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## Opportunity Starts at Home

### Opportunity Starts at Home Campaign Launches Nationally

[\*Opportunity Starts at Home\*](#), a multi-sector housing campaign to meet the rental housing needs of the nation's lowest income people, launched at the NLIHC 2018 Housing Policy Forum: Building the Movement.

With financial support from the [Funders for Housing and Opportunity](#), NLIHC created this new multi-sector affordable homes campaign together with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Children's HealthWatch, Make Room, and the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and with a steering committee that includes Catholic Charities USA, Children's Defense Fund, Community Catalyst, Food Research and Action Center, NAACP, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Association of Community Health Centers, National Education Association, and UnidosUS.

Stakeholders from multiple sectors are increasingly recognizing the importance of affordable housing to their own priorities and goals. The *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign seeks to mobilize powerful new constituencies beyond housing to ensure that people with the lowest incomes have access to safe, decent, affordable housing in neighborhoods where everyone has equitable opportunities to thrive. By combining voices and expertise, leading organizations from these sectors are building a broad national movement that promotes federal policies that protect and expand affordable housing.

“The housing affordability problem has reached historic heights,” said Diane Yentel, NLIHC president and CEO. “Federal housing assistance is chronically underfunded and faces increasing threats. It's time for those who believe that everyone in America deserves a safe and affordable home to join in a movement that will ensure fundamental opportunities for people most in need.”

“The National Education Association is committed to the three million members and the 50 million students we serve and are pleased to support programs, campaigns and initiatives that are in support of students, educators and families,” said Lily Eskelsen Garcia, president of the National Education Association. “We understand and know firsthand the impacts affordable and stable housing have on student success. We also know that given the wages and income of some of our members, it impacts where they work as well as their own families.”

“The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is proud to join this multi-sector housing campaign as it aligns with our goal of economic equality in housing,” said Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP. “The research is increasingly clear that housing affects all aspects of a quality life; therefore, federal housing policy is very important for the people we serve. We find that threats to federal housing assistance are unprecedented and this campaign will indeed shed a brighter light on the needs of all people.”

“A stable, affordable home is a prescription for good health,” said Dr. Megan Sandel, principal investigator with Children's HealthWatch. “Children's HealthWatch is excited to join our colleagues on the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign to identify solutions that provide access to safe, decent, affordable housing in neighborhoods where everyone has equitable opportunities to thrive.”

Learn more about the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign at: [www.opportunityhome.org](http://www.opportunityhome.org) and be sure to follow us on Twitter: @OppStartsatHome #OpportunityStartsatHome

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## Take Action

### Two Ways You Can Build on Recent Housing Advocacy Successes for FY19

Over the last year, advocates throughout the country urged members of Congress not only to reject President Trump's call to slash affordable housing investments, but to provide much-needed increases in funding. As a result, advocates, resident leaders and Congressional champions achieved a 10% increase in federal investments in HUD's programs in FY18 - funding that will directly translate into more affordable homes for the lowest income people.

This is an important step forward - but there is still much more to do. Let's build on the momentum of this year's funding victory to carry it into the next. President Trump [continues to propose huge cuts](#) to housing benefits that help struggling seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, and other populations keep roofs over their heads.

Here are key two ways you can build on the FY18 success:

First, help advocate for affordable housing investments by signing onto a [national letter](#) urging Congress to provide the highest level of funding possible. Last year, more than 3,400 other national, state, and local organizations and governments signed a letter resulting in this year's 10% increase to critical HUD programs.

Second, plan an event for the [Our Homes, Our Voices National Housing Week of Action](#), taking place May 1-8. Last year, NLIHC members, national and state partners, mayors and other elected officials, and concerned individuals across the country hosted more than 60 rallies, press conferences, letter writing campaigns, and other events to defeat harmful federal affordable housing funding cuts and to tell members of Congress why affordable housing matters to our communities. We hope more advocates will join us this year and build on last year's successes by bringing more attention to the severe shortage of homes affordable to the lowest income people and to urge increased investments in proven solutions.

Sign onto the national letter before the April 13 deadline at: <https://bit.ly/2ocUZqa>

Learn more about the *Our Homes, Our Voices* National Housing Week of Action and sign up to participate at: <https://www.ourhomes-ourvoices.org/>

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## Our Homes, Our Voices

### Sign Up Today to Participate “*Our Homes, Our Voices*” National Housing Week of Action, May 1-8

[Sign up today](#) to take action for affordable housing during the nationwide “*Our Homes, Our Voices*” National Housing Week of Action, May 1-8! Go to the [Our Homes, Our Voices webpage](#) to view a video recap of highlights from the 2017 Housing Week of Action campaign, which included more than 60 events in communities across the country July 22-29, 2017. The website also features fact sheets, guides on how to get involved, a list of confirmed local events, T-shirts and other merchandise you can use during your campaign, downloadable posters, and other resources.

In the coming days an array of new planned events and activities will be added to the website, including ones in Allentown, PA; Cambridge, MA; Charlottesville, VA; Cleveland, OH; Dayton, OH; Detroit, MI; Dover, DE;

Eaton, OH; Miami, FL; Newton, MA; Palm Springs, CA; Philadelphia, PA; and Salt Lake City, UT. Additional Week of Action statewide events are in the early stages of planning in Alabama, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Utah, Virginia, and Washington state. Events and activities planned for the week include letter-writing campaigns to elected officials, meal- and story-sharing events, in-home community discussions, subsidized housing site visits, press events, rallies, meetings with elected officials, nonpartisan voter registration drives, and a special feature on public-access television.

For more information on the *Our Homes, Our Voices* campaign, visit: <https://www.ourhomes-ourvoices.org/>

Follow *Our Homes, Our Voices* campaign on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/OurHomesVoices>

Follow *Our Homes Our Voices* campaign on Facebook at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/OurHomesOurVoices/>

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## **Disaster Housing Recovery**

### **Advocacy Groups Call for Better Opportunities for Public Input to Puerto Rico's Disaster Recovery Action Plan**

NLIHC, other national advocates, and local organizations in Puerto Rico sent a [letter](#) on March 29 to Puerto Rico Governor Rosselló and HUD Secretary Ben Carson expressing their concern about the lack of opportunity for community input on long-term disaster recovery plans. HUD's notice allocating the Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) funding requires states to ensure communities have opportunities to provide input and comment on recovery plans, but preliminary public-comment sessions held in Puerto Rico fell short of complying with that requirement.

The letter states, "Public stakeholders were not afforded a meaningful opportunity to consult with Puerto Rican officials about their specific needs and perspectives on long-term recovery." Many community leaders were unaware of the March hearings, and those who were able to attend and speak were given far less time than government officials. NLIHC and other groups urge HUD and the Puerto Rican government to provide additional opportunities for public consultation to ensure communities have meaningful input regarding long-term disaster recovery plans.

Read the letter in full at: <https://bit.ly/2J54IZ6>

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## **Additional Updates on Disaster Housing Recovery – April 2**

The following is a review of additional housing recovery developments related to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and the California wildfires since last week's *Memo to Members and Partners* (for the article in last week's *Memo*, see [3/26](#)). NLIHC also posts this information at our [On the Home Front](#) blog.

### **General Updates**

Free legal assistance is available for all disaster survivors in California, Florida, Puerto Rico, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands through the Disaster Legal Services of the American Bar Association's Young Lawyers division. The [hotline](#) can help individuals appeal FEMA denials, make insurance claims, replace legal documents, receive counseling on landlord-tenant issues, and more.

## Hurricane Harvey

### FEMA

By law, FEMA must require proof of ownership and occupancy from disaster survivors who apply for federal assistance to help with repairs to their damaged homes. Applicants without a title, deed, or other official documentation have been denied FEMA assistance even when generations have lived on a property. FEMA added Texas' [Affidavits of Facts Concerning Identity of Heirs](#) to its list of *Accepted Ownership Documents* required for proof of ownership and occupancy from disaster survivors who apply for federal assistance. In the state of Texas, title bestows immediately upon death of the ancestor or testator, regardless of the existence of a will, and estates pass under state laws of descent and distribution. FEMA has agreed to reprocess any of Lone Star Legal Aid's clients who were denied assistance relative to ownership but had affidavits of heirship, even those dated after Harvey struck. Instructions for accepting these affidavits will be issued to FEMA managers and their inspectors going forward.

### Local Perspectives

In a complaint filed in the U.S. District Court earlier this month, Texas Housers [included](#) evidence that the City of Houston "has created and maintains a separate and unequal storm water system that results in disproportionate and preventable flooding of African-American and Latino neighborhoods." Texas Housers found that 88% of open-ditch drainage is in predominately African-American neighborhoods. According to a 2014 study conducted by the city, nearly half of open drainage ditches could not provide adequate protection from flooding even in modest storms. Texas Housers' lawsuit against HUD urges the agency to force Houston to address this and other issues before allocating Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding.

The Kaiser Family Foundation and the Episcopal Health Foundation released a [report](#) detailing how Hurricane Harvey affected the lives of migrants/immigrants along the Texas Gulf Coast. Immigrants have more precarious financial and social circumstances than native-born residents, with 70% of immigrants saying they have little to no support system and more than half living well below the federal poverty level. Immigrant residents reported higher rates of loss of income or employment and were generally less likely to seek help following the storm.

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## HUD

### Rental Assistance Demonstration Assessed by Government Accountability Office

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) examined the public housing component of the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) at the request of Ranking Member of the House Committee on Financial Services Maxine Waters (D-CA). The report, [Rental Assistance Demonstration: HUD Needs to Take Action to Improve Metrics and Ongoing Oversight](#), examines how RAD conversions are affecting residents, the extent to which RAD is designed to help preserve the long-term affordability of units, HUD's assessment of the physical and financial outcomes of RAD conversions, and challenges public housing agencies (PHAs) face in implementing RAD.

Congress created RAD in FY12 as a demonstration to test whether PHAs could leverage Section 8 rental assistance contracts to raise private debt and equity to make public housing capital improvements and thereby preserve low income housing. RAD has two components. The first, the subject of the GAO study, initially allowed up to 60,000 public housing units to be converted from public housing capital and operating assistance to Section 8 project-based vouchers (PBVs) or to Section 8 project-based rental assistance (PBRA). Congress

has increased the unit cap three times despite the absence of an evaluation of the impact of this “demonstration” on residents. The cap was recently raised to 455,000 units.

Resident leaders and advocates, including NLIHC, engaged significantly with HUD during the drafting of RAD provisions. Because residents and advocates were keenly aware of the many problems residents encountered under the HOPE VI program, they convinced HUD to include strong resident protections in RAD. Key resident protections in the RAD statute and implementing Notice include no displacement, the right to return, no-rescreening, only good-cause eviction, rent payments capped at 30% of a household’s income, long-term affordability, one-for-one replacement, continuation of public housing’s contributions of \$25 per unit for resident participation, strong resident organizing provisions, maintenance of public housing’s grievance procedures, and avoidance of privatization.

## **The Impact of RAD on Residents**

This *Memo* article focuses on the first topic of the GAO’s examination, the impact of RAD on residents so far. The GAO concluded:

“HUD has not yet developed monitoring procedures for certain resident safeguards under the RAD program. RAD requirements include those intended to ensure that residents whose units are converted through RAD:

- Are informed about the conversion process;
- Can continue to live in a converted property following RAD conversion;
- Are afforded certain protections carried over from the public housing program; and
- Are afforded a phase-in of any rent increases under Section 8 program requirements.”

It was not until October 2017 that HUD developed and started implementing procedures that require owners to provide data supporting compliance with the resident right-to-return requirements. Regarding relocation, according to the GAO, HUD is only now developing standard operating procedures to review each conversion for compliance with RAD relocation provisions. HUD is also only now developing guidance in other areas like protocols regarding resident notification and how residents’ comments are addressed through conversion planning. The National Housing Law Project (NHLP) has noted that HUD had not been consistently collecting required documentation on “house rules,” which describe the conditions and procedures for evicting residents and terminating assistance at RAD PBRA properties (see *Memo*, [10/23/17](#)). As a result of NHLP’s advocacy, HUD is now implementing additional legal review procedures to ensure compliance with RAD’s resident eviction and grievance procedural rights requirements.

The GAO adds that HUD has not yet developed separate monitoring procedures for other resident safeguards like the phase-in of tenant rent increases, resident representation through tenant organizations, and choice mobility requirements.

## **Resident Focus Groups**

The GAO conducted interviews with resident focus groups in the eight PHAs it visited. The GAO reports that residents in 7 of 14 focus groups indicated that the information they received about RAD conversion from their PHAs was not helpful, and residents in only 5 of 14 focus groups found the information useful. Residents indicated that the information provided was not always clear, and that the PHA and management were not always forthcoming with information about the changes that RAD would bring. This is consistent with feedback NLIHC received in the early years of RAD implementation, as well as with recent NHLP observations (see *Memo*, [10/23/17](#)).



According to the GAO, residents in 5 of 14 focus groups indicated that they were not given the opportunity to provide input into proposed RAD changes, while residents in 6 of 14 groups indicated that their concerns were not addressed and their suggestions were not incorporated.

In addition, residents described relocation problems. For example, problems regarding the location of temporary units was expressed by 3 of 14 groups, and the timing of relocation or amount of notice given was identified by 7 of 14 focus groups.

Residents in 7 of 14 focus groups noted improved condition and appearance of individual units, and 6 of 14 groups reported improved condition and appearance of their development overall. Residents in other focus groups, however, identified problems like security concerns (10 of 14 focus groups); poor quality renovations (6 of 14 focus groups); decreased amenities, like the removal of common areas or in-unit washing machines (8 of 14 focus groups); and issues with property management (11 of 14 focus groups), such as new managers or owners not being responsive to resident needs or concerns.

### **HUD Has Not Systematically Tracked or Analyzed Household Data**

The GAO reports that HUD does not track changes in key information about residents before and after conversion, like changes in rent, relocation, or displacement. HUD's public housing, voucher, and PBRA databases are not designed to track the impact of RAD conversions on residents, and HUD is unable to electronically link household information submitted before a RAD conversion to information submitted after the conversion.

Starting in November 2016, owners of RAD-converted properties were required to maintain resident logs containing household information. The information to be entered into the logs includes race and ethnicity, household size, and whether a member of the household has a disability. Owners must also track resident status throughout the relocation process, including whether the resident has moved elsewhere temporarily, permanently relocated, or returned, or whether the resident was evicted. Only now is HUD developing procedures for limited review of compliance with the resident log requirement at 90 RAD projects.

The GAO concludes, "Without a comprehensive review of household information, one based on information in HUD data systems as well as resident logs, HUD cannot reasonably assess the effects of ongoing and completed RAD conversions on residents and compliance with resident safeguards."

### **A Sizable Percentage of RAD Projects Do Not Involve Rehabilitation or New Construction**

The GAO report indicates without apparent concern that 27% of all closed (completed) RAD conversions and 36% of all projects currently undergoing RAD conversion do not entail rehabilitation or new construction. HUD explains that such projects allow PHAs to be in a better position to access additional capital sometime in the future.

The RAD statute states that the purpose of the demonstration is to preserve and improve public housing. In addition, the first RAD implementation Notice and subsequent revisions have all stated that the main purpose of RAD is to address immediate and long-term capital needs through rehabilitation or new construction. The latest Notice indicates that HUD expects most projects undergoing conversion to do at least some rehabilitation or renovation.

### **GAO Conclusions**

The GAO concluded that "demonstrating the feasibility of RAD is contingent on collecting and assessing quality information about the converted projects."



In addition, “HUD’s focus on the conversion process itself (and less on its results), as well as limitations in HUD’s data, have contributed to limited monitoring by HUD. Specifically, by not developing and implementing monitoring procedures to assess the effect of RAD on residents, HUD cannot ensure compliance with resident safeguards. Further, HUD collects and maintains household data for the public housing and Section 8 programs, yet it does not systematically use this information to ensure that resident safeguards are in place. Finally, HUD could benefit from additional procedures to assess RAD properties for risks to long-term preservation in order to be able to respond to property default or foreclosure.”

The GAO report is at: <https://bit.ly/2E03rii>

A media release from Ranking Member Maxine Waters is at: <https://bit.ly/2pNL3E4>

The letter sent by the National Housing Law Project to HUD is at: <https://bit.ly/2jbK511> and an NLIHC summary of that letter is at: <https://bit.ly/2GBGtDi>

More about RAD is available on page 4-15 of NLIHC’s 2018 *Advocates’ Guide* at: <https://bit.ly/2I8vK0m>

NHLP has more information about RAD on its [website](#).

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## **HUD Issues Notice Regarding Refinancing Section 202 Housing for the Elderly**

HUD’s Office of Multifamily Housing Programs issued [Notice H 2018-02](#), providing guidance to owners of pre-1974 Section 202 Direct Loan properties serving the elderly that have the option of refinancing to make capital improvements and/or to reduce the interest rate. To prevent displacement of elderly residents, owners may seek Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs) or Senior Preservation Rental Assistance Contracts (SPRACs).

The Notice clarifies that public housing agencies (PHAs) may use TPVs as project-based vouchers (PBVs), as well as regular tenant-based vouchers. Using TPVs as PBVs will help to preserve a refinanced property as affordable. The FY17 Appropriations Act allows refinanced pre-1974 Section 202 properties to directly receive project-based assistance. The clarification in Notice H 2018-02 is needed because [Notice H 2013-17](#) governing refinancing does not provide clear guidance regarding the PBV option.

The FY17 Appropriations Act also provided \$10 million to use either for Section 202 capital advances to develop new housing for the elderly with project rental assistance contracts, and/or to provide SPRACs to preserve refinanced pre-1974 Section 202 Direct Loan projects that do not have rent subsidies. The Notice states that HUD will use up to \$5 million for SPRACs for any units that cannot be covered under a PBV Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract. Owners must demonstrate that proposed SPRAC units could not be covered by a PBV HAP contract, and they must commit to serving very low income elderly residents upon unit turnover. Initial SPRAC rents will be based on the lesser of comparable market rents or 150% of the fair market rent. SPRACs have a 20-year term.

More information about Section 202 is on page 4-29 of NLIHC’s 2018 *Advocates’ Guide* at: <https://bit.ly/2GiF9lp>

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## **HUD Issues Amended Demolition/Disposition Notice**

HUD posted [Notice PIH 2018-04](#), explaining the requirements public housing agencies (PHAs) must follow when applying for HUD approval to demolish and/or dispose of public housing property under Section 18 of the

Housing Act of 1937. This Notice replaces [Notice PIH 2012-07](#), written as a result of persistent efforts by advocates. The 2012 Notice purposely served as a reminder to residents, the public, and PHAs, of PHAs' obligations regarding resident involvement and the role of the PHA Plan under demolition/disposition and PHA Plan regulations. The 2018 Notice significantly downplays the role of resident consultation, the PHA Plan, and other resident-oriented features. Notice PIH 2018-04 follows HUD's recent decision not to implement resident-oriented protections proposed in improvements to the demolition/disposition regulations (see *Memo*, [10/20/14, 1/8](#)). An extended summary and analysis of Notice PIH 2018-04 is at: <https://bit.ly/2GmteDg>

Throughout 2010, the Housing Justice Network (comprised of legal services attorneys and other advocates, including NLIHC) worked on a draft letter to HUD outlining features of the demolition/disposition regulations that needed to be amended in order to address the many problems public housing residents had encountered over the years. At a meeting with HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing (PIH) Sandra Henriquez on November 16, 2010, the NLIHC Board of Directors raised the issue of public housing demolition and disposition. In response, PIH officials had a series of meetings and calls with HJN advocates.

One outcome of these meetings was Notice PIH 2012-7, which NLIHC and HJN considered to be helpful because it emphasized the requirements for genuine resident consultation and clearly stated that demolition/disposition applications must be complete in order for resident involvement to be meaningful (see *Memo*, [2/3/12](#)).

A second outcome was publication of long-awaited proposed improvements to the demolition/disposition regulations on October 16, 2014 (see *Memo*, [10/20/14](#)). PIH stated that the purpose of the proposed rule was to increase oversight of the demolition and disposition of public housing by requiring PHAs to submit more detailed justifications. The rule would also clarify and provide more detail related to existing requirements like resident consultation and relocation, as well as fair housing and civil rights compliance. Unfortunately, HUD recently decided not to finalize the improved demolition/disposition regulations that could have provided residents greater protections (see *Memo*, [1/8](#)).

### **Role of Resident Consultation Significantly Downplayed by the New Notice**

The 2018 Notice only contains five and a half lines regarding resident consultation, compared to a full page in the 2012 Notice. The 2018 Notice no longer reminds the reader that the PHA Plan regulations require a public hearing, a comment period, consultation with the Resident Advisory Board (RAB), and reasonable outreach to encourage broad public participation in the public hearing. The demolition/disposition regulations also require applications to undergo a separate resident participation process that is in addition to the PHA Plan process. Both Notices indicate that applications are subject to consultation with residents in a project a PHA proposes to demolish or sell, resident organizations of affected developments, PHA-wide resident organizations, and the RAB.

The 2018 Notice no longer includes text:

- Stating that PHAs should provide a copy of the application to residents and resident groups, post the application on its website, and/or make application materials available for review at the PHA's central office.
- Stating that PHAs should a) inform residents and resident groups of their right to submit written comments about the application, b) inform residents that the PHA will respond to their comments in writing, and then c) submit their comments and the PHA's written responses to HUD as part of the application. The 2012 Notice also stated that PHAs should consult residents and resident groups regarding the relocation plan, if one was needed.

- Stating that residents and members of the public may submit comments about a proposed application directly to HUD’s Special Applications Center (SAC), which decides whether to approve applications for demolition and/or disposition.
- Explaining resident consultation regarding disposition of public housing that would be followed by the development of new public housing. The 2012 Notice required the PHA to inform residents of the number and affordability of public housing units and other affordable units to be developed, the number of bedrooms per unit, the screening and application requirements for the new units, the ownership structure of the units, any opportunity to return, or other occupancy preferences for displaced residents.

The 2018 Notice does have an enhanced section on accessible resident consultation, stating that priority must be given to meeting locations on the site of the public housing development, even if doing so requires multiple meetings with smaller groups of residents.

### **Role of the PHA Plan Significantly Downplayed by the New Notice**

The 2018 Notice only contains three lines, while the 2012 Notice had a three-paragraph section on the first page, stressing the importance of the PHA Plan. The 2012 Notice:

- Required a description of public housing that a PHA has applied or will apply for demolition or disposition approval, along with a timetable.
- Elaborated on Moving to Work Demonstration (MTW) agencies’ responsibilities.
- Stated three times that HUD would not process or approve an application without evidence that the PHA had complied with all PHA Plan requirements.

### **Other Important Resident-Oriented Provisions Deleted from the New Notice**

The 2018 Notice no longer clearly states that PHAs are prohibited from relocating residents or demolishing or disposing units before receiving HUD approval. The 2012 Notice was written in response to residents and advocates informing HUD of residents being relocated before an application was approved, and of PHAs demolishing properties before receiving HUD approval, even though the regulations prohibit such actions. In addition, the 2018 Notice no longer clearly declares that PHAs cannot point to high vacancy rates as a sole justification for judging a public housing development to be “obsolete,” nor does it state that HUD will review allegations that there are inconsistencies with a PHA’s certifications of obsolescence.

### **The Process for Substantially Incomplete Applications Significantly Diluted**

In response to advocates’ complaints about incomplete applications presented for public comment or even sent to HUD, the 2012 Notice stated, “Prior to submitting an application, PHAs ensure the application is complete with all information and documentation. . . . The SAC will not process an application found to be incomplete or deficient on a substantial item. . . .” The 2018 Notice simply notes “SAC only reviews complete SAC applications.”

According to the 2012 Notice, HUD terminated its review if an application was substantially incomplete or deficient. In addition, HUD “rejected” such an application and rendered the application “inactive.” After an application was rejected, HUD would not allow a PHA to submit missing items or correct deficiencies. A PHA could, however, submit a new application for the same demolition or disposition. Under the 2018 Notice, if an application is substantially incomplete or deficient, HUD will merely return the application and inform the PHA of the deficiencies. The value of the formal rejection and “stop work” process of the 2012 Notice was to serve as a disincentive to PHAs providing residents and HUD with incomplete applications for review and comment. The 2018 Notice does, however, remind PHAs that they must consult with residents and resident groups before re-submitting an application.

Both Notices reflect the regulations indicating that HUD may disapprove an application if it is clearly inconsistent with the PHA Plan and/or any information or data available to, or requested by, HUD, or if the application was not developed in consultation with residents or resident groups.

### **A New Provision Pertaining to Rental Assistance Demonstration**

The 2018 Notice introduces a new provision allowing a PHA to propose disposition using comprehensive rehabilitation or replacement of public housing through the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). This provision requires a PHA to convert at least 75% of a development's units to either Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs) or Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA), and to replace the units proposed for disposition (up to 25% of the units in the development) with PBVs. The RAD and PBV units must be in a newly constructed or substantially rehabilitated property that does not use 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

A preliminary analysis by the National Housing Law Project (NHLP) indicates that because the initial contract rents for RAD-converting public housing units are based on the public housing contract rent, having up to 25% of the units at the property with a higher PBV market rent would likely provide the PHA/owner more money. NHLP is concerned that RAD residents could be treated differently (different leases, house rules, grievance procedures, rents, etc.) than the non-RAD PBV residents. It would be very important for advocates to secure an upfront commitment from the PHA/owner (perhaps in the ground lease, if applicable) that all residents at these properties will be subject to the same leases, house rules, rents, etc.

### **Tenant Protection Vouchers**

The 2018 Notice adds a new section describing how PHAs must apply to HUD to obtain Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs). HUD does not automatically award TPVs to a PHA when SAC approves a demolition and/or disposition application. A PHA must apply to a different office within PIH separately for TPVs following a PIH funding Notice for the voucher program. The current voucher funding Notice is PIH 2017-10 (see *Memo*, [7/3/17](#)). PIH Notice 2017-10 states that the maximum number of TPVs will be based on the number of public housing units occupied at the time the demolition/disposition application is approved.

### **The Civil Rights Section is Significantly Augmented**

The 2018 Notice greatly expands upon civil rights requirements, going beyond a single paragraph in the 2012 Notice to a full page. Information about affirmatively furthering fair housing is addressed in this section, instructing PHAs that they must assess how demolition and/or disposition impacts fair housing choice and access to opportunity. The 2018 Notice reminds PHAs that demolition and/or disposition “should generally improve fair housing opportunities, such as offering residents greater housing choice through Housing Choice Vouchers in a geographic mobility program or placing low income housing units in areas of higher opportunity.”

NLIHC's extended summary and analysis of Notice PIH 2018-04 is at: <https://bit.ly/2GmteDg>

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### **HUD Provides Guidance for PHAs with Voucher Shortfalls**

HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) issued [Notice PIH 2018-05](#) providing guidance regarding public housing agency (PHA) eligibility in FY18 for shortfall funding to prevent terminating rental assistance for households because the PHA has insufficient funds. When drafting the Notice, PIH could not be certain whether there would be yet another Continuing Resolution (CR) or a full appropriations act, and whether either would have provided for shortfall funding. The Notice was issued in the morning of March 23, hours prior to

the president signing the FY18 Appropriations Act – which does make shortfall funding one of four options of potential uses under a \$75 million set-aside.

The PIH Shortfall Prevention Team (SPV) and Field Office staff are identifying PHAs at risk of shortfalls. To receive shortfall funding, a PHA must stop issuing vouchers to applicants, not absorb portability vouchers from other PHAs, and not provide a tenant-based voucher to a household that wants to voluntarily move from a project-based voucher (PBV) unit.

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## **Fair Housing**

### **National Fair Housing Alliance Sues Facebook**

The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and three of its member organizations filed a lawsuit against Facebook, Inc. in federal court in New York City, alleging that Facebook’s advertising platform enables landlords and real estate brokers to exclude families with children, women, and other protected classes of people from receiving housing ads. Facebook customizes the audience for its millions of advertisers based on its personalized user data. After being warned repeatedly about its discriminatory advertising practices, Facebook continues to offer this functionality allowing landlords to deny people access to rental housing and real estate sales ads because of their sex, family status, and disabilities.

The lawsuit alleges that Facebook has created pre-populated lists that make it possible for housing advertisers to exclude home seekers from viewing or receiving rental or sales ads because of protected characteristics, including family status and sex. In addition, Facebook provides housing advertisers with the ability to exclude certain “interest” categories from receiving ads that are disability-based (e.g., people who are interested in homes for disabled veterans or parking permits for disabled individuals) or national origin-based (e.g., people who are interested in English as a second language).

In addition to NFHA, the plaintiffs are the Fair Housing Justice Center (FHJC) based in New York City; Housing Opportunities Project for Excellence, Inc. (HOPE) in Miami, FL; and the Fair Housing Council of Greater San Antonio (FHCGSA).

A copy of the complaint is at: <https://bit.ly/2pPRxT6>

An NFHA media release is at: <https://bit.ly/2GkRARO>

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## **Research**

### **Study Finds Disparities Across LIHTC Neighborhoods**

An article by Ingrid Gould Ellen, Keren Mertens Horn, and Yiwen Kuai in *Housing Policy Debate*, “Gateway to Opportunity? Disparities in Neighborhood Conditions Among Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Residents,” finds that LIHTC renters are typically located in neighborhoods with better transit access, but higher poverty rates, weaker labor market engagement, and lower school proficiency than other renters. LIHTC renters with incomes below the poverty rate and those who are Hispanic or black have even less access to high opportunity neighborhoods than LIHTC renters with incomes above the poverty line or who are white. The authors recommend that policymakers adopt policies that encourage a balanced distribution of LIHTC developments across neighborhoods and ensure equal access to these developments.

LIHTC is the largest place-based housing subsidy in the U.S. LIHTC-supported developments must set aside at least 20% of their rental units for households whose incomes are at or below 50% of the area median income (AMI) or 40% of their rental units for households whose incomes are at or below 60% of AMI (prior to the 2018 omnibus spending bill, which provided an income-averaging option that would enable LIHTC projects to serve more lower income households).

The average LIHTC rental unit is in a neighborhood with a poverty rate six percentage points higher than the neighborhood of an average rental unit in general. Compared to the typical renter, the average LIHTC renter lives near a school with a nine-percentile-points lower performance and in a neighborhood with a thirteen-percentile-points lower labor-market engagement. The average LIHTC renter, however, lives in a neighborhood with a one-percentile-point lower transportation cost.

The average LIHTC tenant with income below the poverty line lives in a neighborhood with a poverty rate three percentage points higher than the average non-poverty LIHTC tenant. LIHTC tenants with below-poverty-level incomes are also more likely to be in neighborhoods of lower school proficiency (by three percentiles), worse environmental quality (by one percentile), and lower labor market engagement (by five percentiles) relative to LIHTC tenants with above-poverty incomes.

After controlling for poverty status, black and Hispanic LIHTC tenants live in neighborhoods with higher poverty rates than non-Hispanic white LIHTC tenants. Black and Hispanic LIHTC tenants also are more likely to live in neighborhoods that are more disadvantaged in terms of school proficiency, environmental quality, and labor market engagement, but that offer lower transportation costs. Racial disparities among LIHTC residents are even more pronounced in metropolitan areas with above-median levels of segregation.

The authors suggest that attention be paid not only to the geographic distribution of LIHTC developments, but also to the tenant selection process implemented at LIHTC properties. It should be asked, for example, whether LIHTC property managers in neighborhoods of higher opportunity require higher credit scores than necessary or whether they find ways to discourage potential renters with rental assistance. The authors also recommend that policymakers consider requiring developers to adopt more affirmative marketing plans that target and attract a more diverse range of households to LIHTC developments in higher opportunity neighborhoods.

“Gateway to Opportunity? Disparities in Neighborhood Conditions Among Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Residents” is available at: <https://bit.ly/2GhNyK8>

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## **HUD Releases New Data on Whom LIHTC Program Serves**

HUD released *Understanding Whom the LIHTC Program Serves: Data on Tenants in LIHTC Units as of December 31, 2015*. The report provides information on the income, race, disability status, and household composition of tenants living in Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)-assisted housing.

Of the properties for which data were reported, the median annual income of LIHTC households was \$17,470. Approximately 44.5% of LIHTC households were extremely low income households, with incomes at or below 30% the Area Median Gross Income (AMGI). The percentage of LIHTC households who were extremely low income ranged from 18.5% in Florida to 63.4% in Massachusetts. Six states did not provide adequate data to calculate the percentage of extremely low income households served. Nearly 38% of LIHTC households received some form of additional rental assistance to help them meet their rental costs.

The report indicates that 36.6% of LIHTC households spent more than 30% of their income on rent, making them housing cost-burdened, and 8.6% of LIHTC households spent more than 50%, making them severely

housing cost-burdened. More than 2% of LIHTC households had no annual household income, so cost burdens were not calculated.

The report also presents data on the race and ethnicity of heads of households. Under fair housing laws, however, tenants are not required to share this information. Of the data collected, 21.2% heads of household were non-Hispanic white, 21.5% were non-Hispanic black or African American, and 2.5% were Asian American. Approximately 11.4% of heads of households were Hispanic.

More than 26% of LIHTC households had at least one member 62 years of age or older, 28.7% of households included at least one child under the age of 18, and 9.5% included at least one person with a disability.

*Understanding Whom the LIHTC Program Serves: Tenants in LIHTC Units as of December 31, 2015* is available at: <https://bit.ly/2pHaZCl>

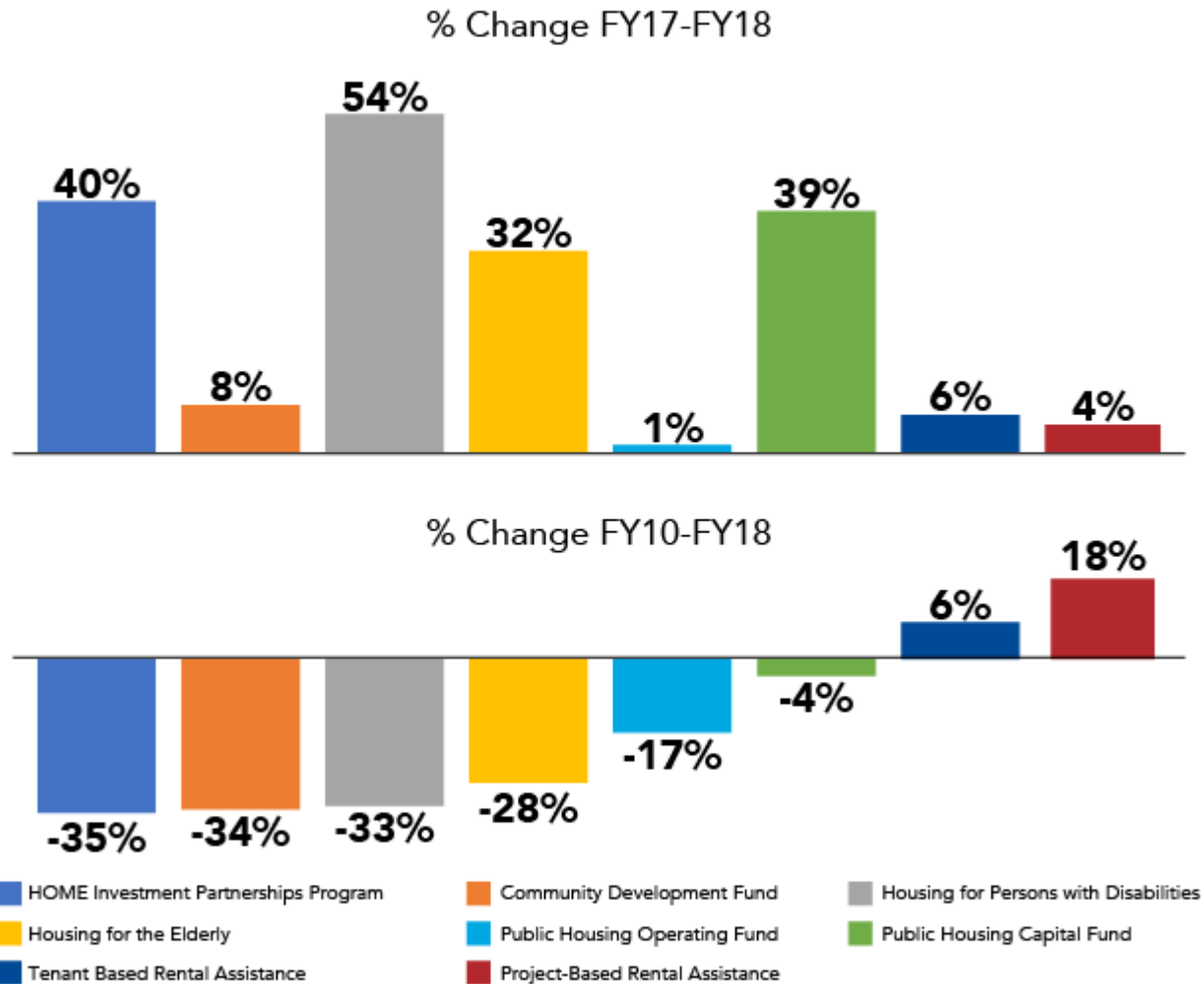
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## Fact of the Week

### Despite Strong Gains in FY18, Most HUD Programs Have Lost Ground since FY10

#### Changes in Enacted Funding Levels for Key HUD Programs: Recent Gains and Long Term Challenges



Note: Adjusted for inflation.

Source: NLIHC analysis of federal appropriations enacted by Congress

## From the Field

### Indiana General Assembly Session Ends with Mix of Wins and Setbacks for Housing Advocates

The Indiana General Assembly adjourned for the year on March 14, with a mix of victories and setbacks for housing advocates.

Like many states, Indiana alternates the length of its legislative sessions each year, with a longer four-month session taking place during odd-numbered years when state legislators must pass a state budget. The shorter session in non-budget years, like 2018, limits the scope of what can be accomplished. The shorter nature of the 2018 session, however, did not inhibit Prosperity Indiana, an NLIHC state partner, from advocating for a strong legislative agenda.

A notable victory of this legislative session was the repeal of a statewide ban on people with criminal records receiving SNAP benefits. The bill cleared the General Assembly as SB 11 and HB 1317, passing both chambers with wide margins, even with a supermajority of Republicans in both the State House and Senate.

Another victory came in the form of HB 1314, which requires the state board of education to study the educational outcomes of youth living in foster care or experiencing homelessness and to publish an annual report on its findings. HB 1314 also cleared both chambers of the General Assembly with broad support and became law on March 21. Prosperity Indiana notes that advocates in the state currently do not have access to concrete data on this topic, and anticipates the new law will lead to stronger advocacy and policymaking.

The State Senate visited the question of land banks in SB 422, introduced by State Senator Vaneta Becker (R-Evansville). Land banks have been authorized in Indiana but have never received funding, prohibiting advocates and community development organizations from using the tool. SB 422 would have provided funding for land banks through a portion of county document recording and filing fees, but the proposal died in committee.

A top priority for Prosperity Indiana has been to clarify the tax-exemption status of nonprofit affordable housing properties and organizations. Current Indiana law is unclear on this matter, leading to a patchwork of differing tax liabilities for nonprofit housing developers and owners across the state's 92 counties. Prosperity Indiana sought a clear and simple definition that standardizes the types of homes and organizations qualifying for tax-exempt status. State Senators Douglas Eckerty (R-Muncie) and Rick Niemeyer (R-Lowell) introduced SB 213 to do so. The bill passed the full Senate with broad support but then died in the House without a committee hearing.

Prosperity Indiana also sought to curb the growth of predatory payday lending by supporting a bill to limit the interest charged for payday loans in the state to 36%. Thirty-six percent is the interest-rate limit the U.S. Department of Defense has secured for active duty members of the military, and 15 states have required that rate limit as well. As in all states, predatory lending in Indiana disproportionately impacts low income and people of color. Prosperity Indiana conducted statewide polling that revealed 88% support for a 36% interest rate cap on new loans, research it used to advocate for the bill. State Senators Greg Walker (R-Columbus), John Ruckelshaus (R-Indianapolis), and Eddie Melton (D-Merrillville) introduced SB 325 to establish the 36% interest rate cap, but the bill failed to pass out of committee.

Simultaneously, Prosperity Indiana worked to defeat HB 1319, which would allow for the creation of a new loan product with interest rates up to 200% APR. The bill, introduced by State Representative Martin Carbaugh (R-Fort Wayne), narrowly passed the House by a vote of 53-41, but was then voted down in committee in the Senate.

Prosperity Indiana allied with a broad coalition of organizations in the state to advance hate crimes protection legislation, which entered the Senate as SB 418, authored by State Senators Susan Glick (R-LaGrange), John Ruckelshaus (R-Indianapolis), and Mike Bohacek (R-Michiana Shores). Indiana is one of very few states without hate crimes protection laws on the books. SB 418 was not taken up for a vote in committee.

More information on Prosperity Indiana's State Policy Agenda is online at:

<https://www.prosperityindiana.org/State-Policy>

For additional information, contact Kathleen Lara, policy director at Prosperity Indiana, at: [klara@prosperityindiana.org](mailto:klara@prosperityindiana.org).

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## Washington Legislature Takes Major Steps Forward on Housing Funding and Renter Protections

After more than a decade of campaigning, housing advocates in Washington are celebrating the passage of legislation to ban discrimination against Housing Choice Voucher holders. Renters who use federal assistance to help pay their rent can no longer be flatly rejected before even applying as “source of income” is now added to the list of protected classes under the state’s fair housing law. In addition to protections for voucher holders, the legislature included \$107 million for the Washington state Housing Trust Fund in their capital budget and passed several other significant bills to advance housing justice and reduce homelessness. Advocacy efforts in support of these legislative achievements were organized by the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance (the Housing Alliance), an NLIHC state partner.

By passing House Bill 2578, Washington [becomes the fourteenth state](#) to ban housing discrimination based on source of income. The legislation additionally creates a mitigation fund that landlords can access if voucher-holding renters damage a property beyond normal wear and tear. Similar mitigation funds in other states have not been heavily utilized, and there is scant evidence that households using vouchers are more likely to damage properties.

The state Housing Trust Fund, which provides housing solutions primarily for the lowest income households in Washington, was given a boost of \$107 million in the biennial capital budget. The capital budget is late, originally to be passed in the 2017 legislative session. Forceful advocacy, including running ads on the home pages of newspapers around the state, finally broke the budget impasse and secured a capital budget during the second week of the legislative session. The Housing Alliance estimates that the new \$107 million will help fund 3,500 new affordable homes.

House Bill 1570 provides another significant funding victory by increasing the state’s real estate document recording fee an additional \$22. This increase is expected to generate \$26 million each year, which the Housing Alliance indicates will be enough to assist an additional 11,500 households experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. HB 1570 also removes the expiration date that had been affixed to the document recording fee, making permanent this essential resource for homeless services. The bill also eliminates a previous requirement that 45% of all rental assistance be paid to for-profit rental housing providers. Mission-driven nonprofit housing organizations will no longer be at a disadvantage in utilizing these funds.

Several other important programmatic changes were passed in the recent session. House Bill 2667 expands access to the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) program, which had previously barred people with disabilities and people suffering from addictive disorders. The bill is expected to allow renters with permanent disabilities to maintain their housing while they pursue Social Security benefits. Accessing disability income is also supported by the passage of House Bill 1239, which provides for no-cost access to medical records that can support claims for benefits in appeals hearings.

The legislature also passed an important increase to asset limits to the eligibility requirements for participating in programs like HEN or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. This increase will help households experiencing temporary financial hardship. People will no longer have to sell valuable asset like a reliable car that provides transit to employment or doctor appointments just to get their asset levels low enough for benefit eligibility.

Additional policy changes will make resources available for developers of low cost housing. House Bill 2444 prevents real estate excise taxes from being charged to Low Income Housing Tax Credit properties at the time that ownership is transferred from a for-profit entity to a nonprofit owner, which happens often at year fifteen of the property's life. House Bill 2382, meanwhile, provides for a clearer and easier process by which under-utilized public land can be transferred to new owners who will use it to expand affordable housing.

“There is so much more to do to solve our state's affordable housing crisis, but we are thrilled about the progress we made this year,” said Rachael Myers, executive director of the Housing Alliance. “These victories would not be possible without the tireless advocacy of the housing providers, low income residents, and community leaders who use their voices to discuss the importance of housing programs.”

For more information about recent victories in Washington, contact Rachael Myers at: [rachael@wliha.org](mailto:rachael@wliha.org)

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## **Oregon Triples Document Recording Fee to Fund Affordable Housing**

The Oregon legislature got a lot done in a very short legislative session to address the state's shortage of affordable homes. Advocates are celebrating a number of wins this year, the most significant of which is a tripling of the state's document recording fee that will henceforth provide an estimated \$90 million for affordable homes each biennium. This victory, several years in the making, comes after persistent organizing and lobbying from the Oregon Housing Alliance, a coalition of more than 80 housing providers, advocacy organizations, and service agencies throughout the state. The Alliance is convened by Neighborhood Partnerships, an NLIHC state partner.

The funding victory provided by the passage of House Bill 4007C will increase the state's document recording fee from \$20 to \$60. This dedicated source of revenue provides resources for the production and preservation of affordable homes, preventing and ending homelessness, and helping people access affordable homeownership. The new legislation also establishes funding for the First Time Home Buyer Savings Account, which will provide a small tax incentive to households saving money for homeownership.

The legislature also funded Governor Kate Brown's (D) request for an additional \$5 million to fund emergency shelter services and eviction prevention. The \$5 million will help add capacity for emergency-weather shelter, motel vouchers, and rental assistance. The expanded funding is considered necessary as Oregon cities continue to struggle with far too many people sleeping in cars, in tents, or on the sidewalk. In Portland, family shelters have recently been full, and parents and children have been turned away to sleep in their cars or on the streets.

In an effort to support planning for expanded rental housing, the legislature also passed House Bill 4006B, which requires the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department to provide annual data on severe housing cost-burden rates for renters in all cities with populations greater than 10,000. Cities where more than 25% of renters are severely cost-burdened will now be required to undertake a community planning process to identify solutions. HB 4006B provides funding to support public hearings and other essential aspects of the planning process.

The legislature also took steps this session to address racial disparities in homeownership opportunities. House Bill 4010A creates a new taskforce to study the reasons driving the homeownership gap by race in Oregon. Solving this inequity is considered an import step toward addressing wealth inequality, giving more households access to acquiring property assets.

The Housing Alliance was also successful in getting the legislature to refer a constitutional amendment to voters in November. The amendment would reduce state restrictions on how local jurisdictions use bonds for housing purposes. Specifically, passage of the proposed amendment would allow local governments that issue bonds for

affordable housing to partner with experienced housing developers and use other funding sources like tax credits to build more affordable homes.

Advocates who campaigned for these important pieces of legislation are grateful for the leadership of Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer (D), House Speaker Tina Kotek (D), and Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick (D). These legislative champions helped to secure the passing margin and bi-partisan support for each bill.

“This recent legislative session was so encouraging,” said Alison McIntosh, deputy director for policy and communications at Neighborhood Partnerships. “We know the Legislature can positively impact people across the state who are struggling with housing instability. Now we’ll ask voters to help local communities build more affordable homes. In 2019, advocates will be back to ask for protections for tenants, as well as more resources to build more affordable homes.”

For more information about recent legislative successes in Oregon, contact Alison McIntosh at: [amcintosh@neighborhoodpartnerships.org](mailto:amcintosh@neighborhoodpartnerships.org)

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## **NLIHC in the News**

### **NLIHC in the News for the Week of March 25**

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of March 25:

- “People In Hawaii Are Fed Up With Vacation Rentals,” *BuzzFeed*, March 30 at: <https://bzfd.it/2GpT7C8>
  - “Orlando near top for lack of affordable rentals,” *Orlando Sentinel*, March 27 at: <https://bit.ly/2pUScDJ>
  - “From the editor: It’s up to us to pressure lawmakers to fund affordable housing programs,” *The Business Journals*, March 26 at: <https://bit.ly/2GZPwfl>
  - “Affordable housing crisis strikes Las Vegas Valley,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, March 26 at: <https://bit.ly/2GDAVIv>
  - “Cantwell provision in federal spending bill to boost housing tax credits by \$3B,” *The Seattle Times*, March 23 at: <https://bit.ly/2Gql5hj>
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## **Resource**

### **Brief Guide Helps Advocates Influence Small Area FMR Implementation**

The National Housing Law Project and the Poverty & Race Research Action Council have prepared a [brief paper](#) summarizing key issues for advocates to address with their public housing agencies (PHAs) regarding implementing Small Area Fair Market Rents (Small Area FMRs or SAFMRs). The two-page guide explains what Small Area FMRs are and lists the 24 metropolitan areas that are required to start using SAFMRs instead of metro-wide FMRs. It also discusses possible changes to voucher households’ rents, potential new housing opportunities in neighborhoods that were once not affordable, and actions advocates can take to protect voucher households.

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## Events

### NeighborWorks Brings Training Institute to Kansas City, May 7-11

NeighborWorks America is bringing the NeighborWorks Training Institute (NTI) to Kansas City, MO, the week of May 7-11. The NTI offers more than 100 course offerings in affordable housing development and financing; housing asset management; community engagement; community revitalization; community economic development; housing construction and rehabilitation; financial capability and homeownership education, coaching, and counseling; nonprofit management and leadership; and single-family and small-business lending. The NTI courses, lasting from one-to-five days each, are an excellent opportunity for skill-building and networking.

More information about the NTI is at: <http://bit.ly/2BwPLxI>

Register for the NTI at: <http://bit.ly/1ATs8Ia>

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## NLIHC News

### NLIHC's Board of Directors Welcomes Six New Members

NLIHC unanimously voted six new members onto its board of directors on March 18. Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) President and CEO Aaron Gornstein, National Housing Law Project (NHLP) Supervising Attorney Karlo Ng, Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama (LIHCA) and Collaborative Solutions (CSI) CEO and National AIDS Housing Coalition (NAHC) Executive Director Russell "Rusty" Bennett, Texas Housers Co-Director Chrishelle Palay, Virginia Housing Alliance Executive Director Sim Wimbush, and resident organizer Yanira Cortes joined a diverse team of affordable housing leaders guiding the Coalition's efforts.

Aaron Gornstein has been leading POAH, Inc., a nonprofit developer, owner and operator of more than 9,000 affordable homes in nine states and the District of Columbia, as its president and CEO since June, 2015. Before that, Mr. Gornstein expanded rental assistance and homelessness prevention programs as undersecretary for the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) under former Governor Deval Patrick. "I am honored to serve on NLIHC's board," said Mr. Gornstein. "In the face of unprecedented housing challenges nationwide, I look forward to working with fellow housing advocates to build on the momentum we have gained in recent months and to support NLIHC in its efforts to build coalitions across sectors so we can achieve more victories in the months and years ahead."

Karlo Ng focuses on fair housing and civil rights for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and immigrants at NHLP, which she joined 2011 as the organization's first David B. Bryson fellow and as the lead editor and managing attorney of the 4th edition of NHLP's publication, *HUD Housing Programs: Tenants' Rights*. "People in low income communities deserve a voice that supports them in accessing and maintaining safe and sanitary affordable housing," said Ms. Ng. "As someone who grew up public housing, I recognize the strength and power NLIHC has to effectuate real change for low income tenants. I'm honored to serve on the NLIHC board of directors to help spearhead change for the long term."

As CEO of CSI and LIHCA, an NLIHC state partner, and executive director of NAHC, Rusty Bennett oversees the provision of technical assistance and leads national advocacy efforts related to HIV/AIDS housing, homelessness, and health. He oversees CSI's Rural Supportive Housing Initiative and national initiatives integrating housing and health. "It is an honor to serve on the NLIHC board, to share my expertise in research



and evaluation related to rural and special needs housing with fellow affordable housing advocates,” said Dr. Bennett. “I hope to help NLIHC highlight the housing needs of people with special needs and to leverage research to increase the quality and quantity of the supportive housing stock.”

Texas Housers (an NLIHC state partner) Co-Director Chrishelle Palay leads the organization’s Houston office, providing state and local policy analysis and support to local community organizing groups. Much of her work revolves around disaster recovery efforts, working closely with policy advocates and grassroots organizers in low income communities and with the NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition. Ms. Palay is a NextCity Vanguard Alumni and Public Voice OpEd Ford Fellow and on The Rhodes School Board of Directors. “I’m looking forward to building relationships and bridges between policymakers and people in low income communities through my work on the NLIHC board of directors,” said Ms. Palay, “and to support NLIHC’s work on the national level for much-needed policy solutions that best serve the needs of vulnerable people.”

Sim Wimbush joined the Virginia Housing Alliance, an NLIHC state partner, as executive director in January 2016. Before that, Ms. Wimbush served as the associate director of housing development for the Virginia Veteran and Family Support Program at the Virginia Department of Veterans Services. “I am eager to be working with a great team of professionals and leaders on the NLIHC board,” said Ms. Wimbush. “I am impressed by the diverse viewpoints and expertise of the other advocates on the board and look forward to helping NLIHC expand housing opportunities and address homelessness for people in the Commonwealth of Virginia and throughout the country.”

Yanira Cortes is a Newark, NJ resident who testified in 2017 before a Senate committee on behalf of New Jersey tenants living in squalid, unhealthy apartments. Ms. Cortes was among several tenants featured in a press investigative series that found serious deficiencies in New Jersey rental housing and was part of a class-action lawsuit against the company that owned the building where she rented her home. “Serving on the NLIHC board of directors is an opportunity for tenants like me to speak on a much larger platform about the needs of low income renters,” said Ms. Cortes. “I’m looking forward to leveraging the momentum of recent wins by affordable housing advocacy groups like NLIHC to achieve new successes for renters in NJ and throughout the country.”

“These new NLIHC board members bring an outstanding diversity of expertise and experience to the board,” said Diane Yentel, president and CEO of NLIHC. “I am pleased to welcome them to the NLIHC team and look forward to partnering with them to achieve solutions to homelessness and housing poverty in America.”

Check out the full list of NLIHC board of directors at: <http://nlihc.org/about/board>

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## Where to Find Us – April 2

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

- [2018 Annual Fair Housing Conference](#), Little Rock, AK on April 5
- [Housing First Partners Conference 2018](#), Denver, CO, April 10 -12
- [PolicyLink 2018 Equity Summit](#), Chicago, IL on April 13
- [South Carolina Housing Conference](#), Columbia, SC, April 17-18
- Annual Summit for Fair Housing, Mobile, AL on April 19
- [2018 Building Michigan Communities Conference](#), Lansing, MI, April 30 - May 2
- Provider Alliance to End Homelessness, Los Angeles, CA on May 17



- [Conference on Ending Homelessness](#), Yakima, WA, May 22-23
  - [2018 Denver Housing Summit](#), Denver, CO on May 24
  - Virginia Housing Alliance Annual Luncheon, Richmond, VA on June 14
  - [Florida Housing Coalition Annual Conference](#), Orlando, FL on August 27
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## **NLIHC Staff**

Sonya Acosta, Policy Intern, x241  
Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245  
Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244  
Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226  
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316  
Ellen Errico, Creative Services Manager, x246  
Jared Gaby-Biegel, Research Intern, x249  
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314  
Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232  
Emma Kerr, Research Intern, x229  
Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317  
Joseph Lindstrom, Manager, Field Organizing, x222  
Lisa Marlow, Communications Specialist, x239  
Lauren McMahon, Graphic Design and Communications Intern, x252  
Sarah Mickelson, Senior Director of Public Policy, x228  
Isaiah Milbauer, Field Intern, x252  
Khara Norris, Director of Administration, x242  
James Saucedo, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233  
Christina Sin, Development Manager, x234  
Debra Susie, Disaster Housing Recovery Coordinator, x227  
Elayne Weiss, Senior Policy Analyst, x243  
Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Coordinator, x230  
Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247  
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x228