Memo To Members & Partners

A weekly newsletter from the National Low Income Housing Coalition

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From the Field

Fact of the Week

NLIHC News

Budget and Appropriations

Senate Appropriations Committee Releases and Approves FY26 THUD Spending Bill with Increases for Key HUD Programs, But Without EHV Funding—Take Action!

By Kim Johnson, NLIHC Senior Policy Director and San Kwon, NLIHC Policy Intern

Keywords: Senate Appropriations Committee

The Senate Appropriations Committee released and approved on July 24 their fiscal year (FY) 2026 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) spending bill, which provides annual funding for HUD's vital affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs. Overall, the bill would provide $73.3 billion for HUD, an increase of around $3.3 billion from the flat funding provided in the previous fiscal year's continuing resolution, and significantly more than the $67.8 billion provided for HUD in the House's draft FY26 spending bill. The Committee approved the bill with a final vote of 27-1, demonstrating strong bipartisan support for increased HUD funding.

See NLIHC's full analysis of the Senate's FY26 THUD bill and updated budget chart.

Overview of the Senate's FY26 THUD Spending Bill

The bill rejects the draconian spending cuts and harmful policy changes included in the Trump Administration's FY26 funding request for HUD programs, including a proposal to redesign rental assistance into a State Rental Assistance Block Grant, and a proposal to consolidate the Homeless Assistance Grant program into an "expanded Emergency Solutions Grants" program. Instead, the Senate's FY26 spending bill would provide needed funding increases or level funding for most HUD programs; however, it fails to provide the additional funding needed to address the funding cliff for the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program. Key implications for affordable housing programs are detailed below:

- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) would receive $33.97 billion for contract renewals, an approximately $1.8 billion increase from FY25 and from the flat funding level provided in the House bill. While this increase is needed, it is likely insufficient to cover the cost of fully renewing all existing TBRA contracts.
- Unfortunately, the bill does not provide additional funding to cover the cost of continuing the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program, which currently serves over 59,000 households who had previously been experiencing housing instability or homelessness. The EHV program is facing an urgent funding cliff; without additional funding to either continue the program or integrate EHV households into the HCV or other tenant-based programs, households served by the EHV program could be at risk of losing their assistance and falling back into housing instability and in the worst cases, homelessness.
- Homelessness Assistance Grant (HAG) Program funding would increase by $479 million for a total of $4.53 billion in FY26. The House bill would provide a smaller increase to HAG funding, $107 million, from the previous year's enacted level.
- The bill would increase funding for other vital HUD programs, including Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA), Section 202 Housing for the Elderly, Section 811 Housing for People with Disabilities, and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program, among others.
- The Senate's bill rejects many of the most drastic cuts included in the House bill, including a proposal to zero-out funding for the HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program. Instead, the Senate bill would provide the HOME program with $1.25 billion, which is level funding from the previous year. Additionally, the bill would provide level funding for HUD's fair housing programs, $86 million; the House bill would have slashed funding for fair housing to $29 million.
- The Senate bill does not include the problematic policy changes in the House bill, and neither the Senate nor House bill includes the Trump Administration's proposal to impose a harmful, arbitrary two-year limit on receiving HUD rental or homelessness assistance.

With both the Senate and House FY26 THUD spending bills introduced, appropriators will need to reconcile the differences between the two bills and come to a final funding agreement by October 1, the beginning of the new fiscal year. Without a final agreement in place, Congress will need to pass a continuing resolution (CR) to temporarily extend funding for federal programs and services or risk a partial government shutdown.

Senate FY26 THUD Markup

The Senate Appropriations Committee held a markup of their FY26 THUD spending bill on July 24, culminating in the Committee voting 27-1 to approve the bill—a strong show of bipartisan support from Committee members for increased HUD funding in FY26. Committee Chair Susan Collins (R-ME), Vice-Chair Patty Murray (D-WA), THUD Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), and Subcommittee Ranking Member Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) highlighted the bipartisan work of Committee members while drafting the bill.

"We've worked to achieve a strong bipartisan product that maximizes finite resources to carry out a broad range of programs and activities...[including] homelessness prevention and community development," said Subcommittee Chair Hyde-Smith in her opening remarks. Ranking Member Gillibrand agreed, sharing in her opening statement her commitment "to working with Democrats and Republicans alike to find bipartisan solutions" to the needs of constituents.

Committee Chair Collins noted that it is critical the committee "make significant investments…to ensure that a greater supply of safe, affordable housing is available to communities throughout the country." Likewise, Ranking Member Murray stated in her opening remarks that, "overall, this is a very solid compromise bill that protects important work in all of our states," and emphasized that, while the bill rejects the harmful, draconian cuts and changes proposed in the Trump Administration's budget request, more should be done to address the nation's affordable housing and homelessness crisis.

To keep the process moving smoothly, most amendments to the THUD bill were negotiated before the committee markup. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) introduced an amendment to curb the White House's ability to enact pocket recissions and reassert the Committee's power over appropriating federal funding. The amendment would have required the House and Senate Appropriations Committee to approve any proposals from the White House to rescind FY26 funding; under current law, a recissions request only needs a simple majority in both the House and Senate to pass. Merkley emphasized the need for such a provision given the alarming $9.4 billion rescissions package that passed the week prior without either bipartisan consensus or approval from the Appropriations Committee. Ultimately, Senator Merkley's amendment was rejected by a vote of 14-15, with members voting along party lines.

Take Action!

Congress has until October 1—the beginning of the federal fiscal year—to draft, negotiate, and pass final FY26 spending bills. Without a final spending agreement, Congress will need to enact a short-term funding patch known as a continuing resolution (CR) to maintain funding for federal programs and avoid a partial federal government shutdown. While Republicans control both the House and the Senate, any spending bill needs at least 60 votes to pass the Senate, so final appropriations bills will need bipartisan support to be enacted.

Keep the pressure on your representatives by contacting your members of Congress and urging them to protect and expand investments in vital affordable housing and homelessness programs!

Use NLIHC's toolkits and resources to take action on FY26 funding, including by:

- **Using NLIHC's advocacy toolkit, "Opposing Cuts to Federal Investments in Affordable Housing,"** to call on Congress to protect and expand affordable housing and homelessness resources, including NLIHC's priorities:
    - At least $35.65 billion to renew all existing TBRA contracts, plus urgently needed funding to ensure the 59,000 households who rely on an EHV to keep a roof over their heads do not lose their assistance.
    - $5.7 billion for public housing operations, and at least $5 billion to address public housing capital needs.
    - $4.922 billion for HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) Program.
    - $15 million for the Eviction Protection Grant Program (EPGP), as provided in the Senate's spending bill.

- At least $1.3 billion for HUD's IHBG program and $150 million for IHBG-C funds targeted to Tribes with the greatest needs.

The toolkit 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!

- **Emailing or calling 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!
- **Sharing 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.

National, state, local, Tribal, and territorial organizations can also **join over 2,700 organizations** on the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF)'s national letter calling on Congress to support the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY26.

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.

Congress

Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Announces Markup of Bipartisan ROAD to Housing Act of 2025; Committee to Hold Executive Session on Tuesday, July 29

By Libby O'Neill, NLIHC Senior Policy Analyst

Keywords: Senate Banking Committee, Road to Housing Act of 2025, Tim Scott, Elizabeth Warren

The Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs (Senate Banking) announced on July 24 a markup of its bipartisan housing package, the "Road to Housing Act of 2025." Led by Chair Tim Scott (R-SC) and Ranking Member Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), the markup includes legislation from members across the Senate Banking committee. This is the committee's first bipartisan housing markup in over a decade.

The Banking Committee will hold an executive session to consider the legislation on Tuesday, July 29 at 10:00 am ET.

The draft legislation covers many areas, including manufacturing housing, disaster recovery, veterans' housing, housing supply, homeownership, and program reform. Following Tuesday's session, NLIHC will analyze the legislation and its impact on renters with the lowest incomes.

Read the Senate Banking Committee's press release here.

Read the draft bill text here.

Read the Senate Banking Committee's section-by-section summary here.

Watch the Executive Session on Tuesday, July 29 at 10:00 am ET here.

House Financial Services Subcommittee Holds Hearing Titled, "HOME 2.0: Modern Solutions to the Housing Shortage"

By Libby O'Neill, NLIHC Senior Policy Analyst and San Kwon, NLIHC Policy Intern

Keywords: HFSC, HOME, Home Investment Partnerships Program, Mike Flood, Rep. Emanuel Cleaver

The House Financial Services Subcommittee held a hearing on July 16 to discuss the "Home Reform Act of 2025" and ways to "modernize" the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program. The HOME program is the largest federal block grant specifically designed to create affordable housing. The hearing took place in the backdrop of the House Appropriations Committee's draft Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) spending bill, which, like President Trump's fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget request, proposes to eliminate all funding for the HOME program.

In April, Chair Mike Flood (R-NE) and Ranking Member Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO) released a video requesting comments from states, cities, non-profits, and developers on the HOME program. In his opening statement, Chair Flood highlighted four key themes that were common in the public comments—namely the limitations and burdens placed by the following regulatory requirements: (1) the "Davis-Bacon Act," which requires contractors working on federally funded or assisted construction projects to pay their laborers the prevailing wage and benefits for the geographic area; (2) the "Build America Buy America Act" (BABA), which requires the use of domestically produced materials to manufacture homes; (3) Section 3 requirements, which ensure that employment and other economic opportunities generated by federally funded projects are directed towards low- and very low-income individuals and businesses that employ them; and (4) environmental review processes. Chair Flood acknowledged that these requirements have noble goals, but argued that together, they make the construction of new affordable housing more difficult. Chair Flood emphasized that the root of the country's housing affordability crisis cannot be addressed without increasing the supply of affordable housing—a point which Ranking Member Cleaver echoed in his opening statement.

Four witnesses participated in the hearing—Allison George, Director of the Colorado Division of Housing, Department of Local Affairs and Board President of the Council of State Community Development Agencies (COSCDA); Eric Oberdorfer, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO); Ellen Woodward Potts, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Tuscaloosa, on behalf of Habitat for Humanity International; and Tiffany Bohee, President of Mercy Housing California.

In their testimonies, the four witnesses highlighted many of the same recurring points. They all called for the easing of administrative burdens, particularly with regard to the four requirements that Chair Flood outlined in his opening statement. They explained that such requirements are often overlapping, overly burdensome, and make it more difficult to find contractors to work with, especially in rural areas. To address these issues, Ms. Bohee suggested making "sensible streamline reforms," so that regulatory requirements are aligned with the primary source of funding given that HOME funds are almost always used to cover critical gaps left by other funding streams. All four witnesses made the same recommendation of increasing the threshold that triggers Davis-Bacon requirements from 12 to 50 units. Mr. Oberdorfer explained that the current threshold makes it difficult for smaller development projects to occur due to added costs and administrative complexity. Mr. Oberdorfer also made the additional recommendation of limiting the number of environmental reviews to one per construction project.

All four witnesses highlighted the HOME program's success in helping to build affordable homes within each of their respective organizations. The witnesses also praised the HOME program's flexibility and adaptability to local needs and emphasized the critical need for continued robust funding.

Representatives Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) and Sam Liccardo (D-CA) pointed out that the new HOME program proposes increasing the eligible income threshold from 80% to 100% of Area Median Income (AMI). Both expressed concerns that this move would deter HOME funds from being allocated to communities that need them most. Mr. Oberdorfer added that the increase in income threshold only makes sense if it is accompanied by an increase in overall funding for the HOME program.

Many Democratic members of the subcommittee, including Ranking Member Cleaver and Representatives Nikema Williams (D-GA), Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), and Brittany Pettersen (D-CO), expressed concern and frustration over the proposed elimination of funding for the HOME program. Representative Williams pointed out the inconsistency in her Republican colleagues' support for improving the HOME program whilst "saying nothing while the president continues to push an anti-affordable housing agenda, including eliminating the HOME program in his FY26 budget proposal... Before expanding the HOME program, we need to make sure there's a HOME program left to even expand," she stated.

Watch the full hearing here.

Read the bill draft of "Home Reform Act of 2025" here.

Lawmakers Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Incentivize More Housing Supply Near Transit Routes

By Libby O'Neill, NLIHC Senior Policy Analyst

Keywords: supply, transit

Representatives Scott Peters (D-CA), Blake Moore (R-UT), and Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Jim Banks (R-IN) introduced the "Build More Housing Near Transit Act" (S. 2363/H.R.

4576) on July 21. If passed, the bill would incentivize the development of more housing, including affordable housing, near transit stops by directing the Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide a scoring benefit to transit projects that demonstrate pro-housing policies along the project route. Pro-housing policies include state or local actions that reduce or eliminate parking minimums, establish by-right approval for multifamily housing, reduce or eliminate minimum lots sizes, and encourage the development or preservation of housing units. NLIHC has endorsed the bill.

NLIHC joined a sign-on letter led by Up For Growth in support of the bill, highlighting the nation's affordability and supply crisis and how the federal government can incentivize solutions.

While pro-housing policies such as those incentivized in this bill can help increase supply, such reforms on their own will not be sufficient to address the housing needs of the lowest-income renters. NLIHC will continue to push Congress to provide needed federal investments to develop and operate housing for those with the greatest needs.

Read Representative Peters' press release here.

Read the bill text here.

Read the sign-on letter here.

Senators Gallego and Tillis Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Remove Permanent Chassis Requirement for Manufactured Housing

By Libby O'Neill, NLIHC Senior Policy Analyst

Senators Ruben Gallego (D-AZ) and Thom Tillis (R-NC) introduced the "Housing Supply Expansion Act of 2025" (S. 2414) on July 23, which would remove a HUD requirement that manufactured homes be constructed with a permanent chassis "to assure the initial and continued transportability of the home." A chassis is a steel frame at the foundation of a manufactured home that allows the home to be transported, but manufactured homes are rarely moved after they are attached to the land. The bill would amend language in the "National Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974" to make the permanent chassis optional. NLIHC has endorsed the bill.

Manufactured homes are an essential source of affordable housing, especially in rural areas. In removing the requirement for a permanent chassis on manufactured homes, the bill would further reduce cost and expand design and location possibilities for manufactured housing. Our nation is facing a housing supply shortage for both renters and homeowners with the lowest incomes, and this common-sense reform is an important piece of addressing this crisis.

In some communities, additional reforms are needed to expand location options for manufactured housing. Local zoning codes may ban manufactured housing in certain areas, and other regulations such as minimum lot size and density rules may preclude smaller homes. These laws restrict where manufactured housing can be sited, limiting possibilities for homebuyers, many of whom have lower incomes. According to American Housing Survey data reported by the National Association of Home Builders, the median income for a manufactured homeowner household was $41,500 compared to $93,000 for owners of site-built homes.

Renters with the lowest incomes continue to have the most severe housing needs, as shown in NLIHC's *The Gap* Report. NLIHC will continue to push Congress to fully fund and expand housing programs that assist renters with the greatest needs.

Read Senator Gallego's press release here.

Read the bill text here.

Other Housing Issues

Domestic Violence, Housing, and Youth Organizations File Lawsuit Challenging Trump Administration's Funding Restrictions on Housing Grants

By Kayla Blackwell, NLIHC Housing Policy Analyst and Kayla Springer, NLIHC Policy Intern

Keywords: Lawsuit, LGBTQ+, federal funding requirements, HUD, grants, equity

A nationwide coalition of domestic violence, housing, homelessness, and youth organizations has filed a lawsuit challenging the Trump Administration's restriction on federal funding. Specifically, plaintiffs in the lawsuit are seeking restoration of grants administered by HUD and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) which provide life-saving support to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, LGBTQ+ youth, and people experiencing homelessness. The case, *Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence v. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. et al.,* challenges funding requirements such as restrictions on diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI") activities, and prohibitions on support for transgender individuals, among other vague mandates that threaten critical services for survivors, youth, and people experiencing homelessness.

The lawsuit calls on the court to block the enforcement of the Trump Administration's anti-equity requirements for federal grants administered by HUD and HHS, which were not authorized by Congress and were instead enacted through executive orders and policy changes at HUD and HHS. In particular, the plaintiffs challenge prohibitions on programs that "promote DEI" or "gender ideology" and threats of financial penalty for service providers that continue to support LGBTQ+ individuals and communities. Facing funding drawbacks because of these requirements, housing service providers have been forced to choose between compliance and providing life-saving services for marginalized populations.

There are 22 plaintiffs in the case, including the House of Hope Community Development Corporation, the Community Care Alliance, and the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness, among others. Plaintiffs are represented by Democracy Forward, the National Women's Law Center, Jacobson Lawyers Group, Amy Romero and Mary Dunn for the Lawyers' Committee for Rhode Island, and Lynette Labinger for the ACLU Foundation of Rhode Island.

Read more about the lawsuit here.

Share information about the lawsuit using this social media toolkit.

Homelessness & Housing First

NLIHC Joins ACTION Campaign Sign-On Letter to Senators on Importance of HOME Program for Affordable Housing Supply

By Libby O'Neill, NLIHC Senior Policy Analyst

Keywords: HOME, LIHTC, appropriations

NLIHC joined an ACTION Campaign sign-on letter sent on July 17 to the Senate Appropriations Committee, emphasizing the importance of funding for the HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program in fiscal year (FY) 2026. The ACTION Campaign advocates for the reform and expansion of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program; NLIHC is a member of the Campaign's steering committee.

The letter explains the importance of HOME as a complement to LIHTC, stating "many affordable housing properties simply are not financially feasible if financed with Housing Credit equity alone and thus must rely on soft resources such as HOME to fill financing gaps and ensure economic viability given the rent limits imposed under the Housing Credit to protect low-income tenants." The ACTION Campaign sent the letter in response to the HOME program being zeroed out in both the President's FY26 budget request, and the recently released draft FY26 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) spending bill from the House Appropriations Committee. After the letter was sent, the Senate Appropriations Committee released a draft FY26 THUD bill that included $1.25 billion for HOME, level funding compared to FY25.

Read the sign-on letter here.

Disaster Housing Recovery

Acting FEMA Administrator Questioned at Hearing on Texas Flood Response

By Alyssa Kemp, NLIHC DHR Intern, and Noah Patton, NLIHC Director of Disaster Recovery

Keywords: disaster response, Texas floods, FEMA, David Richardson

On July 23, 2025, the House held a hearing on FEMA's disaster response to the deadly Texas flash floods that claimed over 130 lives. Lawmakers questioned Acting FEMA Administrator David Richardson over the agency's handling of the catastrophe, and bipartisan frustration focused on FEMA's bureaucratic delays, structural weaknesses, and overall readiness to meet the scale of modern disasters. Richardson faced criticism after admitting to being on vacation during the crisis, though he insisted he remained actively engaged from his vehicle. Lawmakers also highlighted serious operational failures, especially at FEMA's call centers, where on some days less than 16% of calls were answered.

Richardson dismissed those figures as "fake news," but Committee members repeatedly cited internal call center data showing significant service gaps. He stated that he believed disaster survivors in need of assistance would not call the agency during the weekend and so it was reasonable to begin staffing the center the following Monday morning, days after the scope of the damage was clear and FEMA resources were deployed. While questions were more pointed from Democratic members of the Committee, Republican members also sought answers about the lag in response and the inconsistency in the agency's statements with lawmakers during the days following the disaster.

Lawmakers on both sides repeatedly asked questions regarding the cancellation of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program that paused vital disaster mitigation projects in communities across the country. The acting administrator stated that the program was cancelled because projects included bike lanes and planting trees.

The hearing also drew attention to delays in FEMA capacity due to internal approval thresholds, such as the need for a single sign-off on contracts over $100,000. In response to these systemic issues, Rep. Larsen promoted the "Fixing Emergency Management for Americans Act," a bipartisan bill aimed at overhauling the agency. The proposed legislation would reestablish FEMA as an independent cabinet-level agency, streamline disaster aid through a universal Individual Assistance application, and create new programs to encourage resilience and recovery.

The hearing concluded with Richardson aligning himself with the Administration's characterization of their activity following the floods as the "best FEMA response ever." He described the Texas response as a "model of how response should be done," calling it "an outstanding response" and stating, "the people of Texas deserved that outstanding response."

Bipartisan, Comprehensive FEMA Reform Bill Introduced in House

By Meghan Mertyris, NLIHC Disaster Housing Recovery Analyst

Keywords: FEMA, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Sam Graves, Rick Larsen

The "FEMA Act of 2025" (H.R. 4669) was introduced by House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) and Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA) on July 24. This bipartisan bill re-envisions a more effective, responsive, and feasible alternative for the agency's future. NLIHC and its Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) of more than 900 local, state, and national organizations provided reform recommendations prior to the bill's release—several of which are included in the final text.

"The American people need an emergency management system that works quickly and effectively, not one that makes disaster recovery more difficult. But time and time again, we've heard the same story from state and local officials, emergency managers, and disaster victims: the federal process is too slow, complicated, and disconnected from the realities on the ground," said Chairman Graves in a press release announcing the introduction of the bill. "FEMA is in need of serious reform, and the goal of the 'FEMA Act of 2025' is to fix it."

"Billion-dollar disasters—like the devastating 2021 flooding in Skagit and Whatcom counties—threaten the safety and livelihood of communities in Washington and across America as the severity of disasters increase," said Ranking Member Larsen in the same press release. "This bipartisan bill will make FEMA stronger and more efficient, giving it the tools it needs to provide relief to disaster-impacted communities like those in my district hit by the 2024 Bomb Cyclone. Thank you to my counterpart, Chairman Sam Graves, for partnering on this bipartisan solution."

Earlier in May, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee members released draft text for the "FEMA Act of 2025." NLIHC staff and DHRC members are currently analyzing the final bill and comparing it to the draft text. There do not appear to be significant changes regarding FEMA Individual Assistance improvements made in the draft text vs. the final text.

The final text continues to include proposals that would:

- Restore FEMA as an independent agency reporting directly to the president as a cabinet-level agency.
- Make it easier for individuals without a fixed address, like individuals experiencing homelessness, to access post-disaster housing assistance.
- Lengthen the amount of time FEMA can assist disaster-impacted households.
- Create a unified disaster assistance application for all federal disaster assistance programs.
- Direct FEMA to create clear and understandable notices regarding program eligibility.
- Remove penalties for disaster survivors who utilize crowdfunding sites like GoFundMe for disaster expenses.

Several of these proposals have been major policy objectives for the DHRC, and this bill has the potential to become Congress' primary vehicle to influence the future of FEMA. NLIHC staff and DHRC members will continue to engage with Transportation and Infrastructure Committee staff as the bill progresses.

State and Local Innovation

NLIHC Southeastern Tenant Protections Cohort Grantees Convene in Atlanta, GA for Southeastern Tenant Protections Roundtable

By Nada Hussein, NLIHC Research Analyst, State and Local Innovation

Keywords: tenant protections, south, grantees, cohort

NLIHC convened its 2024-2025 State and Local Innovation Southeastern Tenant Protections Cohort in Atlanta, Georgia on July 24 and 25—a one-of-a-kind meeting outside of NLIHC's Washington, D.C. headquarters. More than 25 people representing NLIHC's Southeastern Tenant Protections grantees across five states—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee—came together to discuss ongoing efforts to: (1) advance, implement, and enforce tenant protection policies in the South; (2) center racial equity in their advocacy efforts; and (3) promote tenant leadership and engagement in their communities.

The agenda for the two-day convening was dynamic and responsive to the needs, challenges, and current work taken on by the Cohort in their respective jurisdictions. During the convening, attendees heard from national partners working on state and local tenant protection policies, including the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel, the National Housing Law Project, the Southern Economic Advancement Project, Urban Institute, and the Southern Poverty Law Center. The conference also provided attendees the opportunity to discuss topics related to data collection for strategic narrative creation, rural organizing in the South, and the ways in which housing advocates can sustain their work in the face of divisive political climates, lack of political will, and lack of critical resources needed to advance tenant protections and keep renters stably housed.

NLIHC launched its Southeastern Tenant Protections Cohort in 2024 through an internal request for proposals (RFP) to provide one-time capacity building grants to state teams in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee to support tenant protection laws, policies, and programs at the state and local levels. The cohort, which formally concludes in December 2025, consists of housing advocates, legal aid service providers, and tenant advocates working in tandem to strengthen renters' rights and safeguard against the threat of eviction—and in the worst cases, homelessness.

Through the conclusion of the grant year, NLIHC will continue to work with its Southeastern Cohort to help its partners develop a community-based advocacy strategy, engage tenant leaders, conduct-on-the-ground partnership development, and reach out to educate elected officials and other stakeholders. It is the ultimate goal that the cohort will work to conduct policy reform and systems change work that supports the introduction, passage, implementation, and enforcement of tenant protections that seek to advance racial equity and rectify the longstanding power imbalance between landlords and tenants that often leaves renters at the will of their landlords and at the risk of housing instability.

Grantees selected for the 2024-2025 Southeastern Tenant Protections Cohort include the following teams:

Alabama: Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama, Fair Housing Center of North Alabama, Legal Services of Alabama

Florida: Community Justice Project, Miami Workers Center, Florida Rising Together, Florida Housing Coalition

Georgia: Georgia Advancing Communities Together, Inc., SOWEGA Rising, Inc., Housing Justice League, Georgia Appleseed

Mississippi: Mississippi Center for Justice, Mississippi Housing Partnership, National Association of Social Workers – Mississippi Chapter

Tennessee: Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment, Tennessee Renters United, Open Table Nashville, Greater Memphis Housing Justice Project, Memphis Tenants Union

For more information on the National Low Income Housing Coalition's Southeastern Tenant Protections Cohort, please visit: https://nlihc.org/resource/nlihc-announces-2024-2025-state-and-local-innovation-grantees.

Opportunity Starts at Home

Opportunity Starts at Home Campaign Releases New Podcast Episode on the Impact of Eviction Threats on Parenting College Students

By Julie Walker, NLIHC National Campaign Coordinator

Keywords: Opportunity Starts at Home, multi-sectors

The *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign released a new podcast episode, "The Adverse Impact of Eviction Threats on Parenting College Students." The episode, hosted by Julie Walker, features a discussion with Edward Conroy, Senior Policy Manager for New America's Higher Education Policy Program, and Nick Graetz, Assistant Professor at the University of Minnesota Department of Sociology and Institute for Social Research and Data Innovation.

In the podcast episode, guests discuss their issue brief, "Ousted from Opportunity: Eviction's Adverse Impact on Parenting College Students," which examines the unique challenges faced by students caring for children while enrolled in college. Analysis of this issue reveals the consequences of the threat of eviction and the impact of eviction threats not only on the likelihood of completing a degree but on life expectancy as well. Their findings reveal that the threat of eviction significantly reduces graduation rates and economic mobility, and that both Black- and women-identifying parenting students face higher rates of eviction threats due to longstanding racial inequities in housing resulting from discriminatory housing policies.

Further, the guests discuss how the current financial aid system fails to address the unique needs of students with children, and how investments in affordable housing promote successful college outcomes. The discussion emphasizes the urgent need for policy reforms that better support parenting college students, particularly in housing and education. These changes are crucial for improving graduation rates and creating generational economic stability.

New America is a member of the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign's Opportunity Roundtable.

Listen to the episode on Spotify, Apple, and Soundcloud.

Research

PHA Strategies for RAD Conversions Vary by Local Capacity and Geographic Region

By Katie Renzi, NLHC Research Intern

Keywords: Public Housing, RAD Demonstration, Public-Private Partnership

A recent article published in *Housing Policy Debate* titled "A Spectrum of Preservation to Privatization? Public Housing Authorities' Adoption of the Rental Assistance Demonstration Across the United States" provides a comprehensive overview of the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program and how it is implemented by Public Housing Authorities (PHAs). RAD is a federal initiative designed to address preservation needs in public housing by converting properties from traditional public housing to a Project-Based Section 8 model enabling the use of public-private financing. The authors found that RAD's implementation varied significantly by region and PHA size. They also found that the dominant management arrangement among RAD properties was for-profit owned and managed, given that RAD properties house lower-income tenants than the overall public housing population.

To investigate this transformation, the study used datasets compiled from HUD administrative data, including the RAD Resource Desk and the Picture of Subsidized Households. This included data for RAD's two primary components: Component 1, which converts traditional public housing properties to a Project-Based Section 8 assistance model, and Component 2, which converts the contracts of various other HUD-assisted multifamily housing programs already operated by private or non-profit owners to the Section 8 model. The authors analyzed regional variation in the adoption of RAD across 495 PHAs, including 1,696 Component 1 and 481 Component 2 properties. The analysis details the characteristics of the PHAs, the demographics of residents in affected properties, and the emerging ownership and management structures under the RAD program as of July 2024.

The study revealed distinct geographic patterns for RAD's two primary components. **Component 1**, the conversion of traditional public housing, has been most heavily adopted in the US South, with the Southeast/Caribbean region alone accounting for 35% of all converted units. The Midwest and Southwest also showed significant activity, at 19% and 12% of conversions, respectively. In contrast, **Component 2** conversions are geographically concentrated in the Northeast, collectively accounting for over 70% of conversions. An overwhelming 43% of these units are in the New York/New Jersey region alone, with New York City showing a high density of conversions. This geographic divergence suggests that different regional housing markets and policy environments are influencing which parts of the RAD program are utilized.

A key finding is the emergence of two divergent strategies among PHAs, largely dependent on their size and existing capacity. Large, high-capacity PHAs, often with prior experience in complex federal programs like HOPE VI that involve public private-partnerships, are using RAD as a tool for recapitalization and acquiring additional funds. These agencies, which account for 52% of all converted units, have leveraged the program to raise $19 billion in construction funds, $11.7 billion in Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and created thousands of additional non-subsidized units. On the other end of the spectrum, 61 PHAs, a majority of which are small, have converted their properties without leveraging any new debt or tax credits. These low-financing PHAs were often early adopters of RAD and appear to be using the program as a tool to reposition their assets and step away from the operational obligations of the traditional public housing model entirely.

The research also found that the public housing properties converted under RAD served a population that was, on average, more socially and economically vulnerable than residents in the broader public housing system. Data shows that households in these properties were more likely to be non-white than the national public housing average (74.1% vs. 59.6%), largely due to having a higher share of Black residents (53.2% vs. 39.1%). Furthermore, these households had lower average annual incomes ($12,563 vs. $13,043), a higher proportion of very low-income households (94% vs. 90.6%), and a greater prevalence of single-parent families (38% vs. 34.3%).

Analysis of a sample of 863 converted properties revealed that RAD has created a complex spectrum of ownership and management structures. Profit-motivated entities have emerged as the dominant players, owning 64% of properties and managing 42% of the sample. In contrast, PHAs retain ownership in only 16% of cases, although they continue to act as property managers in 36% of conversions, often under a private owner. The most prevalent management arrangement was a profit-motivated entity acting as both owner and manager (37%), followed by a traditional PHA-owned and managed structure (16%), and a hybrid model where a property is profit-owned but PHA-managed (14%).

These findings indicate that RAD is fundamentally reshaping the provision of federally subsidized housing, with its implementation largely dependent on the existing capacities and strategies of local PHAs. The authors propose a need for stronger federal monitoring to ensure RAD's public benefits and resident protections are maintained, particularly as private actors take on larger roles. They add that future research should investigate the impact of RAD conversions from the perspective of residents to better understand the impact of its implementation. They conclude by acknowledging the dire need for the preservation and expansion of subsidized housing, particularly as many programs are inadequately funded, threatening the stability of millions of residents.

Read the full report here.

Housing Advocates Celebrate Successes from the Maine State Legislative Session

By Ramón Kodi Suzuki López, NLIHC Field Strategy & Innovation Intern

Keywords: Maine, affordable housing, advocacy

During Maine's 132nd state legislative session, affordable housing advocates had notable success. The state's first steady source of revenue for funding affordable housing projects was signed into law on June 20, and various changes were made to the state's construction and tax codes that will increase the construction of affordable units in Maine within the next two fiscal years.

The most impactful of the housing related bills was LD 1082, which is expected to raise over $35 million and fund affordable housing projects in Maine by 2027. The bill proposed changes to the real estate transfer tax that would help ensure the future of affordable housing projects in Maine. Although LD 1082 failed to pass in the state legislature, it was successfully incorporated into LD 210, the state's fiscal year (FY)25-26 budget bill that passed through the state's legislature and was signed into law by Governor Janet Mills on June 20.

The real estate transfer tax is placed on all real estate sales or transfers in Maine regardless of the asking price or size of the property. Historically, the funds have gone to affordable housing projects through MaineHousing, the Maine State Housing Authority. While the funding for the programs was expected to run out by this fall, the luxury real estate market has grown dramatically in the state, which is short 84,000 housing units.

The tax changes that go into effect on September 18 will more than double the historical amount of tax revenue collected on luxury properties by imposing an additional tax rate of $3.80 per $500 of the property value for properties valued over $1 million (LD 210 section 4641-A). This is on top of the original real estate transfer tax of $2.20 for each $500 of the property value. First-time or low-income homebuyers who use one of MaineHousing's first-time home-buyer mortgage loan programs are now exempt from paying the real estate transfer tax. This is expected to incentivize more home sales to residents participating in these programs since the tax is a split payment between both the buyer and the seller.

The new provisions also establish an updated real estate transfer tax revenue distribution model starting in FY26-27 (LD 210 section 4641-B). Revenue will first go to meeting MaineHousing's bond obligations. Then, 18% of the remaining revenue will go to the Housing First Fund, 32% to MaineHousing's Housing Opportunities for Maine (HOME) Fund, and 30% will be applied to a new Housing Production Fund (LD 210 section 4773) that supports the LIHTC and the Rural Affordable Rental Housing program to be administered by MaineHousing. The remaining 20% will go into Maine's General Fund. This new distribution model creates the first consistent funding stream for affordable housing in Maine.

A number of other bills signed into law by Governor Mills over the month of June make changes to building codes and tax credits that will make housing more available and affordable across the state. LD 1829 changes height and area zoning rules to reduce barriers to developing affordable housing. To address the shortage of homes, LD 997 permits residential use in commercial zones, and LD 970 exempts infill residential projects up to 40,000 square feet, which will streamline affordable housing development. Other bills expand tax credits to incentivize affordable housing construction.

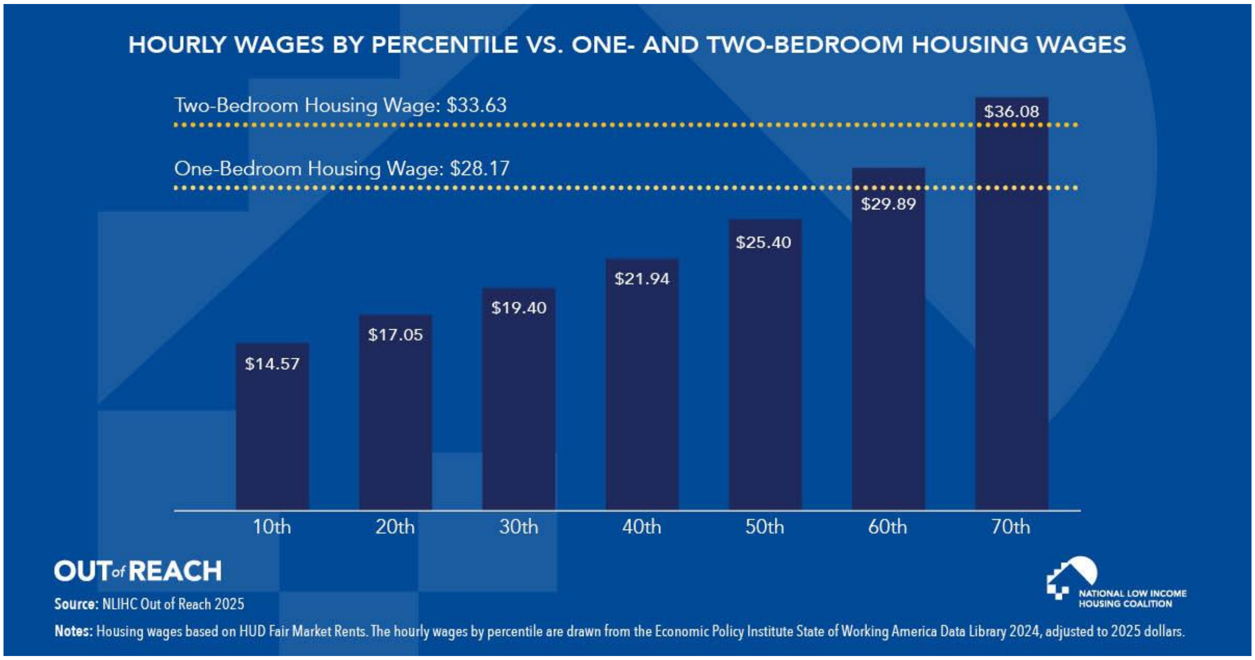
Many of these legislative successes were due to strong and robust advocacy and mobilization in the months leading up to the bill's passing. The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC), an NLIHC state partner, led numerous advocacy efforts and prioritized outreach regarding LD 1082. MAHC made information about their priority housing bills widely available, published one-pagers on LD 1082 and LD 1829, and published an op-ed in the Portland Press Herald that detailed MAHC's priority bills and called on residents to use their click-and-send email message tool to voice their opinions to state legislators during the legislative process.

The future of affordable housing in Maine looks promising, but the fight continues. Many impactful housing bills are on the table for Maine's next legislative session, including LD 690, which would issue a $100 million bond to further support MaineHousing's LIHTC and Rural Housing programs. "Looking ahead, we're encouraged by the momentum and committed to keeping it going. We urge lawmakers to keep the urgency of *housing as the solution* when they return to Augusta," said Laura Mitchell, Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition.

Fact of the Week

More Than Half of Wage Earners Earn Less Than the One-Bedroom Housing Wage

Keywords: Out of Reach, housing wages, housing costs, housing affordability



Source: NLIHC *Out of Reach 2025*

Note: Housing wages based on HUD Fair Market Rents. The hourly wages by percentile are drawn from the Economic Policy Institute State of Working America Data Library 2024, adjusted to 2025 dollars.

NLIHC News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of July 21

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of July 21:

- "3 charts that show why renters struggle to become homeowners," *HousingWire,* July 18, at: https://tr.ee/lEkXIm
- "This California town tops the most expensive rental market in the nation for third year running." *The Economic Times*, July 19, at: https://tr.ee/3MF8fE
- "Is Housing 'Out of Reach' for More Than Half of Workers?" *Yahoo*, July 22, at: https://tr.ee/OK5dkU

Where to Find Us – July 28

- Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, --Alaska Housing Summit 2025 – Anchorage, AK, August 19-20 (Kayla Blackwell)
- Dutchess County Continuum of Care meeting – Poughkeepsie, NY, September 23 (Lindsay Duvall)

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Tiara Wood, Communications Coordinator