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Congress

Senate and House Release Assignments for Key Housing Committees

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives released assignments for key housing committees last week, although two vital committees – the House Committee on Financial Services and House Committee on Appropriations – have yet to finalize members.

In the Senate, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs oversees legislation, petitions, and other matters related to financial institutions, economic policy, housing, transportation, urban development, international trade and finance, and securities and investments. The Banking Committee includes a Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development that has jurisdiction over mass transit systems and general urban affairs and development and is the primary oversight committee for HUD.

Members of the [Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs](#) and members of the Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Urban Development (marked with an asterisk*) for the 118th Congress are as follows:

- Sherrod Brown (D-OH)*, *Chair*
- Tim Scott (R-SC), *Ranking Member*
- Tina Smith (D-MN)*, *Subcommittee Chair*
- Mike Rounds (R-SD)*, *Subcommittee Ranking Member*
- Jack Reed (D-RI)*
- Bob Menendez (D-NJ)*
- Jon Tester (D-MT)*
- Mark Warner (D-VA)
- Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)
- Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)*
- Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)*
- Krysten Sinema (I-AZ)
- Jon Ossoff (D-GA)*
- Raphael Warnock (D-GA)*
- Mike Crapo (R-ID)*
- Thom Tillis (R-NC)
- John Kennedy (R-LA)
- Bill Hagerty (R-TN)*
- Cynthia Lummis (R-WY)*
- Jerry Moran (R-KS)*
- Kevin Cramer (R-ND)*
- Steve Daines (R-MT)*

The [Senate Committee on Appropriations](#) is responsible for determining the amount of funding made available to federal programs in each fiscal year's budget. The Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) has jurisdiction over funding for the U.S. Department of Transportation and for HUD.

Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations and members of the THUD Subcommittee (marked with an asterisk*) for the 118th Congress are as follows:

- Patty Murray (D-WA)*, *Chair*
- Susan Collins (R-ME)*, *Ranking Member, Subcommittee Ranking Member*
- Brian Schatz (D-HI)*, *Subcommittee Chair*
- Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)*
- Richard Durbin (D-IL)*
- Jack Reed (D-RI)*
- Jon Tester (D-MT)
- Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
- Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
- Chris Coons (D-DE)*
- Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
- Chris Murphy (D-CT)*
- Joe Manchin (D-WV)*
- Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)*
- Martin Heinrich (D-NM)
- Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
- Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
- Lindsey Graham (R-SC)*
- Jerry Moran (R-KS)
- John Hoeven (R-ND)*
- John Boozman (R-AR)*
- Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)*
- John Kennedy (R-LA)*
- Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS)
- Mike Braun (R-IN)*
- Bill Hagerty (R-TN)
- Marco Rubio (R-FL)

The [Senate Finance Committee](#) oversees matters related to taxation and other general revenue measures, including the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC). Members of the Senate Finance Committee for the 118th Congress are as follows:

- Ron Wyden (D-OR), *Chair*
- Mike Crapo (R-ID), *Ranking Member*
- Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
- Maria Cantwell (D-WA)
- Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
- Tom Carper (D-DE)
- Ben Cardin (D-MD)
- Sherrod Brown (D-OH)
- Michael Bennet (D-CO)
- Robert Casey (D-PA)

- Mark Warner (D-VA)
- Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
- Maggie Hassan (D-NH)
- Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)
- Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)
- Chuck Grassley (R-IA)
- John Cornyn (R-TX)
- John Thune (R-SD)
- Tim Scott (R-SC)
- Bill Cassidy (R-LA)
- James Lankford (R-OK)
- Steve Daines (R-MT)
- Todd Young (R-IN)
- John Barrasso (R-WY)

In the House of Representatives, the delays involved in electing a speaker resulted in delayed committee assignments. In consequence, as of today (January 17), assignments for the [House Appropriations Committee](#), the THUD Subcommittee, the [House Financial Services Committee](#) (HFSC), and the Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance have yet to be finalized and publicly released.

However, it is known that that Representative Patrick McHenry (R-NC) will become the Chair of the powerful HFSC and Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) will serve as Ranking Member. Representative Warren Davidson (R-OH) will become Chair of the Housing and Insurance Subcommittee. Representative Kay Granger (R-TX) will become the next head of the House Appropriations Committee, and Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) will serve as Ranking Member. Representative Tom Cole (R-OK) and Representative Mike Quigley (D-IL) have been named as Chair and Ranking Member, respectively, of the THUD Subcommittee.

Members of the [House Ways and Means Committee](#) have also been announced. The chief tax writing committee in the House, the Ways and Means Committee has jurisdiction over taxation, tariffs, and other programs, including LIHTC. Members of the House Ways and Means Committee for the 118th Congress are as follows:

- Jason Smith (R-MO), *Chair*
- Richard Neal (D-MA), *Ranking Member*
- Kevin Brady (R-TX)
- Vern Buchanan (R-FL)
- Adrian Smith (R-NE)
- Mike Kelly (R-PA)
- Tom Rice (R-SC)
- David Schweikert (R-AZ)
- Darin LaHood (R-IL)
- Brad Wenstrup (R-OH)
- Jodey Arrington (R-TX)

- Drew Ferguson (R-GA)
- Ron Estes (R-KS)
- Lloyd Smucker (R-PA)
- Kevin Hern (R-OK)
- Carol Miller (R-WV)
- Greg Murphy (R-NC)
- David Kustoff (R-TN)
- Lloyd Doggett (D-TX)
- Mike Thompson (D-CA)
- John Larson (D-CT)
- Earl Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Ron Kind (D-WI)
- Bill Pascrell (D-NJ)
- Danny Davis (D-IL)
- Linda Sanchez (D-CA)
- Brian Higgins (D-NY)
- Terri Sewell (D-AL)
- Susan DelBene (D-WA)
- Judy Chu (D-CA)
- Gwen Moore (D-WI)
- Dan Kildee (D-MI)
- Brendan Boyle (D-PA)
- Don Beyer (D-VA)
- Dwight Evans (D-PA)
- Brad Schneider (D-IL)
- Tom Suozzi (D-NY)
- Jimmy Panetta (D-CA)
- Stephanie Murphy (D-FL)
- Jimmy Gomez (D-CA)
- Steven Horsford (D-NV)
- Stacey Plaskett (D-VI)

Membership lists will be updated as more information becomes available.

Learn more about key housing committees in Congress by consulting NLIHC's *Advocates' Guide*: <https://bit.ly/2VLIK4c>

Homelessness and Housing First

USICH Hosts Webinar on Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) hosted a [webinar](#) on January 10 focusing on the Biden administration's federal plan for ending homelessness in the U.S. The webinar provided an overview of the plan, [All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#), which was released by the Biden administration on December 19 (see [Memo, 12/19/2022](#)). Developed by USICH in collaboration with the 19 federal agencies comprising the USICH council, the plan outlines strategies to prevent homelessness and increase the supply of housing with supportive services and announces the ambitious goal of reducing homelessness by 25% by 2025. *All In* recommits the federal government to proven strategies to end homelessness, including [Housing First](#).

During the webinar, speakers addressed the current state of homelessness and discussed the [inclusive public input process](#) that informed the federal strategic plan. The presenters provided an overview of *All In*, describing the plan as a roadmap for federal action to ensure that communities have sufficient resources, policy guidance, and tools to build sustainable systems to both prevent and end homelessness. The Biden administration encourages state and local governments to use the new plan as a blueprint for developing their own plans to prevent and end homelessness and for defining their own goals for 2025. State and local officials, housing and homeless service providers, advocates, and others can also use the plan to learn about federal programs and actions, hold the federal government accountable, and educate partners and stakeholders on the causes of homelessness, as well as existing challenges and opportunities.

The presenters outlined the plan's three foundational pillars – [equity](#), [data](#), and [collaboration](#) – as well as its three solution pillars – [housing and supports](#), [homelessness response](#), and [prevention](#). Each pillar includes strategies and actions the federal government will pursue to increase the availability of and access to housing, health care, economic security, and stability for all Americans. The speakers also addressed how the plan will be [implemented and evaluated](#). In collaboration with local, state, national, and federal partners, USICH will develop implementation plans with specific actions, milestones, and metrics. The agency will publish an annual performance management plan and will update the plan annually to reflect evolving metrics, input, and lessons.

Receive updates on *All In* by following USICH on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), [subscribing to the USICH News Bulletin](#), or contacting your [USICH Senior Regional Advisor \(SRA\)](#).

Access the presentation slides and recording at: <https://bit.ly/3XIFXNF>

Learn more about the *Federal Strategic Plan* at: <https://www.usich.gov/fsp>

Read NLIHC's statement on the *Federal Strategic Plan* at: <https://bit.ly/3iq0pOG>

Budget and Appropriations

House Passes Rules Package, Setting Stage for Appropriations Fights Ahead

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a rules package along mostly party lines on January 9, with a final vote of 220-213. The rules package lays out policies by which Republicans will run the chamber in the coming Congress and foreshadows future funding fights that will likely erupt between the Republican-controlled House and the Democrat-controlled Senate as Congress works to advance must-pass legislation, including a fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations bill and a measure to raise the country's debt limit.

While much attention has been paid to a rule allowing a single member of Congress to force a vote to oust the House Speaker, several other provisions were included in the package that will make it significantly more difficult to enact legislation to increase direct spending or increase revenues via tax increases. The rules package blocks the House from considering legislation that would increase mandatory spending, which includes spending on vital programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Social Security, and Medicare. Proposals to increase federal revenues through tax increases would require a supermajority – three-fifths of House members – to vote in favor for the proposal to pass the chamber.

Another rule requires that appropriations bills brought to the House floor go through an open amendments process, and the package reinstates the “Holman rule,” which allows lawmakers to propose amendments to spending bills that would effectively defund specific programs or fire federal officials. Further, the rules package scraps the “Gephardt rule,” which allows the House to automatically raise the debt limit when the Senate adopts a budget resolution, setting up a fight over the debt limit that will likely cause another legislative logjam in Congress.

To secure his position, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) made several backroom deals with far-right members of his party to slash federal funding and appoint members of the far-right House Freedom Caucus to key committee seats. Speaker McCarthy vowed to cap federal spending at FY22 levels, which would result in a federal funding decrease of roughly \$130 billion in FY24, including a cut of at least \$8.1 billion to HUD. However, such drastic cuts are extremely unlikely to pass the Democrat-controlled Senate, suggesting that a highly contentious FY24 appropriations fight lies ahead.

In addition to enacting an FY24 budget, Congress will need to lift the statutory debt ceiling this year to prevent the federal government from defaulting on its debts, which would have catastrophic consequences not only for HUD's affordable housing and homelessness programs but for the national and global economies as well. U.S. Department of the Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen noted in an [announcement](#) on January 13 that the country's outstanding debt is expected to reach its statutory limit as soon as January 19 and that the federal government will exhaust its cash reserves, as well as an array of “extraordinary measures” that can be used to keep the government running, by early June.

Speaker McCarthy has already signaled that he will require spending cuts in exchange for agreeing to lift the debt ceiling, while President Biden has said he will only accept a “clean” debt ceiling increase. The standoff increases the risk of a “compromise” of across-the-board cuts and austere, arbitrary spending caps like those enacted under the “Budget Control Act of 2011.”

Take Action!

It is unacceptable for Congress to cut funding to HUD's and USDA's affordable housing and homelessness programs or impose needless barriers to decrease access to these programs. There is a national shortage of approximately 7 million affordable, available homes for people with the lowest incomes, and only one in four households who qualify for federal housing assistance receives the help it needs. Without adequate federal funding for vital federal affordable housing and homeless assistance programs, households with the lowest incomes will continue to live precariously, only one missed paycheck or unexpected emergency away from housing instability, eviction, and, in the worst cases, homelessness.

NLIHC and our members, partners, and allies will continue working to advance the policies needed to ensure everyone has a safe, affordable, accessible place to call home and to guard against spending cuts and harmful proposals that would increase barriers to receiving housing assistance for people with the lowest incomes.

Visit our [Take Action](#) page to learn about ways you can get involved!

HoUsed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes

Join Today's (1/17) National HoUsed Campaign Call for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes!

[Join](#) today's (January 17) national HoUsed campaign call from 2:30 to 4 pm ET. NLIHC's policy team will share its outlook on the 118th Congress, including potential opportunities to move bipartisan legislation and impending threats to funding for affordable housing and homelessness resources. We will be joined by Dr. Maria Raven of the University of California, San Francisco, and Dr. Mark Fleming of the University of California, Berkeley, who will share findings from their new [report](#) on the association between shelter-in-place hotels and health services for people experiencing homelessness with COVID-19 transmission. We will also get updates from the field, hear the schedule for this year's [Tenant Talk Live webinar series](#), and more!

Representative Bowman and Senator Warren Lead Letter to White House Urging President Biden to Take Action on Housing

Representative Jamaal Bowman (D-NY) of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) of the U.S. Senate sent a bicameral [letter](#) to the White House on January 9 urging President Biden to take executive action to address the rising cost of rent, end corporate price gouging in real estate, and ensure renters and people experiencing homelessness have safe, stable housing.

The letter, signed by 50 members of Congress, lists seven executive actions the administration should take to expand tenant protections and help rein in the cost of housing. These suggestions include:

- Directing the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) to establish renter protections for tenants in properties financed with government-backed mortgages.
- Instructing the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to issue regulations defining excessive rent increases as a practice that unfairly affects commerce, and enforcing action against unfair rent-gouging practices.
- Directing HUD to issue guidance to entitlement jurisdictions on the importance of mitigating housing cost-burdens and adopting anti-rent-gouging measures as an important aspect of affirmatively furthering fair housing.
- Encouraging the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to work with HUD to investigate instances of corporate landlords discriminating against tenants.
- Encouraging states to use State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) provided in the “American Rescue Plan Act” to invest in the construction of affordable housing for people with the lowest incomes, and to strengthen and extend emergency rental assistance programs.
- Activating Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) resources to help move people experiencing homelessness into permanent, affordable homes.
- Establishing a Federal Interagency Council on Tenants’ Rights to identify interagency actions that could be taken to support renters and coordinate the implementation of renter-protection policies.

NLIHC and our colleagues at the National Housing Law Project (NHLP) sent a [letter](#) with similar requests to the White House in August 2022 (see *Memo*, [8/16/22](#)). NLIHC’s Tenant Leader Cohort has also [advocated](#) with the White House to strengthen renter protections (see *Memo*, [12/12/22](#)).

Read the letter to the White House sent by Representative Bowman and Senator Warren at: <https://bit.ly/3kd73bx>

Read Representative Bowman’s press release regarding the letter at: <https://bit.ly/3X8IZ83>

Disaster Housing Recovery Updates

Atmospheric River Continues to Impact Central and Northern California with Flooding, High Winds, and Landslides

Over the last few weeks, California has been experiencing the impact of an “[atmospheric river](#)” – a meteorological phenomenon that has repeatedly driven moisture and storm activity into a specific area of the state. Approximately 24 trillion gallons of rain have fallen in California since the string of storms began, or 8.56 inches of rain for every acre of the state. The Bay Area alone has received an average of 13.3 inches of rain over the same period. Meanwhile, near-hurricane-force winds have blasted coastal and central areas of the state, resulting in power outages far inland. Several tornados were even reported south of Sacramento in the early hours of January 10. The storms are expected to continue through today (January 17), when the last is expected to end.

As of January 13, the storm was being blamed for 20 fatalities. More than 16,000 individuals were under evacuation orders in six counties throughout the state, with over 45,000 people have been under evacuation orders at some point in the last several weeks. Nearly 850 individuals remain in 25 emergency shelters throughout the state. Highways and roads across the region had also been impacted by flooding, landslides, and falling trees, with several highways and important access roads shut down.

The City of San Francisco, meanwhile, pursued an aggressive strategy of [evicting](#) individuals experiencing homelessness from encampments days before the severe storms arrived, violating a court order preventing such evictions. In so doing, the city disposed of first aid and survival tools needed for coping with the effects of the upcoming storms. At the same time, the city's Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing opened four temporary shelters that accepted walk-up referrals once the storms began.

California has submitted an expedited request for a Major Disaster Declaration that, if granted by President Biden, would provide federal assistance to state and county governments for expenses related to storm response, as well as to impacted individuals and households. As of January 13, the request is still pending.

The thoughts of everyone at NLIHC are with those being impacted by the storms. The NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition will continue to monitor the situation and is ready to provide advocacy assistance and advice about best practices to ensure that all storm survivors receive the assistance they need to fully recover. Learn more about the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition at: <https://bit.ly/2DGvd7L>

Disaster Housing Recovery Update – January 17, 2023

HUD published two documents in the *Federal Register* for public comment. Both documents are Requests for Information (RFIs) concerning the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program. The [first RFI](#) focuses on the formula used for CDBG-DR; the [second RFI](#) addresses overall implementation of the program. The second RFI is accompanied by a set of questions. Members of the public have until February 21, 2023, to respond to the RFIs.

HUD's CDBG-DR program provides state, tribal, and local governments with the flexible, long-term recovery resources needed to rebuild affordable housing and infrastructure after disasters. Because the CDBG-DR program is not formally authorized, Congress must approve funds for disaster recovery efforts appropriated under the program with each new disaster. HUD, meanwhile, must create new rules and regulations each time this occurs. HUD subsequently determines how to distribute the approved funds via an allocation formula based on disaster impacts and unaddressed disaster recovery needs.

HUD has opened public comment on the RFIs to solicit feedback regarding the policy modifications necessary to better allocate assistance and serve disaster survivors more efficiently, quickly, and equitably via a "universal allocation notice." This is the first time HUD

has invited the public at this scale to direct recommendations to the agency.

While a bill to permanently authorize the program, the “Reforming Disaster Recovery Act,” was not included in the year-end omnibus budget package, NLIHC’s Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) will submit a comment to HUD to address current concerns with the CDBG-DR program and continue pushing for the bill’s passage in the coming year. Because the budget bill also included \$3 billion in CDBG-DR funds for 2022 and 2023 disasters, it is expected that HUD will use comments made in response to the two RFI’s to guide regulations for the use of these funds and future allocations.

Given the level of interest in and broad scope of the two RFIs, NLIHC’S DHRC working group has decided to host a set of meetings for anyone interested in collaborating to provide comments. The meetings will follow the weekly DHRC Working Group calls, held every other Wednesday. Those interested in being a part of this effort are encouraged to join our biweekly planning meetings. Register [here](#).

Congressional and National Updates

Members of the New York congressional delegation [called](#) on President Biden to issue a major disaster declaration in response to the historic blizzard that struck western New York in late December 2022.

The Congressional Research Service released a [review](#) of links between climate and weather hazards and challenges to federal emergency management.

A new [study](#) has found that individuals from households with lower incomes are more likely to experience disaster-related home loss and more likely to develop adverse health effects following disasters.

HSToday [reviewed](#) the most costly disasters of 2022.

State and Local Updates

Alaska

After Typhoon Merbok damaged homes and destroyed substance hunting and fishing camps in Indigenous lands across coastal Alaska, FEMA published documents on assistance programs in local Indigenous languages. However, the documents turned out to be [unintelligible](#) to individuals fluent in these languages. One document published in the Yup’ik language appeared to be nothing more than a collage of phrases lifted from a collection of folklore published in Yup’ik in the Soviet Union during the 1940s. “Imagine if someone took all of your folktales and then interviewed your great-grandmother about her experiences growing up, and had all of this information recorded, and wrote it down, and then scrambled it and stuck it in various different ways and made kind of a collage out of it,” said linguist Gary Holton, describing the composition of the text. “It’s offensive.” Accent on Languages, the federal contractor responsible for the translation, refused to respond to media requests concerning efforts to correct the issue. FEMA has since hired an Alaska-based company to produce new translations, stating that it had released

the document only to several radio stations and congressional offices before staff discovered the problem.

California

Rain created by an “atmospheric river” driving moisture to the Bay Area and surrounding regions is currently being blamed for [17 deaths](#). Hundreds of people throughout California are currently in shelters or under evacuation orders, and widespread damage has been caused by numerous instances of catastrophic flooding. The rain is expected to continue for some time. President Biden [issued](#) a disaster declaration, and elected officials continued to recommend that residents remain [hyper-vigilant](#) about flooding, landslides, and high wind.

In the North Coast region of California, areas struck by earthquakes in late December are rolling out plans for repair and rebuilding. The town of McGuire recently [announced](#) an earthquake assistance fund with \$3 million available.

In Mariposa County, residents [impacted](#) by October’s Oak Fire are still struggling to recover. While local resources are available, the fire did not generate a disaster declaration from FEMA, which would have permitted federal assistance for individuals. As a result, the recovery has been made even more difficult.

Connecticut

A [report](#) published in *Politico* found that the State of Connecticut used Hurricane Sandy-related HUD recovery funds to rebuild 62 homes that were each worth more than \$1 million dollars.

Florida

Florida’s emergency management director Kevin Guthrie is [pushing](#) the state’s legislature to make reforms needed to address challenges revealed by Hurricane Ian and Hurricane Nicole. These reforms include reducing the amount of time people have to remove boats from waterways ahead of a storm and creating uniform requirements for local governments contracting with debris-removal companies.

While the arrival of temporary transportable housing units to Ft. Meyers Beach in late 2022 boosted the spirits of residents desperate for temporary housing after the area was impacted by Hurricane Ian more than three months ago, the revelation that the trailers had been provided in error by FEMA – Ft. Meyers Beach is a designated flood zone and thus cannot receive temporary housing from FEMA – and would be returned provided a “[kick in the gut](#)” for many residents. Instead, the area will receive travel trailers for use as temporary housing at some point in early 2023.

A [review](#) of current and historical data on neighborhood attributes has found that areas of Florida impacted by hurricanes tend to attract wealthier residents after the disasters.

Kentucky

The Kentucky Legislature will be [considering](#) a \$150 million recovery strategy during its legislative session this year. The plan, which creates an Affordable Housing Emergency Recovery Trust Fund (AHEART), would provide a permanent source of disaster recovery funds for the creation of affordable housing for disaster survivors.

An [editorial](#) published in the *Commonwealth Journal* argues in favor of the passage of AHEART while also suggesting that funds received to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic be used to build the affordable housing desperately needed in the state.

New Jersey

A diverse cast of advocates has been [pushing](#) for greater action on flood mitigation in flood-prone areas of New Jersey. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is considering the adoption of inland flood protection standards.

North Carolina

State legislators [grilled](#) leaders of the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency over alleged inefficiencies during the ongoing effort to recover from Hurricane Matthew (2017) and Hurricane Florence (2020). Advocates testified that while the office has improved its ability to quickly assist impacted individuals with housing, delays are persisting.

West Virginia

Members of the West Virginia Legislature [heard](#) from state emergency managers during a meeting of the Joint Legislative Committee on Flooding held on January 1, 2023. Many counties in West Virginia were denied assistance by FEMA after flooding in 2022.

Housing Policy Forum

Discounts Available on Hotel Rooms for Forum – Book Now!

NLIHC's Housing Policy Forum 2023 is quickly approaching, and we are excited to announce that early registrants will have access to discounted rates on hotel rooms at the Hilton Washington DC Capitol Hill Hotel in Washington, D.C. The discounted rates are first-come, first-served, so [register to attend the forum](#) today and then [book your discounted room!](#)

Housing Policy Forum 2023 will take place on March 21-23 at the Hilton Washington DC Capitol Hill Hotel in Washington, D.C. The forum will offer participants an array of opportunities to engage with and learn from thought-leaders, tenant and community leaders, policy experts, researchers, affordable housing practitioners, and leaders from Capitol Hill and the Biden-Harris administration about the state of the affordable housing crisis in America and its solutions. This year's forum will also feature keynote addresses by acclaimed sociologist and author Matthew Desmond and Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, a renowned scholar and social activist.

In addition to offering discounted rates on hotel rooms, NLIHC is offering a limited number of shared-lodging scholarships for stays at the Hilton Washington DC Capitol Hill hotel. Scholarships are intended to help low-income participants attend the forum. Applications must be submitted by January 23. [Apply for a scholarship today!](#)

Application Deadline for Forum Hotel Scholarships Extended to January 23

To help low-income people attend our 2023 [Housing Policy Forum](#) in March, NLIHC is offering a limited number of shared-lodging [scholarships](#) for stays at the Hilton Washington DC Capitol Hill Hotel in Washington, D.C. The deadline for scholarship applications has now been extended to January 23.

The forum will offer an array of opportunities to engage with and learn from others working on affordable housing issues and will feature keynote addresses by acclaimed sociologist and author Matthew Desmond and Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, a renowned scholar and social activist.

Hotel scholarship recipients must be current, dues-paying members of NLIHC and must pay for their own travel costs and Forum registration fees. Scholarships will generally be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, with consideration given to ensuring geographic diversity and supporting applicants who have not received scholarships in the past.

[Apply for a hotel scholarship by January 23!](#)

Learn more about and register for NLIHC's 2023 Housing Policy Forum at:
<https://tinyurl.com/2p8sffmu>

Opportunity Starts at Home

OSAH Welcomes New Partners in Alabama, Alaska, and Maryland

The Opportunity Starts at Home (OSAH) campaign has welcomed three new state grantees: the Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama, the Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, and the Maryland Center on Economic Policy. The three new organizations join a cohort of 26 state partners working to build a cross-sector movement to generate widespread support for federal policies that correct long-standing racial inequities and economic injustices by ensuring quality and affordable housing for people with the lowest incomes. With the help of technical and financial assistance from the national OSAH campaign, the new grantees will broaden their states' housing coalitions to include diverse sectors that can be leveraged to engage in federal advocacy.

In addition to Alabama, Alaska, and Maryland, the OSAH campaign supports multi-sector work being conducted in 23 other states: Arkansas, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Learn more about OSAH's state campaigns [here](#).

Research

New Data from Household Pulse Survey Suggest Disparities among Households Displaced by Disasters

New data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey offer insight into displacement among households due to disasters. As of December 2022, nearly 1.9 million households had been displaced in the past year due to a disaster, over a third of which were renter households. Renter households were slightly more likely to be displaced than homeowner households and were more likely to be displaced for longer periods of time. Black, non-Latino households and Latino households were more likely to be displaced, regardless of whether they were renters or homeowners, compared to white, non-Latino households. Households with incomes below \$25,000 were also more likely to be displaced, regardless of their tenure, compared to households with incomes over \$100,000.

The Census Bureau incorporated new questions about disasters into the December 2022 Household Pulse Survey. The survey asks all respondents if they were displaced from their homes in the past year due to a natural disaster. If respondents were displaced, they are also asked about the type of disaster they experienced, length of time of their displacement, amount of damage caused to their property and possessions, and their experience in the first month following the disaster regarding access to food, water, electricity, sanitary conditions, and other factors.

Based on the Pulse survey data, 1.6% of all households, or nearly 1.9 million households, were displaced in the past year due to a disaster. Renter households were slightly more likely to be displaced than homeowner households: approximately 1.7% of renter households were displaced, compared to 1.4% of homeowner households. Renter households were also more likely to be displaced for longer: only 56% of renter households returned home in less than a month compared to 71% of homeowner households. Nearly one in four renter households never returned home compared to one in 10 homeowner households.

Racial, ethnic, and income disparities were also evident. Black, non-Latino and Latino households were more likely to be displaced than white, non-Latino households. Latino and Black, non-Latino homeowner households were twice as likely to be displaced (2.4% and 2.4%, respectively) as white, non-Latino homeowner households (1.2%). Latino and Black, non-Latino renter households experienced similar disparities (1.5% and 2.4%, respectively, compared to 1.4% among white, non-Latino renter households). Households with incomes below \$25,000 were more likely to be displaced than households with incomes over \$100,000: both renter households and homeowner households with extremely low incomes were three times as likely to be displaced (3% and 2.6%, respectively) compared to renter households and homeowner households with incomes over \$100,000 (1% and 0.8%). Homeowner households with incomes over \$100,000 were more likely to return to their home in less than a month compared to homeowner households in lower income brackets. Both renter and homeowner households with

higher incomes tended not to have damage to their property or possessions, compared to renter households in lower income brackets.

Tenants Face Numerous Barriers in Navigating Eviction Court, New Research Finds

A paper published in *City & Community*, [“Navigating an Overburdened Courtroom: How Inconsistent Rules, Shadow Procedures, and Social Capital Disadvantage Tenants in Eviction Court,”](#) explores the experiences of tenants in eviction court and uncovers the complex challenges they face. Eviction courtrooms in Washington, D.C. are overflowing as they attempt to process an average of 148 cases per day. The high case volume and the pressure such a volume puts on court staff result in spaces that are highly chaotic and difficult to navigate for tenants. The new paper identifies distinct ways in which tenants are disadvantaged by courtroom practices, including unclear courtroom policies and procedures which are applied inconsistently. Unclear and inconsistent policies make it difficult for tenants to know where to be and what to do, particularly for tenants with physical disabilities, tenants who do not speak English, and tenants who have difficulty reading or writing.

The research uses data from more than 420 hours of ethnographic observations undertaken between February 2018 and February 2019 in Washington, D.C.’s Landlord-Tenant Court. The researchers also drew on informal conversations with tenants, landlords, attorneys, and court staff within the building and incorporated administrative records from the court to provide complementary information about the number of court cases and the distribution of case outcomes.

Unpredictable procedures and unclear policies were found to generate major disadvantages for tenants. As an example, the authors illustrate the confusion faced by tenants navigating the building and finding their assigned rooms. There is little signage in the building, and when asking about how to report, tenants are given different answers about where to go and whether they need to sign in. The lack of clarity is compounded for tenants with physical disabilities, who must enter the building at an alternate entrance with no signage. Meanwhile, rules in the courtroom are applied inconsistently, making it difficult for tenants to discern what these rules are. For example, the court goes into recess at seemingly random times, and the duration of recess is often not announced. Not only does this delay proceedings – keeping tenants from their work or family responsibilities – but tenants who leave the courtroom face the risk of missing their hearing if they not return at the correct time.

Some courtroom procedures take place outside of a formal hearing, which can also disadvantage tenants. These “shadow” procedures include settlement agreements and consent settlement agreements, in which the landlord and tenant agree to terms according to which the landlord will not evict. Generally, these agreements specify a time by which back rent must be paid before a tenant faces eviction. Yet the agreements are risky for tenants because they may result in tenants unknowingly agreeing to terms that are not in their favor. One tenant, for example, agreed to move out of his apartment within three weeks but learned after talking to a tenant attorney that he was entitled to more time.

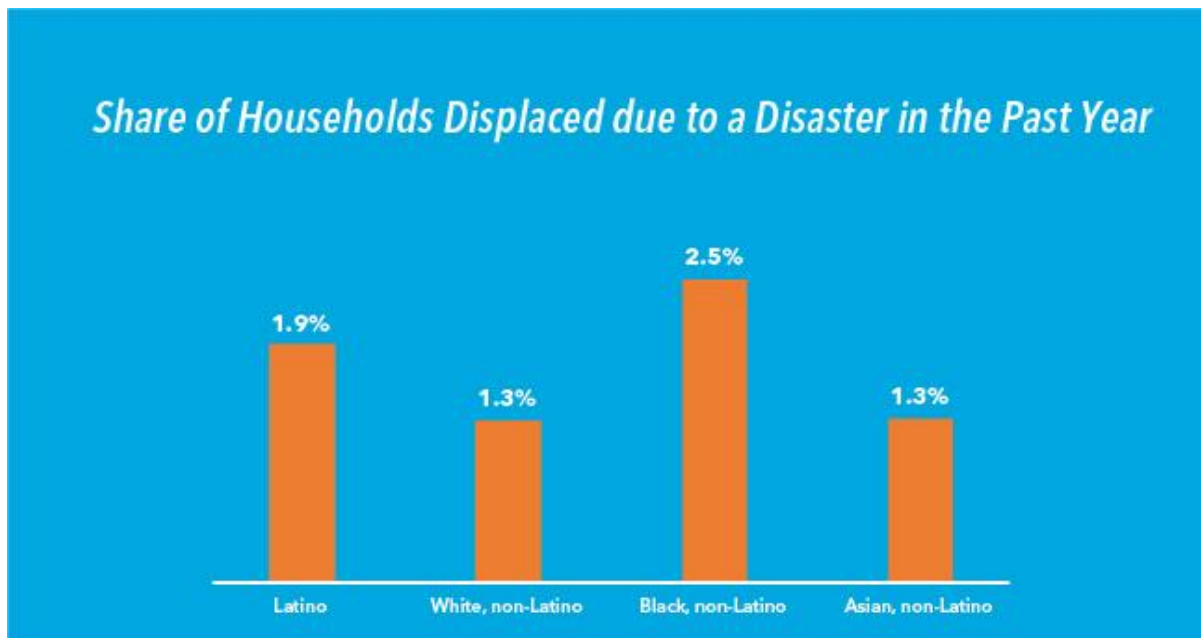
Finally, the researchers find that landlords and their attorneys spend much more time in court, allowing them to build social capital with judges, clerks, and other court staff. Landlords and their attorneys often know court staff by name, and some have personal relationships with staff. When attorneys are not in attendance during a proceeding, for example, staff may know how to reach out to them personally – an advantage not afforded to most tenants.

These disadvantages are all exacerbated by the fact that tenants rarely have their own legal counsel, while landlords almost always have an attorney. The authors suggest that the myriad disadvantages faced by tenants necessitate multi-level policy solutions. To prevent tenants from accruing rental debt in the first place, the District of Columbia should invest more in affordable housing development and tenant subsidies. For tenants that do accrue rental debt, continued investment in interventions like the Emergency Rental Assistance Program could help tenants resolve their arrears without having to go to court. Lastly, guaranteeing a right to counsel for tenants would make the courtroom process more transparent and navigable for renters.

Read the report at: <https://bit.ly/3k4WFIT>

Fact of the Week

Black, Non-Latino and Latino Households More Likely to be Displaced due to a Disaster



Source: NLIHC tabulations of Household Pulse Survey Week 52: December 9-19, 2022, U.S. Census Bureau



Source: NLIHC tabulations of Household Pulse Survey Week 52: December 9-19, 2022, U.S. Census Bureau

From the Field

Sign Up Today to Receive a Hard Copy of the Upcoming Issue of *Tenant Talk*!

NLIHC will release the next issue of *Tenant Talk – Advancing Tenant Protections: Building Tenant Power to Achieve Renter Equity* – on February 9! [Sign up today](#) to receive a paper copy of the upcoming issue.

Tenant Talk is a semi-annual newsletter designed to engage residents in housing advocacy. Each edition highlights innovative approaches and recent victories in communities throughout the U.S. while also providing news about the key issues playing out in Congress. The upcoming edition of *Tenant Talk* focuses on the rapid growth of tenant protections and the role tenants have played in the tenants' rights movement.

History shows that [tenants play an important role](#) in shaping housing policy during times of crisis. Power imbalances have probably always existed between owners of shelter and those who need access to this shelter to survive, but these imbalances changed during the era of rapid industrialization in the nineteenth century, when tenancy became more common in many parts of the U.S. Since then, tenant groups have formed to fight against unjust living conditions, high rents, and evictions – and that's just to name a few concerns! In places with histories of tenant movements, such as New York City, the first tenant-related laws were passed as early as the [1860s](#), and new laws have been fought for by tenant groups ever since. These advocacy efforts have shown time and time again that tenants have the power to push for and enact essential protections, especially during times of crisis. We know that many tenants are eager to continue the struggle for long-term tenant protections, and we hope this issue of *Tenant Talk* will be helpful in that journey.

The new issue of *Tenant Talk* will include articles spotlighting different tenant protections that have been passed in the U.S. over the last few years. As always, the issue includes resident perspectives that dive deeper into renters' experiences, and this issue will also contain an article from tenant leaders describing their visit to the White House to discuss tenant protections and housing affordability. Readers will also find updates on policy, racial equity, and research developments.

If you would like to receive *Tenant Talk* for free through the mail, please fill out this [quick-and-easy form](#), and let us know how many copies you would like (with a maximum of five). Please share the link with your network and others who might be interested!

Alameda County Board of Supervisors Approves Suite of Tenant Protections

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors voted in December 2022 to [approve](#) a suite of tenant protections, including a fair chance ordinance that makes the California county the [first county in the nation](#) to prohibit landlords from conducting criminal background checks on rental

applicants. The Board of Supervisors also voted to enact a just cause eviction ordinance and to create a rental housing registry. The new tenant protections will apply to [more than 60,000 renters](#) living in Alameda County's unincorporated Eden Area.

“For too long, unincorporated families have been left behind and unheard by the County,” said Paulina Jacobo, a longtime Cherryland resident of the unincorporated Eden Area and member of My Eden Voice, a grassroots group representing unincorporated residents. “Our residents are hopeful these policies can protect families, and we hope the new Board of Supervisors upholds their promise.”

The “[Fair Chance Ordinance](#)” prohibits housing providers from inquiring about rental applicants’ criminal history, requiring applicants to authorize the release of their criminal history, or denying housing on the basis of criminal history in the case that this information is made available. Owner-occupied properties of four or fewer units and subleases are exempt from the ordinance. Landlords will still be allowed to check sex offender registries, and they still must comply with federal laws that bar people convicted of certain drug and sex offenses from publicly funded housing. The ordinance also outlaws advertisements of rental housing that indicate, whether directly or indirectly, that applicants with criminal records will not be considered. The Board of Supervisors’ passage of the Fair Chance Ordinance follows the lead of two of Alameda County’s incorporated cities, Oakland and Berkeley, which passed some of the nation’s strongest fair chance housing policies in 2020. The ordinance will take effect when the county’s eviction moratorium expires at the end of April.

The “[Just Cause for Eviction Ordinance](#)” protects tenants from arbitrary eviction by requiring landlords to demonstrate compliance with one of the enumerated causes for eviction. These causes include nonpayment of rent, material violation of the lease, substantial damage, certain criminal activity, refusal to grant the landlord access to the unit, substantial rehabilitation, owner occupancy, or removal of the property from the rental market under California’s “Ellis Act.” The county’s ordinance also protects families with school-age children and Alameda County school employees from no-fault evictions during the school year. Alameda County’s just cause eviction ordinance builds upon the protections of [AB 1482](#), a statewide just cause eviction law passed in 2019, which does not cover the County’s 6,000 renting households in single-family homes, tenants whose units were built within the last 15 years, or tenants who have lived in their home for less than one year. These renters are protected under the new county ordinance, but residents of owner-occupied properties of four or fewer units are not covered.

The “[Rental Registration Ordinance](#)” will establish a registry of all rental housing units in the unincorporated areas of Alameda County. Property owners must register each rental housing unit and mobile home park space with the county and pay an annual registration fee. This requirement will be effective as of January 1, 2024, and registrations must be updated annually. The registry will include information about rental rates and eviction notices, among other key data, and will be used as an enforcement tool for the just cause ordinance.

Four of five members of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors voted to pass the Fair Chance ordinance in an initial vote on December 20, 2022, with the fifth member abstaining from the vote. The Board also passed local just cause protections with three members voting in favor and two abstaining. However, the ordinances face one more obstacle: a second reading

with a newly elected Board member. The second reading is set to be discussed at the end of January, and organizers are concerned about what to expect.

“We are worried the new Board can strip away December’s promise to residents. With newly elected Supervisor Lena Tam, we hope Supervisor Tam upholds the legacy of the late Supervisor Wilma Chan in protecting the most vulnerable families,” said Leo Esclamado, co-director of My Eden Voice.

The Fair Chance Ordinance, Just Cause for Eviction Ordinance, and Rental Registration Ordinance constitute the first of three phases in a multi-step process to develop tenant protections in Alameda County. The Board of Supervisors may consider rent stabilization, among other policies, in future phases. Housing advocates in Alameda County are [calling for](#) the Board of Supervisors to set a clear timeline for passing Phase II and III protections before the expiration of the COVID-19 eviction moratorium in April.

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Weeks of January 1 and January 8

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the weeks of January 1 and January 8:

- “Tenant Advocates Wait for Action after Meeting with White House Officials” *Shelterforce*, January 6 at: <http://bit.ly/3CLmi1J>
 - “Majority of disabled people never go home after disasters” *E&E News*, January 6 at: <http://bit.ly/3CJwMrS>
 - “Bowman, Warren Push Biden to Protect Renters from Corporate Price Gouging” *Common Dreams*, January 10 at: <http://bit.ly/3w1PzSc>
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NLIHC News

NLIHC Welcomes Nada Hussein as ERASE Project Coordinator

NLIHC is pleased to welcome Nada Hussein as project coordinator with the End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) team. In this role, Nada will work to advance the Coalition’s mission by ensuring that the historic emergency rental assistance funding appropriated by Congress reaches the lowest-income and most marginalized renters.

Nada joins NLIHC with an extensive background in both public policy and research. Prior to joining NLIHC, she worked with the North Carolina League of Municipalities, where she crafted training programs and drafted reports on homeownership, inequality, and poverty to educate local elected officials about ways to close the Black and Hispanic homeownership gap across the state. In her most recent role, Nada worked with the North Carolina Justice Center, conducting

research into how local governing bodies across the state could use the funds received from the “American Rescue Plan Act” to support renters at risk of eviction.

Nada received her undergraduate degree in political science and sustainability studies from the University of Florida. She holds a master’s degree in public policy from the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University, where she concentrated in social policy.

Please join us in welcoming Nada to NLIHC!

NLIHC Welcomes Lilly Amechi as Policy Intern

NLIHC is excited to welcome Lilly Amechi as our Spring 2023 policy intern. Lilly is a senior at the University of Oklahoma, where she is pursuing a BA in legal humanities with minors in constitutional studies and international studies. Before joining NLIHC, she was a Forge fellow with the Roosevelt Network, where she conducted a policy case study evaluating housing policy and administrative measures to address affordable housing in her college town that highlighted key areas for improvement. Lilly is looking forward to advancing NLIHC’s mission in her new role.

Where to Find Us – January 17

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

- Matt Desmond Listening Tour Session – Virtual, January 18 (Diane Yentel)
 - Los Angeles Business Council Housing and Transportation Committee Meeting – Virtual, January 18-19 (Sarah Saadian)
 - [Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies Winter Legislative Conference](#) – Columbus, OH, January 26 (Lindsay Duvall)
 - [Prosperity Indiana Summit and Statehouse Day](#) – Indianapolis, IN, February 1 and 2 (Diane Yentel)
 - Public Health: Social Justice and Advocacy, University of Rhode Island Health Studies Department – Virtual, February 7 (Lindsay Duvall)
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NLIHC Staff

Lilly Amechi, Policy Intern

Andrew Aurand, Senior Vice President for Research, x245

Sidney Betancourt, Advocacy Organizer, x200

Victoria Bourret, ERASE Senior Project Coordinator x244

Jen Butler, Vice President of Media Relations and Communications, x239

Alayna Calabro, Senior Policy Analyst, x252

Matthew Clarke, Writer/Editor, x207
Courtney Cooperman, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x263
Bairy Diakite, Director of Operations, x254
Lindsay Duvall, Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy, x206
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
Emma Foley, Research Analyst, x249
David Foster, Field Intern
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Sarah Gallagher, Senior Director, ERASE Project, x220
Jordan Goldstein, Communications/Graphic Design Intern
Danita Humphries, Executive Assistant, x226
Nada Hussein, ERASE Project Coordinator, x264
Kendra Johnson, Chief Operating Officer, x232
Kim Johnson, Public Policy Manager, x243
Mike Koprowski, OSAH Campaign Director, x317
Kayla Laywell, Housing Policy Analyst, x231
Mayerline Louis-Juste, Senior Communications Specialist, x201
Khulud Mohammed, Communications/Graphic Design Intern
Steve Moore Sanchez, Development Coordinator, x209
Neetu Nair, Research Analyst, x291
Khara Norris, Senior Director of Administration, x242
Noah Patton, Housing Policy Analyst, x227
Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Manager, x246
Benja Reilly, Development Specialist, x234
Kharl Reynado, Policy Intern
Gabrielle Ross, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x208
Sarah Saadian, Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Field Organizing, x228
Brooke Schipporeit, Manager of Field Organizing x233
Sophie Siebach-Glover, Research Analyst, x205
Lauren Steimle, Web/Graphic Design Specialist, x246
Leslie Villegas, ERASE Intern
Chantelle Wilkinson, OSAH Campaign Manager, x230
Renee Willis, Senior Vice President for Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, x247
Rebecca Yae, Senior Research Analyst, x256
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225
Zak Zethner, Research Intern