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NLIHC News

NLIHC to Release the 2018 *Out of Reach* Report on June 13

NLIHC will release the 2018 edition of its annual report *Out of Reach* at 10:00 am ET on June 13. *Out of Reach* documents the gap between renters' wages and the cost of rental housing everywhere in the U.S.

The *Out of Reach* report shows the Housing Wage for every state, metropolitan area, and county in the country. The Housing Wage is 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 average renter wages and minimum wages, as well as wages in the fast-growing occupations, nationally. The report also shows how many hours an individual must work each week for all 52 weeks per year at the prevailing minimum wage to afford a modest one- and two-bedroom apartment at the Fair Market Rent. *Out of Reach* 2018 also provides Housing Wages for ZIP codes in metropolitan areas.

As part of the report's launch, NLIHC will host a TwitterChat on June 13 at 2:30 pm ET. A TwitterChat is a public discussion on Twitter around a specific hashtag. NLIHC will lead the TwitterChat using #OOR18 with the authors of the report. This is your opportunity to ask questions about *Out of Reach* and receive real-time answers from the experts. Engage with others to shed light on the tremendous mismatch between wages and the cost of rental housing in America.

Submit questions through Twitter to @NLIHC or to Lisa Marlow at: [lmarlow@nlihc.org](mailto:lmарlow@nlihc.org)

The 2018 report and an interactive website with detailed data will be available at www.nlihc.org/oor after 10:00 am ET on Wednesday, June 13.

Disaster Housing Recovery

Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition Applauds Committee Approval of CDBG-DR Authorization Bill

The House Financial Services Committee approved on June 7 the "[Reforming Disaster Recovery Act of 2018](#)," (HR 4557) permanently authorizing the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program. The NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) of more than 700 organizations strongly supports HR 4557 and commends Representative Ann Wagner (R-MO) for introducing the bill.

The Reforming Disaster Recovery Act of 2018 includes a number of measures [recommended by the DHRC](#) to help ensure that scarce resources are available to low income disaster survivors and communities that face the greatest recovery needs. The legislation would require states to allocate resources equitably between housing and infrastructure priorities and among homeowners, renters, and people experiencing homelessness. The bill would maintain the requirement that 70% of CDBG-DR funds must benefit low and moderate income communities and would set clearer direction to HUD on when it can adjust this requirement. By directing the Office of Inspector General to oversee program outcomes, the bill would help ensure that CDBG-DR delivers on Congress's intent to serve all eligible survivors. The bill would make public data on the impact of the disaster and how resources are spent, promoting transparency, allowing effective public participation in the development of state recovery plans, and helping state and local governments and philanthropic organizations better identify critical gaps in services. The authorization bill would also help Congress ensure that the recovery process is administered consistently and that dollars flow more quickly to communities in need.

Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) offered amendments to improve the bill, each of which were passed by committee, to: prioritize the one-for-one replacement of federally subsidized affordable housing that is damaged or destroyed; and require communities to create a credible plan for meeting their fair housing obligations.

Watch the committee vote at: <https://bit.ly/23X4pol>

Read the NLIHC and DHRC press release supporting the bill at: <https://bit.ly/2JBwShj>

Read Representative Wagner's press release at: <https://bit.ly/2HvGaGK>

NLIHC Joins Amicus Brief Supporting Suit against FEMA on Behalf of Disaster Survivors in Texas

The Penn State Law Civil Rights Appellate Clinic filed an amicus brief on behalf of NLIHC, the Mississippi Center for Justice, SBP (formerly known as the St. Bernard Project), and Texas Low Income Housing Information Service (Texas Housers), four nonprofit organizations assisting and advocating for survivors of natural disasters in 2015 and 2016. The brief supports a suit filed by Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on behalf of 26 disaster survivors whose homes were damaged in the storms.

The amicus brief argues that FEMA is violating the “due process” clause of the Administrative Procedure Act by lacking an adequate appeals process for survivors deemed ineligible for individual assistance. The brief also argues that FEMA has inconsistent standards for granting or denying claims.

Learn more about the amicus brief at: <https://bit.ly/2LttOkU>

Representatives Call for Hearing on Puerto Rico Disaster Recovery

Fourteen U.S. representatives sent a letter to House Natural Resources Committee Chair Rob Bishop (R-UT), calling on him to hold a hearing to evaluate disaster recovery efforts in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. The letter is in response to a recently published Harvard [study](#) in the *New England Journal of Medicine* estimating the death toll from the hurricane to be upwards of 4,646, far higher than the official death toll of 64.

“It is our responsibility to be honest about the shortcomings of the Trump Administration’s response to this disaster, provide answers to the Puerto Rican people, and take immediate steps to correct any outstanding inadequacies,” the representatives stated. “A timely hearing would contribute to each of these aims.”

Read the full letter at: <https://bit.ly/2Lr7TdX>

Learn more about the study at: <https://bit.ly/2LZm0Iu>

Additional Updates on Disaster Housing Recovery – June 11

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 [6/4](#)). NLIHC also posts this information at our [On the Home Front](#) blog.

Federal Response

GAO

A report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) covering the period from 2008-2016 found that guidelines for why FEMA accepted or rejected requests for Individual Assistance (IA) from states were unclear and inconsistent. It also found that FEMA regions did not consistently obtain and document information on all elements of established IA regulatory factors when making IA recommendations to FEMA headquarters.

FEMA

FEMA representatives were in the greater Houston area [June 4 to June 9](#) to provide expertise and advice on how to protect homes and prepare for the 2018 hurricane season.

FEMA [spent](#) \$74.7 million on a “floating hotel” cruise ship for federal workers in the U.S. Virgin Islands. While the ship was supposed to house 2,056 workers, the average number of nightly passengers was under 800. This came at a rate of \$5,959 per person per week, paid for with tax-payer dollars.

State Action

The Texas General Land Office (GLO) is partnering with the University of Texas at Austin to [conduct research](#) on the housing needs of homeowners and renters affected by Hurricane Harvey. This research will help the GLO identify the best type of housing assistance for individuals receiving CDBG-DR funds. The survey opened on June 4 for two weeks, and can be found at: www.harveysurvey.com.

HUD

HUD announced new [job opportunities](#) in Houston, TX, and San Juan, PR, including regional relocation specialists and environmental protection specialists in the Office of Community Planning and Development.

Local Perspectives

A [protest](#) was held outside of the United Nations Headquarters in New York City on June 2 demanding an audit on the number of casualties caused by Hurricane Maria. The demonstration was in response to the recently published [study](#) that estimated the death toll from Hurricane Maria to be over 4,646 people, far higher than the official death toll of 64. Citizens in Puerto Rico also [protested](#) the inaccurate death toll by placing shoes to represent those who died from Hurricane Maria in front of the capitol building in San Juan.

Hurricane Maria damaged or destroyed over 250,000 roofs, leaving most citizens in [substandard living conditions](#). The Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) installed 59,500 tarps (“blue roofs”) designed to last only a month, and many survivors were forced to install these tarps without professional assistance. In addition, it was reported that only 0.11% of applicants to FEMA’s Individual Housing program received the maximum assistance of \$33,000, while most received less than \$5,000.

It is estimated that one quarter (100,000) of first-lien home mortgages in Puerto Rico are in some stage of [delinquency or foreclosure](#), and well over half of these are hurricane-related. For the third time since Hurricane Maria made landfall, HUD has [announced](#) a foreclosure moratorium for survivors across Puerto Rico, this time until August 16.

Congress

New Democrat Coalition Releases Report on Housing Crisis

The Housing Task Force of the New Democrat Coalition released a report on America's housing crisis on June 6. The report, [Missing Millions of Homes](#), discusses the rising cost of housing, the lack of affordable homes, and policy solutions.

The report states that shrinking federal investments in affordable housing are a primary cause of the rental crisis faced by very low and extremely low income families. Almost all sources of federal funding that support the maintenance and development of affordable homes are stagnant or declining after adjusting for inflation. Too many homes are being lost because of inadequate maintenance, and too few affordable homes are being built to keep up with the demand.

Read the full report at: <https://bit.ly/2sCu8qj>

Read the press release at: <https://bit.ly/2sBr1yN>

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Opposes Cuts to Housing Benefits

Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus sent a letter to HUD Secretary Ben Carson expressing their concerns with the Trump administration's proposal to cut housing benefits and increase rents on low income households and the impact such changes would have on Latinos and other communities of color. Under the administration's proposal, low income families receiving federal housing benefits would pay an even greater share of their incomes on rent. Instead of taking away housing benefits; the lawmakers urge, HUD should implement recent bipartisan reforms that encourage work and strengthen existing programs that promote educational and vocational training and hiring.

The letter states, "Latinos participating in our nation's affordable housing programs will derive no greater benefit from raising monthly rents or reducing income deductions. In fact, if enacted, the proposal will have the exact opposite effect. The proposition of raising monthly rent...will force Latino and Hispanic families to take already limited money away from other important household expenditures like educational attainment, health and childcare, food, and investment in career advancement. [I]ncreasing tenants' monthly rent burden will inevitably lead to non-payment or delinquency that will turn the most vulnerable of the Latino and Hispanic community towards eviction and homelessness."

Read the letter at: <https://bit.ly/2M2fu3Z>

Learn more about Secretary Carson's proposal at: <https://bit.ly/2I7Y4U6>

Florida Democrats Call On Carson to Abandon Proposal to Cut Housing Benefits

Representative Charlie Crist (D-FL) led Democrats in the Florida congressional delegation in sending a letter to HUD Secretary Ben Carson, urging the administration to abandon [its proposal to cut housing benefits](#) – through rent increases, rigid work requirements, and de facto time limits – for millions of the lowest income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, and other individuals. The letter was signed by Florida Representatives Kathy Castor, Alcee Hastings, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Ted Deutch, Frederica Wilson, Lois Frankel, Val Demings, Al Lawson, Stephanie Murphy, and Darren Soto.

In the letter, the Congressmembers criticize the HUD proposal as unfairly targeting single mothers by eliminating deductions for dependents and childcare expenses. Moreover, the policymakers argue that “asking Congress to balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable is unconscionable,” especially after providing massive tax breaks to the top one percent of Americans.

NLIHC president and CEO Diane Yentel is featured in a press release issued by Congressman Crist. “Secretary Carson’s attempts to raise rents on the lowest income people are part of this administration’s larger assault on the entire social safety net,” Ms. Yentel states. “Proposals to take away from struggling families their already limited benefits for housing, healthcare and food in the name of savings to the federal government – just months after giving massive tax cuts to wealthy people and corporations – is the height of cruel hypocrisy.”

Read the press release and Florida delegation letter at: <https://bit.ly/2HAlmxO>

House Committee Holds Hearing on the Definition of Homelessness

The House Financial Services Committee held a hearing on June 6 to discuss HUD’s definition of homelessness and review the “Homeless Children and Youth Act of 2017” (HR 1511), introduced by Representative Steve Stivers (R-OH). The bill would amend the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to expand HUD’s definition of “homelessness” to include children and youth who are living in “doubled-up” housing situations, making them eligible for HUD homeless assistance programs.

Several lawmakers and witness Steve Berg of the National Alliance to End Homelessness acknowledged the good intentions of the bill, but said increasing the number of families and youth eligible for HUD homeless assistance without providing any additional resources to meet the increased need would spread already inadequate resources even thinner. Supporters of the bill asserted that the expanded definition will allow service providers to better serve families and youth who are unstably housed and whose housing needs are not currently being met through existing federal assistance programs.

Watch the archived webcast of the hearing at: <https://bit.ly/2L9EZic>

Learn more about the bill at: <https://bit.ly/2sRjOdf>

Budget and Appropriations

Senate Committee Approves Robust Funding for Affordable Housing in FY19

The Senate Appropriations Committee [voted](#) June 7 to approve a draft FY19 spending bill that provides robust funding for affordable housing and community development programs at HUD. The strong Senate bill is the direct result of the efforts by housing advocates across the nation and congressional champions Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) and Jack Reed (D-RI). The bill will now head to the Senate floor. See NLIHC's [updated budget chart](#).

The Senate bill builds on the 10% increase in HUD funding that advocates and congressional champions secured in FY18 by providing \$1.8 billion in new resources in FY19. Overall, the bill provides HUD programs with more than \$12 billion above the president's FY19 request and more than \$1 billion above the [House bill](#). In doing so, the Senate Committee clearly rejected the calls to [drastically cut housing investments](#) – in the form of funding cuts, harmful rent increases, rigid work requirements, and de facto time limits – proposed by the [White House](#) and [members of Congress](#).

The Senate bill fully funds all existing rental assistance contracts and includes additional resources to provide an estimated 7,600 new vouchers to veterans and youth aging out of the foster care system. In contrast, the House bill does not fully renew Housing Choice Vouchers and Project-Based Rental Assistance, which could result in fewer families being served through these programs.

The Senate bill also increases funding for public housing (\$2.78 billion for capital repairs and \$4.76 billion for operating), Homeless Assistance Grants (\$2.6 billion), Family Self-Sufficiency (\$80 million), Healthy Homes & Lead Hazard Control (\$260 million), and the Office of Policy Development and Research (\$100 million). The bill renews all contracts for Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities (\$154 million) and provides enough funding for new construction under Section 202 Housing for the Elderly (\$678 million). The Senate funds the HOME Investment Partnerships program (\$1.36 billion), Community Development Block Grants (\$3.37 billion) at the robust 2018 levels, despite calls for elimination by the president. The Choice Neighborhoods program, however, receives a \$50 million cut.

It is critical that advocates continue to work with congressional leaders to help enact the higher funding levels provided in the Senate bill and to further expand resources to meet the growing needs in communities throughout the U.S. This year advocates held more than 125 events and activities during the second annual [Our Homes, Our Voices](#) National Housing Week of Action in May. And more than 2,400 organizations signed onto a [national letter](#) urging Congress to protect and expand housing resources, and 1,400 organizations opposed efforts to cut housing benefits.

More details on the Senate spending bill can be found below and in NLIHC's [updated budget chart](#).

Housing and Urban Development

Rent Policy Changes:

As with the House version, the Senate bill rejects the rent policy changes proposed by the Trump administration that would have given HUD the authority to increase the financial burden on current and future tenants of HUD-assisted housing. The Trump administration had proposed providing the HUD secretary the authority to: increase a tenant's rent contributions from the current standard of 30% of their adjusted income to 35% of their gross income; eliminate income deductions for childcare and medical expenses; increase the minimum monthly

rent for tenants living in severe poverty to \$150; and allow housing providers to impose rigid work requirements.

NLIHC and others are encouraged that the House and Senate bills reject these changes and will continue to monitor closely any efforts to impose punitive measures that would jeopardize family stability and increase the financial burdens tenants face.

Regulatory Reform:

The Senate bill directs the HUD secretary to initiate a comprehensive review of existing public housing and rental assistance regulations to identify opportunities to streamline the administration of the programs. To do so, the bill requires the secretary to establish a regulatory advisory committee, which will include public housing agencies and independent subject matter experts. The findings of the committee must be submitted to the House and Senate Appropriations Committee by next year.

National Housing Trust Fund:

Both the House and Senate bills reject the president's proposal to eliminate the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF), the first new federal housing resource in decades that is exclusively targeted to serve people with the lowest incomes. Protecting the HTF in these bills represents a significant victory for housing advocates, including NLIHC. Advocates will continue to urge Congress to increase funding to the HTF through other legislative measures, including housing finance reform, an infrastructure spending package, and others. If the HTF had been eliminated through the appropriations process, it would have become far more difficult for advocates and congressional champions to expand this much-needed resource.

Tenant-Based Rental Assistance:

The Senate bill provides \$22.78 billion for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), including \$20.53 billion for the renewal of all previous contracts. This is critical because the House bill does not fully renew Housing Choice Vouchers, which could result in fewer families being served through these programs.

As with the House bill, the Senate version provides \$40 million for new HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers and an additional \$5 million to serve Native American veterans. The Senate bill provides \$154 million for Section 811 mainstream vouchers, a decrease from the FY18 funding level of \$505 million but higher than the \$107 million requested by the administration. The House bill, on the other hand, would have funded Section 811 mainstream vouchers at \$390 million. The Senate bill also funds \$20 million to support new Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers, but does not include funding for a mobility demonstration, as is included in the House version.

Both bills provide significantly more funding than the president's request, which would have resulted in the loss of more than 200,000 vouchers.

Project-Based Rental Housing:

As with the House bill, the Senate version provides \$11.747 billion to renew Project-Based Rental Assistance contracts for calendar year 2019, an increase of \$600 million above the president's request. Advocates estimate that this funding level is sufficient to renew all contracts with project owners.

Public Housing:

The bill provides the capital account with \$2.775 billion, an increase of \$25 million over the FY18 funding level to allow public housing agencies to better address lead-based paint hazards. This continued robust funding will

enable housing agencies to make critical repairs, such as fixing leaky roofs and replacing outdated heating systems, to improve living conditions for tens of thousands of residents and help preserve this essential part of the nation's affordable housing infrastructure for the future.

Funding for the public housing operating fund increased to \$4.76 billion, up from \$4.55 billion in FY18. The bill also provides a \$5 million increase to the Family Self-Sufficiency program, which is funded at \$80 million.

President Trump had proposed eliminating funding for the capital account and slashing funding for operating expenses in his FY19 budget.

Homelessness:

The bill increases funding for homeless assistance programs to \$2.612 billion from \$2.513 billion in FY18. The president would have funded the programs at \$2.383 billion. Additionally, the bill targets \$50 million to address youth homelessness and continues to waive the requirement that youth 24 years old or under provide third-party documentation to receive housing and supportive services within the Continuums of Care. The bill also provides \$25 million for rapid rehousing assistance for survivors of domestic violence.

The bill funds the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, which the president proposed to eliminate, at \$3.6 million.

Other Housing Programs:

The bill provides \$678 million to the Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program, the same level of funding as FY18. This funding will meet the renewal needs of the program as well as provide \$51 million to produce new homes for seniors. The bill also includes \$10 million for new grants to allow low income seniors to modify or repair their homes to help them age in place.

While the bill decreases funding for the Section 811 Housing for People with Disabilities program from FY18 levels by \$76 million to \$154 million, this amount is sufficient to renew all contracts. The FY18 spending bill provided \$230 million for Section 811, \$82.6 million of which was for new construction.

The bill would level-fund the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program at \$3.365 billion and the HOME Investments Partnerships program (HOME) at \$1.362 billion. Both programs would have been eliminated under the president's budget request. The House version provided \$1.2 billion for HOME.

Funding for the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program was also level-funded at \$375 million. The House version of the bill funded the program at \$393 million, while the president proposed to fund HOPWA at \$330 million.

The Senate rejected President Trump's proposal to eliminate the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, funding the program at \$100 million. This funding level is \$50 million below the FY18 level.

The bill provides level funding of \$655 million to the Native American Housing Block Grant program, \$100 million of which is available for new competitive grants. The program would have received \$600 million under the president's budget. The Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant program was level-funded at \$2 million.

Healthy Homes:

The bill provides \$260 million to the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes' grants, \$30 million more than the FY18 enacted level. The president would have funded the program at \$145 million. From this allocation, \$95 million is targeted to communities with the highest lead-based abatement needs. The bill also provides \$45 million for the Lead Safe Communities Demonstration program that will examine the

effectiveness of multi-year investments in lead-based paint remediation activities in five low income communities.

The bill also takes steps to address the physical conditions of HUD-assisted housing to ensure residents are living in decent and safe homes. It requires HUD to take action against property owners receiving rental subsidies who do not maintain safe properties. The language authorizes the HUD secretary to replace the property's management agent with one approved by HUD, impose civil monetary penalties, change HUD's contract with the property owner until the problem is resolved, transfer the property or contract to a new owner, and relocate tenants, among other actions.

Fair Housing:

The bill flat-funds HUD's office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

The bill also prohibits HUD from directing local governments to change their zoning laws under the agency's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule or with the AFFH assessment tool, as was included in the FY18 and other past spending bills.

House Passes Rescission Package that Includes Cuts to Affordable Housing Programs

The House approved, by a vote of 210-206, a rescission package on June 7. "The Spending Cuts to Expired and Unnecessary Programs Act" (HR 3), based on an earlier proposal by the White House, includes nearly \$15 billion in cuts to previously approved funding. The bill cuts almost \$40 million from HUD's Public Housing Capital Fund, \$40 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Section 521 Rental Assistance program, and \$141 million from the Department of the Treasury's Capital Magnet Fund. The NLIHC-led Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF) sent a [letter to Congress](#) opposing the rescissions. The bill now heads to the Senate, where senators from both parties have voiced opposition to cutting previously appropriated funding.

The rescission package specifically targets funding provided by the Public Housing Capital Fund for the Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) program. This program allows public housing authorities (PHAs) to hire service coordinators who help public housing residents access resources in their communities to help them gain self-sufficiency.

The proposed cuts to the Section 521 Rental Assistance Program would cause the USDA to be unable to fully fund rental assistance contracts for the current fiscal year. This money was intended to be carried over into FY18 and supplement the current appropriation. These funds are needed to ensure there are no shortfalls in the program, which would cause significant harm to rural affordable housing providers and residents.

The proposal also rescinds \$141 million from the Capital Magnet Fund, which awards competitive grants to finance affordable housing and community revitalization efforts. The program's FY17 funding round allowed it to award \$120 million to 40 grantees serving 41 states and the District of Columbia. Those 40 organizations are projected to create approximately 17,000 additional jobs, produce 21,000 affordable homes, and attract more than \$3.2 billion in additional investment in both rural and urban areas. Of that investment, 78% - or \$2.5 billion - is expected to come from the private sector.

Learn more about the rescission bill at: <https://bit.ly/2JAfpWN>

Opportunity Starts at Home

Opportunity Starts at Home: State Campaigns in the Spotlight!

To continue to broaden our multi-sector effort, the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign selected seven [state partners](#) to receive capacity-building grants to broaden and diversify each state's housing coalition to engage other sectors. This effort will ensure that each state has active coalition members from the healthcare, education, civil rights, anti-poverty, and other sectors, in addition to its housing partners.

The current *Opportunity Starts at Home* grantees are:

- [Housing California](#)
- [Idaho Asset Building Network](#)
- [Maine Affordable Housing Coalition](#)
- [Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey](#)
- [Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio](#)
- [Neighborhood Partnerships Oregon Housing Alliance](#)
- [Utah Housing Coalition](#)

Left to right: Gina Wilt, advocacy director for COHHIO;

Karen McLeod, executive director of Extended Housing; Representative David Joyce; Nate Coffman, executive director of the Ohio CDC Association; Bill Faith, executive director of COHHIO.



We will highlight the successes of the other state grantees in upcoming *Memos to Members and Partners*. As the campaign grows over time, *Opportunity Starts at Home* will encourage similar efforts in more states.

These *Opportunity Starts at Home* state grantees are doing extraordinary work. This week we highlight Maine and Ohio.

Making Maine Together



The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition has named its multi-sector state campaign “*Maine Together*” and plans to launch its website and a social media effort later this month. Recently, the coalition penned a sign-on letter to Maine’s congressional delegation advocating for lifting federal budget caps for non-defense discretionary programs. The letter was

signed by 151 organizations from a variety of sectors and was hand-delivered to the office of Senator Susan Collins (R-ME).

Maine Together continues to advocate for more robust federal housing policies and has met with Senator Collins’s staff to discuss their ongoing efforts. They have formalized relationships with 20 cross-sector organizations, and will continue to broaden their reach in the months to come.

Outstanding Outreach in Ohio

The Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) has been working hard to diversify the coalition that makes up the movement for affordable homes. It recently hosted a multi-sector outreach event with Representative David Joyce (R-OH), vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development. Topics included the intersections of affordable housing with the needs of low income college students and the provision of services to people experiencing chronic mental illness. The coalition also hosted event with elected officials outside of Dayton, which included a multi-sector panel on the importance of affordable housing for the lowest income families and a tour of local developments.

The coalition is using these expanded relationships to advocate for stronger federal housing policies. The coalition recently sent a [sign-on](#) letter with endorsements from more than 250 multi-sector organizations to their congressional delegation advocating for increased funding to HUD. COHHIO also published an [op-ed](#) with a coalition member, the Ohio Federation of Teachers, in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

COHHIO recorded brief videos of more than a dozen multi-sector partners discussing the importance of housing and distributed them to Ohio’s congressional delegation through social media. Check out these video postcards on [COHHIO’s YouTube channel](#).

For more on the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign, visit the campaign [website](#) and follow the campaign on all social media platforms [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#).

HUD

NLIHC Joins Amicus Brief Supporting Lawsuit against HUD for AFFH Suspension

NLIHC joined more than 50 housing, consumer, anti-homelessness and anti-poverty advocates in submitting an amicus brief supporting a lawsuit brought by three advocacy groups against HUD for suspending the obligation of jurisdictions to submit an Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) as required by the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule ([see Memo 5/14](#)).

The National Fair Housing Alliance, Texas Low Income Housing Information Services (Texas Housers), and Texas Appleseed filed their suit on May 8, 2018. NLIHC signed onto the amicus brief, citing its long-time support of enforcing the affirmatively furthering fair housing obligations of the Fair Housing Act.

The plaintiffs assert that HUD violated the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) in three ways. First, HUD failed to provide public notice and comment before suspending the AFFH rule's requirement for jurisdictions to submit an AFH. Second, HUD acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner because it did not provide a reasoned basis for the suspension. Finally, HUD abdicated its duty under the Fair Housing Act to ensure that recipients of HUD funds affirmatively further fair housing.

Read the amicus brief at: <https://bit.ly/2JCKtVy>

Learn more about the lawsuit at: <https://bit.ly/2sN3nPe>

HUD Announces Campaign to Safeguard Children from Lead Poisoning

HUD has announced the *Protect Our Kids!* Campaign, a new initiative to safeguard young children from lead poisoning as part of National Healthy Homes Month. The campaign aims to review and enforce compliance with regulations concerning lead hazards. The effort will work to ensure that landlords follow through on their legal obligations to disclose lead-based paint hazards in their properties and that all federally assisted homes in the U.S. are lead-safe.

HUD estimates that indoor environmental hazards, like lead-based paint, mold, pests, water leaks, and more, are present in nearly 30 million U.S. homes. HUD is taking legal action against landlords and local governments to make housing safer.

The press release on the *Protect Our Kids!* Campaign is available at: <https://bit.ly/2kHSfPV>

National Housing Trust Fund

HUD Publishes FY18 Housing Trust Fund Allocations in Federal Register

HUD published the FY18 allocations for the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) in the *Federal Register* on June 5. The allocations totaling \$266 million will go to all 50 states, five territories, and the District of Columbia. The total allocations represent a 22% increase from the 2017 allocations and a 45% increase from the inaugural 2016 allocations. HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) had earlier announced the HTF allocations May (see [Memo 5/7](#))

Read the FY18 allocation notice in the *Federal Register* at: <https://bit.ly/2M1TvtD>

Learn more about the HTF at: <https://bit.ly/1OuBHSN>

An NLIHC-created PDF of HTF allocations is at: [2018 HTF State Allocations](#)

Research

Study Supports Use of Small Area Fair Market Rents

A study by Matthew Palm, "[Scale in Housing Policy: A Case Study of the Potential of Small Area Fair Market Rents](#)," published in *Cityscape* investigates the effects of Small Area Fair Market Rents (FMRs) on the share of

for-rent listings affordable for Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) holders in five metropolitan areas. In four out of the five metro areas, the use of Small Area FMRs would increase rental listings affordable to voucher holders.

Dr. Palm's research looks specifically at five California metro areas: Oakland, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose. Small Area FMRs would significantly increase the total share of rental listings affordable to voucher holders in Sacramento, San Diego, and Oakland, with a smaller increase in San Jose, due to increases in affordable listings in high-opportunity neighborhoods exceeding the losses in low-opportunity neighborhoods. San Francisco would experience a small decrease in affordable listings.

HCVs provide federal rental assistance to help low income families pay for their housing. An HCV pays the difference between the amount a family can afford to pay for rent, roughly 30% of family income, and the total housing cost. The maximum amount covered by vouchers is typically determined by a metropolitan-wide FMR, which is the price families moving today could be expected to pay for modest rental homes in their housing markets.

Metropolitan-wide FMRs, however, fail to account for neighborhood variation in rental costs. Small Area FMRs were created to address this issue by reflecting rent costs in individual ZIP codes. The goal of Small Area FMRs is to provide more assistance for rental units in high-cost neighborhoods and less assistance for rental units in low-cost neighborhoods, thus helping families afford housing in high-opportunity areas. Small Area FMRs should increase the share of listings affordable to voucher holders in high-cost or high opportunity neighborhoods and decrease the share in low-cost or low opportunity neighborhoods.

In November 2016, HUD issued a Final Rule mandating that 24 metropolitan areas use Small Area FMRs. HUD selected these areas based on a number of criteria, including the number and geographic concentration of voucher tenants, a sufficient supply of rental units in high-cost neighborhoods (20% of area's rental units in ZIP codes with Small Area FMRs greater than 110% of metropolitan-wide FMR), and vacancy rates (See *Memo*, [11/21/16](#)). HUD suspended the Final Rule in August 2017 (See *Memo*, [8/21/17](#)), but the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia issued an injunction against the suspension in January (See *Memo*, [1/08](#)).

Dr. Palm's study collected rent data for the five metropolitan areas using Rent Jungle, a comprehensive online database of all rental listings. The study found that Small Area FMRs increased the share of listings affordable to voucher holders in high opportunity neighborhoods for all metropolitan areas except San Francisco. "High opportunity" was indicated by low poverty rates and high academic performance scores.

A potential drawback of using Small Area FMRs is that they may reduce the overall supply of housing affordable to voucher holders, because the lower voucher payment standards in low-cost neighborhoods could make some rental units in those areas no longer affordable. The study found, however, that the use of Small Area FMRs would not cause a large loss in listings affordable to voucher holders in at least the first two years of implementation. It would result in an overall gain in affordable units in four of the areas and only a small loss in San Francisco.

San Francisco would not experience an increase in affordable listings for voucher holders in high-opportunity neighborhoods and would see an overall decline in affordable listings because FMRs do not reflect more recent price escalations. The author suggests a similar outcome might also be seen in Oakland and San Jose if Small Area FMRs were implemented today.

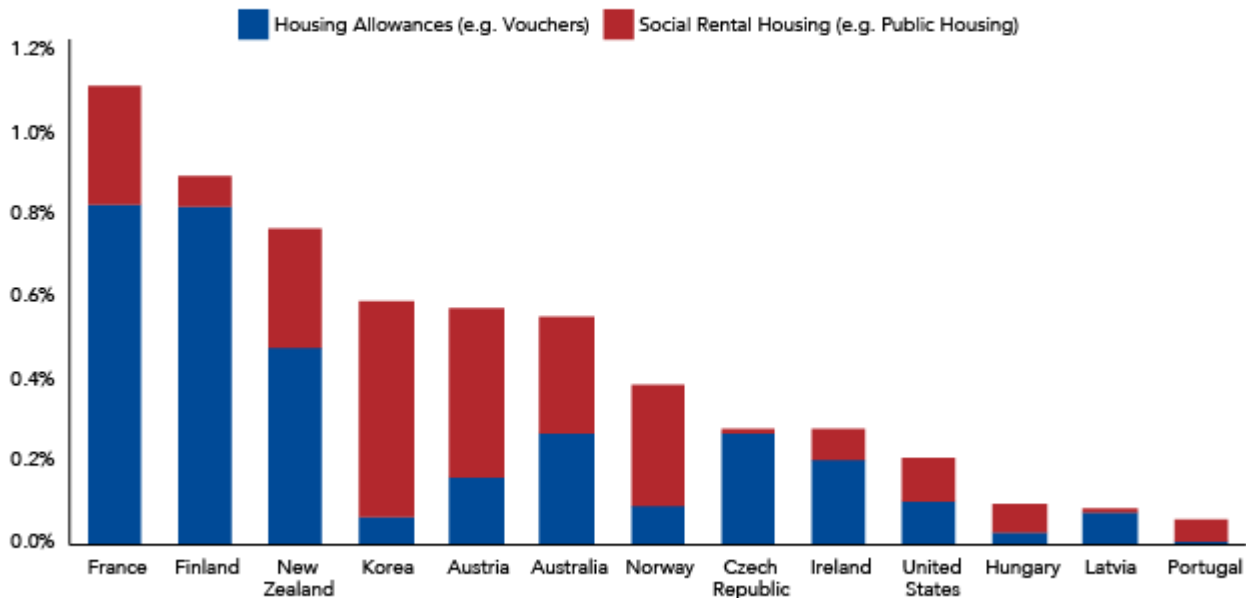
This study supports HUD's criteria for selecting metropolitan areas for Small Area FMRs. HUD mandated the use of Small Area FMRs in Sacramento and San Diego, the two areas shown in this study to benefit the most from the change.

“Scale in Housing Policy: A Case Study of the Potential of Small Area Fair Market Rents” is available at: <https://bit.ly/2M8cQcD>

Fact of the Week

U.S. Lags Far Behind Other Developed Countries in Providing Low Income Housing Assistance

Housing Assistance as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product Among Select OECD Countries



Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) *Affordable Housing Database*, 2018. OECD countries have high income, developed economies. Note: Only includes countries for which OECD provides data for both housing allowances and social rental housing.

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) *Affordable Housing Database*, 2018

From the Field

San Francisco Voters Guarantee Right to Counsel for All Tenants Facing Eviction

During the California state primary election on June 5, San Francisco residents voted to approve a ballot initiative for the city to guarantee legal representation to all tenants facing eviction. The measure, Proposition F, requires the city to establish, fund, and run a program to provide legal representation for all residential tenants in San Francisco, regardless of income. San Francisco joins New York City as the only two cities to pass right-to-counsel legislation.

Following the Supreme Court decision in *Gideon v. Wainwright*, all defendants are guaranteed the right to counsel in felony cases in the U.S., regardless of their ability to pay. The same right does not extend to civil court where housing and eviction cases are heard. As a result, 90% of landlords nationwide are represented by attorneys in housing court, but 90% of residents have no legal counsel. Without representation, tenants are significantly more likely to suffer an eviction. In San Francisco, where thousands of evictions occur annually,

more than 80% of tenants face legal proceedings without representation. The advocates for Proposition F say the new legislation will significantly reduce the number of unfair evictions in the city.

In January 2018, SF Right to Counsel Committee, a coalition of tenant groups and advocates, submitted more than 21,000 petition signatures to send the ballot initiative to voters. Citing the City and County of San Francisco's 2012 commitment to become the first "Right-to-Civil Counsel" city in the U.S., the advocates continued to gather support for the proposal leading up to the vote. Key organizations within the coalition include the San Francisco Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America, the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco, Causa Justa::Just Cause, the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club, the California Nurses Association, and the United Educators of San Francisco.

With 55.6% of residents voting yes to Proposition F, San Francisco will now move towards providing universal access to legal representation for tenants in eviction cases. Previously the city provided basic services to all renters such as tenant's rights counseling, and some tenants were able to find representation from attorneys at nonprofit organizations. Under the new program, all tenants facing eviction will be guaranteed legal representation, with the exception of cases where tenants live in the same unit as their landlord. Proposition F will also require landlords to notify tenants of their intent to evict before filing a lawsuit in the courts.

Some voters expressed concern about the costs and equity of funding legal representation for all tenants rather than creating a means-tested system where only residents with the lowest incomes would be eligible. The New York City right-to-counsel law, for example, is only applicable to individuals who have incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty line.

An impartial analysis conducted by the San Francisco Controller's office found that while the costs of Proposition F will be significant—between \$4.2 and \$5.6 million annually—providing universal access to civil legal services may actually save the city money. Services that keep tenants in their homes help reduce or prevent other costs such as shelters and other homeless services, the office said. The ballot initiative did not specify how the program will be structured or funded, but it requires city officials to implement the program within one year.

Events

North American Housing and HIV Research Summit to be Held in DC, August 1-3

The North American Housing and HIV Research Summit IX will be held August 1-3, 2018 in Washington, D.C. The early bird registration ends June 30. Register at: <https://bit.ly/2kZgeug>

The summit will feature sessions on:

- Structural Interventions and Ending the Epidemic
- Keeping the Flame on the National HIV/AIDS Strategy
- HIV and the Opioid Epidemic
- Collaboration and Coordination HRSA and HUD
- U=U: Undetectable = Untransmittable
- HIV After the Storms: Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands One Year Later

The full agenda is available at: hivhousingsummit.org

The summit will be held at the Capital Hilton Hotel, 1001 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. A room block for the event is available until July 1 at discounted rates for Tuesday, July 31, Wednesday, August 1, and Thursday, August 2. [Click here to register for the hotel room block.](#)

Louisville Hosts NeighborWorks Training Institute, August 20-24

The next [NeighborWorks Training Institute](#) (NTI) will be held in Louisville, KY, the city of thoroughbred racing, baseball bats, and performing arts, the week of August 20-24. The NTI courses, lasting from one-to-five days each, are an excellent opportunity for skill-building and networking. This NTI will also feature a one-day symposium on August 22 on “[Sharing Leadership to Create Inclusive Communities.](#)”

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.

More information about the NTI is at: <https://bit.ly/2s8plMY>

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

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of June 3

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of June 3:

- “Analysis: HUD plan would raise rents for poor by 20 percent,” *CNBC*, June 7 at: <https://cnb.cx/2JqAiEE>
 - “Trump praises hurricane response amid demands for Maria death toll investigation,” *Politico*, June 6 at: <https://politi.co/2Hpg8og>
 - “Houston's Response To A Natural Disaster Might Fix Its Affordable Housing Problem,” *Bisnow*, June 4 at: <https://bit.ly/2kYfyp3>
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More NLIHC News

NLIHC Welcomes Two New Summer Interns

NLIHC welcomes Bethany Gen as the new research intern and Antoine Howell as the new graphic design/communications intern, both of whom will be working at NLIHC for the summer.

Originally from Sacramento, CA, Bethany Gen is a second-year student at Oberlin College in Ohio. She is currently pursuing a B.A. in psychology and politics with a concentration in peace and conflict studies. Bethany is a volunteer for Centro de Servicios Sociales, an organization dedicated to improving the socio-economic status of community residents. She is also an officer for Oberlin Students in Solidarity with Guatemala, a student-led organization that, through its partnership with an indigenous community, works to spread awareness of environmental and social justice issues facing indigenous Guatemalan peoples. Bethany is eager to expand

her work beyond the community level and contribute to NLIHC's mission to achieve universal access to safe and affordable housing.

Antoine Howell is a senior at James Madison University in Virginia. He is currently pursuing a B.F.A in studio arts with a minor in graphic design. He is the president and chaplain of the Beta Delta Delta chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated, managing a wide range of communications and graphic design efforts for the fraternity. Antoine looks forward to gaining professional graphic design knowledge and working with NLIHC to broaden communications about affordable housing to other sectors beyond housing.

Please join us in welcoming Bethany and Antoine to the NLIHC team!

Where to Find Us – June 11

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

- [NFHA National Conference](#) Panel, Washington, DC, on June 12
- [Virginia Housing Alliance Annual Luncheon](#), Richmond, VA, on June 14
- ACHANGE's convening, Little Rock, AR, June 22-23
- [Florida Housing Coalition Annual Conference](#), Orlando, FL, on August 27
- *Reinventing Our Communities: Investing in Opportunity*, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Baltimore, MD, on October 1

NLIHC Staff

Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245
Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244
Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226
Kimberly Curtis, Opportunity Starts at Home Intern, x229
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Ellen Errico, Creative Services Manager, x246
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