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Congress

Senator Bennet and Representative Clyburn Introduce Bill to Provide Tenants Facing Eviction Legal Assistance

Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) and House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC) introduced the “[Legal Assistance to Prevent Evictions Act](#)” on February 13. If enacted, the bill would establish a competitive grant program to provide free legal assistance to households facing eviction that have incomes less than 135% of the federal poverty guidelines or that are rent cost-burdened regardless of income.

This bill is the latest in a series of proposals to address the eviction crisis. Nonprofit organizations and government entities with experience providing no-cost legal assistance to low-income renter households would be eligible to apply for grants. Preference would be given to applicants who propose using grant funds in areas with high eviction rates or where government entities have laws and regulations promoting tenants’ rights. Preference would also be given to applicants with demonstrated experience providing legal services in eviction cases, particularly for people with limited English proficiency or people with disabilities.

“There is growing evidence that evictions are not just a condition of poverty, but a cause of poverty – one that does disproportionate harm to people of color,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel in Senator Bennet’s press release on the bill. “Evictions have broad, destabilizing, and harmful effects on individuals and families, negatively impacting everything from health to education. I applaud Senator Michael Bennet, Chairman David Price, and Majority Whip Jim Clyburn for introducing legislation to help more families receive the legal assistance needed to avoid evictions when possible.”

The bill text is at: <https://bit.ly/3bCRAsz>

Senator Bennet’s press release is at: <https://bit.ly/2vtEkpr>

Representative Meng Introduces House Companion Bill to End Homelessness

Representative Grace Meng (D-NY) introduced the “Pathway to Stable and Affordable Housing for All Act” ([H.R. 5813](#)) in the House on February 7. A companion to the Senate bill introduced by Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI) in November 2019 ([S. 2946](#); see *Memo*, [11/25/19](#)), the bill would effectively end homelessness through robust investments in the national Housing Trust Fund, full funding for rental assistance, and expanded funding for homelessness programs.

More than 500,000 people experience homelessness on any given night, and three in four households eligible for housing assistance are turned away due to chronic underfunding of key housing programs. This bill would ensure that every household eligible for rental assistance receives the help they need to afford their homes. The bill would also invest \$400 billion in the national Housing Trust Fund and \$130 billion for McKinney-Vento homeless assistance grants over ten years.

The bill text is at: <https://bit.ly/2uz3HWY>

More about the bill is at: <https://bit.ly/2UNFJlf>

Members of Congress Introduce Bill to Eliminate Asset Limits for SNAP, TANF, and LIHEAP

Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Representatives TJ Cox (D-CA), Kim Schrier (D-WA), and Jimmy Gomez (D-CA) introduced the “[Allowing Steady Savings by Eliminating Tests \(ASSET\) Act](#)” on February 11. The bill proposes eliminating asset limits for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and raising asset limits on Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The bill aims to improve financial security for low-income Americans and remove barriers to program applicants.

TANF, SSI, LIHEAP, and SNAP provide vital assistance to help low-income households afford basic necessities like food, shelter, and heating for their homes. Asset limits can prevent households from meeting eligibility requirements for these programs and are often set so low it becomes difficult for enrolled households to save money without losing benefits. Recognizing this problem, some states have already removed asset limits for applicants.

The ASSET Act would prohibit states from applying asset limits for TANF, SNAP, and LIHEAP, while maintaining income-limit requirements. The bill would also increase the asset limit for SSI from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for an individual and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for a couple, indexed to inflation in future years. The bill currently has eight co-sponsors and endorsements from NLIHC and other advocates.

Read a one-pager on the bill at: <https://tinyurl.com/wngqjz8>

Read Senator Coons’ press release at: <https://tinyurl.com/u55cn7s>

Read Senator Brown’s press release at: <https://tinyurl.com/t7386pw>

Read Rep. Cox’s press release at: <https://tinyurl.com/w3grmdt>

Read the bill text at: <https://tinyurl.com/vyajkbz>

Take Action

Take Action to Oppose Deep Cuts to Affordable Housing Proposed by the Administration

President Trump and HUD Secretary Ben Carson’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 budget request – [released on February 10](#) – proposes to slash funding for HUD by an astounding \$8.6 billion or 15% below 2020 enacted levels, not including those cuts offset by increased FHA receipts.

At a time when the affordable housing crisis has worsened and homelessness is increasing in some communities, Secretary Carson’s proposal would eliminate vital housing programs, including the national Housing Trust Fund, and all funding for public housing capital repairs. He would eliminate the HOME Investments Partnership program and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), starving communities of needed resources for affordable housing and community development. Secretary Carson proposes cutting public housing operating funds by 21% (\$3.57 billion) and Housing for Persons with AIDS by 20% (\$330 million).

Secretary Carson proposes to cut funding for the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA or Housing Choice Vouchers) program by \$5 billion (not including additional increases needed to cover inflation), while creating a separate Moving to Work (MTW) account with \$5.2 billion in reallocated and reduced funding from public housing and tenant-based rental assistance, essentially block-granting reduced funding to MTW public housing agencies (PHAs). Taken together, these changes could mean up to 160,000 families losing housing assistance over time.

For more details, see NLIHC's [updated analysis](#) of the president's budget request and our [updated budget chart](#).

Take action to support affordable housing funding!

In response to these budget threats, NLIHC and other national leaders of the [Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding](#) (CHCDF) are urging advocates to take action to oppose the president's budget.

Congress needs to hear from you about the importance of increased investments in affordable housing. Below are three ways to learn more and make your voices heard:

1. [Join a national webinar today at 3:30 p.m. ET](#), hosted by NLIHC and other members of CHCDF, to learn more about the president's budget and the funding outlook for affordable housing and community development programs in FY21.
2. [Sign a national letter](#) urging Congress to ensure transportation and housing programs receive the highest amount of funding possible for FY21. Because the FY21 letter is substantially similar to the funding letter sent last year, we are asking organizations already signed on to let us know if you would like to opt-out of the letter by emailing outreach@nlihc.org. See if your organization signed onto last year's letter [here](#).
3. Join advocates across the country in support of affordable homes by participating in the 4th annual *Our Homes, Our Voices* [National Housing Week of Action](#), May 2–12. Week of Action events can range from rallies and film screenings to panel discussions, letter-writing campaigns, tours of housing developments, voter registration activities, and more. Start planning now to engage with your members of Congress during the Week of Action and unite with communities throughout the country in calling on Congress and 2020 presidential candidates for increased investments in affordable housing.

Sign National Letter Urging Housing Investments in Infrastructure Package

House Democrats have unveiled a \$760 billion blueprint for an infrastructure package that does not include robust resources to build or preserve affordable and accessible homes for America's lowest-income seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, families with children, and other individuals.

Congressional leaders need to hear from you! Please sign onto a national letter urging Congress to include in any infrastructure bill at least \$5 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and \$70 billion to repair public housing.

Sign the letter at: <https://sforce.co/2S4u3rm>

Background

The connection between affordable housing and infrastructure is clear: like roads and bridges, affordable housing is a long-term asset that helps communities and families thrive. An infrastructure bill presents a critical opportunity to build and preserve homes affordable to our nation's lowest-income households.

The HTF is the first new federal housing resource in a generation exclusively targeted to building and preserving housing affordable to people with the lowest incomes. Most states have chosen to use their HTF investments to build, rehabilitate, or preserve affordable rental housing for extremely low-income veterans, seniors, people with disabilities or special needs, and people experiencing homelessness.

Public housing is home to nearly 1 million households and plays a critical role in providing safe, decent housing to families with the greatest needs. Due to decades of declining capital funds, however, public housing now faces a backlog of capital repair needs of as much as \$70 billion, threatening the quality and even the existence of these homes. Without sufficient resources, 10,000 to 15,000 public housing apartments are lost each year to obsolescence or decay.

Take Action

Please join organizations across the nation in urging congressional leaders to include in any infrastructure package at least \$5 billion for the HTF and \$70 billion for public housing capital funds.

[Sign the letter today!](#)

Urge the Trump Administration to Support Evidence-Based Approaches to Ending Homelessness

Homelessness is one of our country's most urgent, tragic and solvable crises. We cannot end homelessness, however, by ignoring the evidence about what works. For this reason, NLIHC, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and other national leaders are urging organizations to sign onto a letter expressing concerns about the Trump administration's rejection of evidence-based approaches to ending homelessness.

Sign the letter at: <https://sforce.co/2UfhZY>

Background

It is critical that any federal effort to address homelessness is rooted in evidence and data. Dr. Robert Marbut, President Donald Trump's pick to lead the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), rejects evidence-based approaches to ending homelessness, including "Housing First" and initiatives to stop the criminalization of homelessness.

Housing First and anti-criminalization efforts are supported by [decades of learning and research](#), which has led to broad, bipartisan agreement that the solution to homelessness starts with an affordable home coupled with supportive services to help individuals address other challenges, not with a ticket or jail.

To end homelessness once and for all, our nation must significantly expand investments to make homes affordable for people with the lowest incomes, and Housing First and efforts to stop the criminalization of homelessness must remain the foundation for any federal approach to addressing homelessness.

Take Action

Please sign onto [this national letter](#) to ensure that any federal action on homelessness is based proven solutions and then tweet about it using the hashtag #HomesEndHomelessness.

[Read and sign the letter today!](#)

Fight for Housing Justice

Webinar About Proposed Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule Available Online

NLIHC and other members of the [Fight for Housing Justice](#) campaign hosted a webinar on February 13 about HUD’s proposed Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule. Speakers provided a brief history of housing segregation and of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, reviewed HUD’s previous 2015 AFFH rule, summarized the administration’s proposed rule, and discussed how to take action. The [recording](#) and [slides](#) are available online.

HUD’s proposed AFFH rule would gut the landmark 2015 AFFH rule that provided guidance and tools to state and local governments and public housing agencies to help them better identify and address harmful patterns – often created by government policy – of segregation, discrimination, and disinvestment. The 2015 rule was developed over several years with input from a wide variety of stakeholders.

The proposed rule is not a fair housing rule. It emphasizes increasing the supply of housing, conflating “affordable housing” with “fair housing choice.” It does not ensure that any increase in housing supply is even affordable to low-income and extremely-low income households, much less be available to protected classes people that face of many obstacles to fair housing choice (see *Memo*, [1/13](#)). Public comments on the proposed rule are due March 16.

Look for sample comment letters soon at: <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org>

Additional resources, news and op-eds, and a comment portal are at: www.FightForHousingJustice.org.

The webinar recording is at: <https://bit.ly/2wa13qP>

The webinar slides are at: <https://bit.ly/39rWlmo>

Submit a comment opposing the proposed rule at: <https://bit.ly/2tXSX41>

Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020

Presidential Candidate Buttigieg Releases Affordable Housing Plan

Mayor Pete Buttigieg joins other Democratic presidential candidates in releasing bold plans to address the nation’s affordable housing crisis. All those who have run for the Democratic nomination, with the exception of former Vice President Joe Biden, have released affordable housing plans, most centering on the needs of the lowest-income households. Mayor Buttigieg’s [plan](#)—released yesterday—does likewise, aiming to increase the overall supply of available, affordable, and accessible homes by over 2 million.



Mayor Buttigieg’s proposal would invest \$154 billion over ten years in the national [Housing Trust Fund](#) (HTF) to support the construction, maintenance, and operation of 1.4 million new affordable homes for people with the greatest needs. It would also direct the Department of Treasury and HUD to collaborate with state housing financing agencies to ensure strong HTF investments in rural and native housing, housing for domestic violence survivors, and housing for individuals with disabilities.

Mayor Buttigieg’s plan would invest in the long-underfunded public housing program, providing up to \$50 billion to modernize and repair public housing. The plan would also institute “aggressive controls to ensure that local public housing authorities monitor and eliminate lead hazards” and invest in public housing technology improvements.

The plan would increase investments in the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program by over 50% over five years to build over 500,000 affordable homes.

Mayor Buttigieg would seek to address homelessness for families with children through a series of initiatives such as emergency rental assistance, rapid-rehousing, tenant education, and cooperative housing development.

There is a nationwide shortage of 7 million homes affordable and available to the lowest-income renters, and just one in four deeply poor families that qualify for housing assistance receives it. According to a recent poll commissioned by NLIHC's [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) multisector affordable homes campaign, 85% of Americans believe ensuring everyone has a safe, decent, affordable place to live should be a "top national priority." Eighty percent said Congress and the president should "take major action" to make housing more affordable for low-income people. Mayor Buttigieg's housing plan is another example of presidential candidates responding to voters' calls for action on this critical issue.

NLIHC's nonpartisan [Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020](#) candidate and voter engagement project is elevating solutions to the nation's housing crisis in the presidential campaign and tracking what all the candidates have to say about housing and homelessness. Learn more at: www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org

Read Mayor Buttigieg's housing plan at: <https://p4a.us/housing>

Learn How Housing Providers Can Register and Mobilize their Residents to Vote During NLIHC February 20 Podcast

Join NLIHC for a podcast "The Role of Housing Providers in Registering and Mobilizing Voters" on February 20 at 3:00 pm ET. Register for this podcast and NLIHC's entire 15-month "[Third Thursdays at Three](#)" webinar and podcast series on nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement, free to the public, at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3t9gfr2>

How can housing providers, such as public housing agencies (PHAs), owners and managers of HUD-assisted private Project-Based Rental assistance properties, and operators of Low Income Housing Tax Credit housing, register residents to vote and then mobilize their residents to vote? Learn how during a February 20 podcast. Presenters will also explore ideas about how PHAs can conduct voter registration with Housing Choice Voucher households who are often harder to connect with during registration drives because the households are scattered.

NLIHC provides [an array of nonpartisan resources, tools, and training](#) about increasing voter registration and turnout by low-income renters, as well as about engaging candidates leading up to the 2020 elections. The webinars and podcasts feature subject matter experts and advocates with frontline experience.

The presentations take place at 3:00 pm ET on the third Thursday of each month. All sessions will be recorded and posted to the [Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020 website](#) for those who cannot attend the live broadcasts. The full list of webinar topics includes:

- Session 1: Legal Considerations for Election Engagement for 501(c)(3) organizations, September 19 (watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 2: Developing an Effective Plan for Voter Engagement Work, October 17 (watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 3: Helpful Tools and Partners for Election Engagement, November 21 (watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)

- Session 4: Voter Registration Part 1 – Messaging, Events, and Canvassing, December 19 (watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- Session 5: Voter Registration Part 2 – Finding and Registering Residents of Subsidized Housing, January 16 (watch recording at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>)
- **Session 6: The Role of Housing Providers in Registering and Mobilizing Voters, February 20**
- Session 7: Getting Candidates on the Record, March 19
- Session 8: Educating Voters, April 16
- Session 9: Housing Issues and Ballot Initiatives, May 21
- Session 10: Overcoming Common Obstacles to Voting, June 18
- Session 11: The Challenge of Voting While Homeless, July 16
- Session 12: Voter Mobilization Part 1 – Early Voting and Vote-by-Mail, August 20
- Session 13: Voter Mobilization Part 2 – Protecting Low-Income People from Voter Intimidation and Voter Caging Tactics, September 17
- Session 14: Election Day! Getting Out the Vote, October 15
- Session 15: After the Vote – Holding Candidates to their Promises, November 19

The *Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020* website is at: <https://bit.ly/37vMvz2>

Register once for all webinars/podcasts and receive reminders at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3t9gfr2>

Watch recordings of previous webinars at: <https://bit.ly/338Ydho>

Opportunity Starts at Home

Campaign Submits Statement on “Bold, Bipartisan Solutions to Eviction Crisis” to House Financial Services Committee

The [*Opportunity Starts at Home*](#) (OSAH) multi-sector affordable homes campaign submitted a [Statement for the Record](#) to the House Financial Services Committee in advance of its January 14 hearing, “On the Brink of Homelessness: How the Affordable Housing Crisis and the Gentrification of America Is Leaving Families Vulnerable.” The campaign’s statement, “Bold, Bipartisan Solutions to the Eviction Crisis,” contains six sections:

- Section I explains the causes and pervasiveness of the nation’s eviction epidemic.
- Section II explores how a lack of stable, affordable housing drives negative outcomes in other areas like education, health, food security, upward mobility, homelessness prevention, economic growth, criminal justice, racial equity, and domestic violence.
- Section III discusses recent public opinion polling showing that elected officials have a clear mandate from the public to take bold action.
- Section IV highlights the promise of the “Eviction Crisis Act,” introduced in December, 2019, by Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Rob Portman (R-OH), along with Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Todd Young (R-IN). Among various other promising provisions, the legislation includes the creation of an emergency rental assistance program to test, evaluate, and expand proven interventions to help low-income households facing housing instability due to an unexpected economic shock. This policy solution was developed and championed by the OSAH campaign, which worked closely with the bill’s sponsors.

- Section V explains why emergency rental assistance is needed to avert the downward spiral of housing instability, eviction, and homelessness.
- Section VI presents research demonstrating that many tenants face eviction over relatively small sums of money – in many cases, one month of rent or less – and that emergency rental assistance programs demonstrate effectiveness across the country and save taxpayer money.

Read the statement [here](#).

Follow the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign on all social media platforms: [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Be sure to [sign up](#) for our e-newsletter to get the latest updates about the campaign, including new multi-sector partners, [calls to action](#), events, and [research](#).

Disaster Housing Recovery

Members of Congress Call for Investigation of Puerto Rico Recovery Funding Delay, Call for Increased Assistance after Deadly Earthquakes

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) led ten other members of Congress in [requesting an inquiry](#) by the HUD Inspector General into whether the Trump administration’s continued delay in providing disaster recovery funding for Puerto Rico violates the law – specifically the Impoundment Control Act of 1974. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released an [opinion](#) in January saying the president violated that law by delaying security assistance appropriated by Congress to Ukraine. Using that precedent, the lawmakers requested that HUD’s Office of the Inspector General review the delays in assistance to Puerto Rico.

To date, Puerto Rico has received only \$1.5 billion of the almost \$20 billion in recovery and mitigation funding appropriated by Congress. The lawmakers’ request comes after the speedy passage of emergency supplemental appropriations in the House on February 7. [That bill](#) provides more than \$3 billion in recovery funding as Puerto Rico continues to deal with the aftermath of deadly earthquakes (see *Memo*, [2/10](#)).

"For two years, HUD Secretary Ben Carson wrongfully withheld critical mitigation and disaster recovery funding approved by Congress for Puerto Rico," said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel in a [press notice](#) announcing the request. "While the administration now claims that it will release the funds, it has proposed steep restrictions that could promote the interests of investors over Puerto Ricans, undermine living wage standards, lead to further displacement, and set up pretenses for additional delays by HUD. I thank Senator Warren for working to hold the Trump administration accountable for these outrageous delays and its willingness to put the lives of U.S. citizens at risk."

In other Puerto Rico recovery news, Representative José E. Serrano (D-NY) led a group of New York lawmakers in [sending a letter](#) to FEMA Administrator Peter Gaynor, urging the agency to enter into an agreement with HUD to put into effect the [Disaster Housing Assistance Program](#) (DHAP) to assist survivors of the recent deadly earthquakes in Puerto Rico. Without this program, many Puerto Rican disaster survivors on the island and others who have fled to New York and other states may struggle to afford housing.

Additional Disaster Housing Recovery Updates - February 18, 2020

The following is a review of additional disaster housing recovery developments since the last edition of *Memo to Members and Partners* (for the article in the previous *Memo*, see [02/10](#)).

Federal Action and National News

Measures to combat climate change have once again [been left out](#) of President Trump’s budget request. The spending blueprint for FY21 also lays out significant cuts to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency staff and programming.

The House Veteran Affairs Committee held a [hearing to discuss](#) the “Veteran’s Home Loan Disaster Recovery Act,” which would reduce home-loan fees to veterans affected by natural disasters. Representative Joe Cunningham (D-SC) stated, “When disaster strikes, every American – especially our veterans and service members – deserve to know that their country is there for them.”

[Emergency Legal Responders](#), a Louisiana-based organization working in disaster recovery, is asking legal aid organizations to [fill out a survey](#) to determine the extent to which legal professionals are aware of existing disaster legal resources, whether or not they use these resources, and how effectively they believe their legal community has mobilized such resources in past disasters.

Puerto Rico Earthquakes and Hurricane Maria

Nine additional municipalities in Puerto Rico have been [approved](#) for FEMA’s Individual Assistance Program, bringing the total up to 25.

FEMA has approved the [Transitional Sheltering Assistance](#) (TSA) program for six municipalities in Puerto Rico. TSA provides eligible earthquake survivors temporary hotel or motel lodging. This move comes after members of Congress wrote to the agency asking for the program to be authorized.

Approximately 175 students have fled Puerto Rico to enroll in Connecticut schools since a string of earthquakes rattled the island beginning in December, 2019. More than [2,000 students migrated from Puerto Rico to Connecticut](#) to attend school since the Hurricane Maria in 2017. In response, the Connecticut Department of Education may request additional federal assistance for both Connecticut and Puerto Rico to meet the need. U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) joined other members of Congress in asking the HUD Office of the Inspector General to investigate a potential violation in the Impoundment Control Act due to HUD’s failure to release disaster recovery funds.

Tropical Storm Imelda and Hurricane Harvey

Texas

Developers in Houston have submitted [proposals to build](#) 23 mixed-income apartments in the city after Hurricane Harvey. Approved developers would receive tax credit assistance and Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds.

A Hurricane Harvey [buyout kick-off meeting](#) was held in Grimes County to discuss guidelines and funding for the buy-out process. Grant funds are limited, so officials urge eligible participants apply in time.

Hurricanes Florence and Matthew

North Carolina

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper (D) and other state officials [visited homes](#) damaged by Hurricane Matthew. Officials look to receive CDBG-DR funds for rebuilding of Hurricane Florence-affected areas soon as well. “Many North Carolinians are still feeling the impact of these storms,” stated the governor.

California Wildfires

Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit equity totaling \$100 million will be used to pay for [housing projects in 13 counties](#) negatively impacted by California wildfires in 2017 and 2018. Under pressure from disaster recovery advocates, including Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) members, California Treasurer Fiona Ma withdrew her plan to utilize some of the tax credit funding for homelessness projects in non-fire-affected areas.

Caseloads for [disaster case managers](#) in Northern California are growing as the recovery from California's 2018 wildfire season continues. Despite new training initiatives, many case managers are being overwhelmed.

The Chico City Council is debating [accepting a zoning appeal](#) that would prevent a resident from providing temporary housing for Camp Fire survivors on their property. The city Community Development Director approved the property owner's request to house four RV's on the site, but an appeal was issued from an adjacent neighbor citing concerns about noise pollution, water supply, and waste management.

Hurricane Michael

Florida

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis (R) [announced](#) the launch of a Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's (DEO) effort to access more than \$735 million in CDBG-DR funding to provide long-term recovery assistance for Hurricane Michael-impacted communities. The DEO will be holding public hearings for individuals to provide input on the State Action Plan.

REBUILD Northwest Florida, a residential hurricane mitigation program, is [closing for good](#) due to dwindling funds and completion of projects for likely clientele.

Bay County's county manager provided optimistic [updates](#) regarding Hurricane Michael recovery efforts and stated, "Housing is the county's number one priority moving forward."

Older Disasters

2011 Massachusetts Tornado: Springfield, MA was hit by a deadly tornado in 2011 that destroyed a significant number of homes in the Maple High-Six Corners area of the city. While the recovery has been progressing, the city received [no bids](#) for three lots slated to be used for affordable housing. City officials said they would now reevaluate the bidding process and seek more proposals.

HUD

HUD Proposes Changes to the Equal Participation of Faith-Based Organizations Rule

HUD proposed drastic changes to the "[Equal Participation of Faith-Based Organizations](#)" rule (§5.109) on February 13. The proposed changes would remove the requirement that faith-based service providers receiving federal funds take reasonable steps to refer the people they serve to alternative providers if requested, and it would strip the requirement that providers give beneficiaries written notice of their religious freedom rights. Among other proposed changes, HUD would expand the existing exemption that allows faith-based organizations to accept federal grants and discriminate in employment. The proposed changes put the interests of taxpayer-funded entities ahead of the needs of people seeking critical services. NLIHC has prepared a "[redline](#)" review of the proposed changes. Comments on the proposed rule are due April 13.

The HUD proposed rule is one of eight other similar rules intended to implement [Executive Order \(EO\) 13831](#) issued on May 3, 2018. The eight other federal agencies that issued similar changes to §5.109 are the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Justice, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Veterans Affairs, and the Agency for International Development. The proposed changes for the other eight agencies were published on January 16 with only a 30-day comment period, which closes today (February 18) at 11:59 pm ET. Readers interested in submitting a comment regarding any of those other eight agencies can go to a [commenting portal](#).

Americans United for Separation of Church and State has a four-page [background overview](#) about the proposed rules for HUD and the other eight agencies, as well as [examples of social services](#) programs affected and likely harms. In addition, the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination (CARD) has an [18-page comment template](#) that offers a deeper analysis. CARD is a diverse group of religious, civil rights, education, labor, health, LGBTQ, and women's organizations formed in the 1990s to monitor legislative and regulatory changes impacting government partnerships with religious and other nonprofit organizations and, in particular, to oppose government-funded religious discrimination.

The proposed changes would remove the requirement that faith-based service providers receiving federal funds take reasonable steps to refer the people they serve to alternative providers if requested. A person who is uncomfortable at a provider might forgo getting the assistance they need because they are unable to find an alternative provider on their own. For example, a gay homeless teen might not seek shelter at a facility funded with HUD's Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program because the shelter is run by a religious organization and they know the religion condemns them for being gay. Someone who is Jewish might forgo affordable housing funded by HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program because they might feel uncomfortable at a facility with Christian iconography throughout, even though receipt of HOPWA funds requires secular content only. A single, pregnant mother might not seek services from a faith-based provider that condemns her for having children outside of marriage.

The proposed rule would eliminate the requirement for faith-based service providers to provide a written notice to the people they serve of their religious-freedom rights, including that a provider cannot discriminate against beneficiaries based on their religion or force beneficiaries to participate in religious activities, and that beneficiaries have a right to seek an alternative provider. Refusing to inform beneficiaries of their rights leaves them vulnerable because they do not know that they can object to discrimination, proselytization, or religious coercion when getting government-funded services. People using government-funded social services cannot exercise their rights if they do not know they have them.

The proposed rule would expand the existing exemption that allows religious organizations to accept grants and discriminate in employment with taxpayer funds. Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, religiously affiliated employers, using their own funds, may prefer co-religionists in employment. The existing regulations wrongly extend the Title VII exemption, which has been highly controversial since it was adopted, to government-funded jobs. The justification for the Title VII exemption—to maintain the autonomy of religious organizations and independence from the government—should disappear when the organizations solicit government grants.

HUD's proposed change would extend this exemption even further, allowing faith-based organizations to base employment on the basis of acceptance of or adherence to the religious tenets of the organization. This makes it easier for providers to claim religion as a pretext to discriminate against people on other protected bases. HUD would allow a faith-based organization to fire or refuse to hire someone who is LGBTQ, a person who uses birth control, or a woman who is pregnant and unmarried, because the employer finds those employees do not correctly practice their religion.

Although the proposed rule states that all organizations participating in HUD programs must follow program requirements, it adds that such requirements are subject to any appropriate accommodations under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). Consequently, faith-based organizations can use RFRA as an exemption to allow them to deny access to the program if the organization has a religious objection. A transgender woman, therefore, could be turned away from a woman's emergency shelter, or a same-sex couple could be refused a lease at a Project-Based Section 8 property.

In addition, households with Housing Choice Vouchers might also be denied leases if landlords have religious objections to particular voucher holders. A voucher is considered "indirect" federal financial assistance; it is provided to the household and not an organization. Theoretically, a voucher household has a choice where to use a voucher. It is conceivable, however, that a voucher holder who is a single LGBTQ person or a same-sex couple or a single head of household mother may be seeking an apartment closer to a job or an ailing elderly parent or in an area of greater opportunity, but is denied for religious reasons a lease at a property developed and operated by a faith-based organization or even a mom-and-pop landlord.

There are a number of other problematic provisions explained in CARD's [comment template](#). It and the Americans United [background paper](#) provide historical context and rebut HUD's mistaken defenses using Supreme Court and other court decisions.

As CARD notes, many faith-based organizations provide important social services for people in need and have been partnering with the government for years, but that does not mean they should be allowed to take government funds and then place religious litmus tests on who they hire, who they serve, or which services they provide with those funds. Nor may they include religious content in their programs funded directly by the government. Faith-based organizations should continue to be partners with the government, but there needs to be clear safeguards in place to protect beneficiaries, especially against proselytizing and discrimination.

The proposed rule in the *Federal Register* is at: <https://bit.ly/3bDnd55>

An easier to read version of the proposed rule is at: <https://go.aws/3bCNDns>

NLIHC's redline showing the proposed changes to §5.109 is at: <https://bit.ly/2uGs1WE>

Americans United's four-page background explanation of the proposed rule changes is at: <https://bit.ly/2UKvtdH>

Americans United's examples of social services programs affected and potential harms is at: <https://bit.ly/2P6QJH1>

CARD's 18-page comment template is at: <https://bit.ly/38p0x6P>

President Trump's Executive Order (EO) 13831 is at: <https://bit.ly/38qHRDs>

President Obama's EO 13498 of February 5, 2009 is at: <https://bit.ly/31Sky35>

President Obama's EO 13559 of November 17, 2010 is at: <https://bit.ly/2uwDMiB>

Inspector General: HUD Does Not Refer Troubled PHAs According to Law and Regulation

HUD's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a report, "[HUD Has Not Referred Troubled Public Housing Agencies as the Law and Regulations Require](#)," on February 4. The OIG concluded the HUD Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) has not referred troubled public housing agencies (PHAs) that have failed to

improve after two years to the PIH assistant secretary to appoint a receiver or take possession, as required by law and regulation. Consequently, a PHA could remain troubled for an indefinite period while conditions stagnate or deteriorate. A troubled PHA is one that has a Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) score of 59% or lower. The OIG identified 18 PHAs remaining troubled for more than two years without being referred.

Law and regulation require a troubled PHA to be referred to the PIH assistant secretary either one year or two years after being designated as troubled, depending on the PHA's scores on PHAS, as explained below. The OIG reports that the PIH Office of Field Operations (OFO) has no process to make such a referral, and OFO officials admit that referrals were never made to the assistant secretary.

Instead of making referrals, PIH allows a troubled PHA to remain troubled longer than the two-year recovery period because some troubled PHAs with severe problems could not reasonably recover within two years. PIH gives such PHAs more than two years to recover as long as the PHA is improving and complying with a recovery agreement established with PIH. During this time PIH heightens monitoring and provides technical assistance. The OIG expressed concern that, if PIH does not refer a troubled PHA to the assistant secretary after the two-year recovery period, conditions could stagnate or deteriorate.

PHAS and REAC Scores

PIH's Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) measures the performance of PHAs using the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS). One goal of PHAS is to ensure that homes are decent, safe, sanitary, and in good repair. Using PHAS, REAC scores a PHA's performance using four indicators – physical condition, financial condition, management operations, and the Public Housing Capital Fund program. REAC then compiles the scores into an overall PHAS score for the PHA. PHAs scoring 59 (on a scale of 100) or lower are designated as “troubled.” PHAs scoring 90 or higher are designated as “high performing,” and those with scores of 60-89 are considered to be “standard” or “substandard.”

Troubled PHAs Are Allowed a Maximum of Two Years to Recover

When REAC gives a PHA a PHAS score lower than 60, it notifies the PHA of its troubled status immediately by sending an automated email. According to law and regulation, upon receiving this notice, a PHA has a maximum of two years to improve its overall PHAS score. After the initial notice of a troubled designation, a PHA has until its next PHAS assessment, which is at least 12 months after the initial troubled designation, to improve its performance by at least 50% of the difference between the initial PHAS assessment score and the score necessary to remove the PHA's designation as a troubled performer. For example, if a PHA's initial score was 50, its PHAS score 12 months later should be at least 55 because 60 would remove the troubled designation. If a PHA does not improve its performance by the required score percentage at the one-year mark, law and regulations require the PHA be referred to the PIH assistant secretary rather than allowing the PHA the full two-year period. A PHA must have an overall PHAS score of at least 60 by the next PHAS assessment, which is at least 24 months after the initial notice of the troubled performer designation.

Actions the PIH Assistant Secretary Must Take

Once the PIH refers a PHA to the PIH assistant secretary for action, the following are required:

- For a troubled PHA with 1,250 or more public housing units, the assistant secretary must declare a “substantial default” and petition for the appointment of an administrative receiver.
- For a troubled PHA with fewer than 1,250 public housing units, the assistant secretary must either petition for the appointment of an administrative receiver or take possession of the PHA and appoint an administrative receiver to assume the responsibilities of the HUD secretary for the administration of all or part of the PHA.

Under administrative receivership, HUD takes possession of a PHA and appoints one or more HUD staff members or an outside contractor to serve as an administrative receiver. An administrative receiver works on site at the PHA to manage and operate the PHA's housing operations and affairs. The OIG limited its evaluation to administrative receiverships because judicial receiverships are established, monitored, and supervised by federal courts.

18 PHAs Remained Troubled for More than Two Years without Being Referred

PIH determined that five PHAs failed to meet the two-year recovery requirements as of April 2019. Of the five PHAs, the Alexander County Housing Authority (Cairo, IL) and the Gary Housing Authority (IN) are under HUD receivership for reasons unrelated to meeting the two-year recovery requirements. The other three PHAs, Bridgeport Housing Authority (CT), Irvington Housing Authority (NJ), and Hoboken Housing Authority (NJ), were not referred to the assistant secretary or placed under HUD receivership.

The OIG analyzed the list of troubled PHAs from FY11 to FY18 and identified 13 additional PHAs that had failed to meet either the one- or two-year recovery requirements and were not referred. They are: Alexandria Housing Authority (LA), Emery County Housing Authority (UT), Floydada Housing Authority (TX), Gallup Housing Authority (NM), Highland Park Housing Commission (MI), New Iberia Housing Authority (LA), New Rochelle Housing Authority (NY), Peekskill Housing Authority (NY), Pontiac Housing Commission (MI), San Francisco Housing Authority (CA), Tulia Housing Authority (TX), Village of Hempstead Housing Authority (NY), and Wicomico County Housing Authority (MD).

Of the 13 PHAs, 9 had recovered from their troubled status but not before the law and regulations required them to be referred for receivership, and the Emery County, Highland Park, Pontiac, and Wicomico County housing authorities remained troubled at the conclusion of the OIG's fieldwork.

PIH Drafted a Referral Process, But It Would Need Legislative Changes

The OIG reports that in 2017 PIH began creating a process to refer long-term troubled PHAs to the assistant secretary, giving the assistant secretary four recovery options:

PIH continues to work through the current recovery agreement with an estimated recovery date;

PIH provides technical assistance needed for either a continuation or a transition;

PIH repositions the PHA (for example, placing the PHA under the Rental Assistance Demonstration, transferring the PHA to another housing agency, consolidating the PHAs, or placing the PHA under an alternate management); or

PIH declares the PHA is in substantial default and places the PHA under receivership or HUD's possession.

The OIG notes, however, that if HUD would like to consider receivership as a "last-resort option" as proposed, it should petition Congress for a legislative change to existing law that requires HUD to petition for the appointment of a receiver or take possession of a public housing agency in certain circumstances.

Current Process Could Extend Troubled Status to Three Years

OFO defines the two-year recovery period differently than the law and regulations by using a PHA's fiscal year because PHAS data are submitted on a fiscal-year basis. OFA asserts that the recovery period should begin in a PHA's first full fiscal year after it receives its initial troubled designation so that the PHA has time to address the troubled designation and use the data subsequently submitted to reflect those efforts. The OIG notes, however, that calculating the recovery period based on the PHA's first full fiscal year after notification may

allow a troubled PHA more than the maximum two-year period to recover. If a PHA receives its initial designation of troubled status shortly after its fiscal year-end, the PHA’s recovery period would not start until the PHA’s next fiscal year, allowing the PHA almost three years to recover. For example, if a PHA with a fiscal year-end of March 31 receives its troubled designation on May 1, the PHA’s recovery period would not start until April 1 of the following year. As a result, the PHA would receive 11 more months to recover than the law allows.

The HUD Office of the Inspector General’s report, “HUD Has Not Referred Troubled Public Housing Agencies as the Law and Regulations Require” is at: <https://bit.ly/2tJzDqX>

More about public housing is on [page 4-25](#) of NLIHC’s 2019 Advocates’ Guide.

Research

Diversity Data Kids Releases New Child Opportunity Index

[Diversity Data Kids](#), in partnership with Brandeis University, released the Child Opportunity Index 2.0, which measures neighborhood opportunity for children in 72,000 census tracts across the U.S. in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. The interactive website allows users to explore the neighborhood opportunity rankings for their states and metro areas. There is significant variation in access to neighborhood opportunity across the country and significant racial disparities in neighborhood opportunity for children. White children are far more likely to reside in high- or very high-opportunity neighborhoods than Black and Hispanic children.

Twenty-nine indicators are utilized in the Child Opportunity Index 2.0, grouped into three broad categories: education, health and environment, and social and economic indicators. Neighborhoods are defined at the census-tract level and scored according to their performance within these categories. The scores can be calculated and compared across neighborhoods nationally, between metropolitan areas, and within metropolitan areas.

The index shows children’s access to opportunity varies substantially across each level of geographic comparison, but just 9% of variation in neighborhood opportunity occurs between metropolitan areas while 91% of variation occurs within metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas with some of the highest-opportunity neighborhoods in the country can also contain some of the lowest-opportunity neighborhoods for children, especially for children of color. Across the 100 largest metropolitan areas, 46% of Black children and 32% of Hispanic children live in neighborhoods with very low opportunity rankings.

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

An interactive map is at: <https://bit.ly/2SJ7KYz>

Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies’ Rental Housing Report Highlights Affordability Challenges

The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University released [America’s Rental Housing 2020](#), providing a comprehensive look at current challenges in the rental housing market. Among other things, the report highlights the loss of low-cost rental housing over the past decade and a growth in renters with housing cost burdens (spending more than 30% of their incomes on housing).

The rental market is gaining high-cost homes while significantly losing low-cost ones. The median asking price for new apartments between July 2018 and June 2019 was \$1,620 per month. Approximately one in five new apartments had a monthly asking price of at least \$2,450, while only 12% had rents below \$1,050. Meanwhile, the supply of low-cost rental homes continues to decline. Between 2012 and 2017, the number of rental homes with monthly rents less than \$600 declined by more than 3 million while the number of rental homes renting for more than \$1,000 per month increased by more than five million.

The report notes the increase in homelessness in recent years. The number of unsheltered homeless – sleeping in spaces not intended for human habitation – increased from 173,270 to 194,470 between 2015 and 2018. The overall number of people experiencing homelessness increased to 552,830 in 2018. The report notes that the number of beds available to these individuals – which includes beds in shelters, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing – declined between 2017 and 2018 by nearly 2,200 beds, the first decline in at least a decade.

Rental housing is far more available in urban centers than in other areas, particularly low-density communities. Nearly a third of census tracts are considered “rental deserts,” where fewer than one in five homes are rentals. Fifty-three percent of these rental deserts are in low-density tracts of metropolitan areas, and 43% are in non-metropolitan areas. Rental deserts further economic and racial segregation. The median household income in these rental deserts is \$71,400 compared to \$49,100 in other communities. Whites account for 78% of the population in the rental deserts.

Housing assistance programs for low-income renters are insufficient to meet the need. HUD rental assistance covers only one in four eligible households. For the first time in decades, fewer than a million households occupy public housing. Other programs, such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, provide rental housing that often remains out of reach for the lowest-income renters.

America’s Rental Housing 2020 is available at: <https://bit.ly/37MkxQe>

National Housing Week of Action

Join Planning Webinar for *Our Homes, Our Voices* National Housing Week of Action, February 26

The fourth annual *Our Homes, Our Voices* National Housing Week of Action will take place May 2 to May 12, and advocates from around the country are beginning to plan how they will be involved. To assist with planning and carrying out an event in your community, NLIHC will provide a planning [webinar](#) on February 26 at 4:00 p.m. ET.

The webinar, “*Our Homes, Our Voices: Preparing for Week of Action*,” will discuss best practices, resources you can use, suggestions about effective messaging, the best uses of templates and materials, and building turnout for an event. The webinar will also include advice and perspectives from organizers who led events during the 2019 Housing Week of Action.

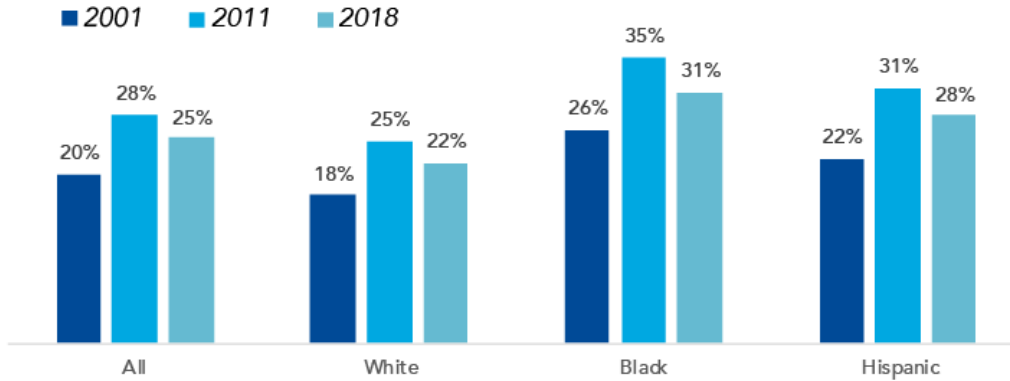
Every county in the nation is impacted by the shortage of affordable homes available to those most in need. Federal investments in proven affordable housing solutions benefit us all, but these investments have not kept pace with the need, and the Trump administration is again proposing big cuts. We must keep raising our voices to protect and expand vital affordable housing programs to ensure everyone has an affordable place to call home.

Register for the webinar at: <https://bit.ly/38mBam7>

Fact of the Week

Black, Hispanic Renters Continue to Be Disproportionately Severely Housing Cost-Burdened

Severely Housing Cost-Burdened Renter Households by Race or Ethnicity



*Note: Severely cost-burdened households spend more than half of their income on housing costs.
Source: JCHS. (2020). America's rental housing. Cambridge, MA: Author.
Retrieved from <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/americas-rental-housing-2020>.*

Source: JCHS. (2020). America's rental housing. Cambridge, MA: Author.

From the Field

Maine Governor Signs Law Establishing \$80 Million State Affordable Housing Tax Credit Program

Maine Governor Janet Mills signed into law on February 12, a bipartisan bill (L.D. 1645) sponsored by House Assistant Majority Leader Ryan Fecteau that will create a new state affordable housing tax credit program. The Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit Program will create 1,000 new affordable homes over eight years, increasing the state's current production rate by 50%, while also preserving more than 500 units of rural housing at risk of losing affordability restrictions.

The state has committed to investing \$10 million per year to preserve and create homes for low-income families, seniors, and rural households. The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC), an NLIHC state partner, worked closely with a bipartisan group of cosponsors to ensure the program would adequately meet the needs of low-income renters across the state.



Maine Governor Janet Mills and MAHC Greg Payne at signing ceremony for L.D. 1645

More than 35,000 renter households in Maine are severely housing cost-burdened, and tens of thousands of residents are on waiting lists for affordable homes. Maine is also at risk of losing up to 2,500 affordable homes that were originally financed by USDA Rural Development under the Section 515 program. Roughly 10% of the tax credit program will be used to help transfer these at-risk affordable units to nonprofit owners who will maintain their existing affordability restrictions for another 20 years.

The Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit Program is modeled on the state's successful historic rehabilitation tax credit. It will allow individuals and/or corporations to invest in the development or preservation of affordable housing in return for state income tax credits. The investment dollars provided to a project will fund 30% of the overall construction cost and allow a project to gain an equal amount of federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs). At least 30% of the tax credits will be targeted to senior housing and at least 20% will be targeted to rural communities.

The Maine State Housing Authority will administer the program and will provide incentives to ensure that at least 20% or four units, whichever is greater, are reserved for people with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence, or people who have experienced chronic homelessness. The new housing units will carry affordability restrictions of a minimum 45 years.

At the bill signing ceremony, Governor Mills reiterated her commitment to increasing the number of affordable homes in Maine: "The goal of ensuring that Maine people have a safe place to rest their head at night, a place where they can take care of their family, get ready for work, and live with dignity and comfort is at the heart of our administration. With this program, I hope we can now say to thousands more Maine people, 'welcome home.'"

"Maine legislators deserve a lot of credit for their bipartisanship in responding to what has become an enormous problem for tens of thousands of people across the state," said Greg Payne, director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. "This is the largest investment that the state of Maine has ever made in affordable housing development, and its unanimous passage through both the House and Senate speaks volumes about the depth of our housing needs."

Information about the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition is at: www.mainehousingcoalition.org

Events

Register Today for Upcoming Webinars on Effective Advocacy and NLIHC Policy Priorities

NLIHC will hold two webinars in March on effective advocacy and NLIHC’s policy priorities. These webinars are in preparation for NLIHC’s annual Capitol Hill Day taking place on March 27, but those not attending Capitol Hill Day may also find them useful. Capitol Hill Day is part of [NLIHC’s Housing Policy Forum 2020: Ending Homelessness and Housing Poverty](#), March 25-27.

The first webinar, “Advocacy 101,” an introduction to effective advocacy, is scheduled for March 5 at 2:00 p.m. ET. The NLIHC field team will cover how a bill becomes a law and key moments for advocates to be involved, allowable advocacy activities for nonprofits, and tips for effective advocacy. The session will also include a mock legislative visit. The webinar is an excellent training opportunity for those new to advocacy. Sign up for the March 5 webinar at: <https://bit.ly/3akfs3d>

The second webinar, “NLIHC 2020 Forum Policy Priorities,” will provide an overview of NLIHC’s policy priorities and talking points. The NLIHC policy team will highlight the main legislative requests advocates should be making and provide information that compellingly makes the case for more federal investments in affordable homes for those most in need. Sign up for the March 12 webinar at: <https://bit.ly/360jVEX>

Register for NLIHC’s Housing Policy Forum 2020: *Ending Homelessness and Housing Poverty*, March 25-27, at: <https://bit.ly/2SI4WLq>

NLIHC Housing Policy Forum 2020

“Advancing Solutions to Homelessness through Effective Messaging” at NLIHC Housing Policy Forum 2020

“Advancing Solutions to Homelessness through Effective Messaging” will be a featured session at NLIHC’s Housing Policy Forum 2020: *Ending Homelessness and Housing Poverty*, taking place in Washington, DC, March 25-27. Register today for the 2020 Policy Forum at: <https://bit.ly/2ofWibO>

How can we cast a bold and achievable vision of ending homeless based on truth and shift the narrative by busting myths and converting complex ideas into compelling, easy-to-understand messages? Homelessness grabs the attention of media and policymakers. But the reasons for homelessness – and its solutions - are seen as complex and get distorted by myths and lies. Explore ways to advance accurate messaging, combat stigmas, and debunk myths using the latest research. Hear examples of local and national campaigns on homelessness that reached new audiences, moved advocates to action, and engaged reporters, policymakers, and leaders from other sectors. Confirmed speakers for the session:



Celinda Lake, President, Lake Research Partners



Daniella Pierre, Housing Chairwoman,
Miami Dade Branch of NAACP



Tom Murphy, Director of Communications,
National Alliance to End Homelessness



Waldon Adams, Outreach Specialist,
Pathways to Housing DC



Renee M. Willis,
NLIHC VP for Communications and Field

Other session topics at the Forum include racial equity with Ibram X. Kendi, National Book Award-winning author of *How to Be an Antiracist* and *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in*

America!; the Ken Burns Film, “East Lake Meadows: A Public Housing Story” and a discussion with the film’s directors, a resident featured in the film, and policy experts; the current state of affordable housing in America – the opportunities and threats; a Capitol Hill Insiders Panel; promoting healthy homes; mobilizing against attacks to housing opportunities; creating and sustaining multi-sector housing coalitions; the administration’s actions on homelessness; redesigning the disaster recovery system; zoning reform, civil rights, and housing justice; research on ending homelessness; NLIHC’s *Our Homes, Our Votes* nonpartisan voter and candidate engagement project; resident-led movements; state and local affordable housing solutions; rural and native housing; state and local organizing best practices; advancing ambitious housing bills; and more.

When: The Forum will begin for most participants (see note about special Resident sessions below) on **Wednesday, March 25 at 1:00 pm**, with a full day of sessions on Thursday, March 26. Capitol Hill Day will take place on Friday, March 27.

Additional Sessions for Low-Income Residents: The 2020 Housing Policy Forum will offer additional resident sessions **starting on Tuesday, March 24, at 2:00 p.m.**, including a dinner with NLIHC state partners that evening. The special resident sessions will continue on Wednesday, March 25 at 8:30 a.m. prior to the full Forum start at 1:00 p.m.

Housing Leadership Awards 2020: The 2020 NLIHC Housing Leadership Awards Reception honoring Shauna Sorrells (posthumous), Bill Faith, and Jennifer Ho will take place on Thursday, March 26 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., also at the Washington Court Hotel. A separate registration fee is required to attend the Leadership Awards event. Register here. (See related article in this *Memo to Members and Partners*.)

Register for the 2020 NLIHC Housing Policy Forum [today!](#)

NLIHC Housing Leadership Awards

Celebrate Bill Faith’s Lifetime of Service at March 26 Housing Leadership Awards Reception

Join NLIHC in celebrating the lifetime achievements of 2020 Housing Leadership Award Honoree **Bill Faith**, who will be recognized at the **38th Annual Housing Leadership Awards Reception** on March 26, 2020 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, DC. The other honorees are **Jennifer Leimaile Ho** and **Shauna Sorrells**. Register to [attend](#) the reception and/or make a contribution as an [organization](#) or [individual](#) in their honor.

The **Cushing Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award**, named after NLIHC’s late founder who has been referred to as the “godmother” of the affordable housing movement, goes to an individual who has demonstrated an unyielding commitment to achieving decent, accessible and affordable homes for low-income people over a long period of time.



Bill Faith

NLIHC will honor **Bill Faith**, executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) since 1994, with the 2020 Cushing Dolbeare Award. Throughout his career, Bill has worked to end homelessness by advocating for expanding access to affordable homes. He has served individuals with disabilities, directed agencies serving people experiencing homelessness, and led affordable housing advocacy organizations. Bill has worked extensively with key policymakers to strengthen a wide range of housing and homeless assistance programs, winning significant reforms against predatory mortgage and payday lending, defended fair housing, and advanced tenants' rights. He has fought to create, protect and expand the Ohio Housing Trust Fund, which recently surpassed \$1 billion in revenue for homeless and affordable housing programs. Bill served on the NLIHC board of directors in various forms for 26 years and was the board chair for six years.

The second award is named for Senator Edward Brooke (R-MA), who championed low-income housing as a U.S. senator and later as chair of the NLIHC board of directors. **Shauna Sorrells** will receive the 2020 Edward W. Brooke Housing Leadership Award posthumously for her unwavering commitment to ending homelessness and housing poverty in the U.S. over many years at HUD, at the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County, and on the executive committee of the NLIHC Board of Directors.



Shauna Sorrells

The Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award, named after former NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, will be bestowed to **Jennifer Ho**, commissioner of Minnesota Housing and former senior advisor at HUD and deputy director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). She will receive the Crowley Award for her outstanding work to end homelessness and housing poverty in the U.S. since 1999 at Hearth Connection, USICH, HUD, Minnesota Housing, and beyond.



Jennifer Ho

Come celebrate the contributions of Bill, Shauna, and Jennifer at the 2020 Housing Leadership Reception on March 26 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington DC! Register for the event at: <https://bit.ly/362lyDf>. (Note: A separate ticket from the NLIHC Housing Policy Forum is required for the Leadership Awards Reception.)

Recognize these outstanding individuals by making a donation to NLIHC in their honor!

Donate as an individual at: <https://bit.ly/34ng1FP>
Donate as an organization at: <https://bit.ly/2WyFnOb>

Your donation will be recognized in the Leadership Awards Reception program. The contribution will support NLIHC's mission to achieve socially just public policy to ensure the lowest-income people have decent, affordable homes.

The 2020 Leadership Awards Reception will be held on the second evening of NLIHC's 2020 Housing Policy Forum: *Ending Homelessness & Housing Poverty* taking place March 25-27, 2020. Register for the Forum at: <https://bit.ly/2PutSGn> and/or Leadership Awards Reception at: <https://bit.ly/362lyDf>

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of February 9

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of February 9:

- "5 Things To Know About The Affordable Housing Crisis," *Forbes*, February 14 at: <https://tinyurl.com/sthrk9c>
- "Garcetti and Trump officials enter a new phase of finding a fix for homelessness in L.A.," *Los Angeles Times*, February 13 at: <https://tinyurl.com/wyzfjxp>
- "A timely, simple idea to boost affordable housing," *The Washington Post*, February 12 at: <https://tinyurl.com/tuez9rf>
- "This Year, Running for President Means Talking About the Housing Crisis," *City Limits*, February 10 at: <https://tinyurl.com/w2199lg>
- "President Trump's Budget Proposes Deep HUD Cuts Amid Affordable Housing Crisis," *SFGate*, February 10 at: <https://tinyurl.com/ujnabsl>

NLIHC News

Where to Find Us – February 18

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

- Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities' Information Session and Overview of Voter Registration Drive, Philadelphia, PA, February 25
- [Community Development, Housing, and Homelessness Program Managers Training](#), Washington, DC, February 25
- [Housing Alliance of PA Legislative Briefing](#), February 26
- [Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless Legislative Action Day 2020](#), Boston, MA, February 27
- [NYHC March Thought Leader Event](#), New York, NY, March 12
- Making Change Happen: Effective Advocacy for Affordable Housing, La Vista, NE, March 16
- [YIMBY Town 2020](#), Portland, OR, April 3
- Humility Homes and Services 30 Years Celebration, Davenport, IA, April 18
- [Building Michigan Communities Conference](#), Lansing, MI, April 28
- Tulsa Mayor's Development Roundtable, Tulsa, OK, April 30
- [National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies Annual Conference](#), New York, NY, May 7

- [Princeton Community Housing Annual Homes Build Opportunity Gala](#), Princeton, NJ, June 13
 - [HousingWorks RI Annual Factbook Lunch](#), Providence, RI, October 16
-

NLIHC Staff

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Kyle Arbuckle, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x227
Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245
Victoria Bourret, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x244
Alayna Calabro, Field Intern, x252
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Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Kim Johnson, Housing Policy Analyst, x243
Mia Juliana, Graphic Design/Communication Intern, x240
Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, x232
Mike Koprowski, Director, Multisector Housing Campaign, x317
Joseph Lindstrom, Director, Field Organizing, x222
Mayerline Louis-Juste, Communications Specialist, x201
Lisa Marlow, Manager, Media Relations and Communications, x239
Tyra Reed, Policy Intern, x241
Sarah Saadian, Vice President, Public Policy, x228
Khara Norris, Director of Administration, x242
Noah Patton, Housing Policy Analyst, x227
Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Specialist, x246
Catherine Reeves, Development Coordinator, x234
Brooke Schipporeit, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233
Dan Threet, Research Analyst, x202
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