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Housing Policy Forum

Celebrate NLIHC's 2026 Loraine Brown Resident Leader Award Honorees!

By NLIHC Communications Team

Keywords: Loraine Brown Resident Leader Award, honorees, Kennetha Patterson, Linda Lee Soderstrom

Join NLIHC in celebrating our 2026 Loraine Brown Resident Leader Award honorees: **Kennetha Patterson** and **Linda Lee Soderstrom**. These exceptional leaders will be recognized at [NLIHC's Annual Housing Leadership Awards Reception](#) on Thursday, March 12, 2026, from 5:30 to 8:30 pm at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Instituted in 2025, the **Loraine Brown Resident Leader Award** is named after NLIHC Board Member Loraine Brown and honors a person living in subsidized housing who has shown dedication to helping tenants, people experiencing homelessness, and their community. [Kennetha Patterson](#) is a systems-change advocate and the current lived-experience cohort chair for the HUD Nashville-Davidson County Homeless Continuum of Care. As the former chair of the homeless planning council and the first with lived expertise, her leadership remains rooted in equity, integrity, and unapologetic truth—even when the path hasn't always been fair.

[Linda Lee Soderstrom](#) is a dually licensed Hennepin County daycare and foster care provider for 60 medically fragile preschool-aged children prenatally exposed to alcohol and other drugs. Her adopted son turns 40 in 2026. She has always been a Jill-of-all-trades, organizing in the fair housing community since 2015. In that community, she helped others use their voices and grassroots power to object to the displacement of over 2,500 extremely low-income Crossroads residents in suburban Richfield, MN.

The NLIHC Housing Leadership Awards celebrate and honor individual leaders and organizations for their outstanding contributions to affordable housing for those most in need. Honor the recipients of the Loraine Brown Resident Leader award and all of our Housing Leadership Awards honorees by donating [here](#)! Your donation will be recognized in the Leadership Awards Reception program and your contribution will support NLIHC's mission to achieve racially and socially equitable public policy that ensures people with the lowest incomes have quality homes that are accessible and affordable in communities of their choice.

[Register today](#) to attend the 2026 Housing Policy Forum Leadership Awards Reception!

Register for NLIHC's Capitol Hill Day Prep Webinar on February 10

By Brooke Schipporeit, NLIHC Senior Director, Field Strategy & Innovation

Keywords: Capitol Hill Day, Housing Policy Forum, Events, webinar, advocacy

NLIHC invites advocates from across the country to [join](#) our Capitol Hill Day Prep Webinar on Tuesday, February 10, from 4:00 to 5:00 pm ET to prepare for our annual Capitol Hill Day on Friday, March 13. This webinar is open to all but is especially helpful for those who plan to attend this year's event.

Capitol Hill Day is the concluding day of NLIHC's annual Housing Policy Forum, taking place this year March 10-13 in Washington, DC. Advocates will meet with their members of Congress and staff to advocate for the housing and homelessness solutions needed in their communities.

Register for the Capitol Hill Day Prep Webinar [here](#).

To participate in Capitol Hill Day, [register](#) to attend the Forum and check "Yes, I will participate," or contact outreach@nlihc.org.

Budget and Appropriations

Senate Passes Final HUD Funding Bill After Reaching Agreement to Renegotiate DHS Bill – Final House Vote Expected This Week

By Kim Johnson, NLIHC Senior Director of Policy

Keywords: Appropriations, FY26 spending bills, continuing resolution (CR), PPAs, RIF, THUD, funding

Senators passed by a vote of 71 to 29 the final fiscal year (FY) 2026 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill on January 30 as part of a massive spending package that includes four other full-year spending bills for other federal departments, plus a two-week continuing resolution (CR) temporarily funding programs under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The THUD bill includes funding for HUD's vital affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs. The FY26 spending bill provides \$77.3 billion for HUD programs, an over \$7.2 billion increase from the previous fiscal year, and boosts funding for several key programs. Read NLIHC's full [analysis](#) of the final FY26 spending bill and view our updated [budget chart](#).

While the FY26 THUD bill has [already passed the House](#), the House and Senate must pass bills in the same form; this week, the House will return from recess and take up the spending package just passed by the Senate. Because the CR funding many federal programs and services – including HUD – [expired](#) on January 30, the federal government is now in a partial shutdown. The partial shutdown is not expected to last long enough to cause major disruptions to HUD's programs and services; NLIHC will continue monitoring progress on a final vote on the FY26 THUD spending bill and the potential for a longer-term shutdown.

Potential House Vote February 3

In addition to five full-year funding bills, the spending package includes a two-week CR extending funding for DHS until February 13, giving lawmakers time to renegotiate provisions before finalizing the full-year spending bill for DHS. This agreement, negotiated between Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and the White House, has been met with mixed reception by members of the House; still, House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) expressed optimism that the House would be able to clear the package tomorrow (February 3).

Take Action

The House returns from a weeklong recess today (February 2) and will need to take up the five-bill spending package that includes HUD funding immediately to ensure the partial shutdown is over quickly and minimize any potential funding delays.

- Use NLIHC’s toolkits and resources to contact your members of Congress and urge them to pass a final FY26 HUD spending bill with increased funding for HUD’s programs!
- NLIHC’s advocacy toolkit, “[Opposing Cuts to Federal Investments in Affordable Housing](#),” includes talking points, advocacy materials, engagement ideas, and more resources for advocates to weigh-in with their members of Congress on the importance of these vital resources!
- **Email or call members’ offices** to tell them about the importance of affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources to you, your family, your community, or your work. You can use [NLIHC’s Take Action page](#) to look up your member offices or call/send an email directly!
- **Share stories of those directly impacted** by homelessness and housing instability. Storytelling adds emotional weight to your message and can help lawmakers see how their policy decisions impact actual people. [Learn about how to tell compelling stories with this resource.](#)

Visit [NLIHC’s Advocacy Hub](#) for more information and resources that can help you take action and help protect the affordable housing programs people rely on.

HUD

Take Action! Oppose HUD’s Elimination of Crucial Fair Housing Regulations; Comments Due February 13

By Renee Williams, NLIHC Senior Advisor for Public Policy and Kayla Blackwell, NLIHC Senior Housing Policy Analyst

Keywords: disparate impact, NPRM, FHA

HUD has proposed eliminating the agency’s 2013 “Fair Housing Act” (FHA) disparate impact regulations via a [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking \(NPRM\)](#) published January 14 (see [Memo](#),

1/20/26). This proposal continues the current administration's efforts to eliminate the use of disparate impact theory across the federal government.

NLIHC encourages members of the public to [submit comments](#) both opposing the elimination of HUD's disparate impact regulations and urging HUD to fully enforce the "Fair Housing Act," including through use of disparate impact. See below for a link to a template comment letter and additional resources.

Brief Background

The FHA prohibits housing discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, familial status, and religion. There are different types of discrimination, including intentional discrimination (e.g., a landlord refuses to rent to a family because the household includes young children) and discrimination that has a disparate impact based on a protected characteristic such as race or sex (e.g., a local ordinance has an unjustified disproportionate effect on Black residents but does not explicitly mention race).

While intentional discrimination is often easier to uncover, disparate impact helps identify discriminatory practices that are facially neutral. Discriminatory housing policies are not always overt; thus, disparate impact is an important tool to enforce fair housing protections.

The U.S. Supreme Court decided in 2015 that the FHA allows for disparate impact claims. HUD rescinding the current disparate impact regulations cannot change the underlying law. However, HUD's existing regulations promote a consistent understanding of how to analyze disparate impact claims and are worth keeping.

Take Action

NLIHC urges housing and civil rights advocates to submit comments via [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) through 11:59 pm ET on February 13, 2026. HUD must read and account for comments in a published final rule.

The most impactful comments are those that are customized and unique. This is the opportunity to make your voice heard and share how the disparate impact rule protects your community from housing discrimination!

The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) created a template letter for advocates to use in drafting their comments. The template also offers examples of how policies with a disparate impact may show up in your community. NLIHC has modified the template, including supplementing the discussion on the role of disparate impact in promoting access to affordable housing and suggesting ways to incorporate NLIHC's research.

Advocates are encouraged to use the template as a starting point for commenters to create a comment that best reflects their perspective. Find the template letter [here](#).

The Alliance for Housing Justice (AHJ) also created a [petition](#) open to individuals and organizations urging HUD to withdraw the disparate impact rule. The petition reiterates that the “Fair Housing Act” is still the law of the land, and HUD is still legally required to enforce fair housing law. Join the petition to urge HUD to “withdraw this rule, adequately staff the Department, and get serious about its legally mandated responsibility.”

Download the template letter [here](#).

Find step-by-step instructions on how to submit comments on Regulations.gov [here](#).

Submit comments by February 13 at 11:59 pm ET [here](#).

Read and join the AHJ petition [here](#).

HUD Imposes Redundant 30-Day Directive on PHAs, Owners to Review Immigration Data

By NLIHC Policy Team

Keywords: HUD, press release, immigrant, citizenship, mixed status

On January 23, HUD [announced](#) that it is requiring public housing agencies (PHAs) and owners of HUD-assisted housing to review potential inconsistencies in tenant immigration records. According to the press release, the review must occur within 30 days. However, timing regarding the implementation of this directive appears to differ between PHAs and HUD-assisted owners.

Importantly, PHAs and owners already ascertain tenant program eligibility, which includes checking for eligible immigration status. The recently announced records review is new and would be in addition to the prior tenant eligibility determination.

This directive comes after HUD and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agreed to data-sharing, resulting in HUD providing tenant files to the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system “for immigration status verification.” Notably, the SAVE system’s [reliability has been questioned](#).

NLIHC affirms the Protecting Immigrant Families Coalition (PIF) [statement](#) that the new HUD announcement is a paperwork requirement that will impose costs at the state and local levels while blaming immigrants. Additionally, “HUD has adopted a rhetorical strategy of conflating federal data quality issues with evidence of fraud, waste, and abuse in local communities,” adding that it is “unfair to keep piling red tape on resource-strained housing providers only to make up for data lag and inconsistency in the government’s own systems,” said NLIHC President and CEO Renee M. Willis in a separate comment.

Letter to PHAs

According to the [letter to PHA directors](#), HUD has created a new report, an “EIV-SAVE Tenant Matching Report” in the Enterprise Income Verification system (EIV). This new report cross-references HUD data with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services’ SAVE data. This report “includes a list of individuals whose citizenship or eligible immigration status needs to be confirmed by the PHA, due to possible discrepancies between what appears in SAVE and what has been provided for the individual.” The EIV-SAVE Report does not include tenants that the PHA has already determined are ineligible noncitizens.

The letter indicates that PHAs are required to verify the EIV-SAVE Tenant Matching Report, retain documentation verifying eligible immigration status, and correctly code appropriate HUD documents, all within 30 days. Additionally, the letter states that “PHAs that fail to use EIV reports in accordance with established requirements may be subject to sanctions,” and that compliance with the new report “will be monitored.”

The letter emphasizes that an individual’s inclusion in the EIV-SAVE Report “does not automatically mean that an individual is ineligible for HUD assistance.” However, the letter states that if someone is determined to be ineligible for assistance, a PHA “may be required to initiate termination of assistance” depending on household make-up. Section 214 of the “Housing and Community Development Act of 1980” permits families with mixed-immigration statuses to live together with prorated assistance in Section 214-covered housing. HUD [has indicated](#) its intent to propose changes to its regulations regarding mixed-status families.

The directive itself and the limited amount of time provided for PHA compliance raise questions and potential implementation concerns. For example, it is unclear whether HUD can impose a new records review requirement on PHAs in this manner. The letter also announces no new resources to undertake this review in a brief timeframe. Finally, as noted above, this process is in addition to the fact that PHAs already determine program eligibility, including whether each household member is contending eligible immigration status.

Owners of HUD-Assisted Housing

Though HUD mentioned both PHAs and owners in its press release, HUD only linked to the PHA letter in its release. LeadingAge has [written a blog post specifically regarding HUD-assisted owners](#), indicating that additional instruction from HUD’s Office of Multifamily Housing Programs is forthcoming. This means that the timing for PHAs and owners will likely differ in carrying out HUD’s directive.

Read HUD’s press release [here](#).

Read HUD’s letter to PHAs [here](#).

OIRA Concludes Review of HUD Regulatory Changes Regarding 30-Day Notices, Time Limits, and Work Requirements; New Joint Resource on Work Requirements and Time Limits Issued

By Renee Williams, NLIHC Senior Advisor for Public Policy

Keywords: regulations, work requirements, time limits, lease termination, rental assistance

On January 23, the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) concluded its review of two anticipated HUD rulemakings that would directly impact HUD tenants if implemented. The first rulemaking is expected to rescind the [2024 HUD rule imposing a 30-day notice requirement](#) for tenants who are being terminated for nonpayment of rent in public housing and project-based rental assistance (PBRA) programs.

Generally, OIRA concluding its review of a regulatory change means that the change has gotten closer to being published in the *Federal Register*. NLIHC will provide summaries in Memo to Members and identify opportunities for public comment once the rules are published. Because the final versions of rulemakings are not yet available, this article summarizes the descriptions OIRA has previously provided.

The first rulemaking, listed by [OIRA](#) as “Revocation of the 30-Day Notification Requirement Prior to Termination of Lease for Nonpayment of Rent,” is designated as an interim final rule. Publication as an interim final rule generally means that a regulatory change is expected to go into effect immediately, accompanied by an opportunity to comment. OIRA describes this expected interim final rule as rescinding the 2024 rule [requiring](#) public housing agencies (PHAs) and PBRA owners to provide 30 days’ notice prior to lease termination for nonpayment of rent. Additionally, the rule is anticipated to remove requirements “to include certain information in termination notices.” While not described by OIRA, under current regulations such information includes, for example, instructions in the notice on how tenants can “cure” their nonpayment. The OIRA description says that termination notices would revert to pre-2021 requirements.

The second rulemaking, listed by [OIRA](#) as “Establishing Flexibility For Implementation Of Work Requirements And Term Limits in HUD-Assisted Housing Programs,” is slated to be published as a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). This means that the regulatory change would be made available for public comment, and that change would go into effect after an agency considers public input. OIRA describes the anticipated NPRM as providing PHAs and PBRA owners “with the ability to implement work requirements and lifetime benefits for work-able adults” after “completing certain implementation procedures and subject to existing statutory limitations.” According to the OIRA summary, the NPRM provides that failure to meet work requirements or exceeding a lifetime benefit limit can be the basis for terminating assistance. [News reporting](#) by *ProPublica* from September 2025 provides additional context regarding this rulemaking.

According to a July 2025 Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [analysis](#), a two-year time limit in HUD programs (specifically, public housing, Housing Choice Vouchers, and PBRA) would result in an estimated 3.3 million people losing their rental assistance.

New Resource

The National Housing Law Project—jointly with NLIHC, the Center for Law and Social Policy, Justice in Aging, and Southern Poverty Law Center—published a resource entitled, “[Work Requirements and Time Limits in Rental Assistance Programs Will Worsen Housing Instability](#).” This document outlines the ways in which imposing work requirements and time limits in HUD programs is counterproductive.

The new resource about work requirements and time limits can be found [here](#).

Opportunity Starts at Home

Opportunity Starts at Home Joins Housing Action Illinois Webinar on Social Media and Housing Advocacy

By Ella Izenour, NLIHC *Opportunity Starts at Home* Intern

Keywords: multi-sector, webinar

The *Opportunity Starts at Home* (OSAH) campaign joined the “Making Your Own Spotlight – Lessons from the Field” webinar on January 22, hosted by [Housing Action Illinois](#), an OSAH campaign State Partner. The webinar explored how housing advocates can use digital storytelling on their own platforms to raise awareness, shift narratives, and mobilize support.

Kristin Ginger, director of communications and development at Housing Action Illinois, opened the webinar and introduced Horacio Mendez, president and CEO, and Rob Mayo, communications associate, of the [Woodstock Institute](#). Mendez and Mayo discussed how posting long-form content on [LinkedIn](#) helps them reach a targeted audience interested in affordable housing policy. They emphasized the value of leveraging personal connections and professional networks on LinkedIn to build credibility, deepen engagement, and spark meaningful conversations around housing justice.

Nick Dodson, Continuum of Care housing navigator at [Heartland HOUSED](#), shared his experiences creating short-form video content on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. Drawing from his own work in housing navigation, Dodson highlighted how authenticity, consistency, and clear, actionable messaging help him connect with viewers and mobilize social media users and community members around specific housing goals.

Julie Walker, NLIHC *Opportunity Starts at Home* Project Manager, provided an overview of the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign and [podcast](#). She outlined the campaign’s mission to build a broad housing coalition and highlighted how the podcast has been used to engage experts from multiple sectors in conversations about the intersectionality of housing. Walker discussed how the podcast helps the campaign reach new audiences, build relationships, and contribute to narrative change in housing advocacy, including through notable episodes such as the five-part OSAH podcast series with the American Institute of Architects Right to Housing [Working Group](#).

The webinar concluded with Dawn Broers, Founder and Executive Director of [Fortitude Community Outreach](#), who discussed how Fortitude has used [Facebook](#) and their [Blind Spot](#) podcast series to share stories with their community. Broers emphasized the importance of intentional storytelling, visibility, and amplifying lived experiences as key components of effective advocacy.

Listen to the *Opportunity Starts at Home* podcast on [Spotify](#), [Apple](#), and [Soundcloud](#).

Disaster Housing Recovery

FEMA CORE Cuts Lawsuit Memo

By Oliver Porter, NLIHC DHR Intern

Keywords: FEMA, proposed staffing cuts

On January 27, a [lawsuit](#) was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, San Francisco Division, over FEMA's recent proposed staffing cuts. News of the proposed [cuts](#) was first reported at the beginning of January. If these cuts are implemented, FEMA could ultimately lose over 10,000 employees, the lawsuit alleges.

The lawsuit was [filed](#) by a group of unions representing the workers, as well as several nonprofits and local governments. The plaintiffs challenge the executive branch's right to cut FEMA staff without gaining approval from Congress first. The case is being presided over by U.S. District Judge Susan Illston. Judge Illston previously ruled [against](#) the government's widespread federal layoffs last spring, before her ruling was later overturned by the Supreme Court.

The outlook for FEMA CORE personnel and other employees remains unclear because additional staff—beyond the more than [50 employees](#) who were let go in late December—have not been laid off yet, so the certainty and pace of the proposed staffing reductions are unknown.

The legal battle over this additional proposed staffing reduction underscores the importance of removing FEMA from the Department of Homeland Security's control. FEMA needs autonomy over its operations to ensure it can effectively protect communities in the face of major disasters and guide them through full recovery. To remedy the crisis facing FEMA, Congress must pass the NLIHC-endorsed bipartisan "[FEMA Act](#)" to reinstate FEMA as an independent cabinet-level agency.

FEMA Council Extended by White House Executive Order

By Oliver Porter, NLIHC DHR Intern

Keywords: FEMA Review Council, executive order

On January 23, the White House issued an [executive order](#) extending the tenure of the FEMA Review Council so that the council will serve until March 25, 2026. The review council's executive mandate was established last [January](#) and would have expired on January 24 had it not been for this new executive order. This extension prolongs widespread uncertainty over FEMA's future. The council's final report has been anticipated for weeks because of its potential to significantly shape agency policy. A final meeting for the council was supposed to take place in mid-December, but it was canceled [abruptly](#).

Given the current absence of public meetings or public-facing publications, it is difficult to ascertain the ultimate impacts of the review council's work. However, multiple drafts of the council's final report have been examined by journalists over the past couple of [months](#), offering some insights into the report's content.

Last Wednesday, it was revealed that the report includes a proposal to change FEMA's public assistance disaster aid program so that payments are provided based on criteria related to the [type of disaster](#), rather than through damage assessments performed by the agency. The proposal would give states aid if they can demonstrate that certain meteorological or other conditions associated with intense damage occurred. The proposal bears resemblance to a type of insurance known as parametric insurance, where parameters are agreed to in an insurance policy and compensation is awarded to the affected party based on whether specific extreme weather events occurred.

The proposal suggests releasing aid to states within 30 days of a presidential declaration of emergency if specific weather parameters occur. It would also change the minimum percentage of disaster recovery costs that the federal government must reimburse states for from the current, and statutorily mandated, 75% down to 50%, leaving states to pay the other half unless they can show that they previously pursued enough disaster-preparedness policies to qualify for a full 75% reimbursement. The copy of the report also projects possible staffing cuts to half of FEMA's workforce over two to three years.

This proposal obtained by reporters represents just one possible recommendation from the review council. The Disaster Housing Recovery team at NLIHC will continue to update members about new developments related to FEMA as they unfold. The strongest way to protect and reform the agency remains congressional action. NLIHC's organizational sign-on letter for the bipartisan "[FEMA Act](#)" remains available [here](#).

NLIHC's Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition Sent a Letter to Senate Leadership Urging Pause on DHS Funding; Stressing FEMA Funds are Sufficient at This Time

By Noah Patton, NLIHC Director of Disaster Recovery

Keywords: DHRC, DHS, ICE, CBP, Minneapolis

The NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition delivered a [letter](#) on January 29 to Senators John Thune (R-SD) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY), urging a pause on U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding, given recent, concerning actions by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) across the country. High-profile negotiations over the DHS Appropriations bill [concluded](#) later that day, with the Senate subsequently removing the bill from a government spending package, agreeing to fund the agency at current levels before revisiting the issue in two weeks.

The [Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition](#) (DHRC) is an NLIHC-led group of over 900 local, state, and national organizations working to ensure that all disaster survivors receive the assistance they need to fully recover.

Negotiations around the pause of DHS funding included concerns from lawmakers that any action may adversely impact the ability of FEMA to respond to disasters—including the recent Winter Storm Fern. However, with approximately \$9 billion currently in FEMA’s Disaster Relief Fund, the agency [would be able to respond adequately](#) to disasters given the length of time before the 2026 Wildfire and Hurricane season begins in Spring. In addition, given the essential status of the majority of FEMA’s workforce, agency personnel would respond to disasters regardless of funding levels.

The letter also stressed that, if need arises, Congress has passed emergency disaster supplemental spending bills in the past, topping up FEMA’s operating fund and also providing long-term recovery dollars via HUD, the latter of which continues to be desperately needed by southern California as it recovers from the destructive LA Wildfires in early 2025.

“The DHRC recognizes that ICE and CBP’s actions and the rationale officials have provided to defend and fund them, particularly rhetoric around funding the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), all undermine the minimally necessary conditions for just public policy in the areas of affordable housing, income inequality, and disaster housing recovery” reads a portion of the [letter](#). “Concerns around FEMA funding should not be used to justify approving the FY26 DHS appropriations bill in its current form. Given its roster of essential workers and current funding levels, FEMA will be able to continue its mission in the short-term while Congress renegotiates the DHS spending bill.”

Our Homes, Our Votes

***Our Homes, Our Votes* Campaign Kicks Off 2026 Webinar Series on February 9 – Register Now!**

By Tia Turner, NLIHC Project Manager, *Our Homes, Our Votes*

Keywords: 2026 webinars, GOTV, Louisiana v. Callais

NLIHC’s *Our Homes, Our Votes* campaign is a nonpartisan initiative to boost voter turnout among low-income renters and elevate housing as an election issue. The *Our Homes, Our Votes*

2026 monthly [webinar series](#) platforms housing providers, housing advocates, organizations, and tenant leaders during this pivotal election year. Our partners will share proven voter engagement strategies, highlight what's working in communities, and provide proven practical tools to help get renters out to vote. Sessions will feature real-world examples, lessons directly from the field, and step-by-step guidance to help organizations strengthen their nonpartisan voter engagement efforts and ensure renters' voices are heard. The series will launch **Monday, February 9 at 3:00 pm ET**.

Register for the webinar series [here!](#)

This webinar series is critical to the campaign's mission of ensuring renters are fairly represented in our democracy at a time when renters remain severely underrepresented in our political process. The series equips advocates with proven, effective resources such as election protection and voter registration activities while confronting emerging challenges such as the rise of misinformation and escalating present-day threats to voter engagement.

The *Our Homes, Our Votes* kickoff webinar will spotlight "Voter Engagement Partners in Action: Replicating What Works for Renters," a deep dive into the [Turning Renters into Voters: Lessons in Engaging Low-Income Renters](#) best practice report. Two partners who contributed to the report will join the conversation: Sarah Rennie, JD, senior director of advocacy and engagement at the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness, and Jen Thomas, community engagement manager at the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. They will share in-depth examples of their voter engagement work and expand on the strategies featured in the report. This event will highlight key patterns from the field, innovations piloted across six communities, and new tools available to support nonpartisan voter engagement in 2026. This series will be led by Tia Turner, NLIHC Project Manager for *Our Homes, Our Votes* in partnership with Chantelle Wilkinson, NLIHC Vice President of Strategic Partnerships & Campaigns.

The webinar dates, topics, and descriptions are listed below. All webinars will be held from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm ET every second Monday from February to November 2026.

NLIHC's Our Homes, Our Votes 2026 Webinar Series Schedule

February 9

- **"Voter Engagement Partners in Action: Replicating What Works for Renters":** A deep dive into the 2025 best practice report. This event will highlight patterns from the field, innovations piloted across six communities, and new tools for 2026.

March 9

- **"Building Voting Power Locally: How Local Elections Set the Stage for 2026":** Connects local civic action to federal election turnout. The event explains the influence of municipal seats (mayor, city council, county commissioners) on housing policy.

April 13

- **“Protecting Voting Rights: Strengthening Democracy Through Local Housing Advocacy”**: This event frames how housing advocacy supports democratic participation and introduces foundational concepts before the Supreme Court webinar in May.

May 11

- **“Understanding Louisiana v. Callais: What the Supreme Court Decision Means for Housing & Democracy”**: This event provides a legal breakdown of the decision and implications for nonpartisan voter engagement.

June 8

- **“Mobilizing Voters After Louisiana v. Callais: Nonpartisan Action Steps for 2026”**: This event provides concrete, practical voter outreach strategies following the Court’s ruling.

July 13

- **“What’s Next for Housing Advocates After Louisiana v. Callais?”**: This event explains the Court ruling’s implementation, state barriers, and opportunities.

August 10

- **“Voter Registration 2026: Tools, Rules & Strategies for Low-Income Renters”**: Updated version of 2024’s popular training; includes compliance reminders and renter-specific best practices.

September 14

- **“Combating Misinformation: Equipping Housing Advocates as Trusted Messengers in 2026”**: Updated framing for 2026, focusing on disinformation targeting renters.

October 12

- **“GOTV for Housing Advocates: Mobilizing Voters in the Final Weeks Before Election Day”**: This event provides concrete, field-ready mobilization tactics.

November 2

- **“Election Protection: Ensuring Voter Access & Overcoming Suppression in 2026”**: This event covers how to protect voters, troubleshoot issues, and support communities.

Key Developments on Democracy & Voting Rights

By Tia Turner, NLIHC Project Manager, *Our Homes, Our Votes*

Keywords: voter access, ballot box, NLIHC, voter engagement, voter mobilization, low-income renters

As the 2026 election cycle continues, several developments regarding voting rights and democracy have received national attention. These events touch on issues of voter data privacy, election administration, and public confidence in democratic processes—all areas directly

connected to NLIHC's commitment to supporting safe and nonpartisan civic engagement among low-income renters and housing advocates.

On January 25, U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi sent a [letter](#) to Minnesota Governor Tim Walz requesting access to the state's voter registration rolls and certain related data. Minnesota election officials, including Secretary of State Steve Simon, publicly declined the request, emphasizing that state law protects voter registration data and that the federal government cannot compel its release outside established legal processes. State officials noted that courts have previously upheld state authority over the handling of voter data and reinforced that voter information is subject to privacy protections under state election law. The situation highlights ongoing national discussions about the balance of state and federal roles in election oversight, as well as the importance of clear legal frameworks governing access to voter information. For nonprofits and community organizations engaged in voter registration and education, these conversations underscore the need to follow established state guidance on data handling and to prioritize the privacy and security of individuals they serve.

In days following, on January 28, the FBI [executed](#) a search warrant at the Fulton County Elections Hub and Operations Center in Georgia. Federal agents collected election-related materials connected to prior election records as part of an ongoing legal matter. Local election officials have stated they are working to understand how the materials will be maintained and how this action may affect their office operations. News coverage has framed the search within broader, long-running legal disputes related to election records and post-2020 election litigation in Georgia. This development has prompted discussion among election administrators and advocates about record preservation, transparency, and the legal processes that govern election materials.

NLIHC remains committed to empowering communities and partners to conduct voter engagement in ways that are nonpartisan, transparent, and respectful of voter rights. We are continuing to monitor developments related to voter data privacy, election administration, and federal-state dynamics, particularly where they may affect nonprofits, housing providers, and tenant leaders engaged in civic participation. In the coming months, NLIHC's *Our Homes, Our Votes* will continue to provide tools, [webinars](#), and technical support to help partners navigate civic engagement throughout the year. This includes sharing best practices around nonpartisanship, data protection, and compliance with state election laws, as well as sharing updates that offer context.

Partners are encouraged to [join](#) the *Our Homes, Our Votes* Campaign webinar kick-off as well as monthly webinars to be held thereafter. Our first monthly webinar, "Voter Engagement Partners in Action: Replicating What Works for Renters," will be on **Monday February 9, from 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm ET**. This session will be a deep dive into the 2025 best practice report. This event will highlight patterns from the field, innovations piloted across six communities, and new tools for 2026.

Register for webinar [here](#).

For more information about NLIHC's nonpartisan *Our Homes, Our Votes* campaign, visit ourhomes-ourvotes.org

Research

Exposure to Evictions is Associated with Exposure to Firearm Violence in Chicago

By Tori Bourret, NLIHC Manager, State and Local Innovation Outreach

Keywords: eviction, eviction prevention

A new study published in *JAMA Network Open*, "[Eviction, Collective Efficacy, and Firearm Violence in Chicago](#)" explores whether evictions are associated with higher rates of neighborhood firearm violence in Chicago. The study also explores whether evictions change the relationship between neighborhood residents' belief in their ability to work together for a common goal, known as collective efficacy, and neighborhood firearm violence. The study finds that increased exposure to evictions, both at the individual and community levels, was associated with an increased number of firearm shootings within 1,000 feet of an individual's home and that greater collective efficacy was associated with lower firearm violence in communities with high eviction rates. These findings suggest that preventing evictions could be an effective tool in a toolbox of interventions to reduce firearm violence.

Collective efficacy, or residents' belief they can work together to achieve a common goal, is a neighborhood social characteristic that previous research indicates is positively associated with neighborhood safety and with lower rates of violence. The study's authors hypothesized that evictions could worsen neighborhood collective efficacy, because of its destabilizing effect on individuals and communities, and would be associated with higher rates of firearm violence. At the same time, collective efficacy may play a more critical function in neighborhoods with structural disadvantages like high eviction rates.

The study paired individual survey data from the Healthy Chicago Survey with publicly available data on evictions and firearm violence in Chicago. The study found that exposure to eviction, both at the community and individual levels, was consistently associated with an increased number of shootings within 1,000 feet of a survey participant's home. A personal experience of eviction was associated with one additional shooting within 1,000 feet of a participant's home, and each percentage increase in a census tract's eviction rate was associated with 2.66 more shootings within 1,000 feet of a participant's home. In terms of collective efficacy, in neighborhoods with low to no evictions, collective efficacy was not associated with firearm violence. In neighborhoods with high rates of eviction, greater collective efficacy was associated with lower rates of gun violence. These findings indicate collective efficacy is an important mitigating factor in neighborhoods with high eviction rates, but less so in neighborhoods with few evictions.

The findings suggest that policies to prevent evictions could, in combination with other interventions, combat firearm violence. Future research should examine the causal connection

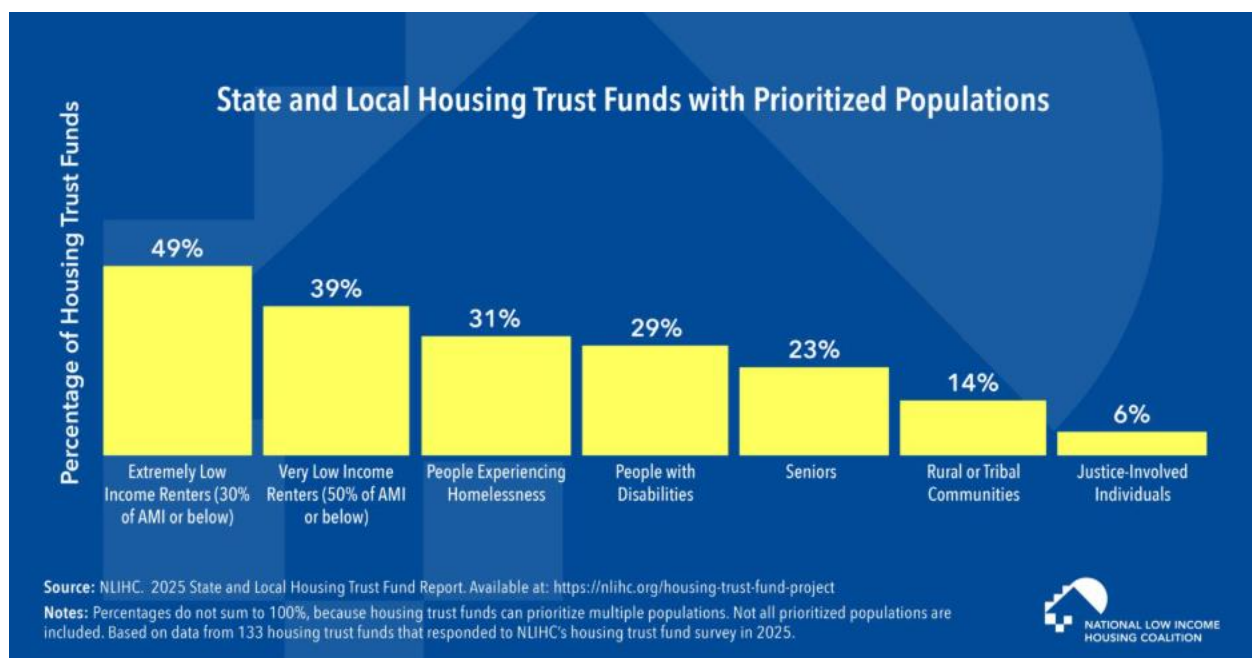
between evictions and firearm violence, as well as eviction policies' impacts on eviction rates, firearm violence, and neighborhoods.

Read the study [here](#).

Fact of the Week

Nearly Half of Surveyed State and Local Housing Trust Funds Prioritize Extremely Low-Income Renters

Keywords: affordable housing, housing trust funds



Source: NLIHC. 2025 State and Local Housing Trust Fund Report. Available at: <https://nlihc.org/housing-trust-fund-project>

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because housing trust funds can prioritize multiple populations. Not all prioritized populations are included. Based on data from 133 housing trust funds that responded to NLIHC's housing trust fund survey in 2025.

NLIHC News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of January 26

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of January 26:

- “Proposed changes to federal housing programs could put formerly homeless community members back on the streets,” *Charlottesville Tomorrow*, January 27, at: <https://tr.ee/gA1n4f>
 - “We need housing,” *Creston News Advertiser*, January 28, at: <https://tr.ee/o51oCP>
 - “FEMA could still support winter storm response in a shutdown, despite administration warnings,” *Associated Press*, January 29, at: <https://tr.ee/HEXosI>
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Where to Find Us – February 2

- National American Indian Housing Council’s [Legislative Summit and Awards Reception](#) – Washington, D.C., February 3-5 (David Gonzalez Rice)
 - [American Society for Public Administration](#) (ASPA) – virtual, February 12 (Renee M. Willis)
 - [2026 Leadership Summit on Ending Homelessness](#) – San Diego, CA (in-person), March 3-4 (Gabby Ross)
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