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## Congress

### Senate Bill Would Eliminate Nearly All Federal Housing Programs

Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) introduced the “Welfare Reform and Upward Mobility Act” (S. 3047) that would eliminate nearly all federal affordable housing programs by consolidating them into a state block grant. S. 3047 is the Senate companion to H.R. 5360, introduced by Representative Jim Jordan (R-OH) (See *Memo 6/6*). The bill would prohibit Congress from funding means-tested housing programs beginning in 2017.

S. 3047 would consolidate the following programs:

- Housing Choice Voucher program,
- Public Housing,
- Section 8 Project-based Rental Assistance program,
- HOME Investment Partnerships program (HOME),
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants,
- Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program,
- Section 811 Housing for People with Disabilities program,
- Native American Housing Block Grant program,
- Section 101 Rent Supplement Program,
- Section 236 Rental Assistance Payments program,
- Rural Housing Insurance Fund, and
- Assistance programs provided by the Rural Housing Service.

Instead of funding these programs individually, Congress would instead appropriate funds as a block grant to states in an amount that “bears the same relationship” to the amount that a state received for means-tested housing programs for the most recent fiscal year. Over a ten year period, Congress would increasingly reduce funding for housing block grants until 2027 when funding would be cut in half.

States receiving grants would have to provide a 20% match of non-federal funds. States would “have full flexibility to use the amounts of grants to finance a housing provider, service, or program,” and would be allowed to establish a portable voucher system that allows parents with low incomes to use a portion of their grant funds to attend a private prekindergarten education program.

States would have to conduct a “comprehensive self-assessment of the effectiveness and progress” of covered housing programs. The U.S. Comptroller General would also have to conduct a study on different approaches and best practices used by states in carrying out their affordable housing programs in accordance with the bill and report its findings to Congress.

The bill would also impose new requirements on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

The bill currently has three cosponsors and was referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

Learn more about the bill at: <http://1.usa.gov/1Yu5IOZ>

## **Coalition on Human Needs Hosts Briefing on Alleviating Poverty and Expanding Opportunity**

The Coalition on Human Needs, in conjunction with cosponsors including NLIHC, hosted a Congressional briefing Thursday, June 16 entitled “What Works - and What Doesn’t - to Reduce Poverty and Expand Opportunity.” Speakers and panelists critiqued the House Republican anti-poverty plan and discussed a broad range of evidence-based poverty-reduction measures they hoped would be implemented in the future.

Amidst discussion of the importance of nutritional assistance, childcare support, and just labor policies, David Bowers, NLIHC board member and vice president of the mid-Atlantic region for Enterprise Community Partners, emphasized the role that housing policy reform must play in combatting poverty. He urged the expansion of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), a program that assists with the development of affordable housing. Mr. Bowers also advocated for the creation of universal housing vouchers and reform of the mortgage interest deduction (MID), in addition to lauding the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) for “bringing new money into the [affordable housing] system.”

Olivia Golden of the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) opened the briefing with a conversation with LaJuana Clark, a security officer, student, and native Washingtonian. Ms. Clark described the challenge of juggling a job, a full course load, and a continuous struggle to make ends meet. Ms. Golden remarked that Ms. Clark’s situation unfortunately was typical. She explained that the majority of those struggling financially in the U.S. are working, pursuing education, caring for a family—defying unfair representations of the poor.

Melissa Boteach of the Center for American Progress criticized the Republican anti-poverty plan, contending that the plan operates on flawed premises. The first mistaken premise, she stated, was a misunderstanding of the nature of poverty. Ms. Boteach said that, contradictory to the stereotype of the poor being lazy or apathetic, far too many struggling individuals “are working in low-wage, dead-end jobs, and when they are unemployed, they’re looking for jobs.” She said that “when you mischaracterize poverty, it’s easy to mischaracterize the safety net,” leading into an explanation of the second flawed premise: the assumption that the existing social safety net is defunct and wasteful. Ms. Boteach emphasized that, without programs like Social Security, nutritional assistance, and low income tax credits in place, our nation’s poverty levels would be far higher. She warned that Republican proposals, including cuts to Pell Grants and jobless benefits and the block granting of relief programs, pose a significant threat to some of the impactful programs already in place.

Both Ms. Boteach and Liz Schott of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities emphasized that federal assistance programs similar to the largely ineffective Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program should be avoided as anti-poverty policy-making proceeds.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) briefly spoke at the briefing as well. Leader Pelosi stated that Republican policy proposals would exacerbate poverty. She added that policy should “lift up the dignity and worth of every person,” particularly those in our nation who are the most vulnerable.

## **Budget**

### **Amendments to CJS Spending Bill Would Undermine Fair Housing and Census Bureau Funding**

During Senate consideration of the FY17 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill, several senators filed amendments that would undermine the Fair Housing Act and funding for the U.S. Census Bureau. At the same time, the House and Senate have decided not to include the FY17 Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill in the negotiations over a spending package that provides funding for Zika aid and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) filed an amendment to the CJS bill that would prohibit the Department of Justice from enforcing HUD’s discriminatory effects rule. This rule clarifies the use of the disparate impact standard

under the Fair Housing Act to challenge facially neutral policies or practices that constitute housing discrimination. Senator Lee had earlier introduced an amendment blocking enforcement of HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule during debate of the Senate's THUD bill.

Senator Deb Fischer (R-NE) filed an amendment that would cut the proposed funding level for the Census Bureau by \$148 million in order to flat fund the agency, essentially eliminating the resources it needs to ramp up for the 2020 Census. The bill currently provides \$1.5 billion to the Bureau. The cut in funding would force the Bureau to abandon most, if not all, plans to modernize the census. Alternatively, the Bureau would have to eliminate the America Community Survey (ACS), which provides critical data on household incomes and housing conditions. NLIHC and other affordable housing organizations use ACS data to determine the need for affordable housing at the national, state, and local levels. The ACS helps determine how more than \$400 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year.

Senator David Vitter (R-LA) filed an amendment that would add questions on citizenship and legal status to the 2020 Census form in order to exclude undocumented residents from state population totals used to determine congressional apportionment. This amendment could put the accuracy of the 2020 at risk and seeks to achieve a purpose that is unconstitutional. The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states that apportionment of the House of Representatives is based on a full count of all resident in each state, regardless of citizenship or legal status.

It is unclear if any of these amendments will receive a vote when the Senate again takes up debate of the CJS bill later this week. Debate of the CJS bill was delayed when Democratic Senators filibustered the bill to force action on gun control proposals in the wake of the mass shooting in Orlando, Florida.

## **HUD**

### **HUD Issues Proposed Rule to Use Small Area Fair Market Rents**

HUD published a proposed rule to use Small Area Fair Market Rents (Small Area FMRs) instead of 50<sup>th</sup> Percentile FMRs as a means to deconcentrate the use of Housing Choice vouchers in select metropolitan areas. Small Area FMRs reflect rents for U.S. Postal ZIP Codes, while traditional FMRs reflect a single rent standard for an entire metropolitan region. The proposed rule, published in the *Federal Register* on June 16, would apply to tenant-based vouchers, as well as to project-based vouchers approved after the effective date of the Small Area FMR designation. Small Area FMRs would not apply to other HUD programs. The goal is to provide voucher payment standards that are more in line with neighborhood-scale rental markets, resulting in relatively higher subsidies in neighborhoods with higher rents and greater opportunities, and lower subsidies in neighborhoods with lower rents and concentrations of voucher holders.

In the voucher program, the FMR is the basis for determining the "payment standard amount" used to calculate the maximum monthly subsidy for a voucher household. Public housing agencies (PHAs) may establish payment standards between 90% and 110% of the FMR. HUD calculates FMRs for all metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. A single FMR is used throughout an entire metropolitan area, even though these areas generally have many counties with differing housing submarkets. Consequently, in the lowest rent, lowest opportunity neighborhoods, nearly all of the rents qualify for the voucher program, while in high opportunity communities rents are usually well out of reach of the voucher program. FMRs are usually set at the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile gross rent for typical rental units occupied by recent movers in the metro area. The 40<sup>th</sup> percentile means that 40% of the rents are lower than this amount.

The proposed rule would require Small Area FMRs to be used in metropolitan areas where: (1) there are at least 2,500 vouchers under lease; (2) at least 20% of the standard quality rental stock within the metropolitan FMR area is in ZIP codes where the Small Area FMR is more than 110% of the metropolitan FMR; and (3) the

percentage of voucher holders living in low income areas is greater than 155% of the percentage of all renters living in low income areas.

Beginning in 2000, HUD began to set FMRs at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in a few metropolitan areas where voucher families were highly concentrated in order to expand the range of housing opportunities for voucher households and enable them to move out of areas of concentrated poverty. However, research indicates that using the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile FMR is not adequate to enable moves from areas of low opportunity to areas of higher opportunity.

Small Area FMRs will now be used instead of 50<sup>th</sup> Percentile FMRs, and metropolitan areas currently at 50<sup>th</sup> Percentile FMRs that meet the Small Area FMR criteria will transition to Small Area FMRs. Those that do not meet the Small Area FMR criteria will remain as 50<sup>th</sup> Percentile FMRs until the expiration of their three-year 50<sup>th</sup> Percentile FMR period, at which time they will revert to 40<sup>th</sup> Percentile FMRs. PHAs within the 50<sup>th</sup> Percentile FMR area reverting back to a 40<sup>th</sup> Percentile FMR will maintain their ability to request approval to keep payment standards at the 50<sup>th</sup> Percentile FMR.

The 31 metropolitan areas that meet HUD's criteria for Small Area FMRs under the proposed rule are at Appendix A of the *Federal Register* notice and in a June 15 press release, <http://1.usa.gov/1S9iy0P>.

NLIHC responded to HUD's request last summer for comments on Small Area FMRs (see *Memo*, 7/6/15). NLIHC expressed concern over the potential harm that a transition to Small Area FMRs could cause to voucher recipients living in low cost ZIP codes where the payment standard would be reduced. Voucher holders may be responsible for higher rental costs if they stay in the same apartment after a hold harmless period is over. NLIHC proposed that HUD categorically exempt tenants from any reduction in their payment standard as a result of the transition to the Small Area FMRs for as long as they remain in their existing unit.

HUD's proposed rule instead states that, in accordance with current regulation, a hold harmless period up to the second annual reexamination of income will follow any decline in payment standards. This time period ranges from 13 to 24 months. HUD acknowledges that families with a disabled member may face barriers to moving and experience rent increases because of their current neighborhood's reduced payment standard, but refers to the wide latitude that PHAs have in setting higher payment standards for disabled tenants as a "reasonable accommodation" for their disability.

NLIHC also expressed concern over the potential for landlords to exit the voucher program where payment standards in low rent neighborhoods sharply decline. NLIHC proposed that HUD phase in Small FMRs over a few years.

HUD is seeking public comment by August 15 on the proposed rule and on a number of specific issues. The specific issues include:

- What additional policies or requirements should the final rule include to mitigate the impact of FMR decreases in certain ZIP codes on families with assistance currently living in those ZIP codes?
- Whether the final rule should limit the decline in the FMR for a ZIP code resulting from the implementation of Small Area FMRs.
- Whether there are specific populations for whom the transition to Small Area FMRs would be particularly burdensome. What are the ways in which the proposed rule could create a disproportionate burden on certain groups like elderly and disabled voucher holders?
- Whether there are certain situations or any specific groups of voucher recipients, such as people with disabilities or elderly recipients, where voucher holders should be exempt from having their voucher

payment standard change due to specific hardships they may encounter from having to choose between moving or staying and receiving a lower payment standard.

- Whether or not other HUD rental assistance programs would benefit from using Small Area FMRs.
- What other criteria should HUD use to select metropolitan areas that will be impacted by the proposed rule and why are those criteria important?

The proposed rule is at: <http://1.usa.gov/260pemu>

## **HUD Makes Changes to Interim Continuums of Care Rule**

HUD has made two amendments to the current interim Continuum of Care (CoC) program regulations. One amendment allows individuals and families to choose to live outside of a CoC's geographic area while keeping their tenant-based rental assistance funded through the CoC program under certain conditions. The other amendment exempts CoC recipients and subrecipients from complying with all non-statutory regulations when a program participant moves outside of the CoC's geographic area in order to flee from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

A recipient is an entity that applies for CoC program funds and signs a grant agreement with HUD. A subrecipient is a private nonprofit organization, state or local government, or instrumentality of a state or local government that receives a sub-grant from the recipient to operate a project.

The amended interim rule allows a program participant to choose housing outside of the CoC's geographic area as long as the following conditions are met:

- The decision is made in consultation between the program participant and the recipient or subrecipient.
- The recipient or subrecipient may decline the request if the recipient or subrecipient is unable to comply with all CoC program requirements in the area outside of its geographic area, such as ensuring housing quality standards, calculating the program participant's income, conducting an annual assessment of the program participant's service needs, making supportive services available, and providing monthly case management in situations involving rapid rehousing (RRH) projects.
- The receiving CoC is not involved in the decision to allow a program participant to move. The receiving CoC may not prohibit a program participant from moving into its geographic area.
- The program participant remains in the Homeless Management Information System of the CoC where the program participant is enrolled for assistance.

HUD issued an interim CoC rule to take effect on July 31, 2012 and accepted comments until October 1, 2012. Commenters wrote about the difficulty providers have in locating affordable housing within their CoC's geographic area because of the high cost of housing. Commenters also noted that limiting use of CoC tenant-based assistance to the CoC's geographic area restricted resident choice and limited opportunities for program participants to identify affordable housing, contrary to the obligation to affirmatively further fair housing.

Regarding a program participant who has tenant-based rental assistance and is fleeing imminent threat of harm from domestic violence, the existing interim rule allowed moves outside of the CoC geographic area, subject to the program participant having complied with all program requirements. The amended interim rule exempts the recipient or subrecipient from regulatory requirements, such as conducting an annual assessment of the service needs of the program participant. However, the recipient or subrecipient must still comply with statutory requirements, such as ensuring housing quality standards and ensuring the education needs of children are met.

The amended interim rule is at <http://1.usa.gov/260sGtN>

## Research

### Survey Finds Widespread Support for Affordable Housing

The MacArthur Foundation released findings from its *2016 How Housing Matters Survey* on June 16. Eighty-one percent of respondents believed that housing affordability is a problem, and 68% believed that securing stable, affordable housing is more challenging today than it was for previous generations. The results also indicate strong support for solutions that address the nation's housing problems.

Sixty-three percent of respondents felt that a “great deal” or “fair amount” of things can be done to solve the problem of housing affordability and 76% believed it should be addressed by their elected leaders in Washington. This was true for respondents across political affiliations, with 88% of Democrats, 75% of Independents, and 62% of Republicans agreeing. Sixty-three percent of respondents indicated that the issue of housing affordability hasn't received sufficient attention from presidential candidates.

The survey also asked respondents about a range of local, state, and federal housing policy solutions. Every policy solution, including those targeted to help low income renters, was supported by at least 70% of respondents. Seventy-three percent of respondents favored expanding rental assistance for the 14 million Americans who qualify for housing assistance but don't receive it, and at least 76% favored expanding federal housing programs to ensure that low income families with children receive assistance.

The proposal that received the greatest support (81%) was to “revise the federal income tax code so that more families with incomes from \$40,000 to \$70,000 receive tax benefits intended to help them purchase homes.” This indicates potential support for the [United for Homes](#) campaign proposals to reform the mortgage interest tax benefit for homeowners from a tax deduction to a tax credit. Lower income homeowners are less likely to benefit from a deduction because they don't earn enough to itemize on their taxes, but they would benefit from a mortgage tax credit. United for Homes also calls for lowering the portion of a mortgage against which tax relief is applied from the first \$1.1 million of a mortgage, which benefits wealthiest homeowners, to \$500,000, and investing the savings into affordable housing.

The following table provides the level of support for the various policies described in the survey:

<b>Policy Description</b>	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
Revise the federal income tax code so that more families with incomes from \$40,000 to \$70,000 receive tax benefits intended to help them purchase homes.	81%	16%	3%
Expand federal housing policies and programs to ensure that families earning less than \$30,000 with children under age eighteen receive some assistance with their housing costs.	80%	18%	2%
Allow developers to build more housing units if they include units that are affordable to families making less than \$50,000.	79%	18%	3%
Expand federal housing policies and programs to ensure that low-income families with children under age eighteen receive some assistance with their housing costs.	76%	22%	2%

Require that at least 20% of housing in local communities is affordable for families making less than \$50,000.	74%	23%	3%
Ensure that federal programs, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, provide enough income assistance to cover housing costs.	74%	22%	4%
Expand rental assistance to ensure that the approximately 14 million Americans who currently qualify for rental assistance but are not receiving it, get it.	73%	24%	3%
Give renters a federal tax break, similar to the federal tax break homeowners currently get when they deduct the interest they pay on their mortgage.	70%	26%	4%

According to Julia Stasch, MacArthur Foundation’s President, “Having a decent, stable, affordable home is about more than shelter: It is at the core of strong, vibrant, and healthy families and communities. This survey demonstrates that the public wants action to address the nation’s real and pervasive housing affordability challenges.”

The *2016 How Housing Matters Survey* is the fourth annual national survey commissioned by the MacArthur Foundation. The Melville Charitable Trust and the Kresge Foundation also supported the survey, which was conducted by Hart Research Associates.

The *2016 How Housing Matters Survey* is available at: <http://bit.ly/1UeQeZE>

### **Federal Housing Expenditures Disproportionately Benefit Higher Income Homeowners**

A publication by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), titled *Chart Book: Federal Housing Spending Is Poorly Matched to Need*, illustrates the extent to which federal housing expenditures disproportionately benefit higher income homeowners, while leaving 75% of qualified low income renters without housing assistance. Seven million households with annual incomes greater than \$200,000 received at least \$83 billion in federal housing expenditures in 2014, while the 55 million households with incomes less than \$50,000 received \$30.2 billion. Households with annual incomes above \$200,000 receive an average benefit more than four times greater than the average benefit received by households with annual incomes below \$20,000. Approximately 70% of the \$190 billion in federal housing expenditures last year went to homeowners.

The largest federal housing expenditures are the mortgage interest and property tax deductions taken by homeowners on their federal income tax returns. Forty percent of the more than \$100 billion expended on these two deductions goes to families with incomes above \$200,000. Meanwhile, less than \$50 billion is spent on the major federal housing programs for low income households – public housing, Housing Choice vouchers, Section 8 project-based rental assistance, and low income housing tax credits.

Low income renters, particularly extremely low income (ELI) renters whose household income is less than 30% of the area median income, have the greatest need for housing assistance. In 2014, ELI renter households accounted for 70% of all severely cost burdened renter households spending more than half of their incomes on housing. Housing Choice vouchers, Section 8 project-based rental assistance, and public housing are highly effective in helping over 5 million of our nation’s neediest families. However, current levels of funding fall short of the large and growing demand. Only one in four eligible households receives assistance.



Chart Book: *Federal Housing Spending Is Poorly Matched to Need* is available at <http://bit.ly/1UM8ruF>

## **Much More Needs to be Done to House Homeless Students**

A report by Civic Enterprises and Hart Research Associates, *Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools*, analyzes the increase in housing instability among children in public schools. The McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act was passed thirty years ago to provide infrastructure and supports to homeless families with children, but much more needs to be done to assist the more than 1 million school-aged (K-12) students experiencing homelessness. The report details the scope of mental and physical health challenges homeless students face, issues that are largely unseen and ineffectively addressed by school support services. Schools are inadequately connecting homeless students to housing.

The authors conducted telephone focus groups with McKinney-Vento state coordinators for the education of homeless children and youth and with McKinney-Vento district liaisons, and they administered a quantitative online survey to 504 district liaisons. The district liaisons serve as the facilitators between homeless families, school district staff, and other service providers. The state coordinators provide technical assistance to districts and cooperate with the U.S. Department of Education to assess the educational needs of homeless youth. Forty-four interviews were also conducted with currently homeless youth in cities and in rural areas, where much less is known about homelessness and where resources can be more difficult to access. The researchers also surveyed 158 previously homeless 18-24 year-olds.

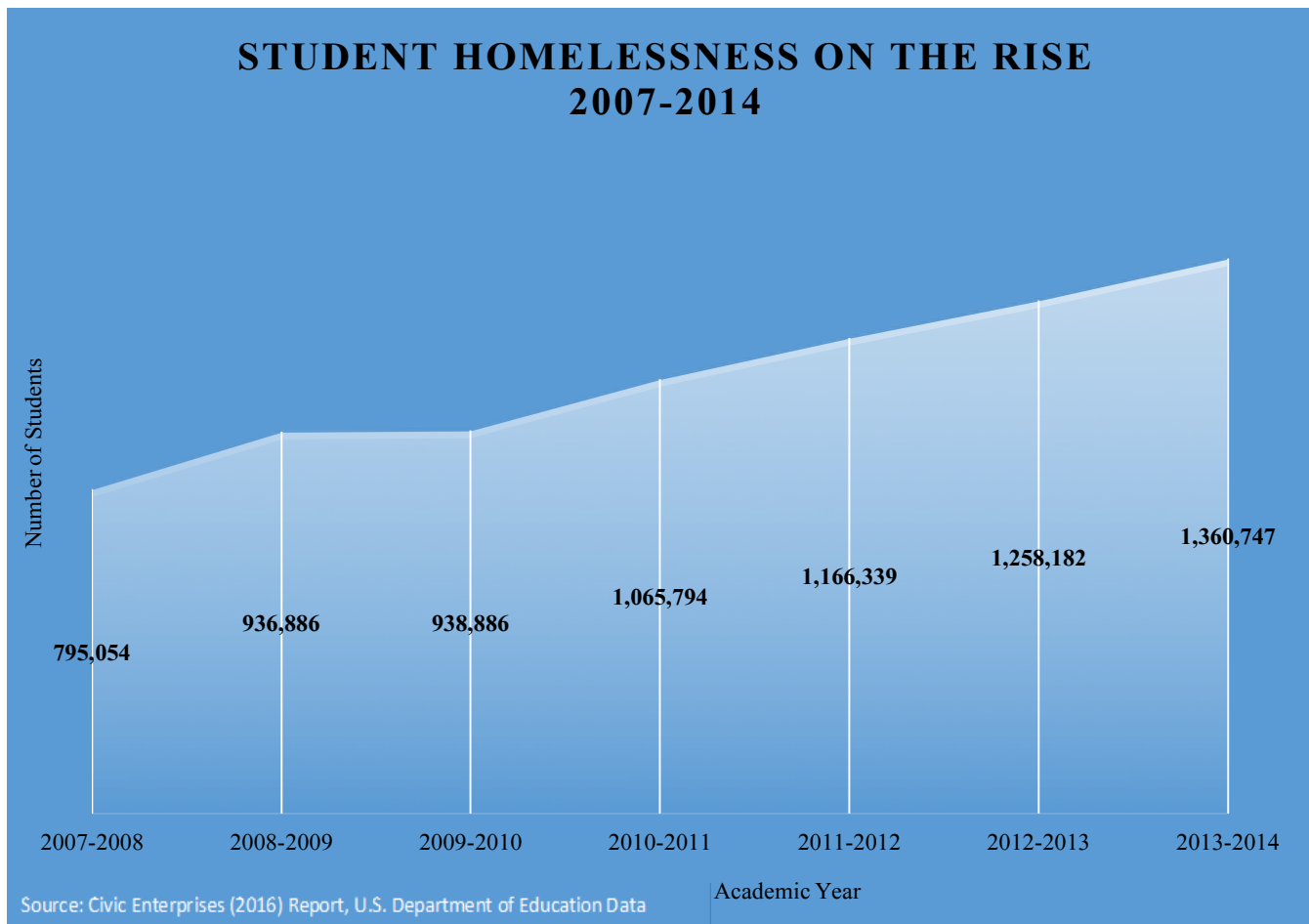
Only 29% of the district liaisons believed their schools were doing a good job of connecting homeless students to housing. Ninety percent of liaisons reported that they work in another capacity other than as homeless liaisons within their school district, and 89% said they spend less than half of their working hours on their homeless liaison responsibilities. Just 69% of liaisons reported they had worked with shelters, transitional housing or local and city government agencies and programs. When asked to identify the biggest obstacles they face, liaisons pointed to the lack of government and community resources for homelessness programs, shelters, services. The greatest obstacle, they said, "is a lack of affordable housing."

Sixty-seven percent of formerly homeless youth reported they were uncomfortable talking with people at their schools about their housing issues and related challenges. Only 25% of youth believed their schools were doing a good job of connecting them to housing, the lack of which affects their success in school. Forty-two percent of youth surveyed said they have at one or more times dropped out of school, often due to the difficulty of establishing proof of residency when switching schools or re-enrolling.

The report calls for providing safe, stable housing for all homeless students, in a similar way that school breakfasts and lunches are provided to low income students. Increased public funding is needed to establish host home programs, school partnerships with housing agencies, and other innovative efforts to ensure homeless youth can access existing housing assistance. The authors argue that increased investments in decent, affordable housing and the support services needed to connect students to this housing are needed to ensure each student has the ability to succeed and excel.

The full report can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/1rlvu57>

## Fact of the Week



Source: Civic Enterprises. (2016). *Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools*. Ingram, et al. <http://civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/HiddeninPlainSightOfficial.pdf>

ED Data Express. "Total Number of Homeless Students Enrolled in LEAs with or without McKinney-Vento Subgrants-Total (2013-2014). U.S. Department of Education. <http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/data-element-explorer.cfm/tab/trend/deid/5353/state/US/>

## Housing in the Elections

### Housing Advocates Provide Input to Political Party Platform Committees

Dr. Sheila Crowley, former president and CEO of NLIHC, testified before the Democratic National Committee (DNC) Platform Drafting Committee on June 8 on the housing needs of the lowest income people. NLIHC also submitted a statement to the DNC and Republican National Committee (RNC), and the NLIHC-facilitated Campaign for Housing and Community Development (CHCDF) submitted statements to both the DNC and RNC Party Platform Committees.

Dr. Crowley described the severity of the affordable housing shortage in America. She stated that nationally there are 10.4 million extremely low income renter households, but only 3.2 million rental homes that are available and affordable to them. As a consequence, 75% of extremely low income households are paying more than half of their incomes on rent.

“Having a home to which one can return at the end of the day is fundamental to human existence,” Dr. Crowley testified. “A home is a common human need and a human right. It is essential to success in all other spheres of modern life. Yet like so many other aspects of the American economy, housing, the physical manifestation of home, is riddled with inequality. Federal, state, and local housing policy and housing finance are weighted in favor of the better off. Eviction, foreclosure, housing poverty, homelessness, substandard conditions, unfair lending, and illegal discrimination are experienced by millions of people in the United States every day. We can and should do better.”

Dr. Crowley made several policy recommendations for the Platform Committee to consider, including preserving and expanding affordable housing programs through reforming the mortgage interest deduction and mandatory federal spending, ensuring the housing needs of people with criminal records are addressed in criminal justice reform, and protecting the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule.

NLIHC submitted a statement to the Platform Committee with similar recommendations. The statement emphasizes that “[a] home is vital to the success of every individual and of our nation as a whole, and we must ensure that the lowest income people have access to safe and secure housing. We urge the DNC to continue its commitment to overcoming wealth inequality in America and to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to succeed by expanding access to decent, affordable housing through a realignment of US housing policy priorities.”

CHCDF submitted statements to both the RNC and DNC Party Platform Committees. More than 25 national organizations signed onto the statements, which read in part: “[Affordable housing] programs have helped to provide stable homes for millions of families and, through innovation, will continue to provide safe and affordable housing for decades to come. However, the impact of these proven, effective programs is limited when resources are inadequate for their implementation and evaluation. We urge you to support expanding investment in these critical housing programs that serve as the foundation of opportunity for so many families.”

Sheila Crowley’s testimony is at: [http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Crowley-DNC\\_platform\\_testimony\\_June\\_8\\_2016.pdf](http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Crowley-DNC_platform_testimony_June_8_2016.pdf)

NLIHC’s statement is at: [http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/NLIHC\\_DNC\\_Testimony\\_2016.pdf](http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/NLIHC_DNC_Testimony_2016.pdf)

CHCDF’s statements are at: [http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/CHCDF\\_Statement-to-DNC-Platform-Committee.pdf](http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/CHCDF_Statement-to-DNC-Platform-Committee.pdf) and [http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/CHCDF\\_Statment-to-RNC-Platform-Committee.pdf](http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/CHCDF_Statment-to-RNC-Platform-Committee.pdf)

## **From the Field**

### **New Hampshire Housing Advocates Win Increased Funding for Supportive Housing**

New Hampshire housing advocates, including Housing Action NH, an NLIHC state partner, are celebrating a vote by the State Legislature for a \$2 million appropriation for supportive housing for people with substance use disorders within an omnibus bill to address the opioid and heroin addiction crisis in the state. This level of funding is more than double the appropriation in 2015.

[Senate Bill 533](#) specifies that the \$2 million appropriation must be used for the development of supportive housing for people living with and recovering from substance use disorders. The bill also provides an additional \$3 million in funding for prevention and treatment programs aimed at addressing the state’s growing addiction crisis.

The supportive housing appropriation, which was originally introduced as a standalone proposal by Senator Dan Feltes (D-Concord), was combined with SB 533’s other provisions and passed the State

Senate unanimously. At the urging of housing advocates, the House revision of SB 533 amended the bill to clarify which state agency would receive the supportive housing funding.

The \$2 million appropriation will be allocated to New Hampshire's Affordable Housing Fund. The Fund, created in 1988 without a dedicated funding source, depends on authorized appropriations each year. Including this year's SB 533 appropriations, State legislators have elected to provide appropriations to the Fund only five times since its creation. The Fund has received \$12.6 million over the nearly 30-year history of the program.

After a major effort by advocates to educate key legislators on the importance of the Fund, the state legislature appropriated \$800,000 to the Fund in 2015, the program's first funding since 2007. With the success of SB 533, advocates are celebrating not only the second consecutive year of appropriations for the Fund, but also its more than doubling of funding from last year.

Proponents of SB 533's supportive housing funding included law enforcement officials, homeless shelter directors, and supportive housing providers. All stakeholders testified to the challenges of combatting the addiction crisis and to its intersection with housing. Advocates argued that full recovery from addiction is unlikely if a person with a substance use disorder does not have access to permanent housing with supportive services. Housing Action NH targeted its advocacy on SB 533 toward key members of the State House, including Minority Leader Steve Shurtleff (D-Penacook) and Speaker Shawn Jasper (R-Hudson).

"We're pleased that the New Hampshire House and Senate have begun to understand the important role state funding plays in addressing the lack of affordable homes in the Granite State, and it gives us hope that future requests will be looked upon favorably," said Elissa Margolin, director of Housing Action NH.

In all its advocacy work, Housing Action NH has prioritized the inclusion of supportive housing services and tenancy supports in Medicaid. With passage of SB 533, New Hampshire's legislature has taken the important step of recognizing the role supportive housing plays in long-term recovery and improved outcomes for people with substance use disorders.

Governor Maggie Hassan (D) is expected to sign the omnibus bill.

For more information, contact Elissa Margolin at [elissa@housingactionnh.org](mailto:elissa@housingactionnh.org).

## **North Carolina Housing Advocates Anticipate Budget Victory**

Emphasizing housing as a bipartisan issue, the North Carolina Housing Coalition (NC Housing Coalition), an NLIHC state partner, has played a lead role to reverse a decade-long trend of declining levels of state funding for affordable housing. In a complex political landscape, the NC Housing Coalition helped secure a total of \$31.1 million for affordable housing in the House and Senate budgets. The state budget is in conference and is expected to pass by the end of June.

North Carolina had previously been a model of strong affordable housing assistance. The state had dedicated millions to both the North Carolina Housing Trust Fund (NCHTF) and a state housing tax credit used to supplement the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit. Ten years ago, the NCHTF was funded at more than \$20 million, and in 2010 the state's housing tax credit was worth nearly \$55 million. But with a change of political leadership in 2010, the state's priorities changed. Lawmakers ended the housing tax credit and established a Workforce Housing Loan Program, which is funded through annual appropriations and received just \$10 million in its first year, a precipitous reduction from the tax credits' \$55 million. Support for the

NCHTF similarly declined, while the need for affordable housing in North Carolina has steadily risen. In 2015, there was a shortage of 213,782 homes that were affordable and available to extremely low income renters. To address the gap between need and supply, the NC Housing Coalition has advocated strongly to increase state funding for affordable housing, particularly for those most in need. Central to their advocacy efforts is bringing together a broad, bipartisan coalition of affordable housing providers, funders and advocates in support of common goals.

The past two budget cycles have shown signs that the tide may be shifting in state funding for affordable housing. Last year funding for affordable housing increased for the first time in 10 years. That has been followed by another modest but positive increase in the budgets passed this year by the House and Senate. The 2016 budget includes \$7.66 million for the NCHTF (which is level funding from last year), \$15 million for the Workforce Housing Loan Program (a \$2.5 million increase), \$3 million to match federal HOME program funding (a \$1.5 million increase), and \$5.5 million for the Community Living Housing Fund, which is a transfer of funds from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to meet federal requirements for housing persons with disabilities. This level of appropriations not only allows vital programs to expand but also suggests that both public and political opinion on affordable housing is moving in a positive direction, thanks in large part to the work of housing advocates.

“Focusing on housing as the first rung on the ladder of opportunity not only for families, but for entire communities as well, the NC Housing Coalition has ensured an array of advocates can and will coalesce around the issue,” said Samuel Gunter, NC Housing Coalition’s Director of Policy and Advocacy.

For more information about efforts to expand affordable housing through the North Carolina state budget, contact Samuel Gunter at [sgunter@nchousing.org](mailto:sgunter@nchousing.org).

## Events

### Live NLIHC Podcast on *Out of Reach 2016*

NLIHC will be airing a live podcast radio show to discuss the findings of this year’s *Out of Reach* report and the housing affordability crisis in the U.S. Listeners will have the opportunity to call-in with questions. The show will be aired on Tuesday, June 28 at 3:00 pm ET. You can listen to the broadcast at: <http://bit.ly/1Unt3t8>.

Launched last month, *Out of Reach 2016*, which documents the mismatch between the wages households earn and housing costs everywhere in the U.S., has received extensive media attention. The study found that in no state, metropolitan area or county in the United States can a full-time worker earning the prevailing minimum wage afford a modest two-bedroom apartment or, almost everywhere, a modest one-bedroom apartment. How large are the gaps? What do people with the lowest incomes do to pay rent? What public policy solutions are available to address the affordability crisis? Tune into this live program for answers.

Speakers for this broadcast will be:

- Diane Yentel, president and CEO, National Low Income Housing Coalition
- Andrew Aurand, Vice President Research, National Low Income Housing Coalition

Listen to the live show at: <http://bit.ly/1Unt3t8>

Access the interactive *Out of Reach 2016* website at: [www.nlihc.org/oor](http://www.nlihc.org/oor)

The call-in number to participate in the broadcast is: (516) 418-5693

## **Congressional Briefing on Why Housing Matters in Criminal Justice Reform**

NLIHC is cosponsoring a congressional briefing on June 24 at 2 pm at the Capitol Visitor Center in Washington, DC, that focuses on why housing matters in criminal justice reform. The briefing will explore why we must ensure the reentry population has access to decent, affordable homes. It will also explore the barriers to housing those individuals continue to face and the current efforts to revisit and reform policies that have worked to exclude people with criminal records from federally subsidized housing.

Speakers include:

- Kristen Clarke, president and executive director, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
- Cashauna Hill, executive director, Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center
- JoAnne Page, president and CEO, Fortune Society
- Daryl Atkinson, Second Chance fellow, Department of Justice

Each year in the U.S., millions of individuals return to their communities after being released from state and federal prisons and local jails. For the reentry population, access to stable, safe, and affordable housing is crucial to ensure these individuals can get back on their feet and turn their lives around. Housing provides a platform for positive outcomes for the formerly incarcerated, their communities, and their families. Unfortunately, barriers to housing often prevent many from having a second chance after serving their time and increase the likelihood of recidivism and homelessness.

Organizations sponsoring the briefing include: National Low Income Housing Coalition, National Fair Housing Alliance, National Alliance to End Homelessness, Coalition for Juvenile Justice, Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund, Fortune Society, Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force, National Disability Rights Network, and Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

This is a closed press event.

Please RSVP by June 23rd at noon. See the briefing invitation for details at: <http://bit.ly/1UInc7H>

## **Webinar on Protecting Tenants in RAD Communities**

The National Housing Law Project (NHLP) will hold a webinar focused on protecting tenants in communities where their public housing is being converted to project-based vouchers (PBV) or Section 8 project-based rental assistance (PBRA) through the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). The webinar will be held on Wednesday, June 29 at 2:00 pm ET.

Tenants who live in properties converting through RAD have important rights that are critical to the success of the RAD program, such as the right to remain at the property after RAD conversion, continued rights to establish and operate a resident organization, and continued rights of a resident organization to receive resident participation funding.

The webinar will explore how tenant leaders, tenant advocates, and legal services attorneys can secure these tenant rights at each major stage of a RAD conversion. The webinar will draw upon the experiences of tenant advocates in RAD-converting communities nationwide.

[Click here](#) to see which communities have one or more public housing properties going through a RAD conversion.

The webinar presenter will be Jessie Cassella, Abascal legal fellow, NHLP.

Register for the webinar [here](#).

More information about RAD is at <http://bit.ly/1Yfa0E9>, and on page 4-13 of NLIHC's *2016 Advocates' Guide*, <http://bit.ly/22QZiEm>

## **Webinar on Housing Programs Streamlining Rule**

The National Housing Law Project (NHLP) will conduct a webinar about HUD's "Streamlining Rule" issued in March (see *Memo*, [3/7](#)). The rule revised regulations governing many federal housing programs, including public housing, the Housing Choice voucher program, and the Section 8 project-based multifamily housing program. The webinar will be held on Thursday, June 23 at 2:00 pm ET.

Presenters will help residents and advocates learn whether their local public housing agency (PHA) or private Section 8 owner is in compliance with these regulatory changes and how individuals can effectively advocate given the changes.

The webinar will discuss:

- Whether a PHA is required to provide copies of grievance hearing decisions.
- Whether the procedure for requesting a reasonable accommodation for a payment standard up to 120% of the fair market rent has been simplified.
- What happens if a household began receiving the earned income disregard (EID) prior to publication of the streamlining rule?
- PHAs' quarterly utility reimbursement.

The webinars presenters are:

- Deborah Thrope, staff attorney, NHLP
- Stephen Knight, interim co-executive director, NHLP

Register for the webinar at: <http://bit.ly/1WFpIsX>

## **Detroit NeighborWorks Training Institute**

The next NeighborWorks Training Institute (NTI) takes place August 8-12 in Detroit, MI. The NTI offers more than 100 course offerings in affordable housing development and financing, housing asset management, community engagement, community revitalization, housing counseling, nonprofit management and leadership, and many other areas. The Wednesday symposium at the NTI is titled "Creating Places of Opportunity: Investing in Neighborhoods" and will involve a day-long exploration of innovative strategies for restoring competitiveness to distressed areas, catalyzing investment in neighborhoods, and creating vibrant communities.

More information about the NTI and symposium are at: <http://bit.ly/26048o9>

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

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