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Budget and Appropriations

Trump Administration Expected to Release Full FY26 Spending Request in Coming Weeks After “Skinny” Budget Indicating Massive Cuts, Changes to HUD Programs – Take Action!

TAG: Budget and Appropriations

Keywords: Appropriations, FY26

President Donald Trump is expected to release his full budget proposal for fiscal year (FY) 2026 in the coming weeks, after unveiling a “[skinny](#)” budget request on May 2 indicating the Administration will pursue historic cuts to HUD funding in its full FY26 spending request, including a proposal that would result in an unprecedented 43% cut to HUD’s rental assistance programs. For additional details, read NLIHC’s [analysis](#).

Every year, the Administration submits a budget request to Congress in advance of the annual appropriations process. Only Congress has the power to provide funding for federal programs, so the president’s budget request does not carry any legal weight, but it does provide an opportunity for the Administration to signal their priorities in the fiscal year ahead. During his first term, President Trump repeatedly called for [massive spending](#) cuts to HUD programs, including deep cuts to the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program that, if enacted, would have taken housing assistance away from 200,000 households who rely on their HCV to keep a roof over their heads. The previous Trump Administration also pushed Congress to enact policies that would increase barriers to accessing housing assistance, including work requirements, time limits, and minimum rent increases on HUD-assisted households. However, thanks to advocates and congressional champions who worked tirelessly to protect HCVs and other vital HUD programs, these proposed cuts and policy changes were never enacted.

The “skinny” budget request makes clear these threats will be raised again as FY26 negotiations take shape. The President’s full budget request is expected to be released later in May and will provide additional details of the White House’s recommendation for FY26 spending. Over the coming weeks, members of the President’s Cabinet – including HUD Secretary Scott Turner – will appear before the House and Senate Appropriations Committee to discuss and justify the president’s budget proposal. Secretary Turner’s hearing has yet to be scheduled.

The need for additional funding for the Emergency Housing Voucher Program

In addition to the need for increased funding in FY26 to cover the cost of HCV renewals, Congress will need to provide funding to ensure the 60,000 households who receive an Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) do not lose their assistance. The [EHV program](#) was created in the “American Rescue Plan Act of 2021,” which provided \$5 billion for 60,000 new tenant-based rental assistance vouchers specifically targeted to people experiencing or at immediate risk of homelessness, including people escaping intimate partner violence. The EHV program mandates that public housing authorities (PHAs), which are responsible for administering the program, work with their local Continuums of Care (CoCs) to identify people and families at risk

of or experiencing homelessness and connect them to an EHV, plus wrap-around services when needed for long-term housing stability.

The EHV program has been extremely successful, helping almost 60,000 people and families – and in particular families with children – find and maintain stable housing. While funding for the program was originally slated to last until 2030, the rapid increase in the cost of rent over the last four years has caused funding to run out much more quickly than expected. Unless additional funding is allocated by Congress, HUD estimates that funding for the program will likely run out in 2026.

Take Action

As Congress begins their work on FY26, NLIHC will continue to monitor developments and provide updated materials for advocates to take action and demand increased funding for HUD's vital programs in any final FY26 spending bill.

Urge Congress to pass a FY26 spending bill with increased funding for HUD's affordable housing and homelessness programs!

Use NLIHC's toolkits and resources to take action on FY26 funding, including 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.](#)
- **Check out the "Reject Housing Cuts and EHV Funding Cliff: Action Toolkit,"** developed in partnership with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), National Alliance to End Homelessness, and National Housing Law Project. [The toolkit has talking points, resources, advocacy ideas and more!](#)

National, state, local, tribal, and territorial organizations can also [join over 2,300 organizations](#) on 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.

House Committees Plan to Consider Key Provisions of Reconciliation Bill This Week that Could Slash Funding for Food Assistance and Medicaid

TAG: Budget and Appropriations

Keywords: Budget reconciliation, budget resolution

Key committees in the House of Representatives are expected this week to introduce and review the proposed text of a massive reconciliation bill Republicans are trying to pass through Congress in the coming months. The Committees – Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, Agriculture – are responsible for determining some of the most controversial provisions of the bill, including tax cuts and extensions, cuts to Medicaid and healthcare assistance, and cuts to food assistance.

Congressional Republicans are using a special legislative process called “budget reconciliation” to pass a bill that would spend over \$5 trillion to extend tax cuts, increase funding for immigration enforcement, and fund other Trump Administration priorities, while also cutting at least \$1.5 trillion in the federal budget through funding cuts to other federal programs, including the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB; see *Memo*, [5/5](#)), Medicaid, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

While housing assistance has not been named as a potential target for cuts, the anti-poverty programs being considered play a crucial role in economic stability for people and families with low incomes, helping them put food on the table and receive needed medical care. The financial assistance these programs provide also promotes housing stability: by helping families afford the cost of food and other necessities, more money is left over at the end of the month to ensure rent is paid. States can also use Medicaid to cover [health-related social needs](#), including housing.

The threats to Medicaid, which serves over 72 million low-income people around the country, and SNAP, which serves over 42 million people, have triggered widespread outcry from advocates around the country. Public opposition to the proposed cuts to Medicaid and SNAP is pressuring moderate and swing-district Republicans to express concerns about the bill to leadership; as negotiations continue, it will be crucial for advocates – especially those in Republican districts and states – to keep up the pressure on their members of Congress to vote against any reconciliation bill that would cut vital safety net programs.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness launched a [Take Action page](#) for advocates to quickly and easily contact their elected officials and urge them not to support cuts to Medicaid. Take action here: tinyurl.com/3c2ntnnw.

Learn more about how you can advocate for continued SNAP funding at the Food, Research, and Action Center’s (FRAC) website: tinyurl.com/2mzr5pb3.

Congress

House Oversight Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Federal Assistance Programs

TAG: Congress

Keywords: House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services

The U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services held a hearing on May 7, “Examining the Growth of the Welfare State, Part II.” Witnesses were the Honorable Ben Carson, M.D., Former Secretary of HUD; Mr. Chris Edwards, Kilts Family Chair in Fiscal Studies at The Cato Institute; Mr. Howard Husock, Senior Fellow, Domestic Policy Studies at The American Enterprise Institute; and Mr. Indivar Dutta-Gupta, Advisor at Community Change and Doris Duke Distinguished Visiting Fellow, McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University.

The hearing focused on the impact of federal assistance programs that help people afford basic needs, with a focus on housing assistance, food assistance, and Medicaid. Subcommittee Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) shared how federal assistance programs, including public housing, helped give his family the stability they needed during a difficult time, and that stability made it possible for them to gain financial self-sufficiency. Subcommittee Chair Glenn Grothman (R-WI) emphasized the impact assistance programs have on marriage rates, and many of his Republican colleagues asserted claims of waste, fraud, and abuse in assistance programs. Committee Democrats pushed back, noting that the overwhelming majority of people and families receiving public assistance are working, elderly, or have a disability, and that cutting programs will lead to increased hunger, lost health care coverage, and more people experiencing housing instability and homelessness.

NLIHC opposes harmful policies that restrict access to housing assistance and would leave more people struggling to afford rent and keep a roof over their heads. President Trump’s “skinny” budget request, released on May 2, includes significant cuts funding to vital affordable housing and homelessness assistance programs and proposes to impose a two-year time limit of receiving rental assistance for “able-bodied adults.”

Imposing new time limits or work requirements will not create well-paying jobs and opportunities for financial security. According to the NLIHC’s [Out of Reach](#) report, 14 of the 20 most common occupations in the U.S. pay a lower median hourly wage than the wage needed to afford a one- or two-bedroom rental home. Sixty-four million people, or 42% of the entire workforce, work in these 14 occupations, including retail and restaurant workers, health home aides and nursing assistants, building cleaners and repair workers, administrative assistants and those in the construction trades.

NLIHC urges federal lawmakers to expand investments in proven housing, homelessness, and community development programs. Advocates can take action to protect and expand these vital programs by contacting your member of Congress directly or via [NLIHC’s Take Action page](#).

Information about the hearing, witness list, and a link to watch a replay of the hearing can be found [here](#).

Join Tomorrow's (May 13) National HoUsed Campaign Call for Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing!

TAG: HoUsed

Keywords: HoUsed campaign, Trump's "skinny" budget

Join tomorrow's (May 13) national HoUsed campaign call from 4 to 5 pm ET. The call will feature an overview and analysis of the housing provisions in President Trump's "skinny" budget request for fiscal year (FY) 2026, which calls for a historic 44% cut to HUD funding.

NLIHC's Senior Director of Policy Kim Johnson will share an overview of the "skinny" request and its foreshadowing of federal funding fights ahead. We will be joined by Senior Policy Analyst at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) Sonya Acosta, who will share an overview of the proposal's cuts and changes to HUD rental assistance programs. Olivia Wein, senior attorney with the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC), will provide an overview of the request's implications for the Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LHEAP), and a status update after staff responsible for administering LIHEAP at the Department of Health and Human Services were fired from their positions. Finally, Cathy Alderman, chief communications and public policy officer at the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, will share what Colorado affordable housing and homelessness advocates are experiencing on the ground, and how they are fighting back against harmful proposals. We will also highlight resources, provide the latest updates from Capitol Hill, and more. [Register here](#).

May 13 National HoUsed Campaign Call Agenda:

- Welcome & Introductions
 - Renee Willis, Interim President & CEO, NLIHC
- Overview: President Trump's "Skinny" Budget Request for FY26
 - Kim Johnson, Senior Policy Director, NLIHC
- Threats to Rental Assistance in the FY26 "Skinny" Budget Request
 - Sonya Acosta, Senior Policy Analyst, CBPP
- LIHEAP Status Update & Implications for Low-Income Households
 - Olivia Wein, Senior Attorney, NCLC
- On-the-Ground Impact & Advocacy
 - Cathy Alderman, Chief Communications and Public Policy Officer, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
- Policy Update
 - Kim Johnson, Policy Manager, NLIHC

NLIHC's national calls will now take place on the second and last Tuesday of every month, from 4 to 5 pm ET. [Register for the series here](#).

Access NLIHC's archive of HoUsed Campaign calls and other webinar recordings [here](#).

Disaster Housing Recovery

Acting FEMA Administrator Dismissed After He Defends Agency at Congressional Hearing

TAG: Disaster Recovery

Keywords: Disaster recovery, FEMA

Cam Hamilton, the senior official performing the duties of FEMA Administrator, was [dismissed](#) from his position May 8. His firing comes roughly 24 hours after he testified to the House Appropriations Homeland Security Subcommittee that he personally did not “believe it is in the best interest of the American people to eliminate the Federal Emergency Management Agency.” The Department of Homeland Security confirmed his removal but declined to give a reason for the decision, saying only that, “it’s at the discretion of [Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem] to have the personnel she prefers.”

The move comes on the heels of statements that the Administration plans to fully eliminate the agency by the fall of this year. In the same congressional hearing, Secretary Noem stated that, “President Trump has been very clear since the beginning that he believes that FEMA and its response in many, many circumstances has failed the American people and that FEMA, as it exists today, should be eliminated in empowering states to respond to disasters with federal government support.” Late last month, a review council created by President Trump via an Executive Order (EO) to examine reforms for the agency finally received appointments, including several governors and state-level emergency management chiefs.

The new Acting Director at FEMA, David Richardson, is a senior Department of Homeland Security official and former Marine artillery officer and combat veteran. In an [address](#) to employees given on May 9, Richardson forcibly told staff that all decisions involving the agency would go through him. “I, and I alone in FEMA, speak for FEMA. I’m here to carry out the president’s intent for FEMA,” Richardson, who was most recently assistant secretary for DHS Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office, told staff. Amid heavy references to his military experience, Richardson said in his experience carrying out reforms, roughly 20% of an organization will resist. “Obfuscation, delay, undermining. If you’re one of those 20% of people and you think those tactics and techniques are going to help you, they will not, because I will run right over you,” Richardson said. “Don’t get in my way ... I know all the tricks.”

The address was heard by a dwindling number of FEMA staffers, with 2,000 employees recently taking incentives to leave or being terminated in the last 100 days. Currently, 15 requests for federal disaster declarations from states impacted by disasters remain unprocessed in the last several months. The [potentially destructive](#) 2025 Atlantic Hurricane Season is now less than a month away.

Bipartisan, Comprehensive FEMA Reform Bill Being Developed in House of Representatives

TAG: Disaster Recovery

Keywords: Disaster recovery, Congress, FEMA

In response to increasing chaos and uncertainty at FEMA, a group of House members [released](#) draft text for a sweeping bill to overhaul the agency. The bill signifies an attempt by Congress to create a 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 initial reform recommendations prior to the bill's release – several of which have been included in this [draft text](#).

The draft bill, announced in a press release on May 8, was created by House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Sam Graves (R-MO) and Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA). The bill has potential to become Congress' primary vehicle to influence the future of FEMA. However, it is unclear how far the proposal could go in the current legislative environment.

"We have clearly seen that FEMA is not working as it should for Americans who've been impacted by disasters. Congress has passed FEMA reforms over the years, but it simply hasn't been enough," said Chairman Graves, in a [press release](#) announcing the release of the discussion draft. "It makes commonsense reforms to help victims and communities recover faster and to ensure better coordination among agencies involved in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery." The bill also strips out the red tape that slows down recoveries, it makes disaster programs more accountable to the taxpayer, and it ensures that FEMA treats all victims fairly.

"FEMA is the last line of defense for families impacted by increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters," Ranking Member Larsen said in the same press release. "Republican and Democrats on this Committee agree that it is an important agency in need of reform. That's why I'm proud to partner with my counterpart, Sam Graves, to release draft legislation giving FEMA the tools it needs to simplify its programs and provide quicker relief to disaster-impacted communities."

The draft text includes 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.

- Removes 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. NLIHC staff and DHRC members are currently analyzing the bill and will provide direct feedback to Transportation and Infrastructure Committee staff on the final version of the bill.

Opportunity Starts at Home

Eviction Lab Article Explores Impact of Eviction on Kids' Educational Trajectories

TAG: Opportunity Starts at Home

Keywords: Opportunity Starts at Home, multi-sectors

Eviction Lab published an [article](#), “Consequences of Eviction-Led Forced Mobility for School-Age Children in Houston,” in *Sociology of Education* that explores the consequences of eviction cases on students’ academic trajectories. Using court data on eviction cases filed in Harris County, Texas between 2002 and 2016, along with Houston Independent School District educational records, the authors determined that students whose parents face eviction cases are more likely to leave the school district than students not facing eviction. Students who remained in the same school district and experienced eviction filings were more likely to have switched schools and often relocated to schools with fewer resources. The study also found that students whose families faced evictions had an increase in school absences and an increase in suspensions among students who switched schools. The results of the study contribute to an existing body of research demonstrating the consequences of eviction filings, even when they don’t lead to formal eviction judgements.

Each year, nearly 3 million children risk losing their homes through the eviction process. The study’s authors aimed to fill a gap in research examining how evictions affect classrooms and children’s education. The study analyzed court data of all eviction cases filed in Harris County, Texas between 2002 and 2016 and linked these cases to educational records accessed through the Houston Education Research Consortium (HERC), a partnership between Rice University’s Kinder Institute and eight Houston-area school districts. These educational records include enrollment, attendance, disciplinary, and grade data for more than 685,000 students enrolled in the Houston Independent School District between 2002-2016. The authors linked parents’ names and addresses from the enrollment records to defendant names and addresses in eviction cases. Over 13,000 students were identified to have parents who had an eviction filed against them at least once, with nearly a quarter of students in households who were filed against repeatedly. Data analyses revealed three key findings: eviction filings put students at higher risk of switching schools and leaving the district; eviction- driven school changes tended to be to schools with lower standardized test scores, less funding per pupil, and larger shares of economically disadvantaged students; and eviction filings and school changes led to increased absences, especially during the year of the eviction case or school move. The results suggest that students facing eviction who also change schools face increased suspensions in their new schools.

The authors recommend that policymakers explore ways to provide additional eviction protections for families with school-age children, emphasizing that it is just as important to reduce eviction filing rates as it is for schools to strategize how to address problems associated with school mobility. Existing research has identified effective ways to do this, including increasing notice requirements, raising filing fees for evictions, providing legal counsel to those threatened with eviction, and providing emergency rental assistance. The “Eviction Crisis Act,” an OSAH [priority bill](#), would provide emergency, short-term assistance to help stabilize households in crisis and reduce the harm and costs associated with evictions for students and families. The bill would also create a program to fund state and local governments to expand the use of landlord-tenant community courts that offer mediation services and increase the presence of social services representatives for tenants.

Read the article [here](#). Read more about the “Eviction Crisis Act” [here](#).

Research

Researchers Publish First Descriptive Analysis of Right to Counsel Programs in the United States

TAG: Other Housing Policy Issues

Keywords: Right to counsel, eviction, housing instability, access to justice, Civil Gideon, civil right to counsel

A recently published article in Housing Policy Debate, “[A Descriptive Analysis of Tenant Right to Counsel Law and Praxis 2017–2024](#),” provides the first comprehensive description of state and local tenant right to counsel (RTC) policies implemented in the United States. Tenant RTC policies provide eligible tenants with free legal representation in eviction lawsuits and, under some policies, in matters that may lead to eviction or where tenants are asserting legal rights. The authors describe each RTC policy and identify how its implementation meets or diverges from legislative requirements in ways that promote or hinder RTC goals.

The authors employed longitudinal policy surveillance, legal mapping, and legal analysis to identify all 23 state and local RTC policies active in the United States as of June 2024 and created a dataset that captured substantive features of each policy. Additionally, the authors conducted 48 qualitative interviews with stakeholders responsible for program implementation, including program administrators, tenant organizers responsible for education and outreach, and nonprofit or legal service providers. Nineteen of 23 RTC policies were implemented at the time of the study, with an average of 200 days between passage and implementation across all locations. Where RTC was incrementally rolled out by zip code or county, the average time to implementation was longer (330 days). In 19 jurisdictions, RTC legislation included statements justifying the policy. Justifications from 13 jurisdictions were based on principles of judicial fairness, including the imbalance of representation between tenants and landlords (9), fairness in

legal proceedings (6), and access to justice (3). Twelve jurisdictions cited eviction as a social determinant of poor health, a threat to public health, or both.

Eligibility for RTC services was dependent on criteria set forth in the underlying legislation, as well as requirements from funders or legal service providers. Most RTCs were limited to individuals below a set income (14). Other eligibility considerations included household characteristics (e.g., families with children), legal proceeding type, and receipt of housing assistance. While all jurisdictions included eviction defense as part of RTC, nine also provided tenants with RTC services in cases where tenants assert rights, such as for violations of rent control or fair housing claims. While some RTC policies were limited to private-market renters, 14 extended to public housing residents and 11 were extended to renters in subsidized housing. Even where the legislation was silent on eligibility, eligibility depended on provider capacity and any restrictions placed by the funder or the provider organization. For example, RTC services delivered by Legal Service Corporation-funded organizations could only serve renters who met LSC income eligibility and United States citizenship requirements.

In all RTC jurisdictions, renters were responsible for initiating contact with the RTC program to receive services. Interviews revealed that extensive outreach was needed to inform tenants of RTC programs. In many jurisdictions, RTC legislation required some form of notice to renters about the right, such as formal notice of the right in a lease or court summons (12) or tenant education and outreach programs (13).

The authors found that providers and other stakeholders from many jurisdictions celebrated the successes of RTC programs in creating more favorable and just outcomes for renters, renter-supportive case law, and streamlined coordination between legal service organizations and other community service providers. However, the authors found that issues related to insufficient funding, staff turnover, and infrastructure for outreach and education made it difficult to implement RTC programs successfully. While tenants might have a right to counsel, their ability to access RTC services is still contingent on funding. Many programs relied on the piecemealing of several funding sources, some of which were temporary. Nine programs relied on one-time federal funding sources allocated during the COVID-19 pandemic and 13 relied on state or local general fund allocations, which typically required annual reauthorization. Providers operating with limited funding or staff discussed an inability to meet needs, the need to further limit eligibility, postpone or slow education and outreach, the burden of advocating for additional or sustained funding, and the pressure to demonstrate cost savings and outcomes. Providers also highlighted barriers to outreach and education for historically disempowered populations.

The authors also found that judicial discretion limited RTC's success. They explained that the success of RTC often depends upon judges' willingness to inform renters of RTC at the time of hearing and postpone cases to award tenants more time to meet with attorneys. Except for three jurisdictions (Minnesota, Nebraska, Washington), judges were not required to appoint counsel to eligible renters in proceedings. Interviews revealed that judges were reluctant to inform tenants of RTC, perhaps due to a longstanding status quo of judicial deference to landlords. The authors found that courts that were responsible for or more supportive of the RTC program experienced a culture shift that resulted in more successfully meeting legislative intents such as procedural fairness and access to justice.

Despite challenges, the authors conclude that RTC programs can shift court culture and power imbalances in favor of renters. They suggest that their research can serve as a framework for evaluating existing RTC programs and creating new ones. They call for additional research on how RTC directly impacts courts and court processes, the mobility and well-being of tenants, and landlords' behavior. The authors also call for more longitudinal research to determine how RTC impacts broader aspects of the tenant-landlord relationship, housing supply, community wellbeing, and class and racial power dynamics.

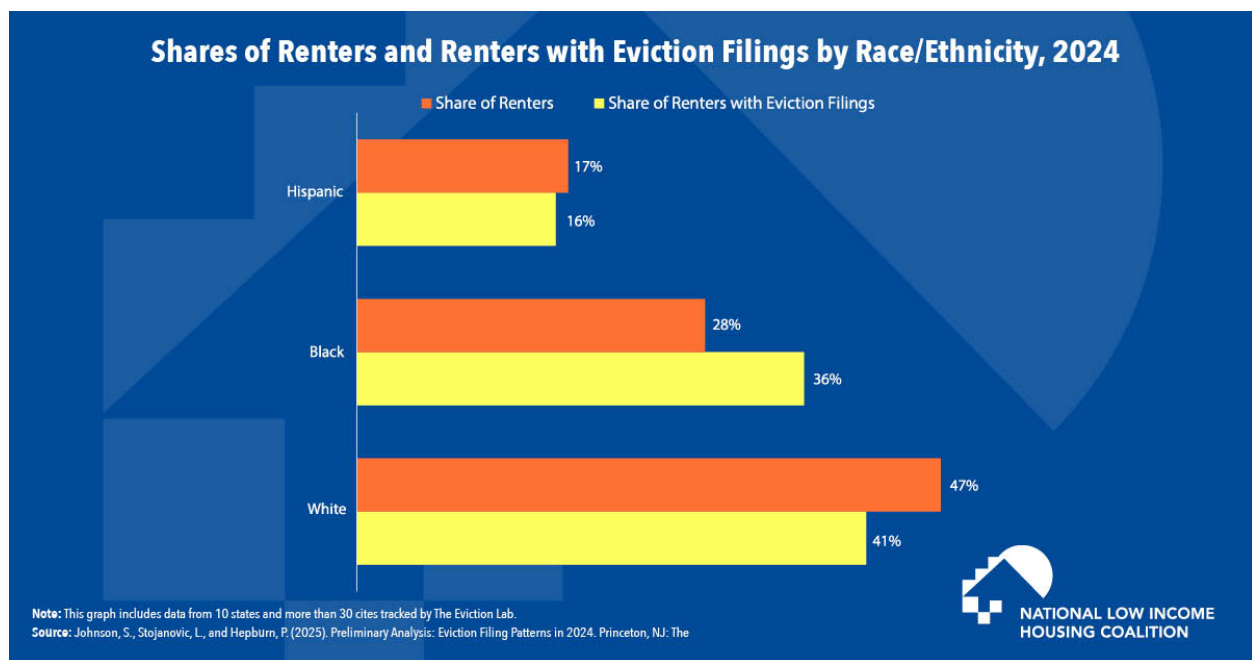
Read the report at: <https://bit.ly/452irMD>.

Fact of the Week

Renters of Color are Disproportionately Impacted by Eviction Filings

TAG: Fact of the Week

Keywords: renters of color, eviction filings



Note: This graphic includes data from 10 states and more than 30 cities tracked by The Eviction Lab.

Source: Johnson, S., Stojanovic, L., and Hepburn, P. (2025). *Preliminary Analysis: Eviction Filing Patterns in 2024*. Princeton, NJ: The Eviction Lab. Available at <https://bit.ly/452jV9F>.

From the Field

Join NLIHC's Second Policy Advisory Committee Meeting of 2025

TAG: From the Field

Keywords: Member, policy, Policy Advisory Committee

NLIHC members are invited to join NLIHC's second Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting of the year on Wednesday, May 21, from 4 to 5 pm ET. PAC meetings offer NLIHC members a space to weigh in on the formation, direction, and implementation of NLIHC's policy priorities and advocacy activities.

We will use our May PAC meeting to discuss tips on bridging divides between urban and rural organizing and advocacy efforts. Speakers will include:

- Housing Action Illinois
- Georgia Advancing Communities Together, Inc. (ACT)
- Tennessee Renters United

Our two remaining PAC meetings will take place on:

- Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 4-5 pm ET
- Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 4- 5 pm ET

*Please note that **PAC meetings are only open to NLIHC members**. If you are not already a member, you can [join online](#).*

Register for the May 21 Policy Advisory Committee meeting and future PAC meetings at: <https://tinyurl.com/3hyemwk5>.

DC Tenant Union Organizes to Purchase Apartment Complex Through Local Right of First Refusal Law

TAG: From the Field

Keywords: Tenant protections, TOPA, right of first refusal, DC, advocacy, tenant union

Residents at Park East Apartments in Washington, DC are in the process of purchasing their 88-unit apartment complex after the prior owner, CIM Group, put the building up for sale in 2021. After years of organizing that culminated in the formation of the 1845 Summit Place NW Tenants Association, the residents announced their intention to purchase the property through the city's [Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act](#) (TOPA) in summer 2024.

Since its inception in 1980, TOPA has given renters in DC the first opportunity to purchase their building when it goes up for sale. Park East is expected to sell for \$17.25 million and the total cost for the project, which includes capital costs, renovations, and outside consultants, is estimated at \$21 million.

The residents are currently working with consultants at [MFX Ventures](#) and the legal team at [Reno and Cavanaugh PLLC](#) to create and execute a financial plan to fund the project costs, which principally rests on securing an insured loan through HUD. With the support of a loan from the [National Housing Trust](#), the residents have already put down \$250,000 toward purchasing the building. The residents, while actively seeking additional financial partners, are also working with local Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) and banks to secure bridge financing to close within the TOPA timeline.

The long-term plan is for a HUD-insured loan to serve as the sole, 40-year fixed rate mortgage. Residents will pay \$1,000 to own their respective units, which they would then be able to sell back to the co-op for \$1,000 if and when they move out. Each unit, currently subject to rent control and approximately \$500 less than the area market rate, would receive even smaller rent increases than have been standard under rent control, currently projected at 2% per year to keep pace with inflation. The coop fee would immediately go towards servicing the 40-year fixed rate mortgage through the HUD loan, capital expenditures, and a reserve fund for future emergency repairs.

Residents of Park East say their goal is not just to preserve affordable housing for themselves, but for their community:

“Our building is full of people that work regular jobs and that are both permanent and transitory in DC,” said Alex M., president of the 1845 Summit Place NW Tenants Association. “All of us want to contribute to preserving affordable housing in Adams Morgan and have found through working with each other that we want to continue to build and preserve our community at Park East and with other co-ops in the neighborhood.”

The average aggregate income for the residents of Park East is estimated at around 70% to 80% of the area median income (AMI). In a city that is synonymous with high rental costs, 39% of renter households making 51% to 80% AMI are cost-burdened per NLIHC’s 2025 [Gap Report](#). The percentage of cost-burdened renter households for extremely low-income renters in the city is even more staggering at 87%.

The efforts to purchase Park East through TOPA, a program consistently lauded for preserving affordable housing in DC, coincides with what advocates say is an effort to severely curtail the program’s scope. In February, Mayor Muriel Bowser introduced the “Rebalancing Expectations for Neighbors, Tenants and Landlords ([RENTAL](#)) Act”, a comprehensive piece of legislation aimed at bolstering DC’s housing market. In addition to returning the process of evictions to its pre-pandemic timeline, the legislation also amends TOPA. Alleging a long TOPA process that leads to disinvestment in the city’s housing infrastructure, Bowser seeks to limit TOPA by exempting market rate buildings from triggering the process. She is also proposing an exemption for buildings built or significantly improved within the last 25 years while creating an eligibility threshold based on the average rents in the building. The exemptions also extend to properties with affordability covenants or those that involve limited partners or are owned by investors.

While Bowser claims the changes will better target low- and moderate-income renters, advocates and organizers have been rallying to push the DC City Council to reject the proposed language:

“TOPA gives tenants rights to either purchase their building or negotiate with an incoming buyer,” said Damiana Dendy, a housing organizer with DC Jobs with Justice. “These are tools that can be used to preserve affordability and it’s been proven since it’s been passed in 1980, it’s been doing what it’s supposed to be doing.”

The RENTAL Act is currently being debated in the DC City Council as residents at Park East continue to move through the TOPA process to purchase the building they call home, anticipating a closing date this coming October.

Learn more about the 1845 Summit Place Tenant Union and how to support [here](#).

NLIHC Careers

NLIHC Seeks Senior Vice President, Public Policy

The Senior Vice President of Public Policy reports to the President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) and oversees the policy team. Direct reports include NLIHC’s Senior Director of Policy and Director of Disaster Recovery. The salary range for this position is contingent upon experience and is from \$148,000 - \$185,000. This position requires physical time in the office, and the candidate must be in the metropolitan Washington D.C. area or be able to commute to our office located in D.C. for a hybrid work schedule.

Responsibilities/Duties

Team Management & Development

- Supervise and provide leadership to diverse, high-performing teams, including policy and disaster housing recovery, resilience, and research.
- Foster a collaborative, high-energy work environment where team members are encouraged to innovate, take initiative, and thrive.
- Provide regular coaching, mentorship, and professional development opportunities to ensure team members grow and succeed.
- Promote a culture of inclusion, transparency, and accountability among teams.

Cross-functional Collaboration

- Facilitate collaboration within the organization to ensure alignment with NLIHC’s broader objectives.
- Leverage the full range of organizational resources— including policy expertise, compelling research, media relations, field engagement, cross-sector partners, and more—to build effective, integrated advocacy efforts to advance housing justice.
- Collaborate with external partners, coalitions, and stakeholders to strengthen campaigns and amplify national messages.

Policy Development, Analysis, Monitoring, and Influencing

- Oversee and provide strategic direction and support for policy team efforts to advocate, educate and influence federal policymakers in Congress and the Administration to support affordable housing and homelessness investments, programs, and policies and an equitable federal disaster response and recovery.
- Establish the vision and strategy for NLIHC's federal policy efforts, aligning them with our strategic plan and mission to serve the nation's lowest-income households.
- Develop and maintain relationships with legislative and executive branch offices, and with other organizations and coalitions.
- Track, analyze, influence, and report on policy developments.

Board & Senior Leadership Collaboration

- Provide updates and strategic insights to the board of directors.
- Participate actively in senior leadership meetings, contributing to organizational strategy, decision-making, and resource allocation.
- Advise on emerging opportunities, potential risks, and innovative approaches to strengthen NLIHC's influence and reach.

Organizational Support

- Participate in staff meetings, retreats, trainings, and NLIHC events; convene and lead staff meetings in the absence of the President/CEO, as needed.
- Coordinate planning and implementation of aspects of annual conference.
- Represent NLIHC on boards, committees, task forces and work groups, and with media. Engage in public speaking on NLIHC priorities at meetings and conferences, and on Capitol Hill.
- Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

- 10-15 years of experience in policy, legislative, and/or advocacy campaigns, with a demonstrated record of success at the national level.
- Ability to identify and strategize around shifting political climates to advance housing justice legislatively and administratively.
- Strong understanding of the political, legal, and cultural landscape affecting the lowest-income and most marginalized households and their housing needs.
- Proven ability to lead and motivate diverse teams, with experience managing cross-functional and geographically dispersed staff.
- Excellent strategic thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities, with a knack for balancing long-term vision with short-term operational needs.
- Experience working in or alongside advocacy, grassroots, and coalition-building organizations.

- Unwavering commitment to racial and social equity in all aspects of work, and a demonstrated ability to develop strategies and tactics to create equitable and inclusive outcomes.
- Highly adaptable, initiative-taking, and strategic, with the ability to thrive in fast-paced, high-pressure environments.
- Persuasive communication skills, both written and verbal, with the ability to engage diverse stakeholders, including the media, policymakers, funders, and supporters.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, and a writing sample to Jamaal Gilani, Director of People and Culture, via email at jgilani@nlihc.org.

NLIHC Seeks Director of Communications

NLIHC seeks a Director of Communications to work closely with the NLIHC Vice President of External Affairs to support the implementation of NLIHC's communications strategies. The Director of Communications will manage communication plans, media, brand, and public relations and expand overall visibility and reach in support of the Coalition's mission, vision, goals, and objectives. The Director of Communications will supervise two positions: a Graphic Communications Manager and a Graphic Communications Sr. Coordinator. The salary range for this position is contingent upon experience and is from \$92,000 - \$118,000. This position requires physical time in the office, and the candidate must be located in the metropolitan Washington D.C. area or be able to commute to our office located in D.C. for a hybrid work schedule.

Responsibilities/Duties

- Manage the development and implementation of the Coalition's internal and external communication strategies, including publications, e-communications, media, digital, public relations, and marketing.
- Develop and maintain key communication channels, adapting and improving the approach in coordination with external trends and housing policy priorities.
- Lead efforts to drive and execute external digital communications, including websites, social media, email campaigns, multimedia.
- Develop and oversee implementation of external marketing and communications strategies, tactics, and deliverables.
- Oversee development and implementation of creative assets.
- Manage content and editorial needs for all digital platforms.
- Collaborate with team leads to drive internal communications to support initiatives and programs.
- Manage communications team workflows for requests, publications, and campaigns.

- Develop/maintain strong relationships with reporters, writers, and opinion leaders in print, broadcast, online, and social media.
- Maintain up-to-date database of all media contacts.
- Pitch stories and secure regular media interviews and editorial board meetings for President/CEO and other Coalition staff and members as appropriate.
- Collaborate with team leads to develop and implement messaging strategy.
- Prepare and distribute press releases and media alerts; manage press events for NLIHC and state partners.
- Manage the process of placing op-eds, letters-to-the-editor, blogs pieces, and other opinion pieces for president/CEO and other Coalition staff and members as appropriate.
- Approve articles for Coalition staff and members as appropriate for placement in partner publications.
- Curate new activation opportunities with media organizations.
- Manage media performance strategy and metrics.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for use of social media.
- Monitor print, broadcast, online, and social media for coverage of NLIHC, NLIHC campaigns, and NLIHC policy priorities; reach out to amplify or correct as needed.
- Stay abreast of new developments in social media and recommend advances and changes to NLIHC platforms. Maintain records of all media work; produce metrics of all social media contacts; prepare monthly reports.
- Manage content development, writing, and editing of NLIHC publications.
- Manage internal staff and state partners in development of media strategies.
- Develop and implement webinars, workshops, and written materials to aid NLIHC members in use of social media and press strategies.
- Collaborate with teams across the organization to amplify programs, projects, and campaigns.
- Supervise communications team and interns.
- Facilitate opportunities for professional development.
- Assist in implementation of the annual Housing Policy Forum, Leadership Awards Reception, and other events.

Qualifications

This is a full-time position, and candidates must be physically located in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree. Applicants must have a strong commitment to social justice and NLIHC's mission. This position would be ideal for someone with five or more years of communications and management experience. Proficiency with Microsoft Office suite and Adobe Creative Cloud is required.

A person will be most successful in this role if you have knowledge and experience in all aspects of communications, digital media, social media, media relations, PR, and brand management.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and a generous benefits package.

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, and one writing sample to Jen Butler, NLIHC VP of External Affairs, via email at jbutler@nlihc.org.

NLIHC in the News for the Week of May 5

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of May 5:

- “Trump Housing Assistance Cuts Would Hurt People And The Economy,” *Forbes*, May 6, at: <https://tr.ee/hVpmVl>
 - “The Housing Trap: When Earning More Means Living Less,” *Medium*, May 7, at: <https://tr.ee/7IM3vW>
 - “Americans are worried about affording the necessities. Not dolls.” *The Washington Post*, May 9, at: <https://tr.ee/cUjjjR>
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Where to Find Us – May 12

- [SWTHA Tri-Annual Meeting](#) – Flagstaff, AZ, May 12 - 14 (Tia Turner)
 - [Housing & Homelessness Alliance of Vermont](#) Membership Meeting – virtual, May 13 (Lindsay Duvall)
 - [Ulster County CoC Annual Membership Meeting](#) – Kingston, NY, May 13 (Lindsay Duvall)
 - [Bringing It Home Conference](#) – Raleigh, NC, May 15 - 16 (Billy Cerullo)
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NLIHC Staff

Sarah Abdelhadi, Senior Research Analyst
Millen Asfaha, Operations Coordinator
Andrew Aurand, Senior Vice President for Research, x245
Sidney Betancourt, Project Manager, Inclusive Community Engagement, x200
Kayla Laywell, Housing Policy Analyst, x231
Hannah Botts, Our Homes, Our Votes Intern
Victoria Bourret, Project Manager, State and Local Innovation, x244
Jen Butler, Vice President, External Affairs, x239
Alayna Calabro, Senior Policy Analyst, x252
Billy Cerullo, Housing Advocacy Organizer
Adelle Chenier, Director of Events
Esther Colón-Bermúdez, Research Analyst
Lakesha Dawson, Director of Operations
Lindsay Duvall, Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy, x206

Thaddaeus Elliott, Housing Advocacy Coordinator
Dan Emmanuel, Manager, Research, x316
Sarah Gallagher, Vice President, State and Local Policy Innovation, x220
Jamaal Gilani, Director of People and Culture
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Raquel Harati, Research Analyst
Danita Humphries, Senior Executive Assistant, x226
Nada Hussein, Project Coordinator, State and Local Innovation, x264
Kenza Idrissi Janati, Tenant Leader Intern
Kim Johnson, Senior Director of Public Policy, x243
Nara Kim, Policy Intern
Sasha Legagneur, Field Intern
Mayerline Louis-Juste, Senior Communications Specialist, x201
Meghan Mertyr, Disaster Housing Recovery Analyst
Khara Norris, Vice President of Operations and Finance, x242
Libby O'Neill, Senior Policy Analyst
Noah Patton, Manager, Disaster Recovery, x227
Mackenzie Pish, Research Analyst
Benja Reilly, Development Coordinator, x234
Katie Renzie, Research Intern
Dee Ross, Tenant Leader Fellow
Gabrielle Ross, Project Manager, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, x208
Craig Schaar, Data Systems Coordinator
Brooke Schipporeit, Director, Field Organizing, x233
Kristen Stehling, Director of Fund Development
Carlton Taylor, Jr., Senior Graphic Communications Coordinator
Tejas Telkar, Homelessness and Housing First Policy Intern
Cecily Thomas, Development Coordinator
Tia Turner, Housing Advocacy Organizer
Julie Walker, OSAH Campaign Coordinator
Brandon Weil, Graphic Communications Manager
Chantelle Wilkinson, OSAH Campaign Director, x230
Renee Willis, Interim President and CEO, x247
Tiara Wood, External Affairs Coordinator