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Point of View

Our Homes, Our Votes 2020 – by Diane Yentel, NLIHC President and CEO

The 2020 presidential campaigns offer an opportunity unlike any housing advocates have seen before. The primary season is already in full swing with several Democrats, including many who are strong and vocal supporters of affordable homes, running for their party's nomination. Several candidates have a long history of supporting affordable homes and have introduced major affordable housing proposals. For the first time in recent memory, affordable housing is a topic on the presidential campaign trail.

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) has announced her intention to run for president. Last year, she introduced the "[American Housing and Economic Mobility \(AHEM\) Act](#)," a bold and comprehensive bill to end the housing crisis. NLIHC worked closely with Senator Warren on developing the bill, which directly addresses the underlying cause of the affordable housing crisis – the severe shortage of affordable rental homes for people with the lowest incomes – through a robust \$445 billion investment over ten years in the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF). Her proposal would also expand Fair Housing Act protections, boost funding for rural and tribal housing, impose stronger requirements on banks and lenders, and encourage inclusionary zoning. Senator Warren has already made affordable housing a topic [in recent campaign speaking engagements](#) in Iowa and New Hampshire. For more details on the AHEM Act, see NLIHC's [factsheet](#).

Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) [announced his bid](#) for the presidency on February 1. Last year, NLIHC worked with Senator Booker on the introduction of his "[Housing, Opportunity, Mobility, and Equity \(HOME\) Act](#)," which would provide a refundable tax credit to individuals who spend more than 30% of their incomes on rent. The proposal also encourages inclusionary zoning to increase the supply of affordable housing and to reduce housing discrimination based on race and income.

Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) [announced](#) on January 21 her intention to run for president. In the summer of 2018, NLIHC worked with Senator Harris on the introduction of her "[Rent Relief Act](#)," which aims to reduce rent burdens on low-income renters by creating a refundable tax credit for individuals who live in rental housing and who pay more than 30% of their incomes on rent and utilities. Like Senator Booker's bill, this proposal would reduce housing cost burdens on struggling low-income renters and provide individuals and families additional money they can spend on healthcare, education, childcare, and other needs. For more information on Senator Harris's and Booker's renters' tax credit proposals, see NLIHC's [factsheet](#).

In addition to Senators Warren, Booker, and Harris, the presidential primary field also includes former HUD Secretary Julián Castro, who announced his candidacy on January 12. As HUD secretary, Castro led the launch of the national Housing Trust Fund and published the historic Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH) rule. Castro's familiarity with and strong support for affordable housing programs means another vocal housing proponent will be on the campaign trail. We expect other candidates to also introduce major housing legislation in the Senate in the coming months.

With so many housing champions running for president, we have a tremendous opportunity to put affordable housing solutions front and center in national political conversations. Over the course of the campaigns, NLIHC's nonpartisan [Our Homes, Our Votes](#) project will continue to engage with all presidential candidates to elevate and amplify affordable housing solutions – through housing forums in key primary states, voter engagement with low-income renters, and more. We will analyze candidates' housing proposals for their impact on the lowest-income people and work to have robust housing planks included in both the Republican and Democratic party platforms. And we will continue to provide our members and partners with concrete tips for nonpartisan voter registration, engagement, and mobilization.

In the coming months we'll share regular updates and ways for you to get involved in *Our Homes, Our Votes 2020* - because housing is built with ballots!

Thanks, as always, for your commitment and good work.

Diane

Take Action

Join February 13 Tweet Storm Urging Congress to Fully Fund Affordable Housing Programs

Please join NLIHC and the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding for a tweet storm on February 13 from 3:00-4:00 p.m. ET to urge Congress to avoid another government shutdown and fully fund affordable housing and community development programs. Use #FullyFundHousing in you tweets and tag your member of Congress.

Not on Twitter? Use this time to spread this important message on other social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Background

President Trump announced on January 25 an agreement to temporarily reopen the federal government for three weeks — ending our nation's longest shutdown in history — giving legislators time to negotiate a larger spending deal and border security. The short-term funding bill expires on February 15. If Congress and the White House fail to reach a deal by then, the government will again shut down, further undermining the short-term operations and long-term viability of our nation's affordable housing and community development programs.

By participating in the February 13 tweet storm, you can urge Congress to ensure affordable housing and community development programs receive robust federal funding in full-year spending bills for HUD and USDA.

Sample tweets and images can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2TDixTj> (.zip)

Budget and Appropriations

Congress Has Only a Few Days Left to Avoid Another Government Shutdown

Congress has only a few days to reach an agreement to fund the federal government for the remainder of FY19 and avoid another partial government shutdown before the current stop-gap funding measure, known as a continuing resolution (CR), expires on February 15. A CR carries forward funding levels from the previous year. Congress has failed to enact several federal spending bills for FY19, including those that fund affordable housing and community development programs, which led to the longest government shutdown in US history. Lawmakers hoped to reach a deal over the weekend, but a dispute over immigration policy has brought negotiations to a halt, increasing the risk of another government shutdown. Even if lawmakers reach a deal, it is unclear if President Donald Trump will sign the legislation if it does not include funding – or sufficient funding - for a southern border wall.

NLIHC asks advocates to [call your lawmakers](#) to urge them to enact clean, full-year FY19 spending bills for HUD and USDA as soon as possible. Advocates can also participate in a national Twitter storm on February 13 at 3:00 p.m. ET.

Congress

House Subcommittee Examines HUD’s Contract Management during Shutdown

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (THUD) will hold a hearing on “HUD’s Management of Housing Contracts During the Shutdown” on February 12 at 3:00 p.m. ET in 2358-A Rayburn House Office Building. Acting HUD Deputy Secretary, FHA Commissioner, and Assistant Secretary for Housing Brian Montgomery and HUD Chief Financial Officer Irv Dennis will testify. The hearing will be streamed live at: <https://bit.ly/2WLgNtb>

House Financial Services Committee to Hold Hearings on Homelessness and Affordable Housing in Rural America

The House Committee on Financial Services has scheduled several hearings during the week of February 11, including one on homelessness on February 13 and another on affordable housing in rural areas on February 14.

The February 13 “Homeless in America: Examining the Crisis and Solutions to End Homelessness” hearing is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. ET in 2128 Rayburn House Office Building.

The February 14 “The Affordable Housing Crisis in Rural America: Assessing the Federal Response” hearing is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. ET in 2128 Rayburn House Office Building and will be held by the Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development, and Insurance.

Both hearings will be streamed live at: <https://bit.ly/23X4pol>

Senate Banking Committee to Hold Confirmation Hearing for FHFA Director

The Senate Banking Committee is scheduled to hold a confirmation hearing on February 14 for President Trump’s Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) nominee, Mark Calabria. Mr. Calabria is currently serving as Vice President Mike Pence’s chief economist and was previously the director of financial regulation studies at the Cato Institute. The FHFA oversees Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which – through a small assessment on their books of business – fund the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF), the first new program in a generation dedicated to building and preserving homes for the nation’s lowest-income people. The hearing will be held on February 14 at 10:00 a.m. ET in 538 Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The hearing will be streamed live at: <https://bit.ly/2I901kK>

2019 Housing Policy Forum

Senator Todd Young to Address NLIHC 2019 Housing Policy Forum

Senator Todd Young (R-IN) will be a keynote speaker at NLIHC's [2019 Housing Policy Forum: *Seizing the Moment for Bold Solutions*](#) in Washington, DC, March 27-29. Senator Young is the lead author of the "[Task Force on the Impact of the Affordable Housing Crisis Act](#)" and the "[Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration Act](#)." He will discuss these legislative proposals—one to establish a task force to evaluate and make recommendations to Congress on addressing America's affordable housing crisis, and the other to help Housing Choice Voucher holders move to areas of opportunity. The early-bird registration rate ends on February 25. Register today and receive the reduced price at: <http://www.nlihcforum.org/>

The Forum will provide an array of opportunities to engage with elected officials and with affordable housing advocates, thought-leaders, policy experts, researchers, housing providers, low-income residents, and congressional staff. Awareness about the affordable housing crisis in America is growing, and federal policymakers on both sides of the aisle are responding; some have put forward bold legislative proposals to address the housing needs of low-income people. The Forum will focus on leveraging this momentum to achieve real solutions to homelessness and housing poverty in America.

Among the topics to be addressed at this year's Forum are:

- The state of affordable housing in 2019, recent successes and challenges, and emerging opportunities
- The state of play related to affordable housing on Capitol Hill in 2019
- Achieving greater racial equity in housing
- the affordable housing crisis in rural areas and tribal lands and advocacy strategies to achieve real solutions.
- The growing *Opportunity Starts at Home* multi-sector affordable housing movement
- The U.S. eviction epidemic and its solutions
- Getting started building and preserving homes for people with the lowest incomes through the national Housing Trust Fund
- Best practices in non-partisan voter engagement and ways to get candidates for public office to make affordable housing a priority in their campaigns
- Working with and making housing an issue with the media
- The future of public housing
- Achieving development without displacement
- Research on the issues and solutions related to housing for extremely vulnerable populations
- The keys to state, local, and resident-led organizing
- Low-income resident leadership
- Federal fixes to ensure equitable disaster housing recovery
- And more

The 2019 Housing Policy Forum is filling up fast, so register today at: <http://www.nlihcforum.org/>

Register Today to Attend NLIHC's 2019 Housing Leadership Awards Reception on March 28 Honoring Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, Pinky Clifford, and Dr. Mitchell Katz

Join NLIHC in recognizing 2019 Housing Leadership Award honorees **Representative Emanuel Cleaver** (D-MO); **Emma "Pinky" Clifford**, executive director of the Oglala Sioux Tribe Partnership for Housing and

NLIHC board member; and **Dr. Mitchell Katz**, president and CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals. All three will be recognized at NLIHC's **37th Annual Housing Leadership Awards Reception** on Thursday, March 28 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, DC. [Register for the event today!](#) You may also still [contribute](#) to NLIHC in honor of these outstanding leaders!

Representative Cleaver will receive the 2019 Edward Brooke Housing Leadership Award for his years of leadership in Congress, unwavering commitment to addressing the needs of the lowest income people in the U.S., and steadfast support for federal affordable housing and homelessness programs. As ranking member of the Housing and Insurance Subcommittee, he co-authored the "Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act," a comprehensive bipartisan housing bill passed into law unanimously in 2017. The award is named after former U.S. Senator and NLIHC Board Chair Edward W. Brooke.

Emma "Pinky" Clifford will receive the Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award, named for NLIHC's founder Cushing Niles Dolbeare, a true pioneer of the affordable housing movement. Ms. Clifford will receive the award for her many years of leadership and dedication on behalf of Native Americans and her tireless work to secure decent, safe, and affordable homes for the lowest income people living on Pine Ridge Reservation.

Dr. Mitchell Katz will receive the Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award, named after former NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, who led NLIHC for more than 17 years. Dr. Katz will receive the award for elevating public and policy-maker awareness about the connections between health, housing, and homelessness and for implementing bold solutions to meet the affordable housing needs of the lowest income people.

There are three ways to contribute:

- [Donate Online as an Individual](#)
- [Donate Online as an Organization](#)
- [Download the Pledge Form and Submit Via Email](#)

Your contribution will help NLIHC achieve socially just public policy to ensure the lowest income people in America have decent, affordable homes.

The 2019 Leadership Awards Reception will be held on March 28, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m., the second evening of NLIHC's [2019 Housing Policy Forum: Seizing the Moment for Bold Solutions](#). Register for the Forum and/or Leadership Awards Reception at: <https://bit.ly/2SzJcjW>. The early-bird registration rate ends on February 25.

Opportunity Starts at Home

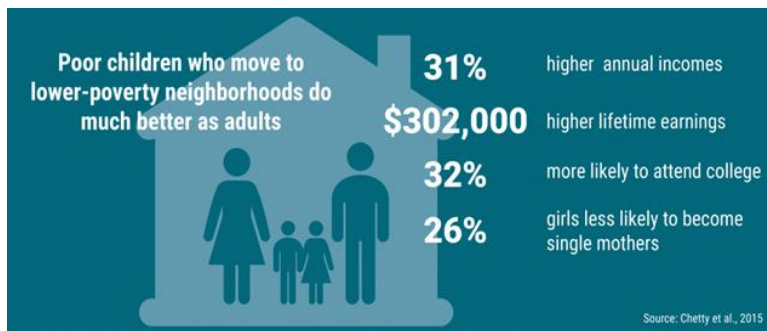
ACT NOW! Tell Congress to Support New Voucher-Mobility Legislation

U.S. Senators Todd Young (R-IN), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Roy Blunt (R-MO), and Maggie Hassan (D-NH) introduced on January 31 "The Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration Act" (S. 291). This bipartisan bill would help families receiving housing vouchers move to areas with stronger opportunities.

The Opportunity Starts at Home multi-sector affordable homes campaign supported voucher mobility in the last Congress and again calls on Congress to support this legislation. This voucher-mobility demonstration would be an important step in helping families with housing vouchers access high-opportunity communities with strong schools, accessible transit, and better job prospects.

Research shows that when children in poor families grow up in neighborhoods with low poverty, quality schools, and low crime, they are significantly more likely to attend college, less likely to become single parents, and more likely to earn dramatically more as adults over the course of their lifetimes. These results can help break cycles of generational poverty and produce a positive taxpayer return. Research also shows that low-income students perform better academically and close achievement gaps faster when housing assistance enables them to live stably in opportunity neighborhoods with lower-poverty schools.

The “Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration Act” would require public housing authorities (PHAs) to submit a regional housing mobility plan detailing how they will help families move to higher opportunity areas. The bill would authorize HUD to award demonstration program funds on a competitive basis and prioritize regional collaborations among PHAs that have high concentrations of voucher holders in low-opportunity neighborhoods and an adequate number of moderately-priced rental units in higher-opportunity areas, an existing high-performing Family Self Sufficiency program, or a strong regional collaboration including one or more small housing agencies, among other factors.



Take Action! Send the Opportunity Starts at Home campaign’s letter to Congress urging lawmakers to support this bill.

Also, please follow the campaign on all social media platforms: Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

HUD

HUD Sends Proposed Changes to Disparate Impact Regulations to OMB

HUD sent proposed changes to the disparate impact regulations to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on February 1. HUD previously published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) in the *Federal Register* on June 20, 2018 seeking public comment on possible amendments to HUD’s 2013 final rule implementing the Fair Housing Act’s disparate impact standard (see *Memo*, [6/25/18](#)).

In the ANPR, HUD acknowledges that the Supreme Court upheld the use of disparate impact theory to establish liability under the Fair Housing Act in cases where seemingly neutral practices have a discriminatory impact on protected classes of persons. HUD went on to state that the Court “did not directly rule upon it [the disparate impact rule],” hence HUD sought public input on whether the regulation is consistent with the Court’s ruling in *Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs v. Inclusive Communities*.

The February 1 [OIRA posting](#) does not provide any more detail than the ANPR. Under Executive Order 12866, proposed changes to regulations must be reviewed by OIRA, which technically then has 90 days before sending them back to HUD for publishing in the *Federal Register*. Once published, the public will have 60 days to

submit comments to HUD. NLIHC will continue monitoring the OIRA site and inform readers once the proposed rule has been cleared by OIRA, and alert readers when a proposed rule is published in the *Federal Register*.

For many years HUD interpreted the Fair Housing Act to prohibit housing practices that have a discriminatory effect, even if there was no apparent intent to discriminate. All eleven courts of appeal that considered the issue agreed. There were minor variations, however, in how the courts and HUD applied the discriminatory effects concept. A February 15, 2013 regulation was therefore issued to establish uniform standards for determining when a housing practice with a discriminatory effect violates the Fair Housing Act.

The final rule standardized a three-step “burden-shifting” approach that HUD has used and that most appeals courts have applied.

- First, the party complaining that there is a discriminatory effect has the burden of proving that a practice caused, or predictably will cause, a discriminatory effect.
- Second, if the complaining party makes a convincing argument, then the burden of proof shifts to the defending party, which must show that the practice has a “legally sufficient justification,” meaning the practice is necessary to achieve a substantial, legitimate, nondiscriminatory interest that cannot be served by another practice that has a less discriminatory effect.
- Third, if the defending party is successful, the complaining party can still succeed by demonstrating that the defending party’s substantial, legitimate, nondiscriminatory interest could be served by another practice that has a less discriminatory effect.

The February 1 OIRA posting is at: <https://bit.ly/2Sg2DSa>

The June 20, 2018 Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is at: <https://bit.ly/2lqfXAT>

NLIHC’s comment letter in response to the ANPR is at: <https://bit.ly/2PvX9hd>

More about disparate impact is on page 7-1 of NLIHC’s *2018 Advocates’ Guide* at: <https://bit.ly/2IcZIWK>

HUD Offers HOME Program Series II and III Training Webinars

HUD’s Office of Affordable Housing Programs (OAHP) is again offering a “Building HOME” webinar training series. The training series will provide an overview of the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), including eligible program activities related to homeowners and homebuyers, rental housing, Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), and Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) activities.

The Building HOME webinar series could be helpful for advocates and nonprofit community-based developers, particularly CHDOs. Each webinar training series is limited to 500 participants and registration will close 24 hours before the webinars begin.

Each webinar training series will include four weekly two-hour sessions on Wednesdays from 1:00-3:00 p.m. ET, followed by one-hour office hour sessions on Thursdays to review homework and answer questions related to each week’s materials. For example, office hours will be held from 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET on March 14 following the March 13 webinar.

Series II will take place on March 13, March 20, March 27, and April 3. Series III will repeat the content on May 1, May 8, May 15, and May 22. TBRA is presented during the first half of the final “office hour” for each series to allow the fourth session to focus on rental housing. (Series I has already taken place.)

Sessions will be recorded and posted to allow registered participants who may have a scheduling conflict during a webinar session the opportunity to make up the session.

Register for Series II at: <https://bit.ly/2t91RYn>

Register for Series III at: <https://bit.ly/2RJ3BBB>

For more information contact: trainings@hudexchange.info

More information about HOME is on page 5-10 of NLIHC’s [2018 Advocates’ Guide](#)

Disaster Housing Recovery

Coalition Urges Congress to Hold FEMA Oversight Hearings and to Reform Disaster Housing Recovery

NLIHC and the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition ([DHRC](#)) of more than 800 local, state, and national organizations sent a [letter](#) on February 6 to the congressional leaders of the Senate Homeland Security and House Transportation and Infrastructure Committees about FEMA’s repeated failure to address the housing needs of low-income disaster survivors. The letter calls on the committees to hold oversight hearings to examine the agency’s repeated failure to address the housing needs of the lowest-income disaster survivors - including people with disabilities, seniors, families with children, and those experiencing homelessness prior to a disaster - and to work with advocates and other stakeholders on much-needed reforms.

Hurricanes Michael and Florence and the California wildfires in 2018 destroyed or damaged nearly 150,000 homes. Several months after these disasters took place, far too many low-income survivors are still struggling to meet their most basic need: a safe, affordable place to call home. At least 50 people in Chico, CA, are still struggling to find safe places to live after the last emergency shelter closed on January 31. Hundreds of survivors of the Camp Fire living in cars and trailers on a shelter’s parking lot were forced to leave if their vehicles did not meet certain standards or they were unable to pay daily fees. About 500 families in the Florida Panhandle are still living in tents while they wait for FEMA trailers.

“On behalf of NLIHC and the DHRC, I call on the Senate Homeland Security and House Transportation and Infrastructure Committees to hold FEMA accountable for its failure to meet the basic housing needs of people with the lowest incomes,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel. “We urge you to hold oversight hearings to examine the agency’s repeated neglect of low-income survivors’ housing needs and to formulate and implement reforms to ensure equitable housing recovery is provided to all survivors of these and future disasters.”

Read the DHRC letter at: <https://bit.ly/2Dca6Yi>

Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – February 11, 2019

The following is a review of disaster housing recovery developments since the last edition of *Memo to Members and Partners* (for the article in the previous *Memo*, see [2/4](#)).

Legislation and Congressional Action

Texas Governor Greg Abbott and a bi-cameral, bipartisan group of 12 Congress members from Texas sent a [letter](#) to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Acting Director Russ Vought requesting approval of HUD's guidelines for Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) mitigation funds. Congress appropriated the funds for mitigation projects in February 2017, with more than \$4.3 billion going to Texas. States can only begin the action plan process when HUD releases guidance in the *Federal Register*.

2018 California Wildfires

Federal Response

FEMA has [extended](#) registration for disaster assistance for residents in Butte, Los Angeles and Ventura counties. The last day to register is now Friday, February 15.

FEMA representatives [joined](#) Cal Office of Emergency Services (OES) representatives at a Chico City Council meeting to discuss a proposed temporary housing project for Camp Fire survivors. The project involves the construction of 48 manufactured homes over four months. Survivors will be able to stay for 12 months, with the option of two six-month extensions.

Local Perspectives and Resources

The town of Paradise was forced to [rescind](#) an ordinance from December that allowed property owners to temporarily live in trailers/RVs on their properties. The decision came after federal officials threatened to withhold debris cleanup funding, citing health and safety concerns. More than 100 Camp Fire victims will be displaced, although county officials are working with the state to find land for the RVs.

The City of Chico continues to try to find solutions to the [extreme housing shortage](#) following the Camp Fire. Although the last shelter closed the week of February 4, about 50 people remain inside because they could not immediately find other stable housing. The Chico City Council is working to accelerate the production of accessory dwelling units to help address the need for affordable homes until the development of larger projects occurs.

NPR [spotlights](#) several former residents of Paradise who have chosen not to rebuild their homes in the town. "How do you rebuild an entire city from the ground up? We don't know. How long does it take? We don't know," says local disaster relief volunteer Duane Crowder. "People have just said you know what, nuts to it, we're out of here, there's not going to be anything here."

Hurricane Michael

Florida

Federal Response

FEMA’s Integrated Recovery Coordination (IRC) group has developed a [Hurricane Michael Recovery Resources Portal](#) to connect communities with philanthropic resources to cover the potential gap between total recovery costs and what FEMA provides.

State Action

Governor DeSantis [released](#) his state budget proposal, “A Bold Vision for a Brighter Future,” which includes \$765 million for housing and job training in impacted areas. His proposal relies on \$1.5 billion in federal funds for debris collection, housing, and agricultural recovery.

Local Perspectives and Resources

Online polls, voter registration records, and school enrollment all show that Bay County residents are [moving away from the area](#). Bay County Commissioner Robert Carroll hopes that addressing the housing supply and affordability will be the first step in re-growing the population as others leave.

In Bay County, Greg Dossie and the Project Hope Coalition – Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) members – are [bringing in 50 donated trailers](#) for survivors ineligible for FEMA trailers. The group is working to make these trailers permanent housing options, so survivors have a place to live during the reconstruction process.

North Carolina

President Trump approved North Carolina’s request for a federal disaster declaration ([DR-4412](#)) for Hurricane Michael. The declaration makes public assistance funding available for county and municipal governments in 21 counties.

Hurricane Florence

North Carolina

Federal Response

FEMA [reports](#) that 571 households (1,608 people) are now living in 601 mobile homes and trailers. A total of 8,632 households have been approved for direct housing, but FEMA states only 720 required it. Those living in trailers need to provide a permanent housing plan to FEMA to remain eligible.

Local Perspectives and Resources

Disability Rights North Carolina released a [report](#) detailing unsafe and unsanitary conditions as well as “disrespectful, dismissive treatment” for Hurricane Florence survivors with disabilities. The report concluded that while emergency help for people with disabilities has improved since Hurricane Michael, North Carolina’s shortage of accessible, affordable housing led to dysfunction.

More than two dozen survivors currently living in a [mobile home park](#) in Cumberland County, NC, are once again being displaced. While the residents own their mobile homes, the owner of the land defaulted on his loan, meaning these low-income families – many of whom were displaced by both Hurricanes Matthew and Florence – will need to find housing once again. All of the mobile homes are older, cannot be moved, and consequently will likely be destroyed.

South Carolina

Officials from Horry County – where most of Hurricane Florence’s damage in South Carolina occurred – are [asking](#) federal agencies to deal directly with them instead of waiting for funding to go through the state first. Local administrators insist on the break from tradition so needs can be localized for each community.

2017 Disasters

Federal Response

Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rosselló and HUD Secretary Ben Carson [announced](#) HUD’s authorization of the disbursement and use of \$1.5 billion in CDBG-DR funding.

Local Perspectives and Resources

A [study](#) conducted by researchers at the University of Miami found Puerto Rican evacuees reported having a harder time finding jobs, housing, and transportation in Central Florida than in South Florida.

A recent NBC News [article](#) details some of the ongoing disaster recovery struggles for Puerto Rico, including delayed funding, excess supply of vacant homes in the wake of hurricane-related foreclosures, and the absence of formal property titles for many households.

Native American Housing

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Finds ‘Broken Promises’ in Provision of Native American Housing

The United States Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) released a report, [Broken Promises: Continuing Federal Funding Shortfall for Native Americans](#), in December 2018, that evaluates the federal government’s commitments to support the well-being and sovereignty of Native American tribes and villages. The report – which was sent directly to President Trump and Vice President Pence – concludes that the U.S. government has not adequately followed through on federal trust obligations regarding numerous issues, including housing. USCCR recommends increasing funding for tribal housing funding through the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA).

Native American tribes and villages face a crisis of substandard housing conditions and a grave shortage of affordable housing. The number of Native American households with incomplete kitchen facilities is seven times greater than the national average and ten times greater for incomplete plumbing facilities. The Native American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) estimated that in 2013 70% of the homes in Indian Country needed repairs or upgrades. Compared with just 2.2% of all U.S. households, 15.9% of Native American households experience overcrowding. Overcrowding negatively impacts school performance and health outcomes and can contribute to ongoing problems of domestic violence. Housing shortages on reservations also present a challenge when recruiting and retaining qualified workers such as healthcare staff, judicial personnel, teachers, and contractors.

USCCR recommends NAHASDA as the best vehicle for addressing these housing challenges and promoting tribal sovereignty. NAHASDA has required reauthorization since 2013 and has received mostly flat funding since its enactment in 1996. The report highly recommends passing a spending package that is: dedicated to fully addressing unmet needs, made accessible on an equitable basis, and includes appropriate technical assistance.

Read *Broken Promises* at: <https://bit.ly/2rPHRte>

Research

Small Area Fair Market Rents Modestly Improve Neighborhood Outcomes Among Black and Hispanic Voucher Holders, but Additional Policies are Needed

An article in *Housing Policy Debate* “[Do Small Area Fair Market Rents Reduce Racial Disparities in the Voucher Program?](#)” by Vincent Reina found that Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs) are associated with important but marginal improvements in accessing less disadvantaged neighborhoods for black and Hispanic Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) holders and accessing less minority-concentrated neighborhoods for black HCV holders. While SAFMRs are an important tool, a broader range of fair housing policies are needed to fully address racial segregation and access to opportunity.

SAFMRs set voucher payment standards at the ZIP code level rather than the metropolitan level to better reflect neighborhood versus city-wide rental prices; the voucher payments are higher in more expensive neighborhoods and lower in less costly neighborhoods. The intention of using SAFMS is to increase the number and types of neighborhoods HCV households can access, including higher opportunity neighborhoods, and to reduce racial and economic segregation.

The author used HUD administrative data on voucher holders from 2003 to 2015 to identify the impact of SAFMRs on racial and ethnic groups’ locational outcomes in six SAFMR demonstration sites: Dallas, TX; Cook County, IL; Long Beach, CA; Mamaroneck, NY; Chattanooga, TN; and Laredo, TX. He evaluated neighborhood based on minority concentration and a disadvantage index of neighborhood opportunity, which included data on poverty, unemployment, housing vacancy, violent crime rates, percentage of children in single-mother homes, and percentage of fourth graders not proficient in reading or math.

Mr. Reina found minority HCV households tended to live in majority minority neighborhoods. The average black voucher household lived in a census tract that was 86% minority in Long Beach, 74% in Cook County, 69% in Dallas, 65% in Chattanooga and 56% in Mamaroneck. Hispanic voucher households, on average, lived in tracts that were 84% minority in Long Beach, 62% in Dallas, 52% in Cook County, 50% in Mamaroneck, and 45% in Chattanooga.

SAFMRs appeared to result in improved neighborhood outcomes for black voucher households in all sites except Chattanooga, TN. Black HCV households lived in less disadvantaged neighborhoods after SAFMR implementation with an average 0.136 percentage-point reduction in the neighborhood disadvantage index. SAFMRs also resulted in black HCV households living in neighborhoods that had, on average, a 0.33 percentage-point lower share of minorities. Hispanic HCV households saw an average decrease of .039 percentage points in neighborhood disadvantage. The use of SAFMRs, however, did not result in black and Hispanic HCV households living in neighborhoods with a lower share of minorities relative to all HCV households.

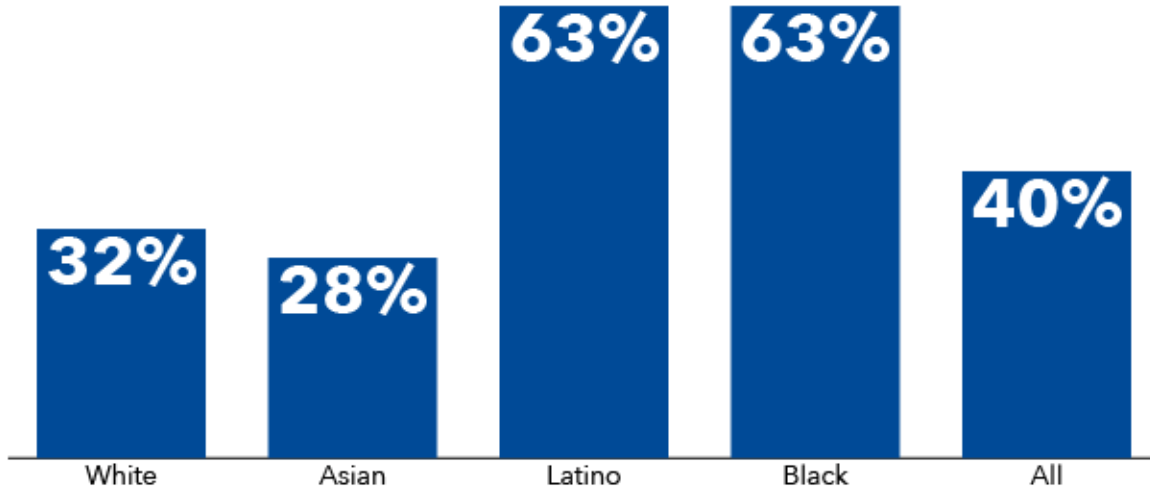
The findings suggest that use of SAFMRs results in important but marginal improvements in black voucher holders’ ability to access less minority-concentrated and less disadvantaged neighborhoods. A broader range of fair housing tools is needed to fully address racial segregation and access to opportunity.

“Do Small Area Fair Market Rents Reduce Racial Disparities in the Voucher Program?” is available at: <https://bit.ly/2UMMa4G>

Fact of the Week

Latinos and Blacks Have Disproportionately High Liquid-Asset Poverty Rates

2019 Prosperity Now Scorecard: Liquid-Asset Poverty Rate Among Households by Race



Note: Households experiencing "liquid-asset poverty" lack savings or assets easily converted to cash to sustain themselves at the poverty level for three months should an interruption to income occur.
Source: 2019 Prosperity Now Scorecard

Source: 2019 Prosperity Now Scorecard

From the Field

Austin City Council Proposes Citywide Rezoning to Expand Affordable Housing

Austin City Council Member Greg Casar proposed "[Affordability Unlocked](#)" on February 5, a draft resolution to create a citywide mandatory zoning bonus program for developments that provide increased affordable housing. The measure aims to maximize the use of public dollars by eliminating zoning barriers like density limitations and parking requirements and to create more affordable housing in areas with greater opportunities. The [Austin Strategic Planning Blueprint](#) released in 2017 and other reports have identified land-use restrictions as cumbersome barriers to developing more affordable housing. A [\\$250 million bond for affordable housing](#) (see [Memo, 10/22/18](#)) was passed by voters in November 2018, but some current zoning restrictions stand in the way of maximizing these dollars. (Council Member Casar will be speaking on a panel related to how communities can achieve housing development without displacement at the NLIHC's [2019 Housing Policy Forum: Seizing the Moment for Bold Solutions](#) in Washington, DC, March 27-29. Register at: <http://www.nlihcforum.org/>.)

Under "Affordability Unlocked," eligible projects for renters would include those with half or more of the total units averaging affordability at 60% of the area median income (AMI) or below and 20% of the total units to be affordable to 50% AMI or below. Eligible homeownership projects would be required to be affordable to 80% AMI or below. The proposed affordability period is a minimum of 40 years for rental projects and 99 years for homeownership projects. The target populations would include families – at least 25% of the homes must have

two or more bedrooms unless they are for older adults or are permanent supportive housing. The resolution includes language to protect current tenants in redevelopment projects, including retaining their units and their affordability once the projects are completed. The new zoning bonus program could be used in addition to any other existing affordable housing bonus program.

Austin's potential for affordable housing development is currently largely confined to a few segregated districts. The proposed resolution states the new zoning bonus program would not only serve more people through zoning allowances but also provide deeper-income affordability. Though some have expressed concern that the new homes will not reach extremely low-income households living at or below 30% of AMI, Austin's housing bonds prioritize projects with deeper levels of affordability by law. Councilman Casar says the proposal will benefit many developments that include permanent supportive housing and those targeting people with extremely low incomes. Some parts of the city already have density bonus programs, but many are voluntary and in areas that provide fewer opportunities for residents. Waiving zoning rules and restrictions will allow eligible projects to build more affordable housing, including in areas that have not traditionally included many affordable homes.

One example of how the program will increase the number of affordable homes is [Saigebrook Development's Aria Grand](#), which is currently under construction. This development consists of 60 affordable units. If it were not for parking and other requirements the project had to address to win zoning approval, 30 additional units could have been created for a total of 90 affordable homes.

Councilman Casar has so far received support from Council Members Sabino "Pio" Renteria, Delia Garza, and Natasha Harper-Madison. The City Council will vote on the measure on February 21. If passed, the city manager will amend the code, and the City Council will vote again for final approval. Councilman Casar is hopeful the measure will be successful and go into effect by summer.

Read the "Affordability Unlocked" draft resolution at: <https://bit.ly/2WQFd4v>

Read the *Austin Strategic Planning Blueprint* at: <https://bit.ly/2AdG18Y>

Read more about the \$250 million bond passed in November 2018 at: <https://bit.ly/2GwgHQI>

Register for the NLIHC 2019 Housing Policy Forum March 27-29 at: <http://www.nlihcforum.org/>

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of February 3

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of February 3.

- "The Green New Deal Ignores the Most Crucial Environmental, Economic, and Racial-Justice Issue of All," *Slate*, February 7 at: <https://bit.ly/2MVwbPd>
- "Chicago lawmaker wants to enable cities to set limits on rents," *Chicago Sun-Times*, February 7 at: <https://bit.ly/2RRovP3>
- "To build more affordable housing, tech looks to startup funding," *Curbed*, February 5 at: <https://bit.ly/2DYcDHj>

- “Lack of affordable housing is a suburban problem, too,” *The Columbus Dispatch*, February 4 at: <https://bit.ly/2GbpAjc>
-

NLIHC News

Job Opportunity: NLIHC Housing Advocacy Organizer

NLIHC seeks a well-qualified and talented housing advocacy organizer. As a member of the NLIHC field team, the housing advocacy organizer mobilizes NLIHC members and partners on federal policy advocacy based on NLIHC’s approved policy agenda, assists in the design and implementation of campaign field strategies, and conducts outreach activities in specific states. The organizer will spend significant time developing and retaining NLIHC membership, increasing endorsements for NLIHC campaigns, and mobilizing membership and state coalition partners on “calls to action” and other organizing efforts in support of providing decent, accessible, affordable homes to people with the lowest incomes.

The position requires strong written and oral communication skills, strong project management experience, and excellent electronic technology skills, including proficiency in the Microsoft Office suite, database management, and social media use; some familiarity with customer relationship management systems like Salesforce would be a plus. Priority consideration will be given to candidates with organizing experience mobilizing a community or constituent base at a national, state, or local level. Some knowledge of federal housing policy would be a plus. A bachelor’s degree is required. The position is based in Washington, DC. Some travel is required.

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

Interested candidates should email a cover letter with salary requirements, a resume, and two writing samples to Renee Willis, VP for field and communications, and Paul Kealey, COO, National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20005 at: rwillis@nlihc.org and pkealey@nlihc.org

Internship: NLIHC Seeks Field Intern for Winter/Spring 2019 Semester

NLIHC is accepting applications for its field internship position for the winter/spring 2019 semester. The NLIHC field intern assists our Field team in creating email campaigns focused on important federal policies, writing blogs, managing our database of membership records, mobilizing the field for the legislative efforts, and reaching out to new and existing members. Interns are highly valued and fully integrated into our staff work. We seek students passionate about social justice issues with excellent writing and interpersonal skills.

NLIHC interns are expected to work 25 hours a week beginning as soon as possible and finishing up in May. A modest stipend is provided. A cover letter, resume, and writing sample are required for consideration. In your cover letter, please specify the position(s) for which you are applying and that you are interested in the winter/spring 2019 semester.

Interested students should send their materials to: Joey Lindstrom, manager of field organizing, National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005 via email at: jlindstrom@nlihc.org

Where to Find Us – February 11

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel and other NLIHC staff will be speaking at the following events in the coming months:

- Just Cities Narrative Project Meeting, New Orleans, LA, Feb 11–15
- National Association of Regional Councils [2019 National Conference of Regions](#), Washington, DC, on February 12
- CHAPA Federal Housing Policy Forum, Boston, MA, on February 15
- DNC Poverty Council Meeting, Washington, DC, on February 15
- [NeighborWorks Training Institute](#), Cleveland, OH on February 18
- [Solutions for Individual Homeless Adults: A National Conference](#), National Alliance to End Homelessness, San Diego, CA, February 21–22
- Food Research & Action Center Annual Conference, Washington, DC, on February 25
- [HousingWorks Austin Annual Summit](#), Austin, TX, on March 1
- [Tennessee Housing Conference](#), Nashville, TN, March 6-7
- NCSHA Legislative Conference, Washington, DC, on March 11
- NCRC’s [2019 Just Economy Conference](#), Washington, DC, on March 12
- National Housing Law Project’s [Housing Justice Network National Meeting](#), New Orleans, LA, March 18-20
- Arkansas Fair Housing Commission 2019 Annual Fair Housing/Fair Lending Conference, Little Rock, AR, on April 19
- [Building Michigan Communities Conference](#), Lansing, MI, on April 30
- Rural Housing Summit, San Jose, CA, on November 7

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Lily Barrett, Policy Intern, x241
Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244
Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226
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Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
Ellen Errico, Creative Services Manager, x246
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232
Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317
Joseph Lindstrom, Manager, Field Organizing, x222
Lisa Marlow, Communications Specialist, x239
Sarah Mickelson, Senior Director of Public Policy, x228
Khara Norris, Director of Administration, x242
Catherine Reeves, Development Coordinator, x234
Brooke Schipporeit, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233
Elayne Weiss, Senior Policy Analyst, x243
Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Coordinator, x230

Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247
Gloria Yang, Communications & Graphic Design Intern, x250
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225