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Coronavirus – TAKE ACTION!

Keep the Pressure On: Join #GetBackToWork Tweetstorm on September 9 at 1 pm ET

The Senate will be back in session next week. On September 9 from 1 – 2 pm ET join NLIHC, the Coalition on Human Needs, and other advocates for a #GetBackToWork tweetstorm. Tell Congress that housing stability during and after this pandemic cannot wait. Congress must immediately pass a coronavirus relief bill that includes the essential resources and protections for America’s lowest-income renters and people experiencing homelessness included in the “HEROES Act.”

Without immediate action by Congress, 30 to 40 million renters are at risk of losing their homes by the end of the year. Even before expanded unemployment benefits and the federal eviction moratorium expired at the end of July, 1 in 5 adults were behind on rent. Experts estimate that renters already owe \$25 billion in back rent and could owe as much as \$70 billion by the end of the year – an amount they cannot possibly pay back. Time has run out for millions of families across the country, and Congress must take action now to keep millions of families stably housed.

Below are sample tweets. Sample images are available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yb8ncgec>

- 30-40M people are at high risk of losing their homes. Congress needs to #GetBacktoWork, pass legislation to provide #COVIDRelief NOW & keep families from facing eviction <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>
- Time has run out for families across the U.S. scraping together resources to keep from getting evicted once the 30-day notice to evict in the #CARESAct ended. Congress, #DoYourJob! Help these families keep their homes. Support #COVIDRelief NOW <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>
- #CARESAct eviction protections expire today & millions of families don’t see any relief in sight. Congress must #GetBacktoWork & help their constituents keep roofs over their heads during #COVID19 <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>
- #TrumpsEO did NOTHING to help with evictions & homelessness. Now, millions of families are out of time & can no longer stay in their homes. Congress must #GetBacktoWork & do what they can to help these families #stablyhouse <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>
- #DYK people we rely on, like home health aides & food servers, don't earn enough to afford rent. They're now among the millions unemployed who need #RentReliefNow. #GetToWork! Ensure families #stablyhouse during & after #COVID19 <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>
- Congress turned its backs on millions of suffering Americans who are facing evictions in the midst of #COVID19. We must pass at least \$100 billion for #RentReliefNow & extend the eviction moratorium <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>
- 3 months ago, the House passed the #HEROESAct to expand & extend the federal eviction moratorium. What did Senate Republicans do? They unveiled a #COVID19 package that was unacceptable & inadequate. Congress, #GetBackToWork! #DoYourJob & #StopEvictions <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>
- Millions of families are on the verge of homelessness. The House passed the #HeroesAct 3mos ago authorizing an eviction moratorium, aid for renters, & additional stimulus to families. Congress must #GetBackToWork & pass #COVIDRelief Now <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>
- Congress is gambling with human life. Evictions cause generational trauma. A single eviction can create a spiraling down into poverty. Americans shouldn’t have to experience this trauma. Congress, #DoYourJob. Pass #RentReliefNow <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>
- If Congress fails to pass #COVIDRelief Now & housing protections, a tsunami of evictions has the potential to exacerbate our public health crisis. #GetBackToWork & give people the means to keep their housing during a pandemic <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>

- #HousingisHealthcare & #housingassistance during #COVID19 should be considered as urgent a priority as investments in healthcare. Tell your senator that 88% of people want #housingstability during & after #COVID19 <https://tinyurl.com/y8m46hep>
- Tell Congress that 9 in 10 people want our elected leaders to ensure #housingstability during the #coronavirus outbreak. Congress must enact critical housing investments & protections in the next #COVID19 spending bill <https://tinyurl.com/y8m46hep>
- #DYK 60% of Americans think the Govt. is doing too little to make sure people can stably house during #COVID19? Tell Congress they can do more. Ask them to immediately enact critical housing protections in the next #COVID19 spending bill <https://tinyurl.com/y8m46hep>
- 80% of Americans want the Govt. to provide #housingstability during the #COVID19 outbreak. Let your senator know they must do everything they can to enact critical housing investments & protections in the final #COVID19 spending bill <https://tinyurl.com/y8m46hep>
- Our country can't contain #COVID19 if millions are without homes or on the brink of homelessness. #GetBackToWork & families keep roofs over their heads during & after this pandemic. We need #RentReliefNow <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>
- Many renters don't have enough \$ for rent. #Rentalassistance is needed to ensure residents who are out of work & fearing eviction are stably housed during & after #COVID19. #GetBackToWork & give us #RentReliefNow <https://tinyurl.com/y9mmz9hv>
- We need resources to protect low-income renters at high risk of #COVID19. #GetBackToWork to ensure the next stimulus package includes emergency #rentalassistance <https://tinyurl.com/y9mmz9hv>
- It is immoral to kick families & individuals out of their homes during the pandemic. We need resources & protections for people experiencing homelessness who are endangered by #COVID19. #GetBackToWork <https://tinyurl.com/y9mmz9hv>
- We need #COVIDRelief NOW to keep families housed & healthy. Families should not have to choose between paying rent & food when #RentisDue. #GetBackToWork to ensure #housingstability for the lowest-income renters during #COVID19 <https://tinyurl.com/y7hdl9zb>

Join Housing Saves Lives Campaign Week of Action: August 31 - September 4

Join NLIHC and the [Housing Saves Lives](#) campaign to oppose HUD's anti-transgender rule in a Week of Action taking place today through September 4. The Trump administration is once again attacking LGBTQ people, this time by removing critical equal access protections and regulations for transgender people. The Administration's proposed rule change to the Equal Access Rule is an egregious attempt to prevent transgender people from accessing federally funded emergency shelters and services (see Memo, [7/27](#)). NLIHC partnered with over 50 local and national organization to form the Housing Saves Lives Campaign, which works to oppose the administration's anti-transgender rule. The public comment period ends on September 22.

National events for the Week of Action:

Monday, August 31, 11 am ET: National Press Call

NLIHC will be hosting a National Press Call today at 11 am ET to discuss the administration's discriminatory changes to the Equal Access Rule. Invited guest speakers include: Representative Jennifer Wexton (D-VA), True Colors United Public Policy and External Affairs Director Dylan Waguespack, National Women's Law Center Media Manager Gillian Branstetter, and NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel. Please contact NLIHC's Xavier Arriaga at xarriaga@nlihc.org for more information.

Monday, August 31, 2 pm ET: National Webinar: "Take Action for the Housing Needs of Transgender Communities"

The National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development will host a webinar with national partners from the housing and LGBTQ movement, as well as local Asian American and Pacific Islander transgender community leaders, for a discussion on housing, homelessness, and transgender community needs. Register at: <https://bit.ly/32xL9TS>

Tuesday, September 1, 11 am ET: National Twitterstorm

Join us on September 1 at 11 am ET for a national Twitterstorm. Use [#HousingSavesLives](#) to encourage individuals and organizations to submit their comments to oppose the rule change. Use the sample tweet below or go to HousingSavesLives.org for more talking points.

“We all pay the price when it comes to government-sanctioned discrimination. Share your comments and  ACTION ALERT!  We only have 60 days to tell Trump and @HUDGov that their plans to cut protections from our unhoused #trans siblings. Submit your comment now and tell them [#HousingSavesLives!](#) housingsaveslives.org”

Wednesday, September 2, 2 pm ET: HUD Equal Access Rule and Youth Homelessness National Briefing

[Youth Collaboratory](#), [A Way Home America](#), and [True Colors United](#) will host a webinar on September 2 at 2 pm ET on the harmful changes to the Equal Access Rule, the impact on transgender young people and local programs, and actions you can take action to stop this dangerous proposal. Register at: <https://bit.ly/3j5fJef>

Thursday, September 3, Time 3 pm ET: National Briefing for Religious Leaders

[Americans United for Separation of Church and State](#) will host a legal advocacy briefing for religious leaders to take action in response to the HUD Anti-Trans Shelter Proposed Rule. Speakers include Sarah Hassmer, senior counsel-income security at the National Women's Law Center; Reverend Cedric Harmon, executive director of Many Voices; and Reverend Alex Patchin McNeill, executive director of More Light Presbyterians. Register at: <https://bit.ly/2Ew4ywo>

How You Can Get Involved

Host events during the week of action to help advocates submit as many comments as possible before the September 22 deadline.

Submit your public comment opposing the rule directly at HousingSavesLives.org

Share this Save the Date with your network and other advocates

Keep an eye out for updates and upcoming events from the [Housing Saves Lives Campaign](#)

For more information, please contact Xavier Arriaga, Policy Analyst, at xarriaga@nlihc.org

Read the proposed rule at: <https://bit.ly/3fVo5DL>

Read NLIHC's comparison of the texts of the proposed anti-transgender rule changes and the 2016 final rule at: <https://bit.ly/3f5FWad>

Read HUD's anti-transgender proposed rule change to the Equal Access Rule: <https://bit.ly/3ed2JjR>

Read the joint press statement from NLIHC and other Housing Saves Lives partners opposing HUD's anti-transgender rule here: <https://bit.ly/2CWWWBS>

Visit HousingSavesLives.org to submit your comment opposing the rule and to keep up with the latest news and resources.

Coronavirus, Homelessness, and Housing

Join NLIHC's National Call on Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness Today at 2:30 pm ET

Join today's (August 31) national call on coronavirus, disasters, housing, and homelessness from 2:30-4 pm ET for field updates on the devastation caused by Hurricane Laura in the Gulf Coast, the wildfires in California, and the derecho in Iowa. We will discuss the state of play between the White House and Congress on a coronavirus relief package, getting the [essential housing and homelessness components](#) in the HEROES Act enacted, and working with Congress on other disaster housing response legislation. We will hear from Sam Batko of the Urban Institute on a [new tool](#) to help state and local decisionmakers center racial equity when distributing CARES Act funding to communities, get updates from the field, and more.

Register for the national call at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

See the full agenda [here](#).

Coronavirus – Resources

New Urban Institute Funding Targeting Tool Available to Accompany Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response

[Partners](#) leading the work on the [Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response](#) released a new tool last week to provide guidance for homelessness systems on targeting funding from the CARES Act to communities disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus.

Urban Institute launched the [Emergency Rental Assistance Priority Index](#), a tool that estimates the level of need in a census tract by measuring the prevalence of low-income renters who are at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability. The Index examines neighborhood demographics, housing instability risk factors before the pandemic, and the economic impacts of the pandemic. It also emphasizes an equitable approach to determining where funding should be targeted, accounting for risk factors that are higher for certain groups that have been historically and systematically excluded from housing and economic opportunities – particularly Black, Indigenous, and Latinx renters – and face greater health and economic impacts from coronavirus. State and local decisionmakers can use the Index to direct outreach and resources to communities most impacted by coronavirus.

View the Emergency Rental Assistance Priority Index at: <https://tinyurl.com/y6g2vnzg>

See all of the resources from the [Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response](#) at: <https://tinyurl.com/y93zhpow>

Coronavirus – HUD

HUD’s PIH Revises List of Eligible Coronavirus-Related Voucher Administrative Activities

HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) posted “[Revised List of Eligible Coronavirus-Related Activities](#),” adding six eligible uses that public housing agencies (PHAs) may carry out with the \$850 million Congress provided through the CARES Act for Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) administration (see *Memo 5/4,4/10*). PIH posted the revised list dated July 31 on August 24. The [prior list](#) was dated April 30 (see *Memo, 5/11*). The six new eligible activities were already listed in [Notice PIH-2020-18](#), posted on July 31 (see *Memo, 4/10*).

The six new eligible uses of a PHA’s CARES Act administrative funds are:

- Purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) for PHA staff and for residents visiting the PHA’s offices or premises for program-related reasons.
- Covering expenses incurred due to coronavirus restrictions impacting PHA operations (e.g., paying for transportation expenses for PHA staff who rely on public transit that is no longer available).
- Testing PHA staff and HCV families for COVID-19.
- Creating or updating an infectious disease outbreak plan.
- Making physical improvements to PHA office space, including expanding or remodeling, or renting additional space.
- Covering costs to coordinate with local schools and local governments receiving funds from the U.S. Department of Education for educating students in the HCV program. This can include covering costs for technological needs of HCV households with school-aged children who are homeschooled as a result of the pandemic.

“Revised List of Eligible Coronavirus-Related Activities” is at: <https://bit.ly/2QHEukB>

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

Coronavirus – Other

Recording Available of NLIHC’s August 24 National Call on Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness

During the most recent [national call on coronavirus, disasters, housing, and homelessness](#), Deborah Weinstein, executive director of the Coalition on Human Needs (CHN), spoke about the national Day of Action hosted by CHN and NLIHC on August 24. Charlie Harak of the National Consumer Law Center discussed short-term and longer policy measures that would prevent utility cut-offs. Charlie’s short-term recommendations included extending existing utility shutoff moratoriums; waiving late fees, deposits, and reconnection fees; allowing longer payment plans; suspending adverse reporting to credit bureaus; revising Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) rules and documentation requirements; and writing off debt. Long-term recommendations included discounting rates; implementing arrearage management programs; enacting PIPPs (Percentage of Income Payment Plans); and additional LIHEAP funding, which was included in the House-passed “HEROES Act.”

Phyllis Chamberlain, executive director of the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, Justin Jones, Clark County commissioner for District F, and Cedar Rapids City Councilman Dale Todd provided field updates. NLIHC’s

Sarah Saadian, Joey Lindstrom, and Lisa Marlow provided updates from Capitol Hill and discussed strategies for ensuring that Senate Republicans #GetBackToWork and pass a comprehensive coronavirus relief package that includes the essential housing and homelessness resources in the “HEROES Act.”

NLIHC hosts national calls on the coronavirus, disasters, housing, and homelessness every week. On today’s call, we will hear updates on the devastation wrought by Hurricane Laura in the Gulf Coast, the wildfires in California, and the massive storms in Iowa. Register for today’s call (Monday, August 31 at 2:30 pm ET) at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

Watch a recording of the August 24 call at: tinyurl.com/y4wfbfob

Additional Coronavirus Updates - Monday, August 31, 2020

National Updates

Department of Housing and Urban Development

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) on August 27 [extended](#) its foreclosure and eviction moratorium through December 31, 2020 for homeowners with FHA-insured single family mortgages covered under the CARES Act. While this action does provide foreclosure relief to some homeowners, it does not protect a single renter from eviction.

Federal Housing Finance Agency

The Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) on August 27 [announced](#) that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will extend the moratorium on single-family foreclosures and real estate owned evictions until at least December 31, 2020. NLIHC notes that this action stops evictions for only a very small share of renters.

FHFA [announced](#) on August 26 that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will extend buying loans in forbearance and COVID-related loan processing flexibilities until September 30. The flexibilities were set to expire on August 31.

Advocacy

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

NLIHC and the National Housing Law Project sent letters on August 21 to [HUD](#), the [Treasury Department](#), and the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA), urging the agencies to use their existing authority to prevent evictions among renters living in federally assisted properties.

Reporting

The [Washington Post](#) reports that President Trump’s attempts to bypass Congress on stimulus relief have produced limited economic relief and prevented very few evictions. “If Congress does nothing, we are very likely to see millions of renters face displacement of eviction, starting in September and October,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel.

The [Washington Post](#) reports on data indicating that millions of people across the country are behind on their rent. “When our collective health depends on our ability to stay in our homes, we all have a stake to ensure that tens of millions of people don’t lose theirs,” said NLIHC’s Diane Yentel.

[Bloomberg](#) reports on the historic eviction crisis facing the U.S., explaining that formal evictions are not the only threat facing renters. Eviction is a legal process, but the mere threat of eviction often pushes renters to move out.

The [New York Times](#) reports that legal aid lawyers are preparing to defend renters in housing courts. For tenants, especially those with low incomes, having legal representation can be the difference between being evicted or being allowed to remain in their home.

Despite being one of the populations at greatest risk of contracting and becoming severely ill from the coronavirus, people experiencing homelessness have been largely “[invisible victims of the crisis](#).” The Howard Center for Investigative Journalism developed a [vulnerability index](#) to understand which counties’ homeless populations might struggle the most in a COVID-19 outbreak.

The Howard Center for Investigative Journalism found that, as of early August, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development had [distributed less than one-third](#) of the \$4 billion provided by the CARES Act.

[HuffPost](#) discusses how Cincinnati’s [new law](#) requiring landlords to accept alternatives to a security deposit could help renters survive the pandemic-triggered eviction crisis. NLIHC’s Diane Yentel says that alternatives to security deposits provide much-needed assistance to get families into homes, but there is an urgent need to address the underlying causes of the affordable housing crisis in the U.S.

The [Guardian](#) reports on the U.S.’ looming eviction crisis, discussing the [joint report](#) released by NLIHC and nine other institutions that found 30-40 million people in America are at risk of eviction.

[NPR](#) shares stories of people struggling to remain in their homes after the federal supplemental unemployment benefit and eviction moratorium expired. Without federal intervention, including emergency rental assistance, a uniform eviction moratorium, and expanded unemployment benefits, millions of renters in the U.S. will face eviction.

[CNET](#) explains that starting August 24, millions of renters who were protected from eviction by the CARES Act could lose their homes. The article provides resources for renters who are facing a potential eviction.

The [Guardian](#) reports that millions of Americans are struggling to afford food and pay their rent and utility bills after the federal supplemental unemployment benefits expired at the end of July.

[CNN’s](#) Kyung Lah shares stories of people facing financial stress and eviction after the federal eviction moratorium and relief benefits expired at the end of July.

[Mother Jones](#) reports that housing advocates and voting experts are concerned that the eviction crisis in the U.S. will create barriers to voting by mail. “Those who are being most impacted by the COVID crisis may end up being largely excluded from the democratic process as a result,” says Brian Miller, executive director of Nonprofit VOTE.

Diana Li, an eviction lawyer at the Legal Aid Society, spoke to [Vox](#) about the long-standing structural issues the pandemic has brought to light, the lack of respect landlords have for the moratorium, and why New York’s court system was not prepared for pandemic.

State and Local News

A list of state and local emergency rental assistance programs is available [here](#) from NLIHC.

Alaska

An outbreak of coronavirus infections linked to an [Anchorage homeless shelter](#) has spiked to 61. City officials have confirmed infections in 60 people who stayed at the shelter and one staff member, but they expect the outbreak has impacted more.

Arizona

[Arizona evictions rules changed](#) on August 22, making it more difficult for renters to remain in their homes if they are facing eviction due to nonpayment of rent because of the pandemic. While Governor Doug Ducey extended the eviction moratorium until October 31 in a July [executive order](#), renters must meet additional requirements to remain in their homes.

California

[HuffPost](#) reports that the combination of California's wildfires and the pandemic is putting thousands of people experiencing homelessness at risk for respiratory issues. "Our homeless residents are breathing ash right now," one advocate said of the unhealthy air affecting unhoused people already at heightened risk for COVID-19.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) editorial board questions why state leaders have taken a "shockingly lackadaisical attitude" toward the impending eviction crisis. California's eviction moratorium is set to expire in less than a week, and state leaders have not acted to prevent an eviction tsunami.

California's eviction moratorium is set to expire September 1, allowing eviction cases to move forward on September 2. With as many [5.4 million California renters at risk of eviction](#), advocates are urging the state Senate to enact a new eviction moratorium by approving Assembly Bill 1436. In Orange County, 570 new eviction cases were filed from April 6 through July 31. At least 1,122 additional eviction cases were filed in Los Angeles County from April through June.

Santa Clara County's Board of Supervisors voted unanimously August 25 to [extend the county's eviction moratorium](#) through at least September 30. The extension comes weeks after a recent analysis predicted 43,490 renter households in Santa Clara County alone could lose their homes when the moratorium is lifted.

Colorado

Colorado has seen a sharp [acceleration](#) in court filings for evictions: more than 1,200 removals throughout July, and nearly 300 more in the first week of August.

Governor Jared Polis [announced](#) on August 26 a [new temporary task force](#) within the Department of Local Affairs to examine housing instability due to COVID-19 in Colorado. The announcement of the Special Evictions Prevention Task Force met [criticism from housing advocates](#) who have urged Governor Polis to reinstate an eviction moratorium and ban on rental late fees. Additionally, an attorney with the COVID-19 Eviction Defense Project noted that the task force's 10-person roster didn't represent renters, including advocates who specialize in eviction defense.

Florida

Within hours of the Orange County eviction diversion program portal opening, [more than one thousand tenants](#) had applied for assistance.

[WUSF](#) reports that a Florida landlord informally evicted a family by cutting off water and power to the unit and removing the family's furniture. By making living conditions so untenable for the family, the landlord effectively removed them from the unit without a formal eviction process.

According to the [Tampa Bay Times](#), a Florida landlord that received between \$2 million and \$5 million emergency loan through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), has [filed more evictions](#) during the pandemic than any other company in Florida. Tzadik Management has a billion-dollar portfolio of residential complexes across the U.S., including at least 12 in Hillsborough County.

Georgia

The [Georgia Recorder](#) reports that eviction hearings are rising across Georgia after the supplemental unemployment benefit expired at the end of July and the 30 days' notice of eviction required by the CARES Act ended on August 24.

[WABE](#) reports that as federal eviction protections have expired, tenants in metro Atlanta are feeling the effects.

Hawaii

Despite [Hawaii's eviction moratorium](#), some landlords are illegally harassing tenants and forcing them out of their homes. While the extended eviction moratorium provides relief for renters, attorneys say state officials need to increase enforcement of the ban.

Catherine Pirkle, a University of Hawaii at Manoa public health professor, told [NBC News](#) that overcrowded living situations in Hawaii can lead to clusters of positive coronavirus cases. Many Hawaii households contain multiple generations and crowding is common, especially for low-income households, making social distancing impossible.

Illinois

[Skokie officials](#) voted unanimously on August 17 to allocate \$100,000 in Community Development Block Grant funding for rental assistance. The Evanston-based Connections for Homeless will distribute the rental assistance.

Indiana

The [Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition](#) urged Governor Eric Holcomb to ensure a waitlist and additional resources were made available before closing Indiana's COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program on August 26. More than 200,000 additional Hoosiers are expected to need emergency rental assistance than will be provided through resources available through state and local government programs. Some [Indiana senators](#) called on Governor Holcomb to extend the Indiana COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program. Indiana Senate Democratic Leader Tim Lanane says that the program could continue to be funded by the \$1 billion available in the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund.

The growing number of people experiencing homelessness in [Indianapolis](#) continues to face reduced shelter capacity and closure of most public restrooms. Mayor Joe Hogsett in July announced \$2.7 million in federal grant funds for homelessness prevention initiatives, but advocates are concerned that relief funds could diminish quickly given the looming eviction crisis.

The [Republic](#) reports that CARES Act funding is helping keep people stably housed in Bartholomew County.

While the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission decided against extending the state's moratorium on utility disconnections past August 14, [Columbus City Utilities](#) is choosing not to disconnect customers' service.

Iowa

According to the Iowa Finance Authority, as of August 24, the Iowa COVID-19 Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Program had assisted [2,428 renters across the state](#). The Authority updates statistics weekly about the emergency rent and mortgage assistance program.

A letter to the editor in the [Des Moines Register](#) urges Congress to take action to prevent homelessness by passing emergency rental assistance and a uniform eviction moratorium in the next coronavirus relief package.

Louisiana

The [Wall Street Journal](#) reports that local advocates and officials in New Orleans are bracing for a sharp rise in evictions since the state's ban on eviction expired in June and the grace period for the federal eviction moratorium expired August 24. Given limited public resources and overwhelming need for assistance, Mayor LaToya Cantrell is asking the public to donate funds for tenants who cannot pay their rent.

Fifteen years after Hurricane Katrina devastated [New Orleans](#), the city is bracing for a tsunami of evictions caused by the pandemic. New Orleans renters face a dangerous combination of low incomes, expensive housing costs, weak tenant rights, and a housing supply that is crumbling. Making matters worse, Hurricane Laura threatened to flood the city again.

Massachusetts

[WBUR](#) reports that nearly 109,000 Massachusetts households will need help paying their September rent and mortgage payments, according to a [new study](#). Renters face the most urgent needs, with 61,000 households across the state in need of \$57.2 million a month in housing assistance.

A Suffolk Superior Court [judge denied a request](#) to preliminary block Massachusetts officials from enforcing the state's eviction moratorium. Judge Paul Wilson referred to stable housing as a "crucial component" of containing COVID-19 in Massachusetts.

Michigan

Approximately 75 community members gathered at the 14B District Court in Ypsilanti Township on August 19 to protest [49 eviction hearings](#) taking place that afternoon. Governor Gretchen Whitmer allowed Michigan's eviction moratorium to expire July 15.

Minnesota

The [Star Tribune](#) reports that the Minnesota Attorney General's Office has received 1,235 complaints from tenants since the state's eviction moratorium was enacted in late March. The complaints often concern landlords attempting to remove tenants for nonpayment of rent, general misinformation about the moratorium, and other landlord violations of the executive order.

Missouri

[Missouri renters](#) are facing growing risks of eviction alongside the COVID-19 pandemic and rising rents. The Coalition to Protect Missouri Tenants sent a letter on August 20 to Missouri Supreme Court Chief Justice George Draper III, asking for a statewide eviction moratorium that lasts at least six months. The letter stated that over the next four months, an estimated 243,000 evictions will be filed across the state.

Nevada

Despite statewide rental assistance funds dwindling across Nevada and the Legislature-approved eviction mediation program not open yet, the [eviction moratorium](#) is set to expire August 31. The Guinn Center for Policy Priorities predicts 270,000 Nevada households could face eviction once the moratorium expires. The [need for rental assistance](#) far exceeds the \$30 million Nevada made available for rental assistance.

New Hampshire

Low-income renters needing assistance are getting discouraged by the long and [complicated application process](#) for New Hampshire's rental assistance program. An attorney with New Hampshire Legal Aid reports that, as of August 13, more than 4,000 people had inquired about receiving rental assistance from the state's program, but only 429 people had completed the applications.

New Jersey

New Jersey recently launched the [Small Landlord Emergency Grant Program](#) through the New Jersey Housing Mortgage Finance Agency. The program will reimburse small residential rental property owners for lost revenue due to COVID-19 between April and July 2020, if they agree to forgive outstanding back rent and late fees that their tenant accrued during this time.

New York

Tenants and housing advocates rallied outside [Troy City Court](#) on August 27 to protest against evictions. There were about 30 landlord-tenant proceedings on the Troy City Court scheduled for August 27. VOCAL-NY, a grassroots advocacy organization, says that despite New York's eviction moratorium, property owners are using [pre-COVID-19 paperwork](#) to pursue evictions.

An op-ed penned by Dave Giffen and Giselle Routhier of the Coalition for the Homeless in the [New York Daily News](#) discusses the vocal NIMBY voices urging officials to move people residing in hotels prematurely into congregate settings. The authors urge New Yorkers to stop dehumanizing people experiencing homelessness and instead act with compassion and reason.

New York City [Mayor Bill de Blasio on August 17](#) declared that he is considering moving people temporarily residing in hotels during the pandemic back into homeless shelters. An article in [Curbed](#) argues that hotels are still the city's best chance to prevent the looming homelessness crisis. The #HomelessCantStayHome Coalition sent a [letter to city officials](#) on August 12, urging them to stop moving New Yorkers experiencing homelessness back to congregate shelters, end harmful sweeps, and enact additional policies to protect the health and safety of people experiencing homelessness.

The president of the Housing Court Judges Association, a union representing [50 housing court judges in New York City](#), testified on August 21 at a state senate hearing, urging New York legislators to intervene to prevent a looming 'nightmare' situation in housing court. Judge Daniele China asked legislators to help landlords and tenants with their growing debts, rather than force judges to exercise discretion when both parties are reporting extreme financial strain.

North Carolina

Governor Roy Cooper announced [\\$175 million](#) to help North Carolinians with rental and utility support. The state's Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus (CDBG-CV), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG-CV), and Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) will support three programs to help people avoid eviction.

[FEMA denied funding](#) on August 24 for the Trillium Hotels for Health Program, leaving nearly 150 people in North Carolina at risk of losing their temporary shelter the following day. The program, however, announced on August 25 it [secured enough funds](#) to house people for an additional week. A FEMA spokesperson says Trillium, the crisis agency that runs the program, was deemed ineligible because it did not have the legal responsibility to provide shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

North Dakota

Between 16,000-23,000 (or up to 21% of) [North Dakota households are at risk of eviction](#). Approximately 450 renters in about 17 counties across North Dakota have been helped by the state's Rent Bridge Program, which provides assistance for up to six months.

Ohio

The [Ohio Capital Journal](#) reports that Governor Mike DeWine on August 20 announced that given limited resources, he had to prioritize fighting the coronavirus over assisting low-income Ohioans. Advocates, however, argue that it will be more difficult to stop the spread of COVID-19 as Ohioans become more vulnerable to evictions, food insecurity, and homelessness.

The [Ohio Capital Journal](#) reports that the Ohio Controlling Board will not consider advocates' request that the state allocate \$100 million of Ohio's remaining \$1.3 billion in Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) for emergency rental assistance.

Oklahoma

The Oklahoma County Clerk on August 21 announced there were [91 eviction cases](#) on its dockets for August 24. The court typically limits eviction cases to 75 per day. [Community CARES Partners](#), an organization that provides rental assistance for renters impacted by the pandemic, has existed for only five weeks and has already received more than 3,000 applications.

Oregon

[Oregon's \\$35 million emergency relief program](#) ended on August 21 after tearing through the federal funds in less than three days. State legislators were shaken by the overwhelming display of need and have called for additional federal assistance. "The state of Oregon does not have those types of resources," said House Speaker Tina Kotek. "We're going to keep doing everything we can to step up, but at the end of the day, we need more money from the federal government."

Pennsylvania

Up to [500,000 households across Pennsylvania](#) could be evicted once the statewide moratorium ends September 1. Governor Tom Wolf said he does not have the power to extend the eviction moratorium, meaning the Republican-controlled legislature would have to extend it.

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) editorial board urged Pennsylvania's legislature to extend the eviction moratorium set to expire August 31, and to provide emergency rental assistance to support landlords and keep tenants stably housed.

South Carolina

[Myrtle Beach Online](#) reports that the Eastern Carolina Housing Organization, which typically serves about 30 people per month, assisted 84 households in June and between 70-75 in July. Since South Carolina's eviction moratorium ended in mid-May, more than 1,300 evictions have been filed in Horry County.

South Dakota

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about [42,000 of South Dakota's roughly 139,000 renters](#) had little or no confidence that they would be able to make their August rent payments.

Tennessee

Tennessee could see more than [280,000 potential eviction filings](#) over the next several months. Legal aid attorneys report that landlords have attempted to illegally evict people during the pandemic. The Nashville General Sessions court will start processing evictions on August 31.

Texas

The [Texas Tribune](#) reports that since Governor Greg Abbott declared a public health disaster in March, more than 2,600 evictions have been filed in the Harris County justice of the peace precinct. Evictions are disproportionately impacting neighborhoods with large percentages of low-income immigrant families significantly impacted by unemployment.

Utah

[Evictions cases in Utah](#) have climbed a month after federal protections for some renters expired. Utah landlords filed 354 evictions in July and 569 evictions in August.

Virginia

[Arlington County](#) added \$1.1 million from its COVID-19 contingent account to its existing eviction protection fund, bringing the total amount allocated for eviction prevention to \$3.5 million just since July 1, the beginning of the county's fiscal year 2021. "Given the fact of diminished support from the federal government and the continuation of community spread of the virus, we believe the need for rent assistance is likely to continue to increase in coming months," said County Board Chair Libby Garvey.

[Virginia legislators](#) introduced a bill ([HB 5111](#)) to halt evictions until 60 days after Virginia's state of emergency ends. One Northern Virginia resident said that if the House and Senate bills are not passed, he and his family could become homeless.

Washington DC

The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia used Stout's tool to estimate that approximately [57,000 households in Washington DC](#) will be at risk of eviction when the moratorium expires in December. There are significant racial disparities in renters' ability to pay rent, reflecting the District's racial wealth gap prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Washington

The [King County's homeless system](#) has seen 445 cases of COVID-19 since March, with most of those cases occurring in the spring. Cases in Kings County have spiked in August, especially at homeless shelters. The Harborview Hall shelter in Seattle has seen 27 COVID-19 cases since the beginning of August.

A letter to the editor in the [Kitsap Sun](#) urges the Senate and White House to move quickly to enact a coronavirus relief package that includes emergency rental assistance and an eviction moratorium.

Wisconsin

COVID-19 is escalating [Milwaukee's housing crisis](#) and exacerbating racial disparities in housing. "Pre-COVID, there was definitely a racial pattern of filings, and that is definitely what we're seeing now," said Matt Mleczek, a research assistance with Princeton University's Eviction Lab. "Though this is a bad situation for renters in general, this is something that yet again is exposing and exacerbating long-running inequalities in cities like Milwaukee."

Guidance

Department of Housing and Urban Development

[COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Mitigating the Spread - Washington DC Shelter Profile](#) – August 28

[COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Equity Capacity Building - Hiring, Supervision, Training](#) – August 28

[COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Racial Trauma and Trauma-Informed Services](#) – August 28

[COVID-19 Homeless System Response: HMIS Budget and Staffing](#) – August 28

[Continuum of Care \(CoC\) FAQ: Can a CoC Take Actions within its Coordinated Entry Process to Prioritize Persons at Increased Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19?](#) – August 2020

Department of Treasury

[Interim Report of Costs Incurred by State and Local Recipients through June 30](#) – August 24

[Interim Report of Costs Incurred by the District of Columbia and Territories through June 30](#) – August 24

[Interim Report of Costs by Category Incurred by State and Local Recipients through June 30](#) – August 24

[Interim Report of Costs by Category Incurred by the District of Columbia and Territories through June 30](#) – August 24

Disaster Housing Recovery

Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – August 31, 2020

As with other disasters, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition stands ready to support disaster-impacted communities to ensure that federal disaster recovery efforts reach impacted households, including the lowest-income and most marginalized people who are often the hardest hit by disasters and have fewest resources to recover.

Federal Action & National News

Department of Agriculture (USDA)

USDA [released a statement](#) on August 24 reminding communities, farmers and ranchers, families and small businesses in the path of Tropical Storm Marco and Hurricane Laura that USDA has disaster assistance programs to help survivors recover. USDA partnered with FEMA to create the [Disaster Resource Center](#). USDA also developed a [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#) to help survivors learn which disaster assistance programs are available to them.

Department of Housing and Urban Development

HUD [announced](#) on August 25 that it will provide support to homeowners and low-income renters displaced by the California wildfires. HUD can offer foreclosure relief and other assistance to certain families living in Lake, Monterey, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, and Yolo counties.

FEMA

FEMA announced on August 27 that [Arkansas](#) has been approved for emergency protective measures (Category B) under FEMA's Public Assistance program to supplement state and local response efforts to Hurricane Laura.

FEMA [announced](#) on August 25 that President Trump amended the emergency declarations for Louisiana and Texas to include reimbursement for eligible emergency protective measures (Category B) in areas impacted by

Hurricanes Laura and Marco. The Texas counties and Louisiana parishes were previously limited to direct federal assistance and reimbursement for mass care.

FEMA on August 25 [approved Arizona's request](#) for a Fire Management Assistance Grant for the Griffin Fire burning in Gila County.

Governor Gavin Newsom [announced](#) on August 22 that the White House approved California's request for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration to support the state's response to the Northern California wildfires.

Reporting

NLIHC's Diane Yentel spoke with [Marketplace](#) about the resources needed to evacuate safely from disaster zones. The article highlights how the pandemic and subsequent economic fallout are creating additional barriers to evacuating.

[Mother Jones](#) reported on the 100-mile stretch from Texas to Louisiana that faced an "unsurvivable" storm surge due to Hurricane Laura. "Many in the path of Hurricane Laura are already reeling from coronavirus, and financial fallout, and were struggling mightily to avoid homelessness even before coronavirus and this disaster," said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel.

The Union of Concerned Scientists discusses the [inequities of evacuating](#), highlighting that both evacuating to safety and sheltering in place require resources. Data indicate that for many people, decisions about whether and how to evacuate are heavily influenced by long-standing racial and socioeconomic inequities.

Hurricane Laura

[Houston Public Media](#) reported that while the city of Galveston was under a mandatory evacuation order due to Hurricane Laura, some people, including low-income seniors and people experiencing homelessness, were forced to weather the storm.

The [Beaumont Enterprise](#) reported on evacuations that took place in Port Arthur ahead of Hurricane Laura. After the coronavirus-related economic fallout, some residents did not have the resources to evacuate.

As Hurricane Laura loomed, some Houston residents are still [struggling to rebuild](#) from Hurricane Harvey. Some residents have endured challenging, often [hazardous living conditions](#) while waiting months, and even years for disaster assistance from the city. The State of Texas and City of Houston have been fighting over [how to manage](#) the rebuilding effort. "The government is bickering over funding as far as who it belongs to, but it really belongs to the residents, and the residents are still here waiting with hands empty," said Julia Orduña of Texas Housers.

Iowa Derecho

Dozens of families were left without shelter after being given only [two days' notice to vacate](#) their apartment complex in Cedar Rapids for storm damage repairs. Many of the residents do not have the resources to move and are non-English speakers. The number of people experiencing homelessness is [estimated to have doubled](#) due to the Iowa derecho.

The [Washington Post](#) reports that the pandemic has complicated the disaster crisis response. Many Iowans left homeless due to the derecho have been reluctant to go to traditional shelters for fear of contracting the coronavirus and have been camping in tents or staying in damaged homes.

[Hundreds of refugee families](#) in eastern Iowa are homeless after this month's derecho. The Refugee Alliance of Central Iowa says there are approximately 250 people displaced by the derecho.

[KCRG](#) reported on August 19 that residents at a HUD-subsidized apartment building in Cedar Rapids were among those still without power after the devastating derecho. The residents at the Robert E. Schorg Manor are mostly seniors and people with disabilities.

Budget and Appropriations

NLIHC's Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding Sends Letter to House and Senate THUD Appropriators on FY21 Spending Bill

NLIHC's Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF) sent a [letter](#) on August 27 to the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) thanking the House for their work securing increased funding and meaningful protections for fiscal year (FY) 2021 and urging the Senate to do the same.

Despite strict spending caps on defense and domestic programs required by the Budget Control Act, the House bill provided at least \$1.5 billion above FY20 enacted levels and \$13 billion more than the president's FY21 budget request (see *Memo*, [7/13](#)). The bill rebukes the administration's harmful and discriminatory policies advanced by HUD Secretary Ben Carson, including the agency's proposed anti-transgender rule change to the Equal Access Rule and its proposal to roll back the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule of 2015 (see *Memo*, [1/13](#)).

The letter also brings attention to HUD's delayed disbursement of CARES Act funding despite Secretary Carson's broad authority to expedite the use of funds. "HUD has moved with a glacial pace to distribute these potentially lifesaving funds and has not been transparent in its decision-making process," the letter states. "Congress should hold HUD accountable to its obligation to distribute CARES Act resources with the urgency and transparency this moment requires."

Read the letter at: <https://tinyurl.com/y4hnqd2r>

Read NLIHC's analysis of the House FY21 THUD bill at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5yueps9>

HUD

HUD SNAPS Office Posts Updated Version of CoC Tool for Analyzing Racial Disparities in Homelessness

HUD's Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS) announced an updated version of its Continuum of Care (CoC) "[CoC Analysis Tool: Race and Ethnicity](#)" on August 25. SNAPS, which is in the Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD), writes that the coronavirus crisis has surfaced and made worse long-standing race and ethnicity disparities in homelessness and housing instability. SNAPS indicates that the tool can help analysis of racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness, and that such an analysis is a critical first step in identifying and changing racial and ethnic bias in CoC systems and services.

The tool is an Excel sheet with various bar charts. After a user selects their CoC, the first bar chart shows racial distributions for all people living in poverty, people experiencing homelessness, and people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. By comparing racial distributions between persons experiencing homelessness and persons experiencing poverty, it is possible to identify racial disparities in homelessness that poverty alone cannot account for. The bar charts also include the racial distribution for individuals in families with children who were experiencing homelessness. The charts in the center and on the right show the racial disparities for

youth and veterans experiencing homelessness, respectively. The next set of charts displays the distribution of Hispanic and Non-Hispanic groups in the same configurations, enabling a comparison between rates of poverty and rates of homelessness among singles, families, youth, and veterans.

SNAPS notes that the tool can help communities identify disparities in who experiences homelessness in their CoC but does not shed light on how the homeless service system is serving communities of color. The “[CoC Analysis Tool Overview](#)” links to “[Racial Disparities in Homelessness in the United States](#)” from the National Alliance to End Homelessness and “[How to Start Addressing Racial Disparities in Your Community](#)” from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness.

In an email announcing the updated tool, SNAPS notes that once communities have reviewed their quantitative data, they should seek input from people with lived experience and people representing the underserved population groups to understand how disparities are being experienced and design strategies to improve equitable access and outcomes.

The updated “CoC Analysis Tool: Race and Ethnicity” is at: <https://bit.ly/2QuZzOZ>

The “CoC Analysis Tool Overview” is at: <https://bit.ly/32shag6>

The actual “CoC Analysis Tool 2.1” is at: <https://bit.ly/3gwrZCE>

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

HUD PIH Notice Extends Assisted Unit Standard for Voucher Rent Reasonableness Assessment

HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) posted [Notice PIH 2020-19](#) on August 21 modifying the standard for determining whether a unit is considered “assisted” in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) or Project-Based Voucher (PBV) programs when assessing whether the rent paid by a public housing agency (PHA) to an owner is “reasonable.” The notice extends the “assisted unit” standard from limited “Housing Conversion Actions” in earlier [Notice PIH 2011-46](#) to all projects undergoing any conversion action that triggers eligibility for a Tenant Protection Voucher (TPV).

“Rent reasonableness” for the HCV and PBV programs means the rent a PHA pays to the owner is not greater than the rent paid to the owner for comparable, unassisted units in the property. Generally, units for which an owner charges rents that are below that charged to other households, or market-rate rents, are considered “unassisted units” when determining rent reasonableness. Rents for these particular units in a property must be considered when determining whether rent charged by an owner to the PHA for an HCV- or PBV-assisted unit is reasonable.

Sometimes owners choose to charge below market rents to protect households from a rent increase due solely to a “conversion action.” These households are often long-time tenants who had been paying below market rents prior to the conversion action, and in many cases are elderly. Under these specific circumstances such units would be considered assisted and excluded from a PHA’s rent reasonableness calculation.

Conversion actions occur when a private owner with a HUD Multifamily Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) contract decides to opt-out of (not renew) the contract, or a private owner with a HUD-insured mortgage decides to prepay it, among other actions.

The notice considers a unit “assisted” if it is in the Multifamily program and undergoes any of the conversion actions listed above, or if in [Notice PIH 2019-01/H2019-02](#), “Funding Availability for Set-Aside Tenant Protection Vouchers” (see [Memo, 2/25/19](#)) for which the property has received TPVs. A unit is “assisted” if a

public housing development is demolished or disposed under Section 18, voluntarily converts to vouchers under Section 22, is required to convert to vouchers under Section 33, (see the NLIHC [public housing webpage](#)) or is removed through the [Choice Neighborhoods Initiative](#) (CNI).

The notice also considers a unit “assisted” if on certain dates it is occupied by a household who did not receive a TPV when a conversion action occurred, or if an owner provides a below-market rent or other rent concessions to a household who did not receive a TPV. In addition, a unit is assisted if there are rent restrictions placed on the unit capping the rent at below-market levels.

Notice PIH 2020-19 is at: <https://bit.ly/2Yz9qrq>

PIH’s updated rent reasonableness chapter in the *Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook* is at: <https://bit.ly/3aUIzep>

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

More information about Project-Based Vouchers is on [page 4-8](#) of NLIHC’s *2020 Advocates’ Guide*.

More information about Tenant Protection Vouchers is on [page 4-12](#) of NLIHC’s *2020 Advocates’ Guide*.

More information about Section 18 demolition/disposition, Section 22 voluntary conversion of public housing to vouchers, and Section 33 required conversion is on [page 4-50](#) of NLIHC’s *2020 Advocates’ Guide* and on NLIHC’s public housing webpage, <https://bit.ly/3lkoqmE>

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

HUD PIH Publishes Moving to Work (MTW) Expansion Operations Notice

HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) posted the final “[Operations Notice for the Expansion of the Moving to Work \(MTW\) Demonstration Program](#)” in the Federal Register on August 28. This version of the Operations Notice establishes requirements for implementing the MTW demonstration for public housing agencies (PHAs) applying for one of 100 new MTW slots. The original Operations Notice was published on January 23, 2017 (see *Memo*, [1/23/17](#), [5/8/17](#)). The final notice is effective immediately. Next week’s *Memo* will provide a thorough analysis of the final notice, including a comparison with the previous version (see *Memo*, [10/9/18](#), [10/15/18](#), [10/22/18](#), [10/29/18](#), and [12/3/18](#)).

Background on MTW and the Expansion

In 1996, Congress established MTW initially authorizing HUD to admit up to 30 agencies. Congress later increased that limit to 39 by 2011. The “Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016” authorized HUD to expand the MTW demonstration to an additional 100 high performing PHAs over a seven-year period ending in 2022. PHAs will be added to the MTW demonstration in groups (cohorts), each of which will be overseen by a research advisory committee to ensure the demonstrations are evaluated with rigorous research protocols, quantitative analysis, and comparisons to control groups. Each year’s cohort of MTW sites will be directed by HUD to test one specific policy change. MTW agencies may use additional MTW waivers as long as they do not conflict or interfere with their cohort study.

For each cohort, separate PIH notices are planned. [Notice PIH-2018-17](#) invited PHAs to apply for a slot in Cohort #1 “MTW Flexibilities on Small PHAs.” Cohort 1 is limited to PHAs with a combination of 1,000 or

fewer public housing units and vouchers (see Memo, [10/22/18](#)). [Notice PIH-2019-04](#) offered PHAs an opportunity to express interest in Cohort 2, “Rent Reform” and [Notice PIH-2020-21](#) posted on August 28, 2020 invites PHAs to apply for a slot in Cohort 2. The “Rent Reform” Cohort is limited to PHAs with a combination of at least 1,000 non-elderly and non-disabled public housing residents and voucher households (see [Memo, 3/18/19](#)). PIH has not yet selected PHAs for Cohorts 1 and 2. Cohort 3 will test work requirements and Cohort #4 will test landlord incentives for participating in the voucher program.

Under MTW, HUD can waive nearly all provisions of the “United States Housing Act of 1937” and the accompanying regulations. This includes most of the main rules and standards governing Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) and public housing, with some exceptions such as civil rights, labor, and environmental laws. MTW agencies are also allowed to shift public housing Capital and Operating Funds and HCV assistance (including Administrative Fees as well as Housing Assistance Payment, HAP) to purposes other than those for which they were originally appropriated – referred to as “fungibility.” No matter how funds are mixed, they will now be called “MTW Funding.”

There are three MTW statutory goals: reducing costs and increasing cost-effectiveness, providing incentives for self-sufficiency, and increasing housing choices for low-income families. PHA’s granted MTW status (“MTW agencies”) must meet five statutory requirements:

- Ensuring that 75% of the families they assist have income at or below 50% of area median income;
- Establishing a reasonable rent policy;
- Assisting substantially the same number of low-income families as they would without MTW funding flexibility;
- Assisting a mix of families by size comparable to the mix they would have served if they were not in MTW; and
- Ensuring that assisted units meet housing quality standards.

In practice, HUD’s enforcement of these requirements for the original 39 MTW agencies has been highly permissive.

The Final Operations Notice Appendices

The most important components of the final Operations Notice for advocates to read are the three appendices. Appendix I “MTW Waivers” charts “MTW activities” that MTW agencies may implement without HUD approval, as long as they are implemented with the “safe harbors” tied to the specific allowed MTW activity. Appendix II has instructions for any required written impact analyses and hardship policies. Impact analyses are required for certain activities, such as work requirements, term-limited assistance, and stepped rent. Written financial and other hardship policies must be developed for most MTW activities. Appendix III explains the method for calculating the requirement that MTW agencies house substantially the same number of families as they would have absent MTW.

General Description of Waivers in Final Notice

There are four basic categories of waivers: “MTW Waivers,” “Safe Harbor Waivers,” “Agency-Specific Waivers,” and “Cohort-Specific Waivers.”

MTW Waivers: MTW agencies may conduct any activity/policy in Appendix I without PIH review and approval. However, each specific eligible activity/policy has specific “safe harbor” requirements/limitations that an MTW agency must follow, for example requiring a hardship policy or not applying an activity/policy to elderly people.

Safe Harbor Waivers: MTW agencies may request PIH approval to expand an MTW Waiver activity/policy in Appendix I in a way inconsistent with the safe harbors for that specific MTW Waiver activity/policy. PIH has not yet provide instructions on how PHAs may justify such requests. However, when submitting a Safe Harbor Waiver, an MTW agency must hold a public meeting to specifically discuss the Safe Harbor Waivers. This meeting is in addition to following the PHA Plan public participation process requirements. The MTW agency must consider, in consultation with the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) and any tenant associations, all of the comments received at the public hearing. The comments received by the public, RABs, and tenant associations must be submitted by the MTW agency, along with the MTW agency's description of how the comments were considered, as a required attachment to the MTW Supplement (see below).

Agency-Specific Waivers: MTW agencies may seek PIH approval for an Agency-Specific Waiver in order to implement additional activities not among those in the Appendix I. The request must have an analysis of the potential impact on residents as well as a hardship policy. A PHA must follow the same public participation process described above for Safe Harbor Waivers.

Cohort-Specific Waivers: MTW agencies may be provided Cohort-Specific Waivers if additional waivers not included in Appendix I are necessary to allow implementation of the required cohort study. Cohort-Specific Waivers will be detailed in the applicable Selection Notice for that cohort study.

Other Key Features of the Operations Notice

MTW agencies will submit an "MTW Supplement" to the Annual PHA Plan. The MTW Supplement form has not been finalized. The MTW Supplement must go through a public process along with the Annual PHA Plan, following all of the Annual PHA Plan public participation requirements. So-called "Qualified PHAs," those with fewer than 550 public housing units and vouchers combined will be required to submit an MTW Supplement each year.

An MTW agency must implement one or multiple "reasonable rent policies" during the term of its MTW designation. PIH defines a reasonable rent policy as any change in the regulations on how rent is calculated for a household, such as any Tenant Rent Policies in Appendix I.

MTW PHAs will maintain MTW designation for twenty years, with the MTW waivers expiring at the end of the 20-year term. The previous Operations Notice had a 12-year term.

An MTW agency's MTW program applies to all of the MTW agency's public housing units, tenant-based HCV assistance, project-based HCV assistance (PBV), and homeownership units.

An MTW agency may spend up to 10% of its HCV HAP funding on "local, non-traditional activities," as described in Appendix I, without prior HUD approval. Examples include providing: shallow rent subsidies, rent subsidies to supportive housing programs to help homeless households, services to low-income people who are not public housing or voucher tenants, and gap-financing to develop Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties. An MTW agency may spend more than 10% by seeking PIH approval through a Safe Harbor Waiver.

The *Federal Register* version of the Operations Notice is at: <https://bit.ly/3hCrqZf>

An easier to read version of the Operations Notice is at: <https://bit.ly/2ECV569>

More information about MTW prior to the expansion is on [page 4-57](#) of NLIHC's *2020 Advocates' Guide*.

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

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

More information about the Annual PHA Plan is on [page 7-61](#) of NLIHC's 2020 Advocates' Guide.

Opportunity Starts at Home

New Podcast Episode with ZERO TO THREE

The [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) multisector affordable homes campaign released its [25th podcast episode](#), entitled "Early Childhood Development & Housing Stability." In this episode, the campaign speaks to Dr. Myra Jones-Taylor, chief policy officer at ZERO TO THREE. Dr. Jones-Taylor discusses research around baby and toddler development, persistent racial disparities, effective best practices, the short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19, and why ZERO TO THREE is pushing Congress to invest in housing stability. [ZERO TO THREE](#), which is a Roundtable member of the campaign, is a leading national nonprofit that works to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life.

"Babies need a place to call home," said Dr. Jones-Taylor. "Safe, affordable housing is at the heart of healthy early development. I can't think of anything that is more foundational to young children's well-being. The experience of the pandemic has laid bare that our systems for supporting the health and well-being of families with young children are threadbare to practically non-existent. For us, it's important that Congress hears from the baby perspective so we can make this connection for them."

You can listen to the full episode [here](#). To listen to past episodes, click [here](#). Since it launched, the campaign's podcast series has received over 10,500 plays.

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

Housing Leadership Awards

NLIHC, Members of Congress, and Others Honor Jennifer Ho, Bill Faith, and Shauna Sorrells with the 2020 Housing Leadership Awards

NLIHC, joined by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Tina Smith (D-MN), Representative Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO), and others, presented **Jennifer Leimaile Ho**, **Bill Faith**, and **Shauna Sorrells** with the 2020 Housing



Leadership Awards during NLIHC's 38th Annual Housing Leadership Awards Celebration livestreamed on Wednesday, August 26. A recording of the celebration is available at: <https://bit.ly/3hWkXIu>

Marla Newman, NLIHC board chair, kicked off the event with words of support for the communities of the Gulf Coast preparing for the landfall of Hurricane Laura, assuring them that NLIHC would work with them to ensure a just, equitable recovery after the storm—just as it is leading nationwide in response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Eileen Fitzgerald, head of housing affordability philanthropy at Wells Fargo, host sponsor of the Leadership Awards Celebration, also delivered opening remarks, commending NLIHC for its advocacy and research and congratulating the honorees.

Marla Newman presented the 2020 Edward Brooke Housing Leadership Award posthumously to **Shauna Sorrells**, former NLIHC executive committee board member, director of the Office of Public Housing Programs at HUD, and chief operating officer at the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County. Representative Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO) described Shauna as “one of Kansas City’s finest housing advocates,” lauded her twenty years of tireless work to end homelessness and housing insecurity in the U.S. and urged all those in attendance to carry the torch Shauna left with us. NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel spoke about her close friend Shauna and introduced Shauna’s son Isaiah Dadzie and his father Solomon, who accepted the award in Shauna’s honor.

Next, Marla presented the Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award, named after former NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, to **Jennifer Leimaile Ho**, commissioner of Minnesota Housing and former senior advisor at HUD and deputy director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). The award recognized Jennifer for her outstanding work to end homelessness and housing poverty in the U.S. since 1999 at Hearth Connection, USICH, HUD, Minnesota Housing, and beyond. Jennifer was praised for her years of service by Senator Tina Smith (D-MN), who said of her friend, “I’ve worked shoulder to shoulder with Commissioner Ho, fighting for equity in housing and for the fundamental value that every person deserves a safe, stable, affordable place to live.” Jennifer accepted the award with a call to action: “Housing justice and racial justice belong in the same breath,” she said. Speaking from her home state of Minnesota, the epicenter of the 2020 uprisings against racial injustice, Jennifer urged attendees to seize the current moment and fight for “bigger and bolder solutions” to racial inequity.

Marla then presented the Cushing Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award to **Bill Faith**, executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio and former NLIHC board member and chair, for his many years of leadership, dedication and tireless work to secure decent, safe, and affordable homes for the lowest-income people in Ohio and across the U.S. “He gets both the big picture and the policy details that matter, that make an idea work on the ground, in our state, [and] across the country” said Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), congratulating Bill for the “well-deserved” honor. The award is named for NLIHC’s founder Cushing Niles Dolbeare, a pioneer of the affordable housing movement, and Bill spoke about Cushing’s early days establishing the Coalition and about her inspiring leadership, respect for all partners and stakeholders, commitment to data-driven advocacy, and unyielding commitment to securing affordable homes for those most in need.

Diane Yentel closed out the event by congratulating all three honorees and committing NLIHC to continue their legacy in leading in the fight to ensure the lowest-income people in America have safe, accessible, and affordable homes.

Watch the recording at: <https://bit.ly/3hWkXIu>

Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020

Democratic Party and the Republican Party Platforms Address Affordable Housing

The recently adopted Democratic Party [platform](#) and Republican Party [platform](#) from 2016 (the Republicans did not adopt a new platform in 2020) both address housing-related policies, but the differences are stark. The Democratic platform promises robust investments in affordable housing production and rental assistance, strong efforts to address systemic racism and discrimination, and actions to address the coronavirus pandemic. The Republican platform seeks to advance responsible homeownership, reduce the role of the federal government in housing policy, and roll back the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule.

Democratic Platform

The 2020 Democratic platform includes language addressing the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on housing affordability and the eviction crisis; efforts to address the systemic and historic racism in housing policy; investments in the national Housing Trust Fund, Housing Choice Vouchers and Public Housing; and strong and proactive non-discrimination protections. The following are selections from the Democratic party platform:

“COVID-19 has laid bare deep fault lines in our economy, our society, and our health care system. Disparities in health care access, in access to paid sick leave, in environmental quality, in the employment market, and in housing have contributed to disproportionate rates of infection and death among Black Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and certain Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.”

“The United States is facing an unprecedented housing crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and President Trump's recession, with millions of families at risk of being evicted. We support state and local measures to freeze rent increases, evictions, utility shutoffs, and late fees for rent, to prevent families from becoming homeless and making the pandemic even worse.”

“Housing in America should be stable, accessible, safe, healthy, energy efficient, and, above all, affordable. No one should have to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, so families have ample resources left to meet their other needs and save for retirement. Democrats believe the government should take aggressive steps to increase the supply of housing, especially affordable housing, and address long-standing economic and racial inequities in our housing markets.”

“Democrats will supercharge investment in the Housing Trust Fund to greatly expand the number of affordable, accessible housing units on the market. We will expand the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit to incentivize private-sector construction of affordable housing, and make sure urban, suburban, and rural areas all benefit.”

“Democrats are committed to ending homelessness in America. Democrats commit to providing Section 8 housing support for every eligible family and will enact protections to keep landlords from discriminating against voucher recipients. Democrats support a housing-first approach to ending homelessness, because having a stable and safe place to live is essential to helping a person tackle any other challenges they may face, from mental illness to substance use disorders to post-traumatic stress disorder.”

“We will act swiftly to end homelessness among veterans and will enact strong protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth, especially Black, Latino, and Native American LGBTQ+ youth, who too often find themselves on the streets.”

Republican Platform

The 2020 Republican National Convention did not adopt a new platform. Instead, Republicans have re-adopted the 2016 platform, so it does not specifically address the current COVID-19 crisis or any of the Trump administration's policies since his inauguration in 2017. The party platform includes incentives for homeownership and regulatory changes and for minimizing the federal role in zoning decisions. Selected quotes from the 2016 Republican party platform include:

“More than six million households had to move from homeownership to renting. Rental costs escalated so that today nearly 12 million families spend more than 50 percent of their incomes just on rent. The national homeownership rate has sharply fallen and the rate for minority households and young adults has plummeted. So many remain unemployed or underemployed, and for the lucky ones with jobs, rising rents make it harder to save for a mortgage.”

“Our goal is to advance responsible homeownership while guarding against the abuses that led to the housing collapse. We must scale back the federal role in the housing market, promote responsibility on the part of borrowers and lenders, and avoid future taxpayer bailouts. Reforms should provide clear and prudent underwriting standards and guidelines on predatory lending and acceptable lending practices. Compliance with regulatory standards should constitute a legal safe harbor to guard against opportunistic litigation by trial lawyers.”

“Zoning decisions have always been, and must remain, under local control. The current Administration [referring in 2016 to the Obama administration] is trying to seize control of the zoning process through its Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing regulation. It threatens to undermine zoning laws in order to socially engineer every community in the country. While the federal government has a legitimate role in enforcing non-discrimination laws, this regulation has nothing to do with proven or alleged discrimination and everything to do with hostility to the self-government of citizens.”

The *2020 Democratic Party Platform* is at: <https://bit.ly/2El69Ff>

The *2016 Republican Party Platform* is at: <https://bit.ly/2YwlvNU>

“Protecting Low-Income People from Voter Intimidation and Voter Caging” - Webinar on September 17

Learn what you need to know about “[Protecting Low-Income People from Voter Intimidation and Voter Caging Tactics](#)” during the next NLIHC *Our Homes, Our Votes 2020* webinar on September 17 at 3 pm ET. This webinar will explore how nonprofits and community volunteers can best protect low-income people from voter-intimidation efforts. Register for this webinar and NLIHC's entire “[Third Thursdays at Three](#)” webinar and podcast series on nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement, free to the public, at: <https://bit.ly/2Luj0F3>

Educating voters in advance of Election Day about going to the polls, voting by mail, or voting early, even if they have been told their registration is not current, is a best practice, along with ensuring that everyone casts at least a provisional ballot. The webinar will also highlight the importance of establishing relationships in advance of Election Day with election officials who monitor polling locations.

NLIHC's *Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020* project provides training and resources to resident leaders, housing providers, social service professionals, community organizers, and others on key aspects of effective nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement. The “Third Thursdays at Three” webinar series is a 15-part effort to explore best practices, new ideas, and legal considerations for 501(c)(3) nonpartisan election engagement on issues such as voter registration, candidate engagement, election education, and getting out the vote. [View recordings of previous sessions \(1-12\) on our website.](#)

[Register here for the “Third Thursdays at Three” series!](#)

Upcoming topics in the “Third Thursdays at Three” series include:

Session 13

Voter Mobilization Part 2 – Protecting Low-Income People from Voter Intimidation and Voter Caging Tactics

Thursday, September 17 at 3 pm ET

Session 14

Election Day! Getting Out the Vote

Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 3 pm ET

Presenters will review the most effective Election Day get-out-the-vote practices such as coordinating rides to the polls, hosting “walk to the polls” groups in low-income housing communities with nearby polling locations, using snacks and music to keeping people in line at busy polling locations, and using Election Day visibility volunteers with signs reminding people to vote. The discussion will also explore effective “knock-and-drag” efforts throughout Election Day for identifying who has not yet voted and sending volunteers to their doors.

Session 15

After the Vote—Holding Candidates to their Promises

Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 3 pm ET

Once the election is over, it is important to hold candidates to their promises. Learn how to track the success of your voter turnout efforts to demonstrate to newly elected officials that low-income renters are an important and active constituency. Presenters will discuss the best ways to constructively remind elected officials of their campaign promises while establishing relationships with new legislative staff members.

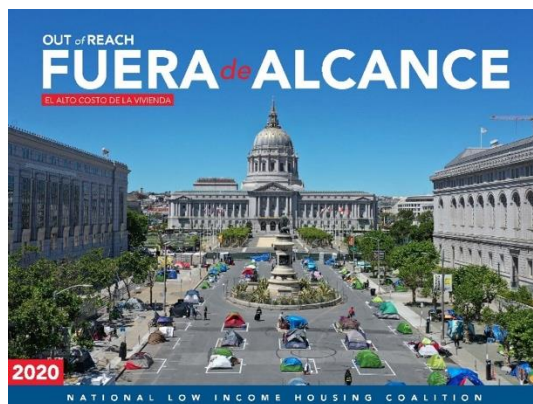
Don’t miss these important training opportunities. Put “Third Thursdays at Three” in your calendar and [register for the presentation series today.](#)

Research

NLIHC Releases Out of Reach 2020 in Spanish (Fuera de Alcance 2020)

NLIHC released a Spanish edition of its report [*Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing 2020 \(Fuera de Alcance: El Alto Costo de la Vivienda 2020\)*](#) on August 25. The report documents the significant growing gap between renters’ wages and the cost of rental housing throughout the U.S.

The report’s “Housing Wage” is the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a modest rental home while spending no more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities. In 2020, the national two-bedroom Housing Wage is \$23.96 per hour. A household must have an annual income of at least \$49,830 to afford a two-bedroom rental home at HUD’s average fair-market rent of \$1,246 per month. The average hourly wage of renters in the U.S. is \$18.22, \$5.74 less than the two-bedroom Housing Wage.



The findings in *Out of Reach 2020* demonstrate the large disparity between the incomes of low-wage workers and other vulnerable populations and the cost of modest rental homes. In response to the pandemic, lawmakers should secure emergency rental assistance to help keep families stably housed. A permanent solution to this affordability problem requires increased federal funding for key affordable housing programs like Housing Choice Vouchers, the national Housing Trust Fund, public housing, and project-based rental assistance. These critical programs serve as a safety net, providing stable, affordable homes for the lowest income households.

Fuera de Alcance: El Alto Costo de la Vivienda 2020 is available at: <https://bit.ly/3aRjMI9>

Housing Voucher Denial Rates Higher in Boundaries for High-Performing Schools

In “[Why Schools Should Care about Housing Voucher Discrimination](#),” scholars at the Urban Institute find that landlords were more likely to deny applicants with Housing Choice Vouchers in the boundaries of high-performing school districts. In jurisdictions that had voucher nondiscrimination laws, some landlords still told would-be renters they did not take vouchers, but the school-performance gap was mitigated or erased.

This research revisits a [2018 pilot study of housing voucher discrimination](#) conducted by the Urban Institute, which found that landlords were more likely to reject voucher holders in lower-poverty neighborhoods. That study selected a random sample of rental unit listings in Los Angeles, California; Fort Worth, Texas; Newark, New Jersey; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Washington, D.C. They conducted 3,870 “acceptance tests” by calling landlords and inquiring about the use of vouchers. In Fort Worth, 78% of landlords refused vouchers, compared to 76% in Los Angeles and 67% in Philadelphia. In Newark and Washington, DC, where voucher non-discrimination laws protect tenants, the denial rates were 31% and 15%, respectively.

For this study, researchers combined the 2018 data about voucher acceptance rates with data on public school performance from ED Facts student assessment data and School Attendance Boundary Survey data. The school performance measure was the share of students testing as proficient in math and reading. Because school boundary data were not complete for Fort Worth, the researchers focused on Los Angeles, Newark, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC.

In Los Angeles, Newark, and Philadelphia, school performance is higher in areas where vouchers are more likely to be denied. For example, in school catchment areas (boundaries for assignment to particular schools) where vouchers were accepted in Philadelphia, 27% of elementary students scored proficient in reading and 15% scored proficient in math. In catchment areas where vouchers were denied, 35% of students scored proficient in reading and 22% scored proficient in math. In Los Angeles, the areas where vouchers were denied had proficiency scores that were 6 percentage points higher in reading and 5 percentage points higher in math than areas where vouchers were accepted. The differences were smaller in Newark—there was a 3 percentage point gap in reading and math—which may reflect the existence of a voucher non-discrimination law in New

Jersey. In Washington, DC, there was not a statistically significant difference in school performance between areas where vouchers were accepted or denied.

A summary of this research can be found at: <https://urbn.is/3aUtSIc>

A technical appendix with more details about the study can be found at: <https://urbn.is/3gthZKD>

Resource

Updated Data Available for the National Housing Preservation Database

The [National Housing Preservation Database](#), maintained by NLIHC and the Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation (PAHRC), is a tool for advocates and researchers to identify federally funded properties at-risk of being lost from the affordable housing stock as a result of expiring rent restrictions. The database was recently updated. The data include updated subsidy and property information from HUD, Treasury, U.S. Rural Development programs, including Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Section 8, Section 202 Direct Loans, Section 515, Section 514, Public Housing, and HUD insured mortgages. This latest update also includes new data on Public Housing REAC scores and buildings with 11 or more units assisted by Project-Based Vouchers and Mod Rehab.

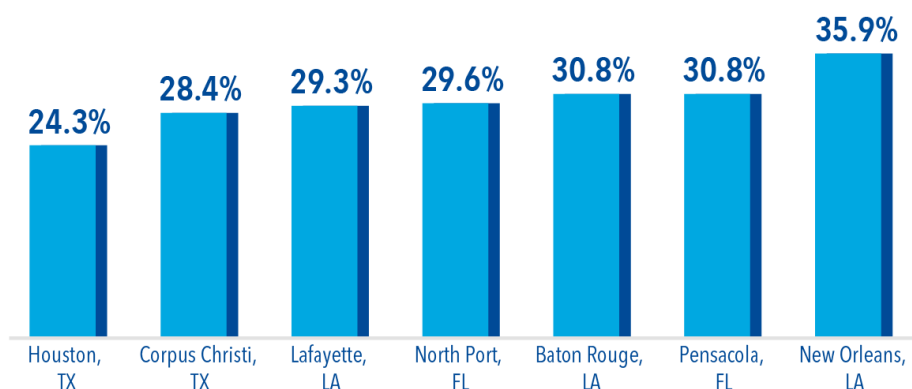
If you have questions about the database, contact NLIHC Vice President of Research Andrew Aurand at 202-662-1530 ext. 245 or Kelly McElwain, PAHRC's Database Manager, at 800-873-0242 ext. 259.

This resource is available at: <http://www.preservationdatabase.org/>

Fact of the Week

In Gulf Coast Metro Areas, 3 in 10 Extremely Low-Income Renters Lack Access to a Vehicle for Evacuation

Share of Extremely Low-Income Renter Households with No Vehicle Access in Gulf Coast Metros



Source: American Community Survey PUMS, 2018.
Respondents asked how many vehicles are kept at home for use by members of household.

Events

Join *Tenant Talk Live!* This Monday at 6 pm ET

[Join](#) resident leaders and NLIHC staff for the next *Tenant Talk Live!* webinar. We will discuss how low-income residents can mobilize for the 2020 election. The next *Tenant Talk Live!* bimonthly call/webinar with resident leaders from across the country will take place next Monday, August 31 at 6 pm ET (5 pm CT, 4 pm MT, 3 pm, PT). Register at: <https://bit.ly/3dNekGP>

The most recent *Tenant Talk Live!* webinar included a presentation by the National Housing Law Project's (NHLP) DeeDee Swesnik and Deborah Thrope. Center on Budget Policy Priorities' Sonya Acosta also joined us to discuss President Trump's executive orders on housing. Lastly, NLIHC staff discussed COVID relief bill discussions on Capitol Hill. Watch the recording at: <https://bit.ly/3hfyY3X>

Tenant Talk Live! provides opportunities for residents to connect with NLIHC and one another, share best practices, and learn how to be more involved in influencing federal housing policies and to lead in their communities.

NLIHC is committed to connecting and engaging with resident leaders in new, robust ways. If you are a low-income resident and have a topic you would like to propose for peer-sharing or if you want to be a speaker on an upcoming call/webinar, please email us at: karbuckle@nlihc.org

Register for *Tenant Talk Live!* at: <https://bit.ly/3dNekGP>

From the Field

Program in Rhode Island Creates Incentives for Landlords to Permanently House People Experiencing Homelessness

The State of Rhode Island partnered with United Way, the Realtors Association, and community providers such as NLIHC's state partner, Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless, to provide permanent housing for 123 people who had been experiencing homelessness and staying in hotels since the onset of the pandemic. The Housing NOW campaign, led by the Housing Action Team, secured 100 pledged units from landlords in one month. Landlords were willing to accept rapid rehousing vouchers due to a variety of incentives. The sustained efforts of the team to house additional unsheltered people is critical, given the filing of over 400 eviction cases in the first month alone since the reopening of district courts in June and the filing of over 400 eviction cases in that first month alone.

The issuance of rapid re-housing vouchers, coupled with incentives for landlords, has provided safety and security for individuals and families living in congregate shelters. Tenants pay 30% of their income toward rent and the landlords are paid the difference between the total rent and what the tenant can pay. Landlords who agree to accept vouchers receive a bonus of \$2,000 for the first unit and an additional \$500 bonus for each additional unit. They may also receive up to \$2,000 for upgrades like minor renovations and repairs.

In addition to obtaining 100 pledged units to rapidly re-house individuals and families, Housing Action Team members are striving to meet a weekly housing move in rate of 10 persons/week for the rest of the year, an additional goal of the Housing NOW campaign. The success and sustainability of the effort is due to a variety of endeavors by team members. They regularly host action-oriented meetings centered on task assignments and breaking through barriers to finding homes for people. They leverage cross-sector partnerships to maximize impact and use a team approach for solving problems. Lastly, the Housing Action Leadership Team is comprised of people with lived experience, which leads to solutions that consider the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

Another component of the campaign's success is direct involvement of the Governor's office in the effort. Staff from Governor Gina Raimondo's office are part of the efforts to identify and match available, vacant units with homeless households. Governor Raimondo has been a champion of the Housing Action Team, holding press conferences highlighting the landlord incentive program and the need for landlords to commit units to Rhode Islanders with the greatest needs.

The success of the pledged units for the landlord incentive program is far from the end of the road. The Housing Action Team continues to:

- Seek additional units;
- House more individuals and continue organizing and coordinating shelter cleanings, bolstering personal protective equipment (PPE) and necessary cleaning and hygiene supplies for shelter and outreach programs; and
- Ensure mobile COVID testing, protocols for symptom screening, and access to safe quarantine and isolation spaces, hygiene stations, and non-congregate shelter programs.

“The biggest challenge through all of this has been the same challenges so many other sectors have been experiencing,” said Jennifer Barrera who is currently juggling being the RI-HMIS Program Manager and the COVID lead at the Coalition. “When your scope of work is constantly changing, making progress in the face of daily triaging is *hard*. We've had to learn how to truly be flexible and quick thinkers in order to get this work done,”

[Learn more](#) about the Housing Action Team and the Housing NOW Campaign.

NLIHC News

NLIHC Welcomes Policy Intern Emmy Cohen

NLIHC is pleased to welcome Emmy Cohen as a policy intern for the fall. Emmy is pursuing her Master of Social Work with a specialization in community, administration, and policy practice at Howard University. As a graduate intern with The Community Builders in Washington, D.C. and Virginia, Emmy witnessed the impacts of state-level implementation of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative and the Housing Trust Fund. She is excited to join the NLIHC policy team to push forward the Coalition's agenda. Emmy earned her Bachelor of Arts in women's, gender, and sexuality studies and religion at American University.

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of August 23

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of August 23:

- “Why a historic eviction wave is bearing down on the U.S.,” *The Washington Post*, August 27 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5yd8dhn>
- “Cincinnati’s bold new law could help renters survive the eviction crisis,” *HuffPost*, August 27 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y57vtwua>
- “Hurricane Laura’s storm surge is predicted to be ‘unsurvivable’,” *Mother Jones* August 26 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y4nzpa7p>
- “People need basic resources to evacuate safely from disaster zones” *Marketplace*, August 26 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3eb4y96>
- “Kentucky announces eviction relief fund after U.S. moratorium expires,” *Newsweek* August 24 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5yh5tad>
- “Debt, eviction and hunger: millions fall back into crisis as stimulus and safety nets vanish,” *The Washington Post*, August 23 at: <https://tinyurl.com/y4gx2kmg>

[NLIHC Staff](#)

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Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245
Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244
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Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226
Bairy Diakite, Operations Manager, x254
Emma Foley, Research Intern, x249
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Kim Johnson, Housing Policy Analyst, x243
Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232
Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317
Joseph Lindstrom, Director, Field Organizing, x222
Mayerline Louis-Juste, Communications Specialist, x201
Lisa Marlow, Manager, Media Relations and Communications, x239
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Khara Norris, Director of Administration, x242
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Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Specialist, x246
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Dan Threet, Research Analyst, x202
Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Coordinator, x230
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