

# TALKING POINTS – GENDER JUSTICE AND HOUSING JUSTICE

The coronavirus has unleashed a health pandemic and recession of unprecedented scope that has exacerbated gender and racial inequities in our nation's housing, employment, and health systems. This disaster has highlighted the housing insecurity that many women and families were already experiencing because of discriminatory employment systems and under-funding of basic supports like rental assistance. Unless Congress acts to provide immediate housing assistance for renters at risk of eviction and people currently experiencing homelessness, there will be a spike in evictions, housing instability, and homelessness that will negatively impact the health and well-being of women and families with low incomes.

## The pandemic will lead to even higher rates of housing insecurity and homelessness for women and families.

- Because women, and particularly women of color, are overrepresented in the low-paid workforce, many women and families already struggled to afford rent before the pandemic. Now, hundreds of thousands of people have already lost their jobs, making it even more difficult for women and families to make rent. This puts them at risk of eviction or foreclosure.
- The number of women, girls, transgender people, and gender non-conforming people experiencing homelessness is expected to rise as COVID-19 spreads, especially for populations like survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, and immigrant women and families who face higher rates of economic insecurity.
- Gender inequities in health care have only increased from COVID-19, especially harming women with low incomes, women of color, transgender women, and women with disabilities. Housing instability and homelessness exacerbates these disparities even more.
- Housing instability and homelessness also negatively impact educational outcomes for women and girls.
- [32% of women renters nationwide](#) have slight or no confidence in their ability to pay next month's rent, according to the U.S. Census. While there is no Census data for women of color in particular, Black and Latinx women are more likely to be worried about paying next month's rent because of higher concerns from Black and Latinx households.

## Congress should provide emergency rental assistance and other resources and protections for renters with low incomes and people experiencing homelessness. These investments can be deployed to address long-standing, structural gender and racial inequities.

- Congress must take every step to prevent housing instability and homelessness as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The housing and homelessness resources and protections included in the HEROES Act will help state and local governments meet the urgent housing needs of women and families with low incomes.

- Housing stability helps families stay healthy. Families who are evicted from their homes and are forced to double or triple up with other families will face greater challenges in practicing social distancing. This challenge is heightened for people experiencing homelessness - whether in shelters or encampments - who find that it is impossible to self-quarantine. Young children in families who live in unstable housing are 20% more likely to be hospitalized than those who do not worry about frequent moves or making rent.
- Housing stability is central to promoting strong families. Families that are behind on rent are more likely than families with stable housing to compromise living expenses and have greater food insecurities. In 2011, families living in affordable housing spent nearly 5 times more on healthcare and one-third more on food compared to their severely cost-burdened peers.

*For more information on the intersection between housing and gender equity, see the [factsheet](#) from the National Women’s Law Center and NLIHC. For further talking points, research, and analysis of how the COVID-19 pandemic and recession are impacting women, see the National Women’s Law Center’s [resource page](#).*

*\*Some of this language is adapted from the RESULTS advocacy week materials.*