Memo To Members & Partners
A weekly newsletter from the National Low Income Housing Coalition

Volume 28, Issue 40
October 30, 2023

HoUSed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes

- NLIHC Testifies before Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Impact of Uncompetitive Housing Market on Renters
- Biden Administration Announces New Actions for Converting Commercial Properties to Residential Use to Increase Housing Supply
- Recap of 10/23 National HoUSed Campaign Call

Budget and Appropriations

- House Elects New Speaker; Both Chambers Prepare to Vote on HUD Spending Bill and Potentially Harmful Amendments – Take Action!

Events

- NLIHC Holds Second Annual Tenant and Community Leader Retreat

Disaster Housing Housing

- NLIHC and NHLP Release Report on HUD's Rapid Unsheltered Survivor Housing (RUSH) Program
- NLIHC, NAC, NLC, Enterprise, and 84 Other National Organizations Send Letter to Congress Urging Passage of Bipartisan "Reforming Disaster Recovery Act"
- NLIHC's DHRC Calls on FEMA to Address Language Accessibility Problems during Maui Wildfire Recovery Efforts
- Disaster Housing Recovery Update – October 30, 2023

Our Homes, Our Votes

- NLIHC Joins Sign-On Letter Opposing Harmful Amendment Undermining Voting Access

HUD

- HUD PIH Offers Streamlined Process for PHAs to Request Voucher Exception Payment Standards

- HUD PIH Announces 41 Additional Metro Areas Are Now Required to Use Small Area FMRs

Opportunity Starts at Home

- Teachers Are Increasingly Unable to Afford Housing

Research

- Utility Payment History Identified as Possible Predictor of First-Time Homelessness

From the Field

- Anti-Displacement Ordinance Introduced in Louisville by Tenant Advocates

Fact of the Week

- Programs with Project-Based Rental Assistance Tent to Provide Assistance for a Longer Period Than Tenant-Based Programs

NLIHC in the News

- NLIHC in the News for the Week of October 22

NLIHC Careers

- NLIHC Seeks Housing Campaign Coordinator

NLIHC News

- Where to Find Us – October 30

HoUSed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes

NLIHC Testifies before Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Impact of Uncompetitive Housing Market on Renters

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Competition Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights on October 24 at a hearing, "Examining Competition and Consumer Rights in Housing Markets."

Diane appeared before the Subcommittee with four other witnesses: Vanessa Brown Calder, director of opportunity and family policy studies at the Cato Institute; Luis Quintero, assistant professor at the Johns Hopkins Cary Business School; EJ Antoni, research fellow at the Heritage Foundation; and Maurice Stucke, professor of law at the University of Tennessee College of Law.

"Renters face real challenges comparing and contrasting prices. More and more of the cost of renting are hidden from view, through the proliferation of junk fees, and as a result, renters struggle to take advantage of price competition because the true cost of housing is not transparent," said Subcommittee Chair Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) in her opening remarks. "We've seen the widespread use of algorithmic pricing tools to set prices, even at the expense of higher vacancy rates…Families are being boxed out of the market by institutional investors…and unlike 'mom and pop' landlords, these absentee owners are more likely to charge junk fees, evict families, and increase instability in our communities. This is all made worse by the fact we are not building enough affordable housing."

"Millions of Americans all across the country – including so many in my own home state of Utah – are paying significantly higher prices to own, rent, or otherwise live in a home in 2023," said Subcommittee Ranking Member Mike Lee (R-UT). "With rents at record highs, many renters have limited housing options available to them. If Americans are spending close to half of what they make on housing, it leaves families with less income, fewer resources, less savings to pay for essentials, such as groceries, gasoline, and cars – all of which have become dramatically more expensive at the exact same time."

In her testimony, Diane explained how the lack of national renter protections leaves tenants – and particularly tenants with the lowest incomes – vulnerable to unjust treatment, housing instability, and evictions. "Landlords can engage in abusive and predatory behavior with few consequences," she said. "Renters facing exorbitant rent increases or excessive fees have little to no ability to move to a new home. Instead, renters can face retaliation for reporting unsafe housing conditions or illegal actions by landlords, and because so few renters have access to legal representation, many are unable to assert their legal rights."

Diane argued that strengthening and enforcing federal renter protections is one critical solution to the nation's housing crisis, and she urged both Congress and the Biden administration to take immediate action to protect low-income and marginalized households from housing instability, eviction, and in the worst cases, homelessness. In addition to renter protections, Diane noted that long-term, sustained investments from the federal government – including to bridge the gap between income and rent, invest in new and preserve existing affordable housing stock, and create a permanent emergency rental assistance program – are needed to end the nation's affordable housing and homelessness crisis.

Read Diane's testimony here.

Watch a recording of the hearing here.

Biden Administration Announces New Actions for Converting Commercial Properties to Residential Use to Increase Housing Supply

The Biden administration announced on October 27 new actions to support the conversion of high-vacancy commercial buildings to residential buildings, including through new financing, technical assistance, and the sale of federal properties.

"Office and commercial vacancies across the country are affecting urban downtowns and rural main streets," said the administration in a press release addressing the new actions. "At the same time, the country has struggled for decades with a shortage of affordable housing units, which is driving up rental costs, and communities are seeking new ways to cut emissions, especially from existing buildings and transportation."

The announcement includes several administrative actions:

- The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) will release guidance on how the "Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act" (TIFIA) and Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) programs can be used to finance housing development near transportation, including conversion projects.
- DOT will release additional guidance on how transit agencies can repurpose properties for transit-oriented development and affordable housing projects, including conversions near transit. Under the new guidance, transit agencies can transfer properties to local governments, as well as non-profit and for-profit affordable housing developers, at no cost.
- HUD will release an updated notice on how communities can use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for affordable housing, including for acquiring, rehabilitating, and converting commercial properties to residential and mixed-use properties.
- The General Services Administration (GSA) will expand its Good Neighbor Program to promote the sale of surplus federal properties that can be redeveloped by buyers as residential units.
- The White House released a guidebook, *Commercial to Residential Conversions*, highlighting over 20 federal programs across six agencies that can be used to support commercial-to-residential conversions. The White House will also hold training workshops on how to use these programs for conversions.
- The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) released a *Supporting Commercial to Zero Emissions Housing Toolkit* that includes technical and financial guidance on achieving zero emissions conversions.

- The U.S. Department of the Treasury is highlighting tax incentives for builders of multifamily housing, including resources available through the "Inflation Reduction Act."

These actions are the latest initiatives from the White House Housing Supply Action Plan, which aims to provide the resources and technical assistance needed to lower housing costs, boost housing supply, and promote fair housing (see *Memo*, 6/1/22).

Recap of 10/23 National HoUSed Campaign Call

In the most recent (October 23) call for the national HoUSed campaign, we were joined by Sonya Acosta of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), who shared an analysis of housing voucher renewal costs in fiscal year (FY) 2024. We heard from NLIHC's Sarah Abdelhadi, who gave an overview of recent updates to the Rental Housing Programs Database and discussed an accompanying report with CBPP, *State and Local Investments in Rental Housing*. Jessica Bellamy of Louisville Tenants Union and Dr. Erin Feichtinger of Women's Fund of Omaha provided field updates, and NLIHC's Sarah Saadian shared policy updates.

CBPP's Sonya Acosta discussed a recent analysis evaluating the funding required to renew all existing Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) contracts. Based on available data, the analysis indicates that funding provided for HCV renewals in both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate draft FY24 spending bills will come up short for renewing all existing vouchers: the House funding level would result in 40,000 fewer households served, and even the higher level of funding provided by the Senate bill would still result in the loss of 6,000 vouchers. Cost and leasing data so far this year suggest at least the full $27.84 billion provided in the President's budget request will be required to renew all existing HCVs in FY24.

NLIHC's Sarah Abdelhadi discussed updates to the Rental Housing Programs Database (RHPD) and an accompanying report with CBPP, *State and Local Investments in Rental Housing.* The RHPD is a publicly available collection of information on state and locally funded programs that create, preserve, or increase access to affordable rental housing. Created to better understand the ways state and local governments use their own financial resources to close the gap between available federal funding for rental housing and the unmet needs of renters in their communities, the RHPD helps housing advocates, state and local agencies, policymakers, and other interested parties learn about initiatives around the country that can serve as models for programs in their own communities. The accompanying report provides a comprehensive overview of rental housing programs included in the updated RHPD. As of August this year, 353 active rental housing programs had been identified – including 281 state-funded programs and 72 locally funded programs – across 48 states, the District of Columbia, and 41 of the largest U.S. cities.

Jessica Bellamy with Louisville Tenants Union discussed her organization's Homes Guaranteed campaign, a national campaign to bring the Union's organizing methodology and skills to other tenants and to create a national space for conversations on rent control. The group is also working on an anti-displacement ordinance, which would create protections for residents and small business owners living in areas that are vulnerable to displacement due to gentrification.

Dr. Erin Feitchtinger with Women's Fund of Omaha recounted how Nebraska had recently accepted its second allocation of pandemic emergency rental assistance (ERA) from the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury). Most state and local ERA recipients accepted the second round of funding when it was first made available in 2021, but Nebraska's governor at the time refused to accept the funds. During the state's 2022 legislative session, Nebraska advocates worked to introduce legislation that would require that the governor accept the second round of ERA funds from Treasury. The bill passed but was vetoed by the governor. It was then reintroduced in January 2023 and finally enacted in July. Over 2,000 applicants across 71 counties in the state have requested assistance since funds began being disbursed at the beginning of October.

NLIHC's Sarah Saadian discussed the latest news from Capitol Hill, including the continued search (now resolved) for a new House Speaker and harmful amendments in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill. Sarah called on advocates to contact their senators and representatives to urge them to expand – not cut – investments in affordable, accessible homes through the FY24 spending bill, including opposing any harmful amendments that would further cut HUD funding, undermine fair housing and racial equity, or prevent marginalized people from accessing the resources they need.

National calls take place every other week. Our next call will be held on November 6 at 2:30 pm ET. Register for the call at: https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan

---

Budget and Appropriations

House Elects New Speaker; Both Chambers Prepare to Vote on HUD Spending Bill and Potentially Harmful Amendments – Take Action!

After three weeks of infighting, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives coalesced around Representative Mike Johnson (R-LA), electing him as the new Speaker of the House on October 25. With a Speaker in place, the House can resume consideration of its fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations bills. Congress has until November 17 – when government funding expires – either to pass all 12 annual spending bills or enact another continuing resolution (CR) to extend current levels of federal funding. If Congress fails to pass the funding bills or enact a CR, the federal government will be forced into a partial shutdown.

In advance of his election, Speaker Johnson released an ambitious timeline for passing the remaining eight FY24 appropriations bills through the House, including consideration of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) bill this week. The House bill provides a $6.4 billion increase over FY23-enacted funding, proposing deep cuts to and even the elimination of some HUD programs but increasing funding for most rental assistance programs. In addition to the underlying THUD bill, the House will also consider several amendments that would further slash investments in affordable housing and harm households with the lowest incomes (see *Memo*, 10/16).

The Senate began consideration of a three-bill "minibus" appropriations package, including an FY24 spending bill for THUD, on October 24. Despite austere spending caps agreed to by President Biden and congressional leaders earlier this year, the Senate THUD bill would provide significant new investments in affordable housing, increasing HUD funding by $8.26 billion over FY23 levels. Senators are expected to finish voting on amendments and hold a final vote on the "minibus" this week.

Even with FY24 THUD bills voted out of each chamber, the House and Senate will still need to work together to reach a final agreement on spending levels for FY24. Because of the drastic increase in the cost of rent over the last year, funding provided for Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) contract renewals in both the House and Senate draft bills is not expected to cover the full cost of renewals. According to an analysis from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), funding for renewals in the Senate bill would still result in an estimated 6,000 vouchers being lost to turnover; in the House, an estimated 40,000 vouchers would be lost.

Take Action!

Advocates must keep urging their members of Congress to **oppose** any amendments to the FY24 spending bills that would cut funding to HUD programs; impose needless barriers to accessing HUD assistance; or restrict funding for evidence-based solutions to homelessness, like Housing First.

As the appropriations process continues and House and Senate leaders meet to finalize an FY24 spending agreement, it will be crucial to ensure HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness programs receive the highest funding possible – including sufficient funding to renewal all existing rental assistance contracts. At current funding levels, only one in four households eligible for rental assistance receives it; any drop in available vouchers will mean even fewer people receive the help they need to find and maintain safe, stable housing.

Keep making your voices heard! Tell Congress that it cannot balance the federal budget at the expense of people with the lowest incomes! Advocates can take action TODAY in the following ways:

- Contact your senators and representatives to urge them to expand – not cut – investments in affordable, accessible homes through the FY24 spending bill, including NLIHC's top priorities:
  - Full funding to renew all existing contracts for the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) and Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) programs.
  - Full funding for public housing operations and repairs.
  - The Senate's proposed funding for Homeless Assistance Grants.
  - Protecting $20 million in funding for legal assistance to prevent evictions in the Senate bill.
  - The House's proposed funding for Native housing.
- Contact your senators and representatives and tell them to vote *for* any amendments to increase funding to HUD's affordable housing or homelessness programs, and *against* any harmful amendments to the FY24 spending bill that would slash funding to HUD, impose needless barriers to access, or restrict the use of funds for equity initiatives.

- Join over 2,100 organizations by signing on to a national letter from the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF), calling on Congress to oppose budget cuts and instead to support the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY24.

Events

NLIHC Holds Second Annual Tenant and Community Leader Retreat

NLIHC convened its second annual Collective Retreat (previously known as the Tenant and Community Leader Retreat) on October 6-9 in Albany, Georgia. This year, NLIHC returned to the sacred grounds of the Resora on Cypress Pond, a property of New Communities, which was founded by the late Reverend Charles Sherrod and his wife Shirley. The Sherrods were revered civil rights trailblazers, instrumental in creating the first community land trust (CLT) in the U.S. The Resora is now used for retreats devoted to promoting racial equity, learning, and community. Members of NLIHC's 2023-24 Collective (previously known as the Tenant Leader Cohort) gathered to discuss their shared goals for achieving housing justice and to engage in community healing in preparation for their upcoming work.

This year's Collective includes 13 advocates:

- Ramona Ferreyra, Save Section 9
- Miracle Fletcher, City of Atlanta housing commissioner
- William E. Higgins Jr., executive director of Homeless Advocacy for All
- Tara Madison, National Alliance of HUD Tenants
- Sharon Norwood, housing justice organizer with Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance
- Taylar Nuevelle, executive director of Who Speaks for Me?
- Daniella Pierre, president of NAACP Miami-Dade Branch
- Robert Robinson, special advisor, Partners for Dignity and Rights, and adjust professor of urbanism at New School University in New York City
- Dee (Derris) Ross, founder and CEO of The Ross Foundation
- Vee Sanchez, Empower Missouri
- Marsh Melody Santoro, tenant leader with Fairview Arms Apartments
- Albert Townsend, National Alliance to End Homelessness
- Shannon (Sunshine) Washington, Sunshine Charity Community Investment Coalition and Sunshine Tenant Authority Patrol and Support

The weekend commenced with members joining in a musical improvisational circle crafted by local historian and musician Michael Harper and his partner A.J. Parker. Music has proven to be a potent tool for fostering community and forging deep connections. The music the group created set the mood for a transformative weekend grounded in the spirit of unity. The Collective members had the privilege of introducing themselves to one another, to the NLIHC staff, and to the esteemed facilitators joining them for the weekend. This year, the Collective was joined by Rebeccah Bennett of Emerging Wisdom LLC & InPower Institute and Dr. Jennifer Mullan of

Decolonizing Therapy. Following a delicious dinner prepared by local chef Michael Daniels, the Collective gathered once more with Mr. Harper and Ms. Parker to create a music circle where they learned about the healing power of music. Following this experience, Collective members headed back to their hotels to rest up for the weekend.

Saturday morning started early as Collective members arrived at the Resora property. Once settled in, they watched the Arc of Justice film, which told the history of the Sherrods, the Resora, and New Communities. After learning about this history, Collective members embarked on a farm tour by Albany local Mrs. Geraldine Hudley, who provided a historical perspective on the land as they rode through it on The Birdy, a large tractor wagon. Mrs. Hudley revealed the diverse initiatives underway at the Resora, including the annual pecan harvest, a budding grape field for winemaking, collaborations with local universities, a satsuma grove, pine straw harvesting, truffle cultivation, and much more. Collective members also had a chance to marvel at the river that is located on the property. After the farm tour, the Collective enjoyed a lunch and captured images that would preserve the moment in time.

The remainder of the day was devoted to educational sessions on community healing and the importance of rest in the tireless work for justice. The evening brought dinner with a special guest, Ms. Rutha Mae Harris, one of the original Freedom Singers, who shared songs and insights from her Civil Rights Movement journey. After connecting with this significant leader, the Collective departed to prepare for the night.

Sunday began with deep healing, guided by Dr. Mullan’s wisdom about decolonized mental health. Collective members learned about crisis intervention and trauma-informed care. After the group had some revelations and worked through some of the content, they got to participate in a dance party that morphed into a soul train celebration! This celebration led right into a communal lunch.

After lunch, Collective members engaged in a session led by Rebeccah Bennett, “Stalking the Healed Future,” where members used creative expressions to demonstrate their version of a healed future. Following this activity, the Collective gathered at Vicks Estate, owned by Albany local, Clinton Vicks. Mr. Vicks prepared a delicious Southern barbeque meal that left everyone’s stomachs happy and full. While at Vicks Estate, Collective members met some local housing advocates and even got to help in prepping dinner. Following another delicious dinner, the Collective went home for the night to prepare for the last day of the retreat.

Monday, the last day of the retreat, began the same way the retreat started: with music. However, this time, the Collective members led the musical improvisational circle, alongside Mr. Harper and Ms. Parker. Afterwards, they had the honor of meeting Mrs. Shirley Sherrod, co-founder of New Communities, who shared her inspiring story of resilience against institutional racism. Her perseverance was a testament to the enduring struggle for justice, a torch that she was passing down to future generations, including members of the Collective.

Following an inspirational meet and greet, the weekend was closed out with a conversation about the work ahead between members of NLIHC and the Collective. Afterwards, a final lunch was shared by Collective members, during which they were able to enjoy one another's company before returning to their respective homes.

This restorative weekend served as a time of reflection for members of the Collective, inspiring them for the work ahead. Over the next nine months, the Collective will convene to discuss shared concerns, chart an advocacy path, and ensure that NLIHC addresses the needs of low-income people and families throughout the country.

Disaster Housing Recovery

NLIHC and NHLP Release Report on HUD's Rapid Unsheltered Survivor Housing (RUSH) Program

NLIHC and the National Housing Law Project (NHLP) released on October 26 a report exploring the implementation of HUD's Rapid Unsheltered Survivor Housing (RUSH) program, a new initiative designed to fill gaps in federal assistance by addressing homelessness in communities impacted by disasters. The report, *Plugging the Gaps: Recommendations for HUD's RUSH Program*, finds that while RUSH offers vital support to disaster-impacted communities, initial implementation of the program in Florida was hampered by challenges that must be remedied before future deployment.

Established in 2022, RUSH provides funds to help communities offer outreach, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, and other assistance to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness who are in a disaster-affected area but who cannot access all services provided by FEMA programs. The program was created following years of advocacy by NLIHC's Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC), which includes the National Housing Law Project and over 900 other local, state, and national advocacy organizations.

RUSH was first deployed in the fall of 2022 to support the response to Hurricane Ian, which decimated the southwest coast of Florida. However, over one year later, funding has only just begun to reach impacted communities, and many of those individuals with the fewest resources who were most impacted by the hurricane continue to experience severe housing instability and homelessness.

RUSH implementation in Florida has been hindered by numerous hurdles, according to the report. These hurdles include a lack of guidance regarding spending deadlines, lack of transparency and information sharing, confusion about RUSH's relationship to existing assistance programs, and a reimbursement model that does not adequately incentivize grantees to spend RUSH funds in a timely manner.

The report recommends that HUD address these challenges in several ways. For example, HUD should ensure that decisions to allocate disaster assistance do not reinforce pre-existing racial disparities, and the agency should explore alternative ways to ensure equity when deploying RUSH funds. Likewise, the report suggests that HUD provide RUSH funds up front instead of via a reimbursement model to allow for quick implementation of activities, and that the agency impose timing requirements that complement FEMA programs. HUD should also clarify the benefits of synchronizing RUSH and related homeless service activities, ensure that regulatory waivers provided to RUSH recipients are sufficient, and prioritize the creation of detailed guidance on how to access RUSH funds.

Download the report here.

NLIHC, NAC, NLC, Enterprise, and 84 Other National Organizations Send Letter to Congress Urging Passage of Bipartisan "Reforming Disaster Recovery Act"

In partnership with the National Association of Counties (NAC), National League of Cities (NLC), National Association of Counties (NCA), and Enterprise, NLIHC sent a letter to congressional leadership on October 24 requesting the inclusion of the bipartisan "Reforming Disaster Recovery Act" (RDRA) in any emergency disaster supplemental appropriations package or other must-pass package. The letter was cosigned by 84 other national organizations.

NLIHC and its Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) of more than 900 local, state, and national organizations support the bipartisan RDRA. The bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate on May 18, 2023, by Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI), Susan Collins (R-ME), Patty Murray (D-WA), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Roger Wicker (R-MS), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Jon Tester (D-MT), Thom Tillis (R-NC), Ben Ray Luján (D-NM), Todd Young (R-IN), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Alex Padilla (D-CA).

The RDRA would formally authorize HUD's Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program to ensure that long-term disaster recovery resources reach survivors and their communities more quickly after a disaster and are better targeted to those with the greatest needs.

CDBG-DR is a vital tool that provides flexible, long-term resources needed to rebuild after a disaster and to prepare for future harm. However, the lack of formal authorization leads to unnecessary delays that harm survivors and communities. Without additional safeguards and transparency provisions like those laid out in the RDRA, recovery and mitigation efforts can be inconsistent and steer funding away from those most in need. Though low-income households are the most impacted by disasters, they receive the least amount of assistance after a disaster. As climate change continues to create longer wildfire and hurricane seasons, the importance of ensuring these households are able fully to recover will only grow.

The 2019 version of the bill introduced by Representative Al Green (D-TX) was unanimously passed out of the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Financial Services and approved by the House through a bipartisan vote. After the legislation was first introduced in the Senate this year, Representative Al Green re-introduced the House companion bill on October 19, 2023.

Under the past two administrations, HUD and the U.S. Government Accountability Office have agreed that permanently authorizing the CDBG-DR program would vastly improve the operation of the country's most important long-term disaster recovery program.

Read a fact sheet on the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act at: https://bit.ly/3U6buBZ

Read the text of the bill at: https://bit.ly/3qXAC4e

Read the letter here.

DHRC Calls on FEMA to Address Language Accessibility Problems during Maui Wildfire Recovery Efforts

The NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) sent a letter to FEMA on October 23 to express concern about the lack of access to translation services for households affected by the 2023 Maui wildfires. Emphasizing the past failures of FEMA to provide adequate language support, the letter requests immediate action to ensure language access for disaster survivors.

Following the wildfires that broke out in Hawaii in August and triggered a federal emergency declaration, FEMA stepped in to provide assistance and information to disaster survivors, including Disaster Case Management. Despite backlash after past disasters, the lack of effective language translation services undermined the benefits of these programs for individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Specifically, language translation and interpretation services have not been adequately offered for speakers of Chuukese, Marshallese, Pohnpeian, Spanish, Tagalog, Ilocano, and Tongan.

The Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) is composed of over 900 national, state, and local organizations, many of which are working to actively assist disaster survivors, and strives to ensure that federal disaster recovery efforts reach those most impacted and most marginalized by disasters, including households with low-incomes and those experiencing homelessness. The letter sent by the DHRC highlighted FEMA's obligation to act in accordance with federal civil rights law, specifically Title VI of the "Civil Rights Act of 1964," Section 504 of the "Rehabilitation Act of 1973," and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which require the agency to provide equal access to services and prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin when conducting assistance. The letter also cited prior examples of FEMA's substandard translation offerings that persist despite FEMA's recently introduced Language Access Policy.

Specifically, the letter requests that:

- Every disaster recovery center (DRC) activated for Maui wildfire response and recovery efforts have translators of Chuukese, Marshallese, Pohnpeian, Spanish, Tagalog, Ilocano, and Tongan immediately available at all times the center is open.
- Information regarding the disaster application and appeals process – including material regarding the Transitional Shelter Assistance program –be provided in the language preferred by the applicant.
- Where an applicant has indicated that they require a translator for a specific language, a FEMA home inspection be conducted with a translator of that language present.
- The FEMA call center be immediately staffed with enough interpreters to ensure that callers requiring translation have similar wait times to others.
- DRCs and FEMA personnel have the ability to quickly meet the needs of individuals with disabilities through the provision of interpretation services and accessible materials.

Read the letter at: https://bit.ly/40aTqKB

Disaster Housing Recovery Update – October 30, 2023

National Updates

An artificial intelligence system for automating urban building evaluation using Google Street View images and deep learning is in development, led by University of Florida Assistant Professor of Artificial Intelligence Chaofeng Wang. The project will expedite post-natural disaster building assessments and provide necessary information needed for recovery. Dr. Wang aims to expand the model's testing and data collection to overcome regional variations and increase its utility. The project is currently being tested by several local governments in Mexico and has potential applications in urban planning and insurance industries.

Based on 69 risk assessments conducted by major international development organizations, a new study finds that only 28% of risk models attempt to use an equity sensitive approach to climate disasters. The paper suggests that this oversight might affect efforts to develop evidence-based disaster risk management interventions.

A new Brookings report shows that a lack of standard definitions and metrics for local operational capacity results in federal resources being directed towards communities that are most capable of managing them – not those that most need them. The authors make several recommendations as to how the federal government should build local governments' capacity for addressing disasters. The research follows upon a separate Brookings report released earlier in October, co-authored by NLIHC Senior Policy Analyst for Disaster Recovery Noah Patton, that compiled recommendations for disaster recovery policy reform to assist renter households after disasters.

An article published in the *New York Times* presents an overview of the slow return of tourism to Maui amid continuing disaster relief efforts following the devastating wildfires this summer. The destruction of the town of Lahaina has had a profound impact on the island's tourism industry, which relies heavily on tourist dollars. Some visitors are contributing to relief efforts, but as Maui heads into its peak tourist season during the winter holidays, the island's recovery will continue to be closely monitored, with many displaced residents still seeking stable housing.

Climate-related disasters are worsening mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), according to a growing body of research. Overwhelming emotions are common in the immediate aftermath of climate-related disasters, followed by long-term symptoms such as insomnia, loss of appetite, headaches, and stomachaches. Low-income populations are especially vulnerable to the psychological impacts of sudden and massive losses, which can impede decision-making about shelter. Moreover, rebuilding in disaster-prone areas can pose risks for repeated traumatization.

State and Local Updates

Alabama

Nine months after a tornado struck in January 2023, debris removal from private properties in Selma is finally complete. The city is now focusing on ensuring housing as its top priority. Additionally, Mayor James Perkins, Jr. announced plans to build 27 more homes in disaster-affected areas. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is still accepting applications for disaster assistance related to the tornado, and additional long-term recovery resources are ongoing.

California

Six years after the Tubbs firestorm scorched a 12-mile swath through Santa Rosa, city structures are mostly repaired. Though many single-family homes have been restored, the area has been rebuilt with greater housing density.

Nearly a year after a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck northern California, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors heard a report from Habitat for Humanity on home repair progress. Supervisors expressed concerns that public funding earmarked for repairs was not reaching those who needed it most. In part due to application and allocation changes, no repairs have been completed, despite the $250,000 allocation to Habitat for Humanity. Camille Benner of Habitat for Humanity stressed that the community's repair needs exceed the allocated total of $500,000 and presented five bids for funds to the Board, including two of $150,000 apiece. The organization is helping people who are applying for USDA loans and working with landlords to make more affordable housing available. Other loans have been received from the Small Business Administration. Still, 19 structures remain red-tagged or unfit for human occupancy, and FEMA money is not available to the county due to unmet requirements.

Florida

Costs for housing remain high and availability remains low five years after Hurricane Michael devastated Florida's Panhandle. Many homes remain damaged, and the closure of local businesses has altered the community fabric.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, which devastated southwest Florida in September 2022 and resulted in over $112 billion in damages, some property owners took advantage of the housing shortage by hiking rental prices. Local organizations like Lee Interfaith for Empowerment (LIFE) responded vigorously, helping establish an affordable housing trust fund and rental assistance programs. However, challenges continue to emerge, as landlords decline rental vouchers and occupant criteria remain prohibitive.

Hawaii

Maui faces economic collapse due to the impact of recent wildfires on the island's tourism industry. Decreased revenues may lead to cuts in essential services. Regulatory obstacles, excessive building costs, and a lack of affordable housing is complicating the process of rebuilding. Moreover, officials and developers lack public trust due to cultural and historical grievances.

Daytime disaster area restrictions in the County of Maui will be lifted for owners and residents with vehicle passes in Zones 14A and 14B beginning October 20 and October 21, respectively. An array of supportive services will be provided to returning residents during the first two days of re-entry into fire-damaged areas, including water, shade, washing stations, portable toilets, medical and mental health care, MauiBus transportation from local hotel shelters, and language assistance. The unsafe water advisory remains in effect.

Kentucky

Governor Andy Beshear announced the first round of Rural Housing Trust Fund (RHTF) Awards on October 23, in accordance with an agreement last legislative session to allocate $20 million in State Aid Funding for Emergencies (SAFE) to aid disaster-impacted communities. This round of funding focuses on home repair, reconstruction to help existing owners impacted by disasters and single-family homebuyer development bring new homes to disaster-impacted markets. A total of $13.5 million was awarded to nine nonprofit housing agencies that are helping Kentuckians recover from the 2021 tornadoes that struck the western part of the state and the 2022 flooding that impacted the eastern part. The funding will be used to rebuild 115 new homes and repair 45 homes for disaster survivors.

Louisiana

A saltwater wedge in the Mississippi River that threatens New Orleans drinking water has been delayed by several weeks, according to local reporting. Officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers now predict the wedge could reach water treatment intake plants in late November, if at all. Even then, salt levels may not reach thresholds that prompt health warnings. Researchers from the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) are actively supporting assessment and mitigation efforts in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) New Orleans District.

The damage and financial loss to New Orleans caused by hurricanes Katrina and Ida have made the city vulnerable to climate gentrification. Naturally occurring geographical advantages and selective government-led proactive resiliency initiatives have exacerbated existing inequalities. To preserve equity, a balanced approach to recovery and community integration is essential, as well as the close monitoring of volunteer organizations' efforts to ensure they do not unintentionally exacerbate gentrification.

North Carolina

The state hurricane recovery program RebuildNC is facing criticism from homeowners, lawmakers, and disaster management experts, who have highlighted waste and inefficiency in the programs. ReBuild NC has struggled to provide permanent housing for over 3,100 hurricane survivors while mismanaging millions of dollars in federal funds. The office is facing backlash for excessive salaries, inefficient spending on temporary housing, the exacerbation of home repair costs due to construction delays, and inconsistent policy that has stymied efficient homeowner applications. After a legislative oversight hearing in September 2022, RebuildNC sought advice from the Saint Bernard Project to address program deficiencies. Still, concerns persist over a lack of accountability and a culture that purportedly protects officials from scrutiny.

Oregon

The Jackson County Community Long-Term Recovery Group (JCC LTRG) introduced "Rogue Reimagined" on October 23, inaugurating the nation's first multi-jurisdictional disaster recovery strategy. This initiative is designed to guide the community's recovery in the aftermath of fires, addressing not only immediate needs but also future challenges such as ensuring affordable housing, improved evacuation routes, enhanced vegetation management, and more. The JCC LTRG has 21 signed partners, but the plan will be jointly managed by local governments and community organizations. The project is funded largely by American Red Cross and Business Oregon with additional support from the towns of Phoenix and Talent.

Virgin Islands

The Committee on Housing, Transportation, and Telecommunications received updates on various housing programs and initiatives during a meeting on October 24. During the meeting, concerns were raised about disaster recovery efforts and continued use of tarp on residences six years after Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Additionally, it was revealed that USDA had only approved one loan through its 502 Direct Very Low-/Low-Income program, in conjunction with the V.I. Slice program, which itself faces challenges related to income requirements and financing limits. Though local nonprofit organizations like Live City Strong have contributed to home rebuilding efforts, their impact is limited due to funding restrictions.

Our Homes, Our Votes

NLIHC Joins Sign-On Letter Opposing Harmful Amendment Undermining Voting Access

NLIHC joined a sign-on letter led by the Union of Concerned Scientists urging senators to vote against an amendment to the fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations bill that would undermine voter access. Amendment 1243 would bar HUD and other federal agencies from using funding to implement President Biden's Executive Order on Access to Voting (EO 14019). The Executive Order directs federal agencies to promote nonpartisan voter registration and participation. Amendment 1243 would thwart HUD's and other agencies' progress expanding voting access and directly counter decades of federal efforts to facilitate voter participation.

The amendment was introduced by Senator Ted Budd (R-NC) as an addition to the U.S. Senate "minibus" appropriations package, which includes the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) FY24 spending bill. If enacted, the amendment would prevent HUD and other agencies funded by the minibus from using appropriated funds to promote voter access. More than 50 civil rights, voting rights, antipoverty, faith-based, environmental, and other social justice organizations joined the sign-on letter, which was circulated to senators on October 25. The letter notes the amendment contradicts the aims of the bipartisan "National Voter Registration Act" (NVRA), which states that it is the duty of federal, state, and local governments to promote the exercise of the fundamental right to vote.

Following the directive of EO 14019, HUD circulated notices to public housing agencies (PHAs) and owners of HUD-assisted properties to affirm that they are permitted – and actively encouraged – to engage in nonpartisan voter registration, education, and mobilization activities (see *Memo*, 2/14/2022). NLIHC's *Our Homes, Our Votes* campaign – a nonpartisan initiative to boost voter turnout among low-income renters and educate candidates about housing solutions – celebrated HUD's notices when they were announced in February 2022. The campaign continues to advocate for HUD and Congress to take further steps to facilitate voter participation among low-income renters. Amendment 1243 would thwart progress towards this goal by limiting HUD and other agencies' capacity to boost voter turnout among the people they serve.

Advocates should continue to reach out to their members of Congress and urge them to vote against this harmful amendment, as well as any other amendments that would decrease funds for HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness programs or limit access to housing assistance. The U.S. House of Representatives is slated to vote this week on its own THUD spending bill for FY24, including several amendments that would slash funding to HUD programs, increase barriers to receiving assistance, and block implementation of HUD's equity initiatives (see *Memo*, 10/16).

Read the sign-on letter at: https://tinyurl.com/5y8ykh58

Learn more about *Our Homes, Our Votes* at: https://www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org/

HUD

HUD PIH Offers Streamlined Process for PHAs to Request Voucher Exception Payment Standards

HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) issued Notice PIH 2023-29 on October 12, providing a streamlined process for public housing agencies (PHAs) to request Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) exception payment standards through December 31, 2024. The higher payment standards are intended to help households with vouchers successfully lease homes in the face of higher rents. Notice PIH 2023-29 offers PHAs three exception payment standard options and allows PHAs to increase a household's payment standard during a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract term rather than be required to wait until a household's next regular income reexamination.

The value of an HCV is determined by the "payment standard" chosen by a PHA, which in general is between 90% and 110% of the fair market rent (FMR). Notice PIH 2023-29 offers PHAs three higher payment standard options:

A. An exception payment standard up to 120% of the Small Area Fair Market Rent (Small Area FMR or SAFMR) for PHAs that are in mandatory SAFMR areas or that have voluntarily chosen to adopt SAFMRs ("Opt-in PHAs) for their entire jurisdiction. (For more information, see "HUD PIH Announces 41 Additional Metro Areas Required to Use Small Area FMRs" in this issue of *Memo*.)
B. An exception payment standard of up to 120% of the metropolitan Fair Market Rent (FMR). For this option a PHA may use the exception payment standard throughout the entire FMR area in its jurisdiction, not just designated parts of the FMR area ("exception areas").
C. An exception payment standard up to 120% of the SAFMR if a PHA is currently approved for an exception payment standard of 110% of the SAFMR for certain ZIP Codes.

A PHA that uses the FMR to establish payment standards for some portion of its jurisdiction in combination with SAFMR exception payment standards for another portion of its jurisdiction and wishes to establish payment standards up to 120% for both must apply for waiver B and waiver C.

For each of these options, a PHA must meet one of the following criteria:

- Fewer than 80% of the households issued a voucher during the most recent 12-month period were able to successfully use their voucher to lease a home; or
- More than 40% of voucher households pay more than 30% of their adjusted income for rent.

PHAs that want PIH approval for the above exception payment standards must submit a simple email to PIH by 11:59 pm ET on June 3, 2024. The exception payment standards only apply to FY24 FMRs, and existing rent reasonableness rules still apply. PHAs that were previously approved for streamlined requests under similar PIH Notices must still apply for the above exception payment standards. The previous PIH Notices were PIH Notice 2022-30 (see *Memo*, 10/3/22), PIH Notice 2022-09 (see *Memo*, 4/18/22), PIH Notice 2022-04 (see *Memo*, 3/7/22), PIH Notice 2021-34 (see *Memo*, 12/20/21), and PIH Notice 2021-14 (see *Memo*, 5/10/21).

Read Notice PIH 2023-29 at: https://tinyurl.com/2wc6u64p

Information about the Housing Choice Voucher program is on page 4-1 of NLIHC's *2023 Advocates' Guide*.

HUD PIH Announces 41 Additional Metro Areas Are Now Required to Use Small Area FMRs

HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) published a *Federal Register* notice on October 25 announcing that public housing agencies (PHAs) in 41 metropolitan areas must use Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) payment standards based on Small Area Fair Market Rents (Small Area FMRs, or SAFMRs) by January 1, 2025. These 41 metropolitan areas will join 24 other metropolitan areas that were required to use Small Area FMRs by a November 16, 2016 final rule. According to a HUD media release, PHAs in the 41 new metro areas have more than 440,000 households using HCVs, while the original 24 metro areas have 370,000 voucher households, covering a total of 45% of all households in the voucher program. The final rule requires HUD to make new metropolitan area designations every five years. (The original 24 metro areas began using SAFMRs on April 1, 2018.) The original 24 metropolitan areas are listed in Appendix A of Notice PIH 2018-01.

Small Area FMRs reflect rents for U.S. Postal ZIP Codes, while traditional Fair Market Rents (FMRs) reflect a single rent standard for entire metropolitan regions, which can contain many counties. The value of an HCV is determined by the "payment standard" chosen by a PHA, which in general is between 90% and 110% of the FMR. SAFMRs are used to provide voucher payment standards that are more in line with neighborhood-level rental markets, resulting in relatively higher subsidies in neighborhoods with higher rents and greater opportunities, and lower subsidies in neighborhoods with lower rents and concentrations of voucher holders. Using Small Area FMRs can help households apply vouchers in more well-resourced areas with lower poverty rates, thereby reducing voucher concentrations in high-poverty areas.

While formal implementation of the notice begins on October 1, 2024, PHAs do not have to align their HCV payment standards with SAFMRs until January 1, 2025. The intent of this delay is to provide PHAs time to change their IT systems, train staff, revise materials and briefings for tenants, and educate landlords. PIH will provide technical assistance, peer-to-peer training with PHAs that have been using Small Area FMRs, and more program materials. PIH will automatically provide PHAs in newly designated mandatory SAFMR areas with $10,000 in special administrative fee to offset transition costs (see page 18 of PIH Notice 2023-07 Revision 1). PHAs may decide to implement SAFMRs before January 1, 2025, but most follow the "Opt-in" provisions of the 2016 rule. SAFMRs for all ZIP Codes are updated each year by HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R).

The policies of the 2016 rule are not changed by the notice. To identify the second cohort of 41 metropolitan areas, PD&R adopted the same criteria used to identify the first cohort of 24 metro areas.

Read the October 25 *Federal Register* notice at: https://tinyurl.com/mtypcw3p

Read HUD's media release at: https://tinyurl.com/ms4zks4b

Find a list of all 65 metro areas required to use SAFMRs at: https://tinyurl.com/2nxk8c6w

Explore HUD's Small Area FMR webpage at: https://tinyurl.com/mrxche5m

Find additional SAFMR information at: HUD Exchange

PIH makes available an SAFMR dashboard showing which PHAs are using SAFMRs and how many HCV units are impacted for each PHA. The dashboard is updated monthly.

Information about the Housing Choice Voucher program is on page 4-1 of NLIHC's *2023 Advocates' Guide*.

Opportunity Starts at Home

Teachers Are Increasingly Unable to Afford Housing

An article published by *EdSurge* shares the story of Carrie Rodgers, a long-time educator in Eagle County, Colorado, who has struggled to stay stably housed in her rural community. The article discusses the impact of the lack of affordable housing on Rodgers's career as an educator, as well as her need to hold additional jobs to afford housing and her worries about falling behind on others bills. The article foregrounds the increasing anxiety felt by educators who are trying to afford housing in their communities and draws attention to the fact that many teachers are forced to move away from their teaching districts and that, in consequence, more schools are struggling to retain teachers. The article also highlights the impacts of reduced teacher retention rates on students of color and other students who are often marginalized. "Teachers have been found to be the single most important in-school determinant of a student's success," explains the article. "Yet when they leave, some students are more likely to suffer than others, according to decades of data: students of color, English language learners, students from low-income families, and students with disabilities are more likely to be taught by inexperienced and less-qualified educators." Read the article here.

Research

Utility Payment History Identified as Possible Predictor of First-Time Homelessness

An article published in *Plos One* by researchers from the Spokane Predictive Analytics Group evaluates the efficacy of using utility billing data to predict first-time homelessness. Previous efforts to predict an individual's risk of experiencing homelessness have relied on data sources like healthcare records or criminal conviction histories, which are not always available for the general population, may vary widely in structure and content, and are not made available in a timely fashion. In contrast, utility billing data are available for most U.S. households, include comparable information on payment history from one jurisdiction to the next, and are typically reported on a monthly basis. The researchers find that utility payment histories hold promise as possible predictors of first-time homelessness.

The authors obtained deidentified utility billing data for residents of Spokane County, Washington, from Avista Utilities (which provided electricity and natural gas billing data) and the City of Spokane (which provided water, sewer, and garbage collection data) for the December 2015-December 2019 period. These data came from over 64,000 premises with roughly 86,300 primary account holders, corresponding to 16.0% of Spokane County residents. The City of Spokane also provided information on individuals experiencing homelessness from its local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

The data were used to build two multivariate binary logistic regression models, which were used to estimate whether a utilities account holder was within 12 months of experiencing homelessness for the first time. One model used general utilities information that is typically available in jurisdictions around the country, including the total amount of utilities owed, whether any utilities are in arrears, the number of times a service shutoff arrangement was established for an account, the number of individual account holders associated with the same address (a proxy for resident turnover at a property), and the number of addresses associated with the same individual account holder (a proxy for transiency). The second model incorporated additional data points available in the Spokane County data that may not be readily accessible in other jurisdictions, such as total amount of money owed for specific utilities over a 90-120-day period, and the number of times a utility provider manually contacted an account holder about payment arrearages.

Based on the utilities billing data, the general model correctly predicted that 1,603 account holders would experience first-time homelessness within 12 months of exhibiting signs of financial instability. This represents 86.2% of the 1,845 total account holders documented as experiencing first-time homelessness during the study period as per the HMIS data.

Although the model also had a high number of false positives, the precision of the model can be adjusted as needed to accommodate the differing goals and resources of homelessness prevention programs (HPPs), which aim to prevent homelessness by addressing financial or other crises that put households at greater risk of losing their homes. These programs often provide rental assistance, landlord-tenant mediation, eviction legal services, and other community-based social services that can help households remain stably housed. In addition to helping people avoid the trauma and long-term negative impacts of homelessness on an individual level, previous studies have demonstrated that HPPs play a role in reducing homelessness rates in communities they serve and may be more cost-effective than homeless assistance programs. However, the success of HPPs is highly dependent on their ability to identify households at risk and intervene in a timely manner.

For this reason, the findings of the study may be especially relevant to HPPs. For example, HPPs that use resource-intensive interventions to prevent homelessness can adjust the model to correctly identify individuals who are truly at risk of homelessness more often (with fewer false positives), even if the model does not identify as many of those individuals (giving more false negatives). The authors believe the model "shows promise in facilitating identification of those in need of aid by increasing processing speed and prediction accuracy" and could be used as a first-line screening tool to identify and connect with households facing financial precarity before more detailed screening processes are conducted. The study's findings may be especially beneficial for cities like Los Angeles that are already exploring ways to use artificial intelligence to prevent homelessness and keep residents stably housed.

Read the article here.

From the Field

Anti-Displacement Ordinance Introduced in Louisville by Tenant Advocates

Tenant leaders and advocates in Louisville, Kentucky, introduced the "Anti-Displacement Fair Housing Ordinance," also known as the "Historically Black Neighborhoods Ordinance" (HBNO), in August 2023. The first of its kind to be introduced in a southern state, the ordinance aims to address the rampant displacement and gentrification affecting Black communities in low-income neighborhoods in the Louisville metropolitan area.

In recent years, developers have used public resources to create housing that is unaffordable to many residents, leading to higher rents and increased cost burdens for existing residents and forcing many into housing insecurity and homelessness. The new ordinance would require that any development projects in designated historically Black neighborhoods and communities in the city participate in and pass an assessment proving they will not cause the direct or indirect displacement of existing residents. If a development does not pass the assessment, then it is prevented from accessing financial incentives or being built on publicly owned land. The legislation would also prioritize access for current residents and small business owners in areas that are vulnerable to displacement, and for city programs including an existing down-payment assistance program, a home repair program, and a small business assistance program.

The Louisville Tenants Union is a multi-racial and multi-generational tenant union that focuses on building tenant power, organizing campaigns, and advocating for policy changes that empower and prioritize tenants and housing rights. The Louisville Tenants Union includes the Historically Black Neighborhood Assembly (HBN), which was founded in 2021 by Jessica Bellamy of the Smoketown Neighborhood Association and became a part of the LTU in 2022.

In February 2023, the organization launched the public facing campaign for the HBNO. After months of advocacy, signature collection, and support gathering among community members and Louisville Metro Council members, the organization was able to present the legislation to the Louisville Metro Council in August. While a final committee vote on the bill is pending, the community has shown tremendous support for the legislation. Not only have 1,500 individuals signed a petition in support of the ordinance, but 50 allied organizations have voiced support, and several Metro councilmembers have co-sponsored the bill. NLIHC state partner Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky expressed support for the ordinance in a letter to the Metro council, explaining that "[d]ue to longstanding patterns of structural racism in the housing market, the residents of West Louisville, which are Historically Black Neighborhoods, need to be protected explicitly."

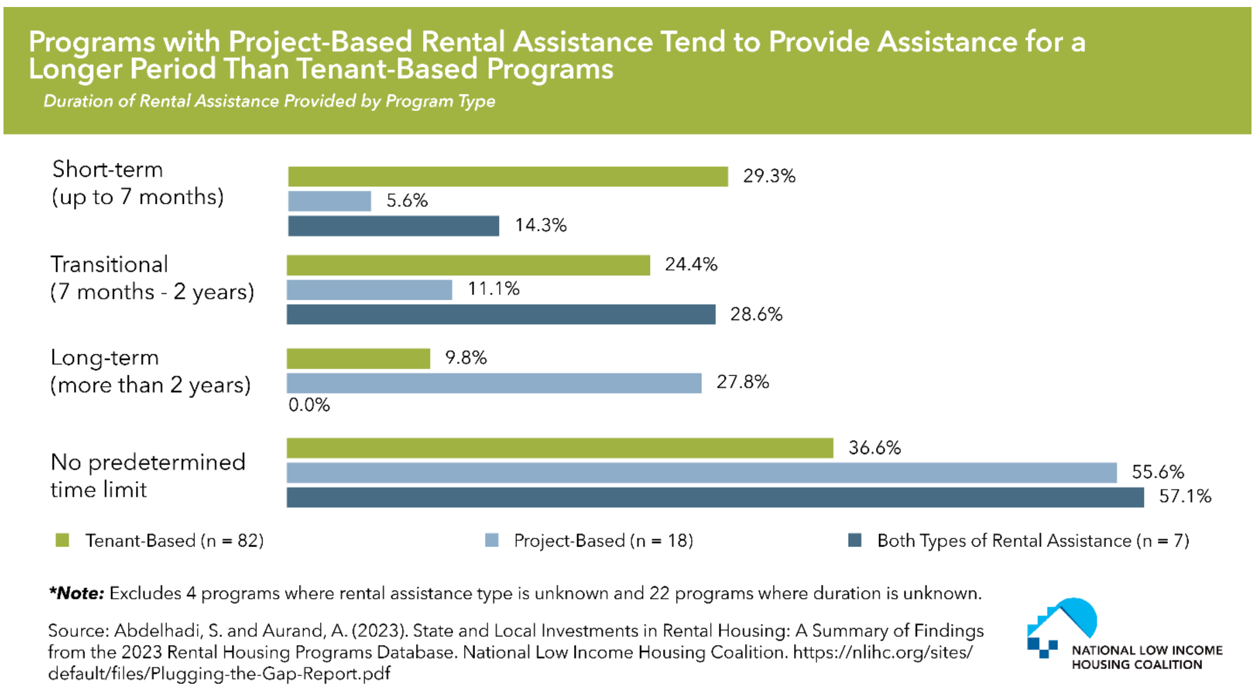
"At its heart, [the ordinance] prevents the Louisville metro government from giving away public resources such as money, land, and staff support to development projects that would increase the cost of living in historically Black neighborhoods," said Bellamy.

Learn more about the Anti-Displacement Ordinance here.

Learn more about the Louisville Tenants Union here.

Fact of the Week

Programs with Project-Based Rental Assistance Tend to Provide Assistance for a Longer Period Than Tenant-Based Programs



Source: Abdelhadi, S. and Aurand, A. (2023). State and Local Investments in Rental Housing: A Summary of Findings from the 2023 Rental Housing Programs Database. National Low Income Housing Coalition. https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/state-and-local-investments-rental-housing-report.pdf

---

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of October 22

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of October 22:

- "The Hourly Income You Need To Afford Rent Around The U.S." *HuffPost* at: https://tinyurl.com/37mbt2dk
- "For Overlooked Populations, Purpose-Driven Housing Represents Hope" *Essence*, October 26 at: https://tinyurl.com/3purac8v
- "Housing in jeopardy? Valuation dispute could imperil thousands of affordable housing units in Nebraska" *Flatwater Free Press*, October 27 at: https://tinyurl.com/4mjkh2rp

---

NLIHC Careers

NLIHC Seeks Housing Campaign Coordinator

NLIHC seeks a housing campaign coordinator to join our Opportunity Starts at Home (OSAH) campaign. The housing campaign coordinator will work closely with the OSAH campaign director to build and maintain a cooperative, productive coalition structure, including by coordinating closely with the OSAH campaign's core partners, the campaign Steering Committee, and a larger network of cooperating organizations.

Background:

Opportunity Starts at Home is a dynamic, long-term, multi-sector campaign that has built a movement of multi-sector partners to ensure that the nation's historically marginalized households and those with the lowest incomes live in safe, accessible, affordable homes in neighborhoods that are free from discrimination and where everyone has equitable opportunities to thrive. NLIHC, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and Children's HealthWatch launched the Opportunity Starts at Home campaign in 2018 to solve the nation's housing crisis. The goals of the campaign are to advance federal policy solutions that:

- Expand rental assistance for every income-eligible household.
- Expand the stock of housing affordable to households with the lowest incomes.
- Stabilize households by providing emergency assistance to avert housing instability and homelessness.

The campaign is advised by a Steering Committee of leading multi-sector organizations and mobilizes a broader coalition of multi-sector partners through the campaign's Roundtable. The campaign also supports state partners that parallel the work of the national campaign by building state-level multisector coalitions and leveraging those partnerships to advance federal housing policies.

Job Description:

The OSAH housing campaign coordinator will:

- Support the Campaign Director in building and maintaining a cooperative, productive coalition structure, including close coordination with the Campaign's core partners, the Campaign Steering Committee, and a larger network of cooperating organizations on the campaign's big table of partner organizations, the campaign's Roundtable.
- Support the Campaign director in carrying out all aspects of the Campaign plan, including helping to develop and implement effective communications, outreach and advocacy plans.
- Support the Campaign director in advancing the campaign's policy agenda in Congress by working closely with coalition partners and NLIHC's broader policy team.
- Working closely with the NLIHC field team, provide and administer grants to state partners and ensure effective partner grants management: ensure grantees are carrying out the terms of their grants and are effectively and appropriately using the grants provided to achieve intended outcomes.
- Ensure that state-based coalitions in grant-receiving states have the materials, tools, and other supports needed to function as effectively as possible.
- Organize webinars and other training and technical assistance for key coalition members engaged in the campaign in all states.
- In partnership with NLIHC's field team, stay in close contact with key organizational leaders in grant-receiving and other states to ensure that the Campaign and state efforts are best synchronized.
- Review plans and reports about state coalition efforts in grant-receiving states to determine ongoing effectiveness.
- Develop and implement a plan to ensure that state and local leaders are effectively engaged with and apprised of Campaign-related developments.
- Contribute to ongoing fundraising efforts to ensure sustainable funding for the campaign through existing and new funding opportunities.
- Contribute to periodic reports to the Campaign's partners, Steering Committee members, donors, and relevant others about the Campaign's progress; and other duties as assigned.

Qualifications:

- A bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred). Relevant life experience may be substituted for years of education.
- A minimum of two to three years previous experience working in, coordinating, or leading multi-faceted projects, national initiatives, or campaigns. Exceptional candidates with fewer years of such experience may be considered.
- A demonstrated, clear commitment to the alleviation of poverty (affordable housing experience a plus).
- Experience successfully building partnerships among organizations.
- Demonstrated excellence in organizational skills.
- Excellent communications skills, both orally and in writing.
- An ability to work in a diverse, fast-paced environment.

- Experience in grant management and in reporting to donors a plus.

Compensation and Benefits:

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. This is a full-time position located in Washington, D.C.

Job Application Process:

Candidates for this position should **send a cover letter, resume, and two writing samples** to: Lakesha Dawson, Director of Operations, NLIHC, 1000 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20005 at **ldawson@nlihc.org**.The cover letter should describe the candidate's interest in, and relevant experiences for, the position, and should include salary requirements and the names and contact information for at least three people serving as candidate references. (NLIHC will not contact references before consulting with the candidate.)

NLIHC News

Where to Find Us – October 30

- Housing Is a Human Right Orange County General Meeting: Housing First – Virtual, October 30 (Courtney Cooperman)
- Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing – Los Angeles, CA, November 1 (Sarah Saadian)
- Congressional Progressive Caucus Hill Briefing on Homelessness – Virtual, November 2 (Diane Yentel)
- Children Defense Fund, Child Well-Being in America, A National Policy Forum – Washington, D.C., November 2 (Diane Yentel)
- Sinergia NY Housing Advocacy Program – Virtual, November 8 (Lindsay Duvall)
- Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency Conference – Hershey, PA, December 7 (Sarah Saadian)

NLIHC Staff

Sarah Abdelhadi, Senior Research Analyst
Meredith Abel, Research Intern
Andrew Aurand, Senior Vice President for Research, x245
Sidney Betancourt, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x200
Victoria Bourret, ERASE Senior Project Coordinator x244
Jen Butler, Vice President, External Affairs, x239
Alayna Calabro, Senior Policy Analyst, x252
Matthew Clarke, Writer/Editor, x207
Courtney Cooperman, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x263

Lindsay Duvall, Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy, x206
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Sarah Gallagher, Senior Director, ERASE Project, x220
Jordan Goldstein, Communications/Graphic Design Intern
Yingxue Snow Guo, Communications Intern
Danita Humphries, Senior Executive Assistant, x226
Nada Hussein, ERASE Project Coordinator, x264
Kim Johnson, Public Policy Manager, x243
Kayla Laywell, Housing Policy Analyst, x231
Mayerline Louis-Juste, Senior Communications Specialist, x201
Steve Moore Sanchez, Development Coordinator, x209
Khara Norris, Vice President of Operations and Finance, x242
Noah Patton, Senior Housing Policy Analyst, x227
Mackenzie Pish, Research Analyst
Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Manager, x246
Benja Reilly, Development Specialist, x234
Gabrielle Ross, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x208
Sarah Saadian, Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Field Organizing, x228
Brooke Schipporeit, Manager of Field Organizing x233
Sophie Siebach-Glover, Research Analyst, x205
Lauren Steimle, Web/Graphic Design Specialist, x246
Chantelle Wilkinson, OSAH Campaign Director, x230
Renee Willis, Senior Vice President for Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, x247
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225