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Take Action

Join Webinar on Wednesday, 5/31 for Latest on Trump's Proposed Budget and Ways to Defeat it

President Donald Trump's FY18 budget request proposes to slash federal investments in affordable housing and other essential programs that ensure basic living standards for low income individuals and families. With this budget, the Trump administration shows a cruel indifference to the millions of people struggling to keep a roof over their heads. ([Read NLIHC's detailed analysis of the budget in this issue of *Memo to Members*](#))

Join the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) and other leaders of the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF) for a webinar to learn more about President Trump's budget proposal and actions you can take to fight back. The webinar will be held May 31 at 3 pm ET.

Speakers include:

- Doug Rice, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- Linda Couch, LeadingAge
- Tess Hembree, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
- Sarah Mickelson, National Low Income Housing Coalition
- Gabriel Strachota, Community Voices Heard
- Moderator: Elayne Weiss, National Low Income Housing Coalition

Register for the webinar at: <http://bit.ly/2rDPjsH>

Take action now:

1. [Call](#) your members of Congress and urge them to protect critical resources for affordable housing. Here is a script for you to use:
Please reject the president's proposed budget that slashes HUD and USDA investments that provide millions of Americans with affordable homes. These resources keep roofs over the heads of low income families, seniors, people with disabilities, low-wage workers and other vulnerable people. Funding affordable housing is a smart investment that leads to better health and education outcomes and boosts economic mobility and the local economy. Our communities are stronger because of HUD and USDA programs. Instead of making harmful cuts, please work with your colleagues to lift the spending caps on critical domestic programs like those at HUD and USDA.
2. [Email](#) and [tweet](#) members of Congress.
3. Organizations and local governments can sign onto a national letter: <http://bit.ly/2jnY5Ee>

Oppose Administration's Proposal to Defund the National Housing Trust Fund

The national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) is under immediate threat of defunding by the Trump administration. NLIHC urges all organizations concerned about homelessness and the lack of affordable homes in the U.S. to sign onto a [letter](#) calling on Congress to protect and expand the HTF.

President Trump's [FY18 budget proposal](#) released on May 23 not only would slash funding for critical HUD affordable housing programs (see related article in this *Memo to Members*), it would also defund the HTF, the first new housing resource in a generation and one that is exclusively targeted to help build and preserve housing affordable to people with the lowest incomes, including those experiencing homelessness.

The HTF is administered as a block grant, giving each state the flexibility to decide how best to use HTF resources to address its most pressing housing needs. The HTF's first \$174 million were allocated to the states in 2016, which was an important start, but Congress must protect the HTF from the administration's attack and instead significantly increase its funding to address the critical affordable housing needs of the lowest income renters in every community in the U.S.

With more resources, the HTF can play a critical role in ensuring the nation's 11.4 million extremely low income households have access to decent, affordable homes.

In addition to protecting the HTF from this new threat in Congressional deliberations on FY18 spending, Congress is considering reforms to the government sponsored enterprises (GSEs), Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, in 2017. Because the HTF is funded through a small assessment on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's new business each year, reforms to the GSEs would have a direct impact on the HTF. Previous bipartisan legislation reforming the GSEs included a significant increase in resources to the HTF. Congressional leaders considering reforms during this session of Congress must protect and expand the HTF to assist the 7.4 million extremely low income households who lack access to affordable homes. There may also be opportunities to expand the HTF in a comprehensive infrastructure package and in comprehensive tax reform efforts.

Sign the [letter](#) urging Congress to protect and expand the HTF and share it with your networks.

Contact your Congressional delegation directly at: <http://bit.ly/2IBR7eM>

NLIHC News

NLIHC to Reveal How Many Hours One Must Work at Minimum Wage to Afford a Modest Apartment, June 8

NLIHC will release on June 8 the 2017 edition of its annual report, *Out of Reach*, which shows how many hours an individual must work each week for 52 weeks a year at the prevailing minimum wage to afford a modest one- and two-bedroom apartment everywhere in the country. A special webinar for NLIHC members about the report's findings will be held on June 9 at 2 pm ET. Register for the webinar at: <http://bit.ly/2q9z3wr>

The *Out of Reach* report documents the gap between renters' wages and the cost of rental housing throughout the U.S. It also shows the "Housing Wage", the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a modest rental home without spending more than 30% of his or her income on housing costs. The report compares the Housing Wage to prevailing renter wages and incomes. A new feature this year, *Out of Reach 2017* will provide Housing Wages and prevailing renter wages not just nationally and by state, county and jurisdiction, but also at the ZIP-code (Small-Area Fair Market Rent) level.

The preface of this year's *Out of Reach* will be written by Representative Keith Ellison (D-MN).

View the 2016 *Out of Reach* report and interactive website at: <http://nlihc.org/oor>

Sessions from NLIHC Housing Policy Forum Now Available Online

For those who were unable to attend the NLIHC 2017 Housing Policy Forum: Advancing Solutions in a Changing Landscape in Washington, DC on April 3-5, video recordings of all the plenary sessions are now available online at: <http://www.nlihcforum.org/forum-videos>

The following video-recorded sessions now available for viewing (with either transcripts or open-captioning for the hearing-impaired):

- **“Best Practices for Advocacy and Organizing in Campaigns for Expanded Resources”** (with transcript), featuring Michael Anderson from the Center for Community Change, Phyllis Chamberlain of Housing Alliance Pennsylvania, Fredricka Robinson of East Bay Housing Organizations, Greg Payne of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, and Joey Lindstrom from NLIHC.
- **“Getting the Message Across: Effective Communications”** (with transcript), featuring Ali Solis from Make Room, Amy Clark from the National Housing Conference, Tiffany Manuel from Enterprise Community Partners, and Renee Willis from NLIHC.
- **“Keynote by Julie Fernandez, Open Society Foundation Advocacy Director for Voting Rights and Democracy”** (with transcript).
- **“Affordable Housing Needs and Solutions”** (with open-captioning), featuring NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel.
- **“Rebalancing Federal Housing Policy”** (with transcript), featuring Carol Wayman, legislative director for Representative Keith Ellison (D-MN), David Newville from CFED, Agatha So from the National Council of La Raza, Sharon Cornu from the Nonprofit Housing Association of Northern California, and Sarah Mickelson from NLIHC.
- **“Public Housing in a Changing Landscape”** (with transcript), featuring Susan Popkin from the Urban Institute; David Pristin from the New York City Housing Authority; Shauna Sorrells from the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County, MD; Martha Weatherspoon from the Lincoln Home Resident Council in Clarksville, TN; and Paul Kealey from NLIHC.
- **“Presentation of NLIHC Organizer Awards”** (with transcript), featuring Dora Gallo from A Community of Friends, Avni Desai from Community Housing Partnership, Sharon Cornu from the Non-Profit Housing Association of California, and Adlemy Garcia and Fredricka Robinson from East Bay Housing Organizations.
- **“Keynote by HUD Secretary Dr. Ben Carson”** (with open-captioning).
- **“Long-Term Rental Housing Assistance: Opportunities and Challenges”** (with transcript), featuring Dr. Marybeth Shinn from Vanderbilt University, Daisy Franklin from the Connecticut Publicly-Assisted Housing Residents Network, Barbara Sard from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Aaron Gornstein from Preservation of Affordable Housing, and Andrew Aurand from NLIHC.
- **“National Housing Trust Fund Implementation Best Practices”** (with transcript), featuring Virginia Sardone from HUD, Ayana Gonzalez from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Chip Halbach from the Minnesota Housing Partnership, Jim Yates from the Technical Assistance Collaborative, and Ed Gramlich from NLIHC
- **“Hill Insider Panel: What’s Ahead in the 115th Congress”** (with transcript), featuring Artie Mandel, senior policy advisor with Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA); Jason Woolwine, professional staff with Chairwoman Susan Collins (R-ME) on the Appropriations Committee; Beth Cooper from the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Clinton Jones III and Theresa Dumais from the House Committee on Financial Services; and Sarah Mickelson from NLIHC.
- **“Building an Expansive Housing Movement”** (with transcript), featuring Peggy Bailey from the Center on Budget and Policy Policies, Harry Lawson, Jr. from the National Education Association, Richard Hooks Wayman from Children’s Defense Fund, Nan Roman from the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Margaret diZerega from the Vera Institute of Justice, and Diane Yentel from NLIHC.
- **“Keynote with U.S. Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA)”** (with open-captioning).

The video-recorded sessions and transcripts are at: <http://www.nlihcforum.org/forum-videos>

United for Homes

Representative Ellison Urges Colleagues to Support MID Reform and Address Affordable Housing Crisis

In a "Dear Colleague" letter circulated on May 19, Representative Keith Ellison (D-MN) encouraged his colleagues to read the *New York Times Magazine* story by Pulitzer-prize winning author and researcher Matt Desmond, "[How Homeownership Became the Engine of American Inequality](#)." The Desmond piece explores how the mortgage interest deduction (MID) disproportionately benefits higher income homeowners while lower income homeowners get little benefit and most of the lowest income renters get no help at all for their housing. Mr. Ellison urges colleagues to sign onto his "Common Sense Housing Investment Act" (H.R. 948), which addresses the imbalance in federal housing policy by replacing the MID with a 15% tax credit to provide a financial benefit to more homeowners and save billions that could be reinvested in affordable housing solutions for those with the greatest needs.

Mr. Ellison also cites a *U.S. News & World Report* opinion piece, "[A Home for Housing Reform](#)," by former Obama Senior Policy Advisor Michael Stegman and former Bush administration Assistant Secretary for Policy and Research at HUD Dennis Shea, which calls for MID reforms that align with H.R. 948 and the NLIHC-led [United for Homes](#) campaign.

"Conservatives and progressives alike agree that our nation's housing policy is in critical need of revision," said Mr. Ellison. "Replacing the MID with a flat-rate tax credit and investing the savings in programs to support low-income families, people with disabilities and the elderly is one of the best ways by which we can address the crisis of housing insecurity currently affecting millions of Americans."

[Urge your representative to cosponsor "The Common Sense Housing Investment Act."](#)

Resources for Building Support for the UFH Campaign

The "[Resources](#)" page on the United for Homes (UFH) [website](#) includes images for Twitter and Facebook, data, fact sheets, and other tools to assist advocates in spreading the message about the simple UFH solution to homelessness and housing poverty in America: reinvesting savings from modest reforms to the mortgage interest deduction (MID) into affordable housing.

Under "Build Support," users can download or print flyers that provide informational snapshots about the campaign. These flyers can be displayed on an exhibit table at a conference or used as a leave-behind in meetings with members of Congress, and contain graphics and quote that can be added to a presentation or uploaded to social media.

There are four flyers that can be used to build support around the UFH campaign—United for Homes Fact Sheet, United for Homes Flyer, What People are Saying, and a UFH Brochure.

The UHF Brochure, for example, is a printable tri-fold document that provides key high-level information about the campaign, like:

- The mission of the UFH campaign and its supporters.
- A brief message from NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel on the impact the campaign proposal would have on the millions of lower income homeowners who would be eligible for a new tax benefit.

- Seven topline facts the campaign addresses, such as: “The shortage of affordable housing in major metropolitan areas costs the American economy about \$2 trillion a year in lower wages and productivity.”

Visit the UFH campaign website at: <http://www.unitedforhomes.org/>

Congress

Congressional Democrats Hold Press Conference to Oppose Trump Budget

House Democrats rallied and held a press conference on Capitol Hill on May 24 to oppose President Donald Trump’s recently released federal budget proposal for FY18.

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA), Al Green (D-TX), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM), and John Yarmuth (D-KY) spoke at the event.

Additional speakers included leaders from PICO National Network, the Center for American Progress, the Leadership Conference, AFSCME, the National Women’s Law Center, Indivisible, and MoveOn.org. They were joined by advocates from the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, and Planned Parenthood.

Rallying to the chant “hands off,” speakers addressed the breadth of programs, communities, and individuals that would be negatively impacted by the severe cuts included in Mr. Trump’s proposal. “I have never seen a budget so devoid of compassion for struggling families,” Ms. Lee stated.

Ms. Pelosi said that the administration’s budget proposal “undermines the strength and the possibility and the stability of our country” and called on her colleagues in Congress to “just tear this thing up.”

Bishop Dwayne Royster, political director of PICO, stated that the budget proposal “represents a continued transfer of wealth from the poorest people to a handful of the wealthiest people.”

Lee Saunders, president of AFSCME, commented that the budget proposal “is immoral and unprecedented in its cruelty to vulnerable people.”

Read NLIHC’s detailed analysis of Mr. Trump’s budget proposal in this issue of *Memo to Members*: [President Trump’s Budget Proposes to Slash Affordable](#)

Treasury Secretary Mnuchin Testifies Before Congress on Tax Reform

Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin testified before the House Ways and Means Committee on May 24 and before the Senate Finance Committee on May 25 on President Trump’s broad principles for tax reform and details about possible legislation. Republican members of Congress focused many of their questions on the need for comprehensive tax reform, while Democrats expressed concerns about Republican proposals that would disproportionately benefit the wealthy. Mr. Mnuchin’s testimony provided important insights into the administration’s perspective on tax reform.

Mr. Mnuchin stated that his “number one priority as Treasury secretary is creating sustainable economic growth for all Americans. The best way to achieve this is through a combination of tax reform, regulatory relief, and protecting taxpayers; this also includes making some difficult decisions with respect to our budget.” He reiterated that tax reform is the administration’s “highest priority” for legislation and noted that he and National

Economic Council Director Gary Cohn have held listening sessions with Congressional leaders and other stakeholders.

Whether tax reform is possible and what scope such legislation might encompass largely depend on whether the administration seeks to enact permanent changes to the tax code or if they will settle for temporary cuts. Permanent changes would require the administration to work with Democrats in the Senate to secure the 60 votes need to overcome a filibuster. “Permanent is better than temporary. Temporary is better than nothing,” Mr. Mnuchin said. “Trade-offs will have to be made as we go through and score the various alternatives.”

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) asked Mr. Mnuchin whether the administration was considering changes to a list of specific tax provisions. When asked about possible changes to the mortgage interest deduction, the secretary responded, “No.” In regard to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, Mr. Mnuchin stated, “That’s not something that I’ve seen at the moment.”

Secretary Mnuchin’s testimony is available at: <http://bit.ly/2qodYwQ>

Budget and Appropriations

President Trump’s Budget Proposes to Slash Affordable Housing and Other Essential Programs

In a [press statement](#) and a [message to members](#) NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel criticized President Donald Trump’s FY18 budget request – released on May 23 – for its “cruel indifference to the millions of low income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, veterans, and other vulnerable people who are struggling to keep a roof over their heads.”

Mr. Trump proposes to balance the federal budget over 10 years – while cutting taxes for the wealthy and breaking the Budget Control Act (BCA) spending caps on defense programs – by slashing federal investments in domestic priorities by more than 2% each year or \$1.4 trillion over the decade, including deep cuts to affordable housing and other essential programs that ensure basic living standards. If enacted, non-defense spending would be pushed to historic lows beyond current BCA levels.

Despite the overwhelming evidence of the [broad, positive impact of having an affordable home](#), HUD would be cut by nearly 15% or \$7.4 billion in FY18 compared to 2017. This could lead to more than 250,000 of the lowest income people losing their housing vouchers – a move that would increase homelessness and housing poverty. It would also impose punitive measures that would jeopardize family stability – increasing the financial burdens they face through higher rents and by ending support to help cover the cost of basic utilities, like water and heat. For more detailed information, see [NLIHC’s updated budget chart](#).

The Trump budget also guts essential programs that help families put food on the table, provide healthcare to children, and help people with disabilities achieve financial security. It provides states with the authority to impose work requirements and time limits on federal assistance, despite research that shows these restrictions often [push families deeper into poverty](#).

The administration also calls for a \$1 trillion infrastructure package – which may include affordable housing investments. While [housing is infrastructure](#), replacing annual funding with a one-time spending boost in an infrastructure package that has only a remote chance of being enacted is wholly unacceptable. Instead, an investment in affordable housing infrastructure must be made on top of full annual appropriations for HUD and USDA.

HUD Programs

Rent Policy Changes Directly Impacting Tenants

The budget includes several provisions that give HUD the authority to increase the financial burden on current and future tenants. While hardship exemptions are still intact, the proposed changes would hurt tenants already scraping to get by and would make it more difficult for them to achieve financial security.

The budget proposal provides the HUD secretary with the authority to: increase a tenant's rent contributions from the current standard of 30% of their income to 35%; increase the minimum monthly rent for tenants to \$50, beginning with a tenant's first annual or interim authorization; prohibit tenants from receiving utility reimbursements used to cover the cost of heat and water; and not provide rent adjustments for properties receiving housing assistance.

National Housing Trust Fund

Mr. Trump's budget calls for eliminating the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF), the first new housing resource in a generation and one that is exclusively targeted to help build and preserve housing affordable to people with the lowest incomes, including those experiencing homelessness.

The national HTF is funded through a small fee on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Mr. Trump's proposed budget allows the HUD secretary to direct these resources to offset the cost of salaries, contract expenses, and technology improvements at the Federal Housing Administration (FHA).

Tenant-Based Rental Assistance

Mr. Trump would cut funding for tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA) by nearly 5% compared to FY17 funding levels. The request provides \$19.318 billion for TBRA, \$17.584 billion of which is to renew previous contracts. NLIHC estimates that more than 250,000 households would lose their housing assistance, putting them at immediate risk of eviction and homelessness.

The administration would also cut funding for new Section 811 mainstream vouchers for people with disabilities by \$13 million, and would zero out funding for new Family Unification and HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers. The proposal does provide \$7 million for HUD-VASH vouchers targeted to Native Americans. The budget would reduce the amount of funds public housing authorities (PHAs) receive to administer the voucher program by 6% compared to FY17 funding levels.

The budget (Section 231) provides the HUD secretary with the authority to waive or specify alternative statutory and regulatory requirements under the voucher program, including those related to setting and adjusting allowable rents, payment standards, tenant rent contributions, occupancy standards, and PHA administrative, planning, and reporting requirements, if the HUD secretary finds that these would reduce costs or improve effectiveness.

Project-Based Rental Housing

The budget proposal would provide \$10.351 billion to renew project-based rental assistance contracts for calendar year 2018, a decrease of \$465 million from the FY17 funding level. This level of funding is not sufficient to cover all existing contracts.

Public Housing

Public housing takes a huge hit under the Trump budget proposal. The public housing capital fund would be reduced from \$1.942 billion in FY17 to \$628 million—a devastating 68% cut. The allocation for the operating fund would fall from \$4.4 billion in FY17 to \$3.9 billion.

The budget (Section 230) provides the HUD secretary with the authority to waive or set alternative statutory and regulatory requirements for PHAs, including administrative, planning, and reporting requirements, energy audits, income re-certifications, and program assessments, if the HUD secretary finds these would reduce costs or improve effectiveness.

Section 233 would allow PHAs to comingle funding from the public housing operating and capital funds. Such authorization would allow PHAs to direct operating funds, which are used to provide tenants with homes, to cover the cost of repairs and rehabilitation.

Section 219 eliminates the sunset date for the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD).

Homelessness

Mr. Trump would reduce funding for homeless assistance programs to \$2.25 billion from \$2.383 billion in FY17.

Other HUD Programs

The budget would eliminate the Community Development Block Grant program, the HOME Investment Partnerships program, Choice Neighborhoods grants, the Section 4 Capacity Building program, and the Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program.

The budget provides \$510 million to the Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program, an \$8 million increase from last year's funding level, and it reduces funding for the Section 811 Housing for People with Disabilities program to \$121 million, \$25 million less than the FY17 level. The budget would allow Section 202 Project Rental Assistance Contract (PRAC) properties to convert under RAD.

Funding for the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program would decrease to \$330 million, down from \$356 million in FY17.

The budget decreases funding for the Native American Housing Block Grant program by \$54 million, or a little more than 8%. The Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant program would receive no funds.

Healthy Homes

Despite HUD Secretary Ben Carson [promising the Senate Banking Committee during his confirmation hearing](#) that healthy housing would be one of his priorities, the administration cuts funding for the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes grants by \$15 million to \$130 million.

Fair Housing

The budget provides flat funding for HUD's office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

USDA Rural Housing

Rural Rental Housing

President Trump proposes significant cuts to rural housing programs at the Department of Agriculture (USDA), including a \$60 million cut to Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance. It is unclear whether this is sufficient to cover all existing contracts.

The budget also eliminates funding for the Multifamily Preservation and Revitalization demonstration and funds Section 542 vouchers for residents in properties subject to prepayment at \$20 million.

Rural Development

Mr. Trump also calls for eliminating funding for Section 502 Direct Homeownership Loans, Section 514/516 Farm Worker Housing Loans and Grants, Section 523 Mutual and Self-Help Housing, and Section 504 Rural Housing Assistance Loans, as well as cuts to the USDA's water and wastewater loan and grant program and Rural Development staff.

These cuts come on top of the administration's plan to reorganize USDA and eliminate the under secretary for rural development position, which oversees rural housing programs. Rural housing advocates, including the National Rural Housing Coalition, oppose this reorganization plan and call it a "[one-two punch in the gut for Rural America](#)."

Other Agencies

Mr. Trump would also:

- Cut Medicaid by nearly 25% or \$839 billion over a decade. These cuts are on top of the \$800 billion cut included in the House American Health Care Act.
- Cut funding to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program by \$193 billion over 10 years.
- Eliminate funding for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation (NeighborWorks America), and the Legal Services Corporation (Legal Aid), which is often the only resource available to help deeply low income people avoid unwarranted evictions.
- Eliminate funding to the Treasury Department for Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund grants.
- Eliminate the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Community Services Block Grants (CSBG) at the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Eliminate the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) at the Department of Energy.

Infrastructure Package

President Trump's FY18 spending bill calls for a \$1 trillion infrastructure package with \$200 billion in federal spending. The infrastructure package may include affordable housing investments, but no details are available.

While NLIHC believes that [housing is infrastructure](#) and that affordable housing investments must be included in any infrastructure package, replacing annual funding with a one-time spending boost is wholly unacceptable. Instead, an investment in affordable housing infrastructure must be made on top of full annual appropriations for HUD and USDA.

The budget proposal now heads to Congress, where the House and Senate will begin to draft their spending bills. The House is expected to unveil its budget resolution, which sets overall spending guidelines, after the Memorial Day recess.

Although the president’s budget has already been panned by both Republicans and Democrats as a non-starter, advocates are deeply concerned that Congress could try to pass deep – but less severe – cuts as a compromise. For that reason, NLIHC urges Congress to not only reject Mr. Trump’s budget, but to lift the low spending caps that prevent our nation from making the affordable housing investments needed to help families and communities thrive.

Progressive Caucus Proposes Funding HTF and Public Housing through Infrastructure Package

The Congressional Progressive Caucus released a proposal to rebuild the nation’s crumbling infrastructure on June 26. The plan, “21st Century New Deal for Jobs,” would invest \$2 trillion in our nation’s infrastructure over the next 10 years, including \$6 billion annually for “expanding the supply of safe, decent, and affordable housing.” Under the proposal, \$3 billion would be used to fund the national Housing Trust Fund and \$3 billion would be used to repair public housing. The Progressive Caucus estimates that the housing investments alone would support 75,000 jobs in the first year.

The plan states, “A minimum-wage worker in the United States, even working 40 hours per week, cannot afford the cost of a one-bedroom apartment at a fair-market rent anywhere in the country. Extremely low-income families face an affordable housing shortage of 7.4 million apartments or homes.

“Inadequate resources lead to long waiting lists and life on the edge for more than 11 million families, while families who earn six figures a year receive generous benefits for homeownership. For every \$1 we spend in federal dollars benefitting rental-housing tenants, we spend \$4 on homeownership benefits. Only 25 percent of federal housing subsidies go to those with the clearest and greatest need. We need to invest more resources in order to address our affordable rental housing crisis.”

The plan, “21st Century New Deal for Jobs,” is at: <http://bit.ly/2r4wtIF>

Trump Budget Receives Cool Reception from Congress, Budget Committees Hear from OMB Director

Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle criticized President Donald Trump’s FY18 budget request to cut billions of dollars from programs that help low income people. Some Republicans have already said the proposal was dead on arrival.

“The President’s budget displays a fundamental lack of understanding of the role of government of, by, and for the people in supporting the middle class, lifting up the most vulnerable among us and serving our values and interests as a nation,” said Senate Appropriations Ranking Member Patrick Leahy (D-VT). “His budget eliminates key investments in rural communities, leaving them without federal partnership support for everything from infrastructure development and affordable housing, to programs that preserve the environment and provide food for the elderly.”

“We know that the president’s budget won’t pass as proposed,” said Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-TX). Instead, Mr. Cornyn indicated that lawmakers are already having conversations about how Congress can reach another bipartisan budget deal to lift the austere FY18 spending caps required by the Budget Control Act of 2011. “I think that’s the only way,” he said. “It would be good to get that done so we can get the Appropriations Committee to work.”

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) agreed. “We’ll have to negotiate the top line with Senate Democrats, we know that,” Mr. McConnell said. “They will not be irrelevant in the process, and at some point, here in the near future, those discussions will begin.”

Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney defended the Trump budget request before the House and Senate Budget Committees on May 24 and 25.

During the House Budget Committee hearing, Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) said, “Never before really have I seen such a cruel and morally bankrupt budget. It dismantles our nation's basic living standards which Americans have turned to for decades. How are people going to get health insurance with the cut of \$1.3 trillion in Medicaid? And how are people going to get a house to either purchase or rent with the elimination of the Housing Trust Fund and a \$2 billion cut in rental assistance?”

Senator Jeff Merkely (D-OR) criticized the budget for cutting rental assistance and said that, if enacted, it would eliminate 4,000 housing vouchers in Oregon alone. He questioned Mr. Mulvaney on proposing such deep cuts to housing assistance given the current housing crisis in the U.S. Mr. Mulvaney did not provide an answer during the hearing but said he would follow up with a response.

Watch the House Budget Committee Hearing at: <http://bit.ly/2q0Wkz7>

Watch the Senate Budget Committee Hearing at: <http://bit.ly/2qWIiKg>

HUD

PIH Provides VAWA Guidance for PHAs and Owners Who Accept Vouchers

HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) issued Notice PIH-2017-08 providing guidance about complying with the “Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013” (VAWA 2013). Although the Notice is directed to Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) and owners of private housing who accept Housing Choice Vouchers, advocates will also benefit from familiarity with the guidance.

On November 16, 2016, HUD issued a final rule (VAWA Final Rule) implementing VAWA 2013 for HUD’s housing programs (see *Memo*, [11/21/16](#)). Because Notice PIH-2017-08 does not touch on every aspect of the VAWA Final Rule, the Notice should be used in conjunction with the VAWA Final Rule.

The VAWA Final Rule includes core protections across HUD programs, ensuring individuals are not denied assistance, evicted, or have their assistance terminated because of their status as survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or for being affiliated with a victim. In addition, HUD programs must be operated consistent with the Equal Access Rule (see *Memo*, [2/3/12](#)) which requires HUD-assisted housing be made available regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

The 52-page Notice summarizes the major changes to the public housing and voucher programs (including project-based vouchers) and includes an appendix that provides a model owner notification to applicants and tenants of their VAWA rights and obligations. Among the topics covered by the Notice are who may receive VAWA protections, emergency transfers, family breakup, lease bifurcation, and establishing waiting list preferences.

Notice PIH-2017-08 is at: <http://bit.ly/2r1OoNP>

CPD Reduces Annual Action Plan Public Comment Period to 14 Days for FY17

Because Congress only recently enacted the FY17 appropriations act (see *Memo*, [5/8](#)), HUD’s Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) is waiving the regulatory requirement that jurisdictions provide a minimum of 30 days for public review and comment on proposed uses of CPD formula grant programs in the Annual Action Plan component of the Consolidated Plan process. Instead, CPD is shortening the public review and comment period to 14 days for FY17, according to a May 10 CPD Memorandum.

The CPD formula programs funded by Congressional appropriations are the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) programs. The national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) is also a CPD formula program, but it is funded not by appropriations but through a small (0.042%) assessment on the volume of new business generated by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. CPD has not yet announced HTF formula amounts for 2017.

The Consolidated Plan regulations require jurisdictions to submit an Annual Action Plan 45 days prior to the beginning of their program year. Jurisdictions choose their own program years; more than half have a program year that begins on July 1. The regulations also state that an Annual Action Plan must be submitted no later than August 16 of any calendar year.

The Memorandum refers to Notice CPD 16-18 issued on December 15, 2016 (see *Memo*, [1/9](#)), which addressed the late passage of appropriations acts in recent years. The Notice offered jurisdictions two options regarding fulfilling their public participation obligations while waiting for the FY17 allocations. One option was to engage in public participation regarding a draft Action Plan using estimated formula allocation amounts, clearly explaining to the public how it will adjust the proposed Action Plan once actual allocations were known. The second option was to prepare a proposed Action Plan using a jurisdiction's regular timetable, but waiting until actual allocation amounts were known before carrying out public participation. Notice CPD 16-18 also stated that for FY17 CPD will not execute a grant agreement with a jurisdiction until CPD has received an Annual Action Plan (or an amended Action Plan) that incorporates the actual allocation amounts a jurisdiction is to receive for FY17.

The May 10 Memorandum repeats Notice CPD 16-18, declaring that any jurisdiction with a program year start date prior to or up to 60 days after CPD announces the FY17 formula program funding allocations should not submit its Annual Action Plan until the FY17 formula allocations have been announced. Because the timing of the enactment of the FY17 appropriations act leaves insufficient time for jurisdictions to complete the pre-Action Plan submission or pre-Action Plan Amendment public participation review and comment process before August 16, CPD is shortening the public comment period to 14 days.

The May 10 Memorandum is at: <http://bit.ly/2rDsoha>

The December 15, 2016 Notice CPD 16-18 is at: <http://bit.ly/2hPd0c1>

J. Paul Compton Nominated as HUD General Counsel

The Trump administration nominated J. Paul Compton to serve as HUD general counsel. Mr. Compton is a partner in the Birmingham, Alabama law firm Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP. According to the White House website, Mr. Compton has advised banks and other financial institutions about investing in affordable housing and community development projects. He is outside general counsel to the Alabama Affordable Housing Association and a member of the American Bar Association Forum on Affordable Housing and Community Development. A media release from the law firm adds that Mr. Compton has broad experience with federal and state Low Income Housing Tax Credit programs.

According to HUD's website, the Office of General Counsel (OGC) attorneys provide legal opinions, advice, and services regarding all HUD programs and activities. The OGC includes the Fair Housing Compliance Division and the Fair Housing Enforcement Division.

The White House also announced Helen R. Kanovsky has resigned her position at OGC.

The White House announcement is at: <http://bit.ly/2rDAImJ>

More about HUD's Office of General Counsel is at: <http://bit.ly/2rUArDV>

Research

Many Renters Lack Resources to Cover Unexpected Expenses or Buy a Home

The Federal Reserve Board released its fourth annual *Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households* on May 19. The report is based on a Federal Reserve survey of households' economic well-being and risks to their financial security. Forty-four percent of adults reported that they could not cover an unexpected expense of \$400 without selling something or borrowing money. With regard to housing, nine percent of renters who had moved in the previous two years did so because of an eviction or the threat of an eviction. The survey also indicated that many renters lack the financial resources to buy a home.

The survey explored renters' experiences, including the reasons for renting, landlord responsiveness, and expectations for homeownership. Fifty-seven percent identified their inability to afford a down payment to buy a home, inability to qualify for a mortgage, or both as a reason for their renting. Twenty-eight percent of renters opted to rent because it was more convenient. Thirteen percent were currently looking to buy a home. Renters were allowed to provide more than one reason for renting.

Forty-nine percent of renters had reported a problem to their landlord sometime during the previous year. Black and Hispanic renters were more likely than white renters to have a problem getting their landlord to fix the problem. Among renters who reported a problem, 42% of black renters, 44% of Hispanic renters, and 28% of white renters had moderate or substantial difficulty in getting their landlord to fix the problem. The report notes that part of this disparity may reflect differences in the types of landlords or property management companies renting to different populations.

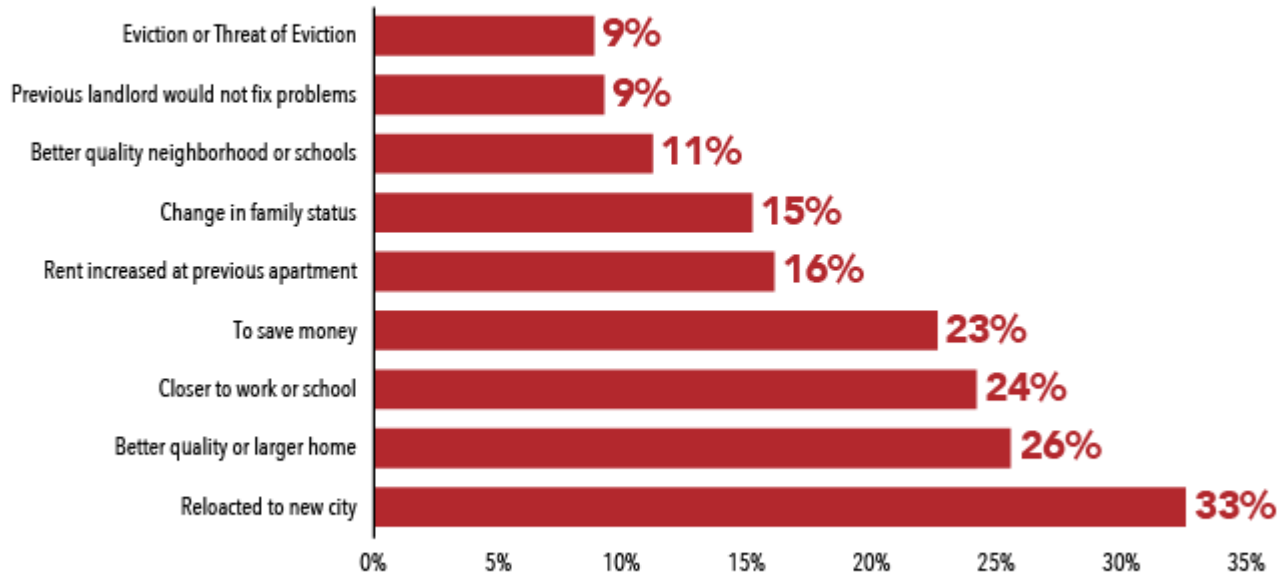
Thirty-seven percent of renters reported that they expected to purchase a home within the next five years. More than 74% of these renters said one reason they expected to buy a home was because they will have saved enough money for a down payment. Sixty-eight percent of them also expected to have higher income to buy a home within the next five years.

Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2016 is available at: <http://bit.ly/2qTwKhw>

Fact of The Week

Why Renters Move

Renters' Reasons for Moving to Their Current Home (Since 2015)



Note: Respondents could select multiple answers. Source: Federal Reserve Board. (2017).

Source: Federal Reserve Board. (2017). *Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2016*. Washington, DC: Author.

From the Field

Working Families in Missouri Face New Challenges as Legislative Session Ends

The 99th general session of the Missouri Legislature came to a close on May 12, sending a total of 75 bills to Governor Eric Greitens (R) for approval. While this represents the fewest approved bills in a single legislative session since 2000, several of this year's new laws are troubling for low income individuals, working families, and their advocates.

The so-called "right to work" (RTW) was signed into law after decades of lobbying efforts pushing for it. Missouri's RTW law allows non-union-member employees to opt out of paying dues for representation costs to the union that represents all employees. Labor rights advocates nationwide argue that such measures are a significant blow to a union's ability to collect revenue to cover its costs, and thereby weakens the union's ability to operate. Labor rights advocates are already organizing a petition to add nullification of the RTW law to an upcoming statewide ballot. A similar question appeared on a statewide ballot in 1978, when 60% of voters rejected making Missouri a RTW state.

Workforce challenges this session were not limited to organized labor. In the final ten minutes before the scheduled end of the legislative session, the State Legislature introduced and passed a prohibition on local communities implementing their own minimum wage ordinances. That legislation was in direct response to St. Louis City passing an ordinance for a minimum wage increase above the statewide minimum, as well as to an anticipated citywide vote in Kansas City to do the same.

St. Louis City had implemented a minimum wage increase to \$10 per hour beginning May 5 but will now be required to lower it back to the Missouri minimum of \$7.70 when the new law goes in to effect on August 28. According to NLIHC's 2016 *Out of Reach* report, the Missouri "Housing Wage," the wage necessary to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment, is \$14.98 per hour, and the Saint Louis City hourly Housing Wage is \$16.15.

This year's legislative session also introduced a sweeping change to the standard by which an individual must prove a discrimination case. Senate Bill 43 weakened discrimination protections by raising the standard for proving discrimination claims and exempting employers from being held liable for discrimination under the Missouri Human Rights Statute. HUD and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission both sent letters warning that, by implementing Senate Bill 43, the Missouri Human Rights Statute would no longer comply with the federal Fair Housing Act, rendering the state ineligible for up to \$1.2 million in Fair Housing Act compliance funding. Mr. Greitens is expected to sign Senate Bill 43 into law, but advocates, including Empower Missouri, an NLIHC state partner, the Missouri NAACP, Missouri Faith Voices, and many others, are organizing a campaign for a vote to overturn the bill in the State Legislature.

Shortly after taking the governorship in January, Mr. Greitens called for a special commission to review statewide tax policy in Missouri. Housing advocates are concerned that resulting proposals may harm the federal and a statewide Low Income Housing Tax Credit, and they are lining up speakers to present at each of four public hearings across the state in May and June.

"While the session has included many setbacks, Empower Missouri celebrates the defeat of some dangerous legislation, like a proposal to block grant or cap Medicaid spending," said Jeanette Mott-Oxford, executive director of Empower Missouri. "Another effort to require renters in dispute with a landlord to establish an escrow account for all payments during the dispute period did not advance beyond committee. Legislation we supported to raise the age at which juveniles are tried in adult courts and incarcerated in adult prisons came close to passing, as did a voucher program allowing low income seniors to purchase fresh produce from local farmer's markets," Ms. Mott-Oxford said.

Shortly after the close of the General Session on May 12, Mr. Greitens called the Missouri State Legislature in for a special session on May 22 to consider a jobs bill. "This year continues to provide new challenges," said Ms. Mott-Oxford. "It is currently believed the Governor will continue to call special sessions to address a variety of items on his campaign agenda, and special sessions in Missouri can last an indeterminate amount of time. We will persist in our advocacy, as we have since 1901."

For more information, contact Jeanette Mott-Oxford at jeanette@empowermissouri.org.

Resource

Guidebook Offers Housing Protections and Advice for Assisting Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Center for Survivor Agency & Justice released *Guidebook on Consumer & Economic Civil Legal Advocacy for Survivors*, a comprehensive resource for legal advocates. The purpose of the guidebook is to offer consumer and civil legal remedies and non-legal advocacy strategies rooted in the experiences of low income domestic violence survivors.

The 15-chapter publication includes a chapter written by the National Housing Law Project on housing protections for domestic and sexual violence survivors. The guidebook also includes topics like building and repairing credit reports, foreclosure defense, and dealing with criminal records and employment rights.

The guidebook notes that there is no safety for survivors of domestic and sexual violence without economic security. Abuse creates economic hardship and poverty that in turn restrict options for safety. Survivors of

domestic and sexual violence experience short and long-term economic challenges. Safety has real costs, and survivors often contend with issues like coerced debt, ruined credit, loss of housing and employment, and identity theft that compound economic insecurity and risk of violence.

The guidebook is available at: <http://bit.ly/2rvL7s7>

Event

NeighborWorks Brings Training Institute to Detroit, August 8-12

The next NeighborWorks Training Institute (NTI) will take place in Detroit, MI the week of August 8-12. 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. In addition to taking training courses throughout the week, participants can attend a mid-week symposium, “[Creating Places of Opportunity: Investing in Neighborhoods](#)” on August 10.

More information about the NTI is at: <http://bit.ly/1Zx8Ima>

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

Other NLIHC News

NLIHC Seeks Interns for Fall Semester

NLIHC is accepting applications for internship positions for the fall 2017 semester. 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.

The available positions are:

- **Field Intern.** Assists the NLIHC 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.
- **Research Intern.** Assists in ongoing quantitative and qualitative research projects, writes weekly articles on current research for NLIHC’s weekly *Memo to Members* newsletter, attends briefings, and responds to research inquiries. Quantitative skills and experience with SPSS a plus.
- **Communications/Media/Graphic Design Intern.** Prepares and distributes press materials, assists with media research and outreach for publication releases, works on social media projects, maintains a media database and tracks press hits. Also assists with sending out e-communications; designing collateral print material such as brochures, flyers, and factsheets; and updating content on the NLIHC website. Graphic design and Adobe Creative Cloud (Illustrator, InDesign, and/or Photoshop) experience needed. Please provide 3 design samples and/or link to online portfolio in addition to a writing sample.

Fall interns are expected to work 25 hours a week beginning in August or September and finishing up in December. 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 applying and that you are interested in the fall 2017 internship.

Interested students should send their materials to: Paul Kealey, chief operating officer, National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005 via email to pkealey@nlihc.org.

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of May 21

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of May 21:

- “Trump Budget Deals 'Devastating Blow' To Low-Income Americans, Advocates Say,” *National Public Radio*, May 23 at: <http://n.pr/2rYZ4iD>
- “For the first time, poor people receiving housing subsidies may be required to work,” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 23 at: <http://on-ajc.com/2qXkL4d>
- “Trump to poor Americans: Get to work or lose your benefits,” *The Washington Post*, May 22 at: <http://wapo.st/2s4qcfw>
- “HUD budget slashes housing programs, drawing protests from advocates,” *Politico*, May 19 at: <http://politi.co/2qCyhKz>

NLIHC Staff

Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245
Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226
Dan Emmanuel, Research Analyst, x316
Ellen Errico, Creative Services Manager, x246
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Sarah Jemison, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244
Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232
Joseph Lindstrom, Manager, Field Organizing, x222
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Sarah Mickelson, Director of Public Policy, x228
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James Saucedo, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233
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Elayne Weiss, Senior Housing Policy Analyst, x243
Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247
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