in January, when landlords are allowed to increase rents.

[Oregon Housing and Community Services](#) (OHCS) closed the Oregon Emergency Rental Assistance Program on August 12. New applications will not be accepted, but tenants with existing applications in the system who submitted complete applications by August 12 will continue to be processed as long as funds remain available. OHCS has paid out over \$390 million in emergency rental assistance to 60,829 households. The funds have helped an estimated 130,000 Oregonians remain in their homes during the pandemic.

Pennsylvania

According to the [Morning Call](#), emergency rental assistance (ERA) is running out in Lehigh County, which housing advocates fear could lead to a rise in evictions. Tenants and landlords must submit applications for the Lehigh County ERA program by August 31. The program has helped about 4,500 households since it launched in April 2021. [Lehigh County ranked fourth](#) among Pennsylvania counties for the most evictions filed in 2021.

Virginia

As Virginia's emergency rental assistance (ERA) program ends, [eviction cases are on the rise](#). The growing number of eviction filings signals the need for ongoing rental assistance and highlights the [lack of affordable housing](#) across Virginia.

Disaster Housing Recovery Update – August 22, 2022

Congressional and Executive Actions

In remarks to reporters in southeastern Kentucky, President Biden [pledged](#) that his administration will continue supplying federal resources for “as long as it takes” to help the state recover from recent flooding.

Senator Cassidy (R-LA) [spoke](#) to the South Central Industrial Association in Gray, LA, and announced that he is working on legislation to add a disaster aid package to a larger budget bill this fall. Senator Cassidy stated that he was hoping to rework the approach taken by FEMA to temporary housing after storms. “If it's going to take a year to get somebody into a home, don't give them a disposable house,” Cassidy said. “Give them something that they can better afford but which anchors them to their community.”

The *Washington Post* Editorial Board released an [Op-Ed](#) on August 6 supporting the permanent authorization of HUD's Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program. Passing the [“Reforming Disaster Recovery Act”](#) – a bill that would permanently authorize the CDBG-DR program – is a major goal of the DHRC.

FEMA

Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear stated that FEMA was [denying](#) too many requests for assistance from the survivors of flooding in Kentucky. Following those comments, the Governor announced that FEMA provided employees at disaster recovery centers across eastern Kentucky the ability to approve claims from disaster survivors [directly](#).

The Congressional Research Service released a [report](#) on hazard-resilient buildings and how building practices can sustain occupancy and function after a disaster.

The Congressional Research Service released a [report](#) on how FEMA's Individual Assistance program can and cannot be used during extreme heat waves.

State and Local

Alabama

With \$501 million in HUD long-term disaster recovery funds coming to south Alabama for hurricane relief, officials are trying to decide [how the money will be spent](#).

California

Two companies in Northern California are attempting to utilize their [3D construction printing](#) processes to quickly create homes for those displaced by wildfires.

Colorado

Colorado's Department of Local Affairs is [holding meetings](#) to outline the allocation of HUD long-term recovery funding for rebuilding after the Marshall Fire and Straight Winds Event late last year.

Florida

Drawing on lessons learned after Hurricane Michael, southern churches are [working together](#) across denominations to prepare for future disasters.

Kentucky

In an article in *The Baffler*, Tarence Ray posits that between abandoned mining industries, lost economies, and overzealous local police forces, even if a disaster like the Kentucky floods isn't partisan, [it is still very much political](#).

Political campaigns already in full swing across Kentucky have [shifted some focus](#) away from partisan attacks to helping victims of the Eastern Kentucky floods and emphasized unity.

Louisiana

HUD [highlighted](#) efforts to assist Lafayette Louisiana in rebuilding after the catastrophic 2016 floods. By utilizing HUD programs such as the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program, the city was able to create a 105-unit housing complex in a former soda bottling plant.

Missouri

President Biden [approved](#) Missouri Governor Mike Parson's request for a major disaster declaration in response to the severe flooding that impacted the St. Louis region in late July. The declaration includes FEMA Individual Assistance approval for St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and St. Charles County.

Iowa

Two years after a derecho tore through Cedar Rapids and surrounding areas, repairs continue, with the city utilizing some of its federal [American Rescue Plan Act funds](#).

Washington

Survivors of flooding in Whatcom County are still [waiting](#) FEMA assistance nine months after the event.

Resources and Research

A [report](#) released via the NOAA Weather Ready Nation initiative focuses on the lived experiences of individuals experiencing homelessness and risk communication before and during disasters. The report includes a plethora of insights both from individuals experiencing homelessness themselves as well as those in community-based organizations serving them.

Publications

NLIHC Releases New Edition of *Tenant Talk* Focusing on Nonpartisan Election Engagement

NLIHC released on August 18 the summer 2022 issue of *Tenant Talk*, our semi-annual newsletter created to engage tenants in housing advocacy and to highlight innovative approaches and recent victories in communities throughout the U.S. The new issue focuses on nonpartisan election engagement and the important role renters and affordable housing advocates can play. [Tenant Talk: Housing Is Built with Ballots](#) can be downloaded by NLIHC members and partners – as well as members of the general public – [from our website](#) for free. Digital copies in Spanish will also be available soon.

Low-income renters face the greatest barriers to voting and as a result are underrepresented among voters. NLIHC's nonpartisan [Our Homes, Our Votes](#) campaign aims to address this disparity by mobilizing low-income renters and affordable housing advocates to participate in the voting process to ensure low-income housing interests are addressed by candidates and elected officials. The new issue of *Tenant Talk* presents practical tips for mobilizing renters to vote and engaging candidates, as well as important state deadlines to be aware of as elections approach. Perspectives from renters and people experiencing homelessness, updates from partners of the *Our Homes, Our Votes* campaign, and news from NLIHC are also included.

Download the new edition of *Tenant Talk* [here](#).

Housing Leadership Awards

NLIHC Invites Nominations for 2023 Housing Leadership Awards

NLIHC is accepting nominations for our 2023 Housing Leadership Awards recipients. Every year, NLIHC celebrates leaders in the fight for affordable housing by honoring three individuals or organizations at the Housing Leadership Awards reception. To submit a nomination, please email Benja Reilly at breilly@nlihc.org by Friday, September 9.

The Edward W. Brooke Housing Leadership Award is named for the late Senator Brooke (R-MA), who championed low-income housing as a U.S. senator and as chair of the NLIHC board of directors after he left the

Senate. The Brooke award goes to an exemplary housing leader with a record of fighting for affordable housing on the national level.

The Cushing Niles Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award is named after NLIHC's late founder, who has been referred to as the "godmother" of the affordable housing movement. The award goes to an individual who has demonstrated an unyielding commitment to achieving safe, decent, and affordable homes for low-income people over a long period of time.

The Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award is named for former NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, who led NLIHC for more than 17 years. The Crowley award goes to an outstanding leader who has elevated the conversation around affordable housing for the lowest-income people in America.

Learn more about NLIHC's 2022 Leadership Awards Celebration and honorees at: <https://bit.ly/3zNtUi5>

Submit a nomination by emailing Benja Reilly at breilly@nlihc.org by Friday, September 9.

Opportunity Starts at Home

A Statement by the Opportunity Starts at Home Campaign on the "Inflation Reduction Act"

President Biden signed the "Inflation Reduction Act of 2022" into law on August 16. While there is much to commend in the legislation – including the infusion of hundreds of billions of dollars into climate and energy programs, expanded healthcare subsidies, and lower prescription drugs costs – Congress missed an extraordinarily rare opportunity to address a primary driver of inflation and a critical issue facing the lowest-income and most marginalized households: skyrocketing rents and a lack of housing affordability.

Data show that rent has climbed 18% nationwide over the last year alone. Not surprisingly, low-income renters are struggling to afford housing and more are falling into a vicious spiral of housing instability, eviction, and homelessness. Meanwhile, an analysis by the Government Accountability Office found that a median rent increase of \$100 per month was associated with a 9% increase in homelessness. At the same time, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the shelter index accounted for over 40% of the spike in "core inflation" – the largest factor in the overall increase. Research clearly shows that investments in affordable housing generate multiplying returns across many sectors. Stable, affordable housing options located in neighborhoods of opportunity are associated with better educational outcomes, better physical and mental health outcomes, lower healthcare expenditures, greater food security, faster upward economic mobility, greater racial and gender equity, fewer encounters with the criminal legal system, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Unfortunately, years of underinvestment in affordable housing solutions have contributed to our current housing crisis. For example, although it is well documented that housing vouchers and other forms of rental assistance are very effective in addressing homelessness and housing instability, reducing domestic violence, and improving other outcomes, only one in four people eligible for rental assistance receives it due to inadequate funding. The Opportunity Starts at Home campaign – alongside other leading organizations from the healthcare, education, climate, hunger, child welfare, gender and racial equity, criminal justice, faith, and other sectors – consistently urged Congress to include robust investments in housing vouchers, public housing, and the national Housing Trust Fund in any reconciliation legislation. These are the three solutions which, if scaled to meet the existing need, would end housing instability and homelessness for the lowest-income people.

Unfortunately, because none of these housing investments are included in the Inflation Reduction Act, the lowest-income people will likely continue to bear the brunt of the nation's worsening housing crisis, and the

consequences will continue to hamstring our ability to achieve other national priorities. Ongoing federal inaction on the housing crisis is simply unacceptable.

Learn more about the campaign's efforts [here](#).

Our Homes, Our Votes

Join Today's (August 22) *Our Homes, Our Votes* Webinar on Voting while Experiencing Homelessness

The *Our Homes, Our Votes: 2022* webinar series features experts with frontline election experience to walk through every step of voter and candidate engagement activities and support housing organizations' nonpartisan election efforts. The next webinar, "Voting while Experiencing Homelessness," will be held today (Monday, August 22) at 2:30 pm ET. Register for the webinar series [here](#).

People experiencing homelessness, service providers, and election officials often face uncertainty about the process of voter registration and obtaining voter ID for those without a permanent address. This webinar will discuss how people experiencing homelessness can exercise their voting rights and overcome the obstacles to making their voices heard in the political arena. Experts will discuss best practices for unhoused voters, shelters and outreach agencies, and election administrators. The panel will feature Kat Calvin, founder of Project ID and Spread the Vote; Courtney Cooperman, housing advocacy organizer at NLIHC; and Jessica Margeson, tenant organizer with the Granite State Organizing Project. Sidney Betancourt, housing advocacy organizer at NLIHC, will also preview the new edition of *Tenant Talk: Housing is Built with Ballots*.

Our Homes, Our Votes webinars will be held on a biweekly basis until the week that follows the 2022 midterm elections. View the full schedule for the webinar series [here](#).

Research

Report Examines How Localities and States Used COVID-19 Funds to Respond to Homelessness

A new report from the *Urban Institute*, "[Using COVID-19 Relief Resources to End Homelessness](#)," details the actions undertaken by sites in eight states and localities to prevent and reduce homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report finds that sites had similar goals and undertook similar actions to keep people experiencing homelessness safe and to prevent new entrances into homelessness. Primary actions included expanding non-congregate shelter, conducting outreach to unsheltered residents, moving people experiencing homelessness to permanent housing, and providing emergency rental assistance to prevent homelessness. The report outlines successes across sites, such as implementing permanent housing solutions and prioritizing equity, as well as challenges, such as limited capacity and trouble spending resources from multiple complex funding sources simultaneously.

Researchers conducted interviews across eight sites with local government officials, nonprofit program administrators, public housing authorities, and continuums of care. These sites, though geographically diverse, implemented similar primary activities amid the onset of COVID-19. Several sites, including Santa Clara County, CA, and King County, WA, moved people residing in congregate shelters to non-congregate shelters, such as hotels and motels, to decrease the risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19. Sites also expanded their efforts to help people exit homelessness to permanent housing. In Austin, TX, and Fairfax, VA, for example, staff connected people living in non-congregate settings to rapid rehousing. Sites also used

emergency rental assistance funds to prevent homelessness, partnering with diverse community-based organizations to reach those most at risk.

Interviewees cited several common successes in their efforts to prevent homelessness amid COVID-19. Several sites, including Santa Clara County, King County, and Austin, created more permanent housing as a result of their work, obtaining state and local funding to convert hotels and motels to permanent housing. Some interviewees were also successful in prioritizing equity in their response efforts. Austin and King County, for example, implemented a new housing prioritization screener to prioritize those households most at risk of COVID-19 exposure and homelessness, explicitly prioritizing Black households.

Sites also faced challenges in their efforts to quickly implement and scale up new programs. Nearly all sites struggled with staff turnover and limited capacity, which also impacted their ability to quickly spend program funds. Some sites also struggled to simultaneously spend multiple funding sources. For example, sites used three funding sources under the “CARES Act” and three funding sources under the “American Rescue Plan Act,” as well as FEMA funding, funding from the “Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021,” and other state and local funding. Varying grant timelines, reporting requirements, and eligible uses made it difficult for sites with already limited capacity to effectively use these funds simultaneously.

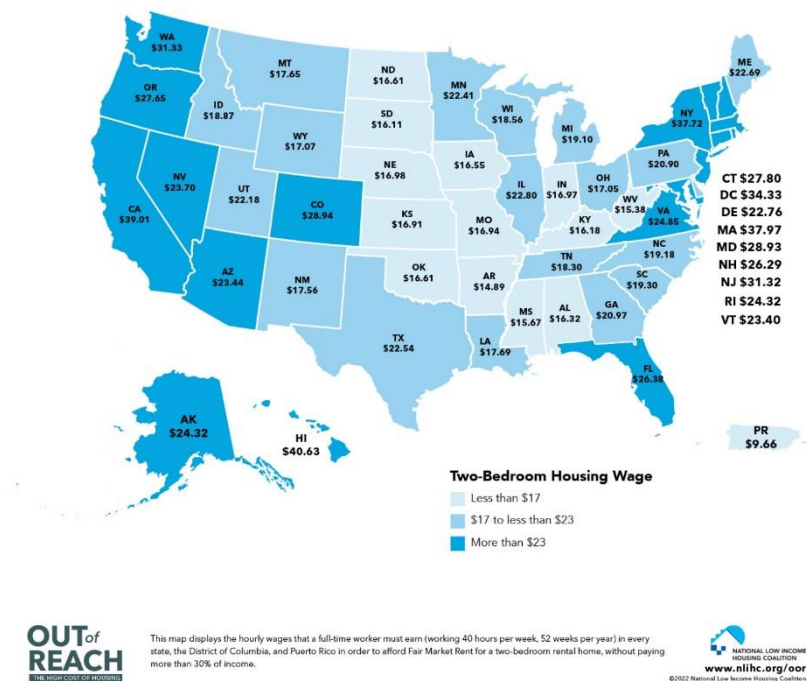
The report suggests that future research should focus on how communities can better prepare to incorporate equity into emergency responses. Future research should also identify which innovative practices used during the pandemic should be permanently integrated into the social safety net.

The report can be found at: <https://urbn.is/3T1ldJQ>

Fact of the Week

In Nearly Every State, Full-Time Workers Must Earn More Than \$15 an Hour to Afford a Two-Bedroom Apartment

2022 TWO-BEDROOM RENTAL HOUSING WAGES



Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition, “Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing,” nlihc.org/oor.

Note: This map displays the hourly wages that a full-time worker must earn (working 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year) in every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico in order to afford Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom rental home, without paying more than 30% of income.

From the Field

Kingston Becomes First City in Upstate New York to Adopt Rent Stabilization

The Common Council of Kingston, New York, approved a [resolution](#) to declare a housing emergency and enact the “[Emergency Tenant Protection Act](#)” (ETPA) on July 28. Under ETPA, rents for certain properties will be frozen, with increases determined annually by a Rent Guidelines Board. ETPA will also ensure that residents in covered units receive essential services and some protections from eviction. An estimated 1,300 units are covered under the new law, which applies to buildings with six or more units that were constructed prior to 1974. ETPA was signed into law by Mayor Steven T. Noble on July 29 and went into effect immediately.

The State of New York first passed the Emergency Tenant Protection Act in 1974. However, the act only applied to New York City and its surrounding suburbs. In 2019, New York passed the “[Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act](#),” which allowed any city to adopt rent control by declaring a housing emergency and demonstrating it had a vacancy rate below 5%. In 2020, Kingston contracted the Center for Governmental Research to conduct a rental housing study, which determined the vacancy rate in the city to be 6.7%. Tenant activists [criticized](#) the study’s results, claiming they were manipulated by real estate developers. Kingston’s Director of Housing Initiatives then completed another [vacancy study](#) between April and May of 2022, which found the vacancy rate in qualifying units was 1.57%. The Common Council subsequently held a public hearing about declaring a housing emergency and ultimately passed the resolution with a 7-1 vote.

Like many cities across the country, Kingston has seen rapidly increasing rents and a limited supply of rental housing, particularly housing that is affordable to people living on the lowest incomes. The city has taken other steps in recent years to protect renters at-risk of displacement and expand access to affordable housing, including establishing [inclusionary zoning](#), passing a [good cause eviction](#) law, and establishing [regulations](#) for short-term rentals. The city is also currently in the process of updating its [zoning code](#).

“I am pleased to be able to codify this legislation and to implement these tenant protections here in Kingston,” said Mayor Noble. “We have known we have a housing crisis in Kingston, and this is yet another step we are taking to protect our residents and make sure that everyone who wishes to live in Kingston is able to.”

Advocates hope that Kingston’s adoption of rent stabilization will encourage other Hudson Valley and upstate communities to follow suit but [concede](#) that ultimately state and federal funding and policies are necessary. [For the Many](#), a local housing justice organization, mobilized tenants to attend the public hearing and reach out to their elected officials about enacting ETPA. It and other community groups are now working to make sure that tenants in ETPA-eligible buildings are aware of their new rights and that landlords are not taking advantage of the confusion. They are also working to ensure that pro-tenant candidates are appointed to the Rent Guidelines Board.

“We applaud Mayor Steve Noble and the Kingston Council for taking this step to protect housing affordability,” said Jonathan Bix, executive director of For the Many. “This will benefit long-term residents, whether owners or renters. The only people this won’t help are corporate landlords.”

The New York State [Division of Housing and Community Renewal](#) (DHCR) administers ETPA throughout New York. It is responsible for contacting the owners of properties covered under ETPA to inform them of their rights and obligations under the law. Based on recommendations from Kingston’s Common Council, it will also appoint nine people – two tenants, two property owners, and five members of the public – to the Rent Guidelines Board. The Board will first meet in September 2022 and, working with DHCR, will determine annual allowable rent increases for units covered under ETPA. DHCR and the City of Kingston will conduct information sessions about ETPA for tenants and landlords.

For more information about ETPA and its implementation in Kingston, please contact Bartek Starodaj, director of housing initiatives, at bstarodaj@kingston-ny.gov. For more information about For the Many, please contact Brahvan Ranga, the organization’s political director, at brahvan@forthemany.org.

NLIHC Welcomes State Partners in Maryland and Nevada

The NLIHC board of directors unanimously approved the Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) and the Nevada Housing Coalition as new partners in NLIHC’s State and Tribal Partner Coalition. The organizations join a group of 66 statewide organizations dedicated to ensuring people with the lowest incomes have quality homes that are accessible and affordable in communities of their choice. With the addition of these two organizations, NLIHC now has state partners in 44 states and the District of Columbia.

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is a statewide nonprofit organization that is dedicated to strengthening and advocating in the General Assembly for Maryland’s community development industry each year. The organization aims to educate legislators and the public about the important social and economic impacts of community development on the region. CDN is made up of over 200 member organizations across rural, urban, and suburban communities in Maryland and includes nonprofits, small developers, community-based organizations, and public agencies. Learn more about CDN at: <https://communitydevelopmentmd.org>

The Nevada Housing Coalition aims to develop strategies to address Nevada's housing shortage, whether through community action or policy changes. The Coalition has created a task force that played an influential role in pushing the state to invest \$500 million of State Fiscal Recovery Funds in Nevada's housing infrastructure. These funds include \$275 million for affordable housing multi-family development and \$150 million for affordable housing preservation. The Nevada Housing Coalition empowers other organizations and advocates in Nevada to advance solutions to the affordable housing crisis in Nevada through data, sustainable programming, and collaboration. Learn more about the Nevada Housing Coalition at: <https://nvhousingcoalition.org/>

Join us in welcoming the Community Development Network of Maryland and the Nevada Housing Coalition to our State and Tribal Partner Coalition!

NLIHC Careers

NLIHC Seeks Executive Assistant

NLIHC seeks an executive assistant who will be responsible for providing administrative and support services to the President and CEO and the Chief Operating Officer (COO) to assist in the effective and efficient management of the Coalition, with particular emphasis on assisting the Board of Directors.

Responsibilities:

Office of the President and CEO

- Provide the full range of administrative support to ensure that the Office of the President and CEO operates in an efficient manner.
- Receive and screen telephone calls to President and CEO, take messages, and make or facilitate return calls.
- Receive and schedule meetings and appointments for President and CEO, as assigned by President and CEO.
- Keep track of all speaking engagements and submit relevant documents to requesting organizations. Pay particular attention to whether requests are for virtual or in-person speaking.
- Work with Communications team to ensure all media requests are scheduled in a timely manner.
- Keep track of all activities of President and CEO and complete monthly program tracking.
- Receive and prioritize requests for President and CEO's input, feedback, or approval from other staff; ensure that all requests are dealt with in a timely manner.
- Provide President and CEO with daily itinerary listing time and place of all appointments; know President and CEO's whereabouts and provide information to staff, Board, and others.
- Prepare acknowledgement letters for all memberships and donations for President and CEO's signature within five days of receipt.
- Arrange for and set up meeting space and conference calls, as needed.
- Maintain President and CEO's and the Coalition's permanent files, including chronological files; assist with management of archives.
- Generate minutes and letters; draft documents as requested by President and CEO and perform formatting, data entry, and copying.
- Place orders for materials and other purchases for President and CEO and entire office; ensure all equipment used by President and CEO is in good working order and supplies are replenished.
- Assist in completing organizational and funding reports.
- Provide support to President and CEO's research projects.

- Provide assistance on fund development activities as needed.

Board Operations

- Serve as primary liaison with Board of Directors for logistical and informational purposes. Make facility arrangements for in-person and virtual meetings and arrange board travel and accommodations, as needed.
- Send timely notices for all scheduled meetings of the Board, Executive Committee, and Board Committees: Finance, Nominating, Investment, and others. Collect RSVPs.
- Prepare and distribute monthly Board packets and all meeting materials. Maintain annual Board book and up-to-date contact and other information on all Board members.
- Assist with staffing/assigning board committee members.
- Prepare correspondence from Board Chair and other Board members as needed.
- Take minutes of Board and Board committee meetings and draft complete minutes in a timely manner.
- Arrange for recognition of outgoing members at annual meeting.

Operations Support

- Receive, open, date, and sort all mail and incoming packages. Ensure mail is stamped and mailed every workday afternoon.
- Monitor general voicemail, fax, and info and general in-boxes; forward communications to appropriate staff.
- Copy and mail *Memo to Members and Partners* newsletter every Monday to those who receive it via U.S. Post.
- Respond to all requests and orders for NLIHC publications. Mail out requested publications in a timely manner.
- Provide administrative support to the COO on an ongoing basis related to calendar updates (NLIHC shared/COO calendar), Outlook contacts, and Intern postings.
- Receipts
 - *Income Tracking*. Prepare income tracking forms on all revenue received for coding by the Chief Operating Officer within one day of receipt. Stamp date on all checks. Make copies of all checks and accompanying documents.
 - *Deposits*. Prepare and make bank deposits on Fridays, the last day of each month, and upon receipt of large checks.
 - *Cash Log*. Maintain accurate log of revenues as they are received.
 - *Enter* all data in database within five days of receipt.
 - *Prepare* receipts for submission to Senior Director of Administration.
 - *Ensure* income tracking forms are completed.
- Assist with maintenance of CRM database (Salesforce). Assist with member prospects and other data entry.
- Maintain adequate inventory of all routine office supplies; ensure all supplies are maintained in an orderly and accessible fashion.
- Ensure that office door and elevators are secured/unsecured, as needed.
- Ensure orderliness of reception area, workroom, and copy room.
- Assist National AIDS Housing Coalition with logistical support in its use of NLIHC office space.

Organizational Support

- Provide assistance as assigned for annual Housing Policy Forum and Housing Leadership Celebration/Reception, semi-annual state coalition meetings, and other events. (Report to COO.)
- Compile and ensure updating of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the Coalition.

- Attend all meetings of Board of Directors, state coalitions, and Board standing committees; participate in staff meetings, retreats, training, and all Coalition events. (Report to CEO and COO.)
- Other duties as assigned. (Report to CEO and COO.)

Qualifications

Applicants must possess highly developed organizational, administrative, interpersonal, oral, and written communications skills; proficiency in all Microsoft Office software applications; knowledge of and skill in operating office equipment; ability to perform several tasks simultaneously; and a commitment to social justice. A bachelor's degree is required; non-profit experience is preferred.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. This is a full-time position located in Washington, DC (with flexible telework).

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, two writing samples, and three references (references will not be contacted before consulting with candidate) to Bairy Diakite, director of operations, at: bdiakite@nlihc.org

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of August 14

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of August 14:

- “Rising Rents Are Squeezing Older Adults” *Next Avenue*, August 17 at: <https://bit.ly/3QS9yed>
 - “A model for neighborhood renewal” *Washington Post*, August 18 at: <https://wapo.st/3SXraY1>
 - “California Politics: Why the housing crisis is a women’s issue” *LA Times*, August 19 at: <https://lat.ms/3T1ch78>
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NLIHC News

NLIHC to Publish End-of-Week Recap Beginning August 26

NLIHC is pleased to announce the creation of a new weekly e-newsletter, *The Connection*. The newsletter will bring together news and updates from NLIHC, making important information available to advocates, partners, and members through a single, consolidated newsletter that will be published on Friday of every week. Beginning August 26, subscribers to NLIHC’s email lists – including subscribers to this list – will receive the first issue of *The Connection*, which will include updates related to advocacy activities, weekly calls and webinars, disaster housing recovery, field operations, NLIHC campaigns, and more. This newsletter will be in addition to *Memo to Members and Partners*, which will continue to be published on Monday. Stay tuned for more from *The Connection*!

Where to Find Us – August 22

NLIHC staff will be speaking at the following events in the coming months:

- [Annual Utah Housing Matters Conference](#) – Keynote Speaker, Midway, UT, August 29-31 (Renee Willis)
- [Dane County Affordable Housing Action Alliance Monthly Meeting](#) – Virtual, September 6 (Courtney Cooperman)
- [HousingIowa Conference](#) – Des Moines, IA, September 7 (Sarah Saadian)
- [Housing Now! California, “Our Homes, Our Votes Campaign Launch”](#) – Virtual, September 8 (Courtney Cooperman)
- Hudson County New Jersey Food and Shelter Coalition monthly meeting – Virtual, September 13 (Lindsay Duvall)
- [AARP](#) Housing Workshop Plenary Panel – Virtual, September 22 (Diane Yentel)
- [Early Care & Learning Council’s](#) It Takes a Village: To Reduce/ Eliminate Expulsion & Suspension Summit – Latham, NY, September 29 (Lindsay Duvall)
- Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York State [Annual Housing Conference](#), Federal Policy Update – Saratoga Springs, NY, October 3 (Lindsay Duvall)
- Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing [Annual Conference 2022](#), “Inflation, COVID and Build Back Better: Federal Housing Policy Update After the Midterm Election” Panel – Los Angeles, CA, October 28 (Sarah Saadian)
- [California Rural Housing Coalition Summit](#): Reconnecting to Build Affordable Homes and Equitable Communities – Keynote Speaker, Asilomar, CA, November 3 (Diane Yentel)
- Partnership for Strong Communities [2022 Connecticut Affordable Housing Conference](#) – Keynote Speaker, Virtual, November 14 (Diane Yentel)
- Maine Affordable Housing Coalition’s Housing Policy conference – Portland, ME, November 17 (Diane Yentel)

NLIHC Staff

Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245
 Sidney Betancourt, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x200
 Jordan Brown, Research Intern
 Victoria Bourret, ERASE Project Coordinator x244
 Jen Butler, Senior Director, Media Relations and Communications, x239
 Alayna Calabro, Policy Analyst–COVID-19 Response, x252
 Josephine Clarke, Senior Executive Assistant, x226
 Matthew Clarke, Writer/Editor, x207
 Courtney Cooperman, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x263
 Bairy Diakite, Director of Operations, x254
 Lindsay Duvall, Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy, x206
 Emma Foley, Research Analyst, x249
 Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
 Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
 Sarah Gallagher, Senior Project Director, ERASE, x220
 Kendra Johnson, Chief Operating Officer, x232
 Kim Johnson, Senior Policy Analyst, x243
 Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317
 Kayla Laywell, Housing Policy Analyst, x231
 Mayerline Louis-Juste, Senior Communications Specialist, x201
 Steve Moore Sanchez, Development Coordinator, x209
 Khara Norris, Senior Director of Administration, x242

Neetu Nair, Research Analyst, x291
Brenna Olson, Policy Intern
Jenna Parker, Field Intern
Noah Patton, Housing Policy Analyst, x227
Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Manager, x246
Benja Reilly, Development Specialist, x234
Gabrielle Ross, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x208
Sarah Saadian, SVP for Public Policy and Field Organizing, x228
Brooke Schipporeit, Manager of Field Organizing x233
Sophie Siebach-Glover, Research Specialist, x205
Kennedy Sims, Communications and Graphic Design Intern
Lauren Steimle, Web/Graphic Design Specialist, x246
Jade Vasquez, ERASE Project Coordinator, x264
Maya Ward-Caldwell, Fund Development Intern
Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Manager, x230
Renee Willis, SVP for Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, x247
Rebecca Yae, Senior Research Analyst–COVID-19 Response, x256
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225