



Memo To Members & Partners

A weekly newsletter from the National Low Income Housing Coalition

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Budget & Appropriations

Disagreements Over Topline Spending Force Senate Appropriators to Delay Planned Markups

By Kim Johnson, NLIHC Senior Director of Policy

Keywords: Budget and Appropriations, THUD, HUD, FY27

Disagreements over topline spending amounts for defense and non-defense programs have forced members of the Senate Appropriations Committee to delay a scheduled markup of several fiscal year (FY) 2027 spending bills. The Senate has not yet released their Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) bill, which funds HUD's vital programs, and a markup for the bill has not yet been announced.

A [markup](#) is a regular part of the legislative process, giving committee members the opportunity to debate and amend a drafted bill and vote on whether to move the bill on for a floor vote in the full House or Senate. The House Appropriations Committee held a markup of their FY27 THUD spending bill on June 3 and voted along party lines to advance the bill for consideration in the full House (see *Memo*, [6/8](#)), although the full House vote has not yet been scheduled. For details of the House FY27 spending bill, see NLIHC's [full analysis](#) and our updated [budget chart](#).

Senate Appropriators, led by Committee Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) and Vice Chair Patty Murray (D-WA), are struggling to reach an agreement on topline funding levels for defense and non-defense programs, which include HUD's affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs. Committee Republicans are calling for greater spending for defense, while Democrats are urging more equitable spending between defense and non-defense programs. Vice Chair Murray noted she would not accept "a huge lopsided offer with a huge defense number and nothing for nondefense."

Annual funding increases are vital to ensuring HUD rental and homelessness assistance programs continue serving the millions of families, people with disabilities, veterans, older adults, low-wage workers, and others who rely on HUD programs to help keep a roof over their heads. Because the cost of rent increases every year, programs must receive increased funding every year to maintain assistance for current households; even flat funding [acts as a cut](#), reducing the number of people served. At current funding levels, only [one in four households](#) who qualifies for any form of rental assistance receive it, leaving the majority of otherwise qualified households to struggle to afford the cost of housing.

Tell Congress to Expand – Not Cut – Federal Investments in Affordable Housing and Homelessness Assistance Programs!

At a time when a record number of renters are housing cost burdened and families around the country are struggling to afford necessities like housing, food, and medical care, Congress should be working to expand—not cut—funding for programs that help people make ends meet.

Advocates can use NLIHC’s toolkits and resources to take action on the FY27 spending bill, and urge federal lawmakers to increase investments in HUD programs, including NLIHC’s top priorities:

- Full funding to renew all existing Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) contracts, including ensuring continued assistance for Emergency Housing Voucher holders.
- At least \$5.1 billion for HUD’s Homeless Assistance Grants program to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- Increased funding for public housing operations and capital needs to help maintain and efficiently operate public housing.
- Increased investments in programs that support the construction and preservation of deeply affordable, accessible housing, including full funding for all Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) and PRA Contract renewals, at least \$424 million for new Section 811 PRA contracts, and full funding to renew all existing contracts under the Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program.
- At least \$15 million for HUD’s Eviction Prevention Grant Program (EPGP) to provide communities grants to establish right to counsel and other programs that help people avoid eviction and remain housed.
- At least maintained funding of \$1.1 billion for the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) program and increasing funding to \$150 million for the IHBG-Competitive program.
- Establishing guardrails to ensure the administration releases appropriated funding to communities and does not withhold, redirect, or otherwise rescind congressionally approved funding.

Advocates can take action today by:

- 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.](#)
- Organizations can also join CHCDF’s sign on letter calling for the highest possible funding for HUD and USDA affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs in any final FY27 spending bills. [Read the letter and sign your organization on here.](#)

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.

House Republicans Pass and President Signs into Law “Reconciliation 2.0,” Providing \$70 Billion for ICE and CBP; Path for “Reconciliation 3.0” Uncertain

By Kim Johnson, NLIHC Senior Director of Policy

Keywords: Budget and Appropriations, THUD, HUD, FY27

Republicans in the House of Representatives passed on June 9 a second reconciliation bill ([S.2](#); referred to as “Reconciliation 2.0”) by a party-line vote, 214-212; having cleared the Senate on [June 5](#), the bill was signed into law by the president the day after passing the House. The bill provides over \$70 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

Congress passed a fiscal year (FY) 2026 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) spending bill on April 30—after a record-setting 76-day shutdown of the department—that did not provide additional funding for ICE and CBP (see *Memo*, [5/4](#)). Congressional Democrats withheld their support for the final bill until funding for the agencies was removed following the violent actions of the DHS sub-agencies in Minneapolis, Maine, and communities across the country. NLIHC strongly [condemned](#) ICE and CBP for their use of deadly force in vulnerable and marginalized communities, and our Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) urged Congress to avoid letting concerns over FEMA funding [stall negotiations](#) over DHS and needed reforms to address [abuses of power](#) by ICE and CBP (see *Memo*, [2/17](#)).

Republicans instead used a tool called “budget reconciliation” to fund ICE and CBP outside of the regular appropriations process and without the reforms Democrats were demanding. [Budget reconciliation](#) is a special legislative procedure that allows bills to pass the Senate with a simple majority of 51 votes instead of the 60 votes usually required in the chamber. When one party controls the House, Senate, and White House, reconciliation can be used to enact a bill into law without any support from the minority party. In exchange for this procedural leniency, the kind of provisions that can be included in a reconciliation bill are limited to those that change federal spending, revenues, and/or the federal debt limit; provisions that fall outside of these limits cannot be included, or they will be subjected to the usual 60-vote threshold for enactment. Republicans used reconciliation to enact [H.R.1](#), the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” into law last year.

Prospects of third reconciliation bill unclear

President Donald Trump and some congressional Republicans are calling for a third and final reconciliation bill—“Reconciliation 3.0”—to be enacted before the end of the year. While it is not yet clear what would be included in a third reconciliation bill, President Trump recently called for an [additional \\$350 billion](#) in defense spending, while some House Republicans have pushed for additional cuts to safety net programs to help offset the costs of the second reconciliation bill. The complex rules of reconciliation help protect HUD programs from spending cuts, but many of the same families who receive assistance from other safety net

programs also struggle with housing stability; a reduction in assistance that helps families afford the cost of food, medical care, and other necessities will also impact their ability to afford the cost of rent.

HUD

Take Action to Oppose HUD's Proposed Rollback of LGBTQ+ Protections in HUD Programs - Comments Due June 29

By NLIHC Policy Team

Keywords: LGBTQ+, HUD, Equal Access Rule, rules, homelessness, proposed rule

HUD's recent Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), "[Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Revisions](#)," (see [Memo, 5/4](#)) seeks to roll back HUD regulations that protect access to HUD programs for LGBTQ+ people. Among the proposed changes, HUD would require that access to HUD-funded shelters be made in accordance with a person's sex (as defined by HUD), removing the requirement that shelters serve individuals consistent with their gender identity.

While HUD's messaging around the rulemaking focuses on shelter access, HUD's proposal is much broader than that. The Proposed Rule would eliminate LGBTQ+ protections across a range of HUD programs. Components of the rule include:

- Removing all references to "gender," "gender identity," and "sexual orientation" and replacing them with "sex," eliminating protections for LGBTQ+ individuals' nondiscriminatory access to shelter and HUD programs, including Section 8 housing/other housing programs, fair housing enforcement and administration, mortgage programs, homelessness and domestic violence programs, and community development programs.
- Allowing facilities, like single-sex shelters, to "require reasonable assurances or evidence to establish a person's sex," and removing a prohibition on intrusive inquiries.
- Attempting to preempt any conflicting state or local laws (i.e., laws that offer protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity) within the context of HUD Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) programs.

NLIHC encourages advocates to [oppose](#) HUD's proposal by June 29 at 11:59 pm ET! See below for resources on submitting comments.

Background on Equal Access

When [one in three](#) transgender people experience homelessness in their lives, LGBTQ+ youth [make up 40%](#) of the homeless youth population, and transgender people report [feeling unsafe](#) in emergency shelters, these realities demand an intentional commitment to creating pathways to safe, decent, affordable housing that addresses inequities. New [research](#) from NAEH and A4TE extended upon the 2022 U.S. Transgender Survey to show further impacts of housing

discrimination on the lives of transgender people, including increased likelihood of facing verbal and physical violence, experiencing homelessness, and considering suicide (see [Memo, 6/8](#)).

HUD's [2012 Equal Access Rule](#) required that access to HUD-assisted or -insured programs be made regardless of one's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. HUD [updated the rule](#) in 2016. The updates largely focused on the barriers transgender and gender nonconforming people face in securing equal access to shelter. The 2016 Rule required that all housing/services funded by CPD ensure equal access to programs for individuals consistent with their gender identity. The 2016 amendments prohibited intrusive questioning as well as asking for anatomical information, or for physical, medical, or documentary evidence of one's gender identity.

Trump Administration Targets LGBTQ+ People, Fails to Enforce Equal Access to Housing

However, in 2020, the Trump administration attempted to weaken protections for transgender and gender nonconforming individuals seeking emergency shelter through [proposed changes](#) to the Equal Access Rule. The 2020 proposal received over 66,000 comments, an overwhelming response signifying public resistance to the then-proposed changes. In 2021, then-President Biden's [Executive Order 13998](#) reinforced laws that prohibited sex discrimination, and the 2020 proposed rule was withdrawn.

Yet in 2025, President Trump's [EO 14168](#) expressed the administration's intent to roll back civil rights protections for transgender and gender nonconforming individuals and named the 2016 Rule specifically. In February, HUD Secretary Scott Turner announced the halting of ongoing or future enforcement actions for the 2016 Rule (see [Memo, 2/10/25](#)). The current Proposed Rule continues in this effort, while also removing language from HUD regulations (beyond CPD regulations) offering protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Importantly, the current Proposed Rule goes much farther to roll back LGBTQ+ protections in HUD programmatic regulations than the 2020 proposed rulemaking. NLIHC strongly opposes this latest attempt by the administration to roll back critical protections for the LGBTQ+ community.

Take action to oppose HUD's Equal Access Rule Rollback!

- **Submit your own comment urging HUD to withdraw the Proposed Rule by June 29 at 11:59 pm ET!**
 - Advocates for Trans Equality has fact sheets, social media toolkit, and commenting tips [here](#).
 - **Organizations** can find comment drafting guidance and templates [here](#).
 - **Individuals** can submit a public comment by June 29 using A4TE's comment portal [here](#).
- **Educate your networks about the HUD proposal and urge them to comment by June 29 at 11:59 pm ET!**
 - NHLP has a detailed legal analysis of the Proposed Rule [here](#).

Use NLIHC's EAR Digital Toolkit [here](#).

Explore [Chapter 6](#) of NLIHC's *Advocates' Guide 2026* to learn more about LGBTQ+ access to housing assistance.

Trump Administration Freezes Funding for Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Putting Tens of Millions of Dollars for Homelessness Programs at Risk

By Alayna Calabro, NLIHC Senior Policy Analyst and Kim Johnson, NLIHC Senior Director of Policy

Keywords: HUD, homelessness, CoC, continuum of care, CBPP

HUD [announced](#) on June 11 that it was suspending the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) from participating in future federal funding opportunities, pending the results of an investigation of LAHSA under HUD's Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

In a [letter to LAHSA](#), HUD accused the agency of fraud and blamed it for failing to reduce homelessness. The letter cites numerous reports and investigations finding LAHSA has mismanaged funds and failed to properly account for its spending. LAHSA says HUD's action could jeopardize the work the authority is doing to reduce homelessness and result in thousands of formerly unhoused people reentering homelessness. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass noted that while she has concerns about LAHSA, threatening its funding does not help house people. She emphasized that the funding freeze would lead to dire consequences, and that "ultimately people will lose their lives."

Los Angeles leaders believe that the decision to halt funding entirely, rather than redirecting it to other agencies, is the latest politically motivated attack on California. HUD's decision to suspend funding for LAHSA comes as the Trump administration has repeatedly weaponized fraud concerns to block federal funds that help people afford [food](#), [child care](#), [health care](#), and other basic needs.

While courts have so far ended or stalled many of the administration's most drastic actions, on June 10, the House of Representatives [passed](#) legislation would further enable the Trump administration to block federal assistance that helps people afford their basic needs. The "Stopping Fraudulent Payments Act" ([H.R.8464](#)) would create a new, broad, and subjective authority allowing federal agencies to block payments to individuals, nonprofit organizations, communities, and states "if they have 'sufficient reason to determine' the payment presents an 'elevated' risk of fraud," according to an analysis of the bill by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities ([CBPP](#)). As a result, the bill would allow the administration to target programs and states it disfavors, using unproven claims of fraud as a pretext to block or delay federal payments.

Read HUD's [press release](#) and [letter](#).

Read reporting from the [New York Times](#) and [CalMatters](#).

HUD Releases FY26 Continuum of Care NOFO, Putting At Least 97,000 People at Risk of Losing Housing

By Alayna Calabro, NLIHC Senior Policy Analyst

Keywords: HUD, homelessness, CoC, continuum of care, NOFO, permanent housing, housing first, National Alliance to End Homelessness

HUD issued the [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2026 Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) on June 1. The FY26 NOFO yet again signals a significant shift in federal homelessness policy priorities by drastically reducing funding for evidence-based practices, like permanent housing, and rewarding communities that prioritize law-enforcement partnerships, mandatory services, and other “public safety” measures. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (the Alliance) estimates that [at least 97,000 residents](#) of CoC-funded permanent housing will likely lose their housing because of HUD’s approach in the NOFO.

The CoC Program is the largest federal source of resources to address homelessness, and communities rely on the funding they receive through the CoC Program’s regular competitive process. The FY26 CoC NOFO contains numerous harmful provisions and will significantly reduce funding to CoCs through two primary avenues:

1. Reducing funds for existing permanent housing to fund more temporary programs. In the FY26 appropriations bill, Congress required HUD to set Tier 1 renewal funding at 60% of Annual Renewal Demand (ARD) compared to 90% in 2024. While this is twice the threshold that HUD recently tried to implement, the change will force communities into difficult decisions about which proven programs can be protected. The Alliance estimates that this will put at least 97,000 residents of CoC-funded permanent housing at risk of losing their housing and reentering homelessness. Use [The Alliance’s tool](#) to see how your community might be impacted by the limitations on permanent housing outlined in the NOFO.
2. Capping the amount of bonus funding that CoCs can receive for new projects. These funding changes will disproportionately harm communities with the greatest needs. The Alliance estimates that this will cause a group of communities with higher rates of homelessness to lose access to approximately \$92 million in CoC funding. These CoCs currently represent 43% of the total population of people experiencing homelessness.

The NOFO contains other harmful policy and programmatic changes that will negatively impact every community’s efforts to end homelessness. For example, HUD provides itself with broad authority to reject applications based on subjective, unclear, or undefined criteria. Additionally, HUD’s new national priorities focus on service participation requirements, treatment, civil

commitment, and public safety. The NOFO rewards communities that prioritize voluntary and involuntary treatment, law enforcement partnerships, and other “public safety” measures. See the [Alliance’s full analysis](#) for more details.

The policy shifts in the NOFO will likely increase the number of people experiencing homelessness as many people lose their permanent housing and others are denied access to housing that would have ended their homelessness. Federal homelessness policy should incentivize strategies that are proven to help people obtain and maintain stable housing, not shift attention away from person-centered housing outcomes. Decades of research demonstrate that people are more likely to achieve stability and improve their health outcomes when they have access to housing and voluntary services tailored to their needs.

Read HUD’s FY26 CoC NOFO [here](#).

Read the Alliance’s full analysis of the NOFO [here](#).

Learn more about how HUD’s policy changes will put at least 97,000 people at risk of losing their housing [here](#).

Disaster Housing Recovery

House Financial Services Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Local Needs and CDBG-DR in Disaster Recovery

By Amin Sobhani, NLIHC DHR Intern

Keywords: Financial Services Subcommittee, hearing, CDBG-DR, statement

The U.S. House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance held a hearing, “Examining Local Needs in Disaster Recovery,” on June 10, 2026. The hearing examined the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program with a focus on streamlining recovery processes and better supporting disaster-impacted communities.

CDBG-DR is the only source of federal funds for providing states, Tribes, and communities with flexible, long-term recovery resources needed to rebuild affordable housing and infrastructure after a disaster. NLIHC and its Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) of over 900 local, state, and national organizations support the “[Reforming Disaster Recovery Act](#)” (RDRA) that would permanently authorize the program, reducing barriers to assistance and providing important safeguards and tools to help ensure that assistance reaches all impacted households—including the lowest-income survivors often hardest-hit by disasters.

NLIHC submitted [written testimony](#) that was included in the hearing record—arguing that the RDRA was essential to meeting the long-term recovery needs of disaster survivors and agreeing

with hearing witnesses that HUD should remain the lead agency for long-term recovery, and that the permanent authorization of the program is necessary.

During opening remarks, Subcommittee Chair Mike Flood cited the slow rate of CDBG-DR allocation spending and argued that it reflected broader challenges with the current ad hoc structure, including delays in allocating funds, difficulties grantees face in spending funds effectively, and oversight concerns. He expressed skepticism regarding the permanent authorization of the program and, along with House Financial Services Chairman French Hill, floated the idea of moving the program outside the realm of CDBG and potentially HUD altogether.

Witnesses described several structural and administrative challenges within the current CDBG-DR framework. Joseph V. Jaroscak, an Analyst in Economic Development Policy at the Congressional Research Service, explained that CDBG-DR is not a standard federal program with its own standing authorization or regulations, citing support by multiple stakeholders for the idea of permanent authorization. J. Patrick Cave, senior vice president of policy at Enterprise Community Partners, emphasized the importance of resilient housing before and after disasters. He highlighted the need to build and retrofit housing, strengthen local capacity, streamline recovery programs, and improve the delivery of tools such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and New Markets Tax Credit, and supported permanent authorization of CDBG-DR.

State-level administrators also discussed the operational challenges of navigating fragmented requirements. Heather Lagrone, senior deputy director at the Texas General Land Office, noted her support for permanent authorization of the program but argued that HUD's current allocation methodology, which relies heavily on total dollar losses, can skew funding toward larger urban jurisdictions and disadvantage rural communities with limited capacity to absorb recovery costs. Stephanie McGarrah, Deputy Secretary for the North Carolina Department of Commerce, shared her state's experience managing recovery from Hurricane Helene. She testified that the intermittent nature of CDBG-DR allocations leads to a lack of programmatic continuity. McGarrah urged Congress to permanently authorize the program so HUD can issue allocation notices more quickly. She also recommended making data-sharing agreements between federal agencies automatic for CDBG-DR grantees and streamlining overlapping federal environmental reviews, including full NEPA-compliant reviews, to reduce administrative expenses and speed up the process of rebuilding homes.

During the question-and-answer portion of the hearing, lawmakers discussed several key issues related to disaster recovery policy:

- **Agency Jurisdiction:** Several lawmakers questioned whether long-term disaster recovery should remain under HUD or be consolidated under FEMA to reduce fragmentation across federal programs. Witnesses generally cautioned against moving long-term recovery entirely to FEMA, noting that FEMA is primarily structured for emergency response and short-term assistance, while HUD has deeper experience with long-term housing recovery and community development.
- **Geographic Equity in Funding:** Lawmakers and witnesses also debated how HUD allocates CDBG-DR funds across impacted communities. Some raised concerns that

allocation formulas based heavily on total dollar losses can disadvantage smaller and rural communities with fewer resources and limited local capacity. Others cautioned that any changes to the formula should also protect assistance for densely populated urban areas and vulnerable, low-income communities with significant recovery needs.

- **Pre-disaster Mitigation:** Members also discussed the importance of proactive disaster mitigation and resilience. The hearing highlighted concerns that CDBG-DR and CDBG mitigation resources are generally tied to post-disaster supplemental appropriations, limiting the ability of communities to use these tools before disasters occur. Lawmakers explored potential legislative approaches that would allow states and local governments in high-risk areas to use CDBG resources more proactively for mitigation before the next major disaster.

Watch a recording of the full hearing [here](#).

Opportunity Starts at Home

Register for this Thursday's OSAH Webinar with New America and SchoolHouse Connection on Homelessness Among College Students

By Julie Walker, NLIHC Project Manager, *Opportunity Starts at Home*

Keywords: multi-sector, OSAH, New America, SchoolHouse Connection, college homelessness

[Join](#) the *Opportunity Starts at Home* (OSAH) campaign on June 18 at 3:00 pm ET for a webinar, "When College and Housing Collide: Addressing Homelessness Among College Students," in collaboration with OSAH Roundtable members New America and SchoolHouse Connection. During the webinar, attendees will hear from researchers at New America and SchoolHouse Connection about recent reports focused on homelessness and housing insecurity among college students, hear from a SchoolHouse Connection Scholar who recently [wrote](#) about her experiences navigating homelessness as a college student, and learn about actionable steps to support students experiencing homelessness.

Speakers include:

- Chantelle Wilkinson, vice president of strategic partnerships & campaigns, NLIHC
- Julie Walker, OSAH project manager, NLIHC
- Richard Davis Jr., policy analyst, New America Higher Education Policy Program
- Ewa Obatuase, policy analyst, New America Higher Education Policy Program
- Jillian SitJar, director of higher education, SchoolHouse Connection
- Harper, SchoolHouse Connection Scholar

More than 1.5 million college students nationwide, including those caring for young children, are grappling with the detrimental effects of homelessness. Lack of housing stability hinders educational success, while some level of postsecondary education is increasingly necessary to achieve economic stability and avoid homelessness. Parenting students, as well as youth and young adults, are often an overlooked population in housing conversations. To address this gap, join OSAH, New America, and SchoolHouse Connection as they come together to discuss the impact homelessness has on college students, and explore data-driven solutions to better support this population.

Researchers from New America and SchoolHouse Connection will walk through data on the student parent population, rates of college student homelessness, and provide actionable steps to support these students and their families. A SchoolHouse Connection Scholar will share her experiences navigating homelessness as a college student, her impressions of the national data, and her policy recommendations to ensure students are supported. Whether you serve in housing, higher education, community-based organizations, policy, or research, this event will offer actionable insights to strengthen support systems for college students who struggle with homelessness and housing insecurity.

Register for the webinar [here](#).

Strategic Partnerships & Campaigns

Episode 5 of “The Common Ground” Coming Soon: A Conversation with President and CEO of CUCS

By May Louis-Juste, NLIHC Project Manager, *Strategic Partnerships*

Keywords: The Common Ground, Dawn M. Pinnock, CUCS

In the next episode of “[The Common Ground](#),” we sat down with the President and CEO of the [Center for Urban Community Services](#) (CUCS), Dawn M. Pinnock, for a conversation about what real commitment looks like in the fight to end homelessness.

Drawing from her decades of public service and leadership, Dawn shares how CUCS is helping reshape the public understanding of homelessness through holistic care, cross-sector collaboration, crisis intervention training, and a deep commitment to human dignity. The conversation challenges common assumptions about homelessness while offering a powerful vision for what becomes possible when communities invest in people rather than punish poverty.

Throughout the episode, listeners will find gems on why narrative change is essential to policy change, how language shapes public perception, and why building trust remains one of the most effective tools for creating stability.

“The Common Ground” is a storytelling podcast that highlights the powerful intersections of housing, homelessness, and other sectors. Each episode aims to bring together cultural leaders, artists, journalists, advocates, and influencers to explore how their values and work connect to housing justice, emphasizing our collective responsibility for a future where everyone has a place to call home.

Subscribe to join us as we explore our shared commitment to finding common ground. Listen to “The Common Ground” on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), and [SoundCloud](#).

Using Public Art to Transform Conversations About Homelessness

By Haadia Hyder, NLIHC Strategic Partnerships & Campaigns Intern

Keywords: Houston, Texas, arts & culture, public art

[HueMan:Shelter](#) is an art initiative in Houston, Texas, that brings together artists and individuals with lived experience of homelessness to create powerful bodies of work that not only inspire conversation but also understanding and connection. It’s a community engagement initiative and economic development program that serves as a catalyst for changing perceptions around homelessness and a physical testament to the social impact of publicly accessible art. The project encompasses installations and mural work across three bus shelters, two underpasses, and one large-scale mural, shaping conversations around homelessness in a Houston neighborhood.

The project was awarded \$1 million through the [Bloomberg Philanthropies' Third Public Art Challenge](#). With applications from over 154 cities across 40 states, Houston and HueMan:Shelter were selected as one of eight grantees for the programs' third wave. It’s a testament to the innovative community effort that uses creativity as a tool for engagement and social change.

Artists and unhoused individuals worked together to design and implement these public art projects across the main corridor of Midtown, integrating lived experiences of homelessness into mural designs. The project served as a paid opportunity for unhoused Houstonians to gain hands-on workforce skills, creating steps to economic stability through Career and Recovery Resources’ UpRise Enterprise program. HueMan:Shelter has also hosted various community programming events, including community paint days, guided walking tours, community celebrations, and free sound meditation sessions and yoga classes.

This initiative highlights the multifaceted capacity public art holds, shaping conversations around homelessness, fostering multi-sector collaborations, and furthering local economic development through a people-first lens.

NLIHC is committed to building and strengthening cultural, political, and coalition partnerships necessary to achieve housing justice through meaningful relationships and highlighting events that showcase housing in different spaces and media.

Let's reshape the narrative together! We are seeking partners who want to shift narratives, expand public will, and strengthen the movement for housing justice. Share your interest [here](#).

Let us know if there are upcoming and past arts and culture events that you believe our team should know about or attend, including film screenings, local gallery shows, community storytelling events, or national conferences. Please send details to May Louis Juste, NLIHC Project Manager, *Strategic Partnerships*, at mlouis-juste@nlihc.org.

Research

Research Finds Racial Disparities in Energy Insecurity Among Homeowners

By Naiya Oden, NLIHC Research Intern

Keywords: Energy insecurity, energy assistance, homeownership, racial equity, housing affordability, utility burden

An article published in *Housing Policy Debate* titled “[Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Relationship Between Homeownership, Income, and Energy Insecurity](#)” examines how homeownership, income, and race intersect to shape energy insecurity in the United States. While homeownership is often viewed as a means to economic security and wealth building, the authors found that these benefits are not experienced equally across racial and ethnic groups. Low-income Black homeowners were more likely to experience energy insecurity than Black renters and significantly more likely to experience hardship than white homeowners with similar incomes.

The authors wanted to determine whether homeownership provides protection against energy insecurity for all households. The study defines energy insecurity as the inability to meet household energy needs and can include receiving utility shut-off notices, keeping a home at unhealthy temperatures, or sacrificing necessities such as food and medicine to pay energy bills. Previous research has shown that Black and Hispanic households experience excessively high rates of material hardship, including challenges paying utility bills and maintaining safe housing conditions. Given that Black and Hispanic households have historically experienced barriers to home repair financing and access to safe, quality housing, the authors expected that low-income homeowners of color would not experience the energy security benefits typically associated with homeownership.

To test this hypothesis, the authors examined data on energy-related characteristics from the 2020 Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS), a nationally representative survey of approximately 18,500 households. The authors analyzed three indicators of energy insecurity,

including receiving a utility disconnection notice, forgoing necessities such as food or medicine to pay an energy bill, and keeping the home at an unhealthy temperature. They looked at differences in these indicators across racial groups, income levels, and homeownership status while accounting for other housing characteristics, household composition, and geographic location.

The authors found significant racial disparities in the relationship between homeownership and energy insecurity. For white households, homeownership consistently lowered the risk of energy insecurity relative to renting. Hispanic homeowners also generally experienced lower rates of energy insecurity than Hispanic renters. Black households, however, experienced a significantly different outcome. Among households earning less than \$20,000 annually, Black homeowners were more likely to experience energy insecurity than Black renters.

The study also showed households of color often needed substantially higher incomes to achieve the same level of energy security as white households with lower incomes. Black and Hispanic households did not experience energy insecurity rates comparable to white households until their annual incomes reached approximately \$100,000. The authors also found that the share of households receiving energy assistance was substantially lower than the share experiencing energy insecurity, implying a considerable unmet need.

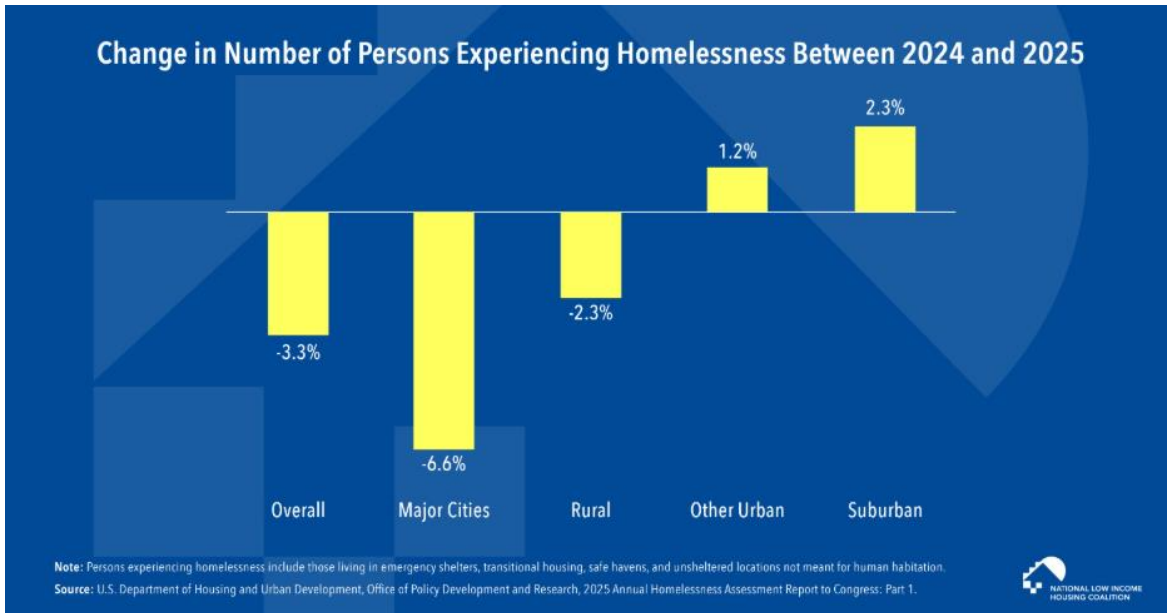
The authors conclude that homeownership alone does not guarantee housing stability, financial security, or protection against energy hardship. Systematic inequities in housing markets, neighborhood conditions, and access to resources continue to shape outcomes for many low-income Black homeowners. The authors recommend future research using longitudinal data and administrative records from utility providers to better understand the causes of energy insecurity. The authors also suggest expanding energy assistance programs, weatherization efforts, and home repair resources to address the disproportionate burden faced by low-income households of color and promote more equitable housing outcomes.

The study is available [here](#).

Fact of the Week

Decline in Homelessness Between 2024 and 2025 Driven by Decrease in Major Cities

Keywords: Homelessness



Note: Persons experiencing homelessness include those living in emergency shelters, transition housing, safe havens, and locations not meant for human habitation.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, [2025 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress: Part 1](#)

IDEAS

NLIHC Celebrates Juneteenth

By Treasure Evans, NLIHC IDEAS Intern

Keywords: Juneteenth, legacy of African Americans, systems of oppression, safe, accessible, and affordable homes

NLIHC recognizes, commemorates, and honors the legacy and unity of Juneteenth 2026. Two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was declared, on June 19, 1865, over 250,000 enslaved African Americans were freed by an enforced military order issued by General Gordon Granger in Galveston, Texas. This day embodies one of the many pivotal beginnings in the ongoing journey toward power, unity, healing, and reconciliation for African Americans in the United States.

In educating on the significance of Juneteenth, we must acknowledge that although this day ended overt legal enslavement for African American communities on public grounds, we are still far from truly reaching equitable and equal access to affordable opportunities due to current policies, institutions, and systems that continue to perpetuate harm, deprivation, and marginalization of communities that need these resources the most.

Juneteenth symbolizes the power that our communities hold when we succeed, but it also is a reminder of how much we must acknowledge and change the powers that be who consistently move the goalposts of liberation, economic justice, and true wellness and health from Black and other marginalized communities. All people deserve dignity, the freedom to exist safely, and to thrive in homes that they call their own.

Juneteenth reveals to us that freedom delayed is justice denied, and today, housing justice remains out of reach for far too many marginalized communities. Let Juneteenth serve as remembrance. Let it be a commitment to advance anti-racist housing policy, center the voices of those most impacted, and fight until safe, accessible, and affordable homes are a reality for all.

NLIHC News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of June 8

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of June 8:

- “America Built Its Way Out of a Housing Crisis After WWII-Can We Do It Again?” *SFGate*, June 8, at: <https://tr.ee/XR8cmn>
 - “Cost headwinds batter affordable housing developers, report finds,” *HousingWire*, June 10, at: <https://tr.ee/00b7xu>
 - “Work requirements in federal affordable housing would ‘harm’ older adults, aging services workforce,” *McKnight's Senior Living*, June 10, at: <https://tr.ee/DqYSMd>
-

Where to Find Us – June 15

- [EbonyFest Juneteenth 2026](#) “Rooted in Resilience — Beyond 250 Years” – Gastonia, NC, June 18 (Tia Turner and Kayla Gilchrist)
 - [What are Tenant Rights? Virtual Training Session](#) (Greater Memphis Housing Justice Project) – virtual, June 24 (Kayla Blackwell & Billy Cerullo)
 - [AASC Conference](#) – Austin, TX, August 23-24 (Tia Turner)
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