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HoUsed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing

President Biden Releases “American Families Plan”

President Biden released on April 28 the “American Families Plan,” a \$1.8 trillion companion bill to the \$2.5 trillion “American Jobs Plan.” The American Families Plan would invest in education, childcare, and paid leave, among other priorities. The proposal calls for making community college free, expanding access to Pell grants, investing in universal preschool, expanding nutrition assistance for children, providing paid family and medical leave, and permanently extending enhancements to the childcare tax credit, earned income tax credit, and Affordable Care Act.

Notably missing from the American Families Plan is a proposal to make rental assistance universally available to all eligible households. Currently, only one in four households eligible for and in need of rental assistance receives assistance. Expanding rental assistance is a core element of President Biden’s housing platform, central to any successful strategy to solve the housing crisis.

While the American Families Plan does not propose housing investments, the “American Jobs Plan” includes an historic [\\$213 billion investment](#) in the country’s affordable housing infrastructure. This investment should include the [HoUsed campaign’s priorities](#) of \$45 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to build, preserve and rehabilitate apartments affordable to the lowest-income people, and \$70 billion to repair and preserve public housing throughout the country. These investments are included in the “[Housing is Infrastructure Act](#)” released by House Financial Services Committee Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA; see *Memo*, [4/19](#)). A final infrastructure spending bill must include these critical investments and an expansion of rental assistance to all eligible households in need.

Take action by signing your organization on to a national letter urging Congress to support robust investments in affordable housing at: <https://tinyurl.com/zbau4kee>

Learn more about NLIHC’s HoUsed Campaign at: <https://nlihc.org/housed>

Turner Center Releases Federal Housing Policy Framework, Calls for Universal Housing Assistance

The Turner Center for Housing Innovation at the University of California at Berkeley released a report outlining a new framework for federal housing policy, “[Building a Better Ladder of Housing Opportunity in the United States](#).” The report provides recommendations for how the administration can expand and better target demand-side housing subsidies. These include Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs), expanding and coordinating supply subsidies for affordable housing construction, and strengthening incentives and accountability to meet housing production goals, further fair housing and lending objectives, and promote sustainable development. Several of the framework’s proposals, such as expanding rental assistance to all extremely low-income and very low-income renter households that need such assistance, align with the [HoUsed campaign priorities](#).

In the near term, the report recommends augmenting emergency rental assistance and strengthening eviction protections in response to COVID-19. Recommendations also include protecting homeowners from foreclosure through increased investments in the Hardest Hit Fund created during the Great Recession and providing post-forbearance loan modifications, homeownership counseling, and legal aid services.

Beyond the pandemic, the report advocates expansion of rental assistance for all extremely low-income and very low-income renter households that need such assistance, either in the form of current HCVs or through a

modernized voucher program. The report outlines a proposal for a renter’s tax credit targeted to low- and moderate-income renter households. Such a tax credit would allow extremely and very low-income households to phase out of the voucher program without facing a sudden benefit “cliff.” A renter’s tax credit could provide low- and moderate-income renters the opportunity to invest savings from rent in assets such as education or homeownership. The report also recommends reforming the mortgage interest deduction by converting it to a credit or replacing it with a credit specifically for low- and moderate-income first-time homebuyers.

Supply subsidies are also addressed in the report. According to the report, over 160 federal housing programs and activities are administered by 20 different entities. These programs are implemented across broad combination of state and local governments, institutions, and even at the individual level. The report advocates not only expanding funding for supply subsidy programs, but also consolidating programs and administering them at the regional level. According to the authors, this would address the highly fragmented nature of federal housing policy and allow for more intentional planning at a scale that better reflects actual housing and labor markets, as well as facilitating more coordinated housing planning across jurisdictions. The report advocates revising the current LIHTC state allocation formula to better align allocations with actual production needs and policy objectives such as fair housing and sustainability. LIHTC is currently allocated to states based on population.

The report outlines strategies to strengthen incentives and accountability to ensure localities and private market entities meet their fair housing and lending obligations. For example, new funding for housing production could be tied to whether a region meets housing production and fair housing goals. Production and fair housing goals could also be tied to highly valued funding streams like the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. These financial incentives, in addition to robust enforcement of existing fair housing laws, could be used to incentivize the termination of local exclusionary housing policies and the implementation of pro-housing development policies.

“Building a Better Ladder of Housing Opportunity in the United States” is at: <https://bit.ly/3aWfXDg>

Join NLIHC’s National Call on “HoUSed: Universal, Stable, and Affordable Housing” Today at 2:30 pm ET

Join today’s (May 3) national HoUSed campaign call from 2:30-4 pm ET. Peter Hepburn from Rutgers University and Eviction Lab will join to share Eviction Lab’s [latest research](#) on eviction filing patterns in 2020. We will also hear about new NLIHC and National League of Cities’ guidance for state, local, tribal, and territorial governments on designing equitable emergency rental assistance programs; hear from National Women’s Law Center about research on racial and gender disparities in pandemic-related housing insecurity; get updates on advancing the HoUSed campaign’s priorities; hear the latest from Capitol Hill and the field; and more.

Register for the call at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

See the full agenda [here](#).

Recording Available of NLIHC’s April 26 National Call on “HoUSed: Universal, Stable, and Affordable Housing”

During the most recent national “HoUSed: Universal, Stable, and Affordable Housing” call, we discussed new funding to address homelessness from the American Rescue Plan Act and heard about a new report on prioritizing emergency rental assistance to ensure funds reach the lowest-income and most marginalized households, who are most at risk of housing instability. We shared information on a campaign to ensure COVID-19 stimulus checks reach low-income households and received updates from the field and from Capitol Hill on advancing the [HoUSed campaign’s](#) policy priorities.

Richard Cho from HUD provided updates on the department’s allocation of \$5 billion in HOME funds from the [American Rescue Plan](#). These funds are designated to provide assistance to people experiencing homelessness, including rental assistance and supportive services, as well as for the development of affordable rental housing and acquisition of non-congregate shelter, like hotels and motels, to be converted into permanent affordable housing or used as emergency shelter.

Rebecca Yae and Emma Foley of NLIHC and Jessi Russell from the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) discussed a [joint report](#) released by NLIHC and CLASP that provides a framework for emergency rental assistance (ERA) administrators to incorporate equitable policies and practices into the design of ERA programs. NLIHC’s Neetu Nair gave an update on [ERA implementation](#) across the country, noting that over 900 state and local ERA programs have been created or expanded in response to COVID-19 and subsequent economic fallout.

Janne Huang from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) shared CBPP’s [Get it Back Campaign](#), created to help low-income people access their stimulus checks and obtain tax credits for which they are eligible. Gregory Heller of the [Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority](#), Alexa Bertinelli from [Civil Justice, Inc.](#) in Baltimore, Maryland, and Kody Glazer from the [Florida Housing Coalition](#) provided field updates. NLIHC’s Sarah Saadian provided updates from Capitol Hill.

NLIHC hosts national calls every week. On today’s call, we will be joined by Peter Hepburn from Eviction Lab, who will share findings from Eviction Lab’s [latest research](#) on eviction filing patterns in 2020. Register for today’s call (Monday, May 3 at 2:30 pm ET) at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

Watch a recording of the April 26 call at: tinyurl.com/bnwvxbwm

Access presentation slides at: tinyurl.com/y2dr92tb

Emergency Rental Assistance

NLIHC and National League of Cities Release Guidance for State and Local Officials on Equitable ERA Programs

NLIHC and the National League of Cities (NLC) released on April 29, “[How to Establish and Improve Emergency Rental Assistance Programs: Suggestions for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Elected Officials.](#)” The resource outlines key principles of a model emergency rental assistance (ERA) program and offers examples of how localities have successfully incorporated these principles into their programs. The principles are based on NLIHC’s tracking and analysis of nearly 900 [state and local emergency rental assistance programs](#) and findings from collaborative research conducted by NLIHC, the Housing Initiative at Penn, and NYU Furman Center.

Congress is relying on state and local governments to stabilize distressed households by connecting residents at risk of eviction to the more than \$46 billion in emergency rental and utility assistance funds provided in the [American Rescue Plan Act](#) and the [December COVID-19 relief package](#). NLIHC and NLC prepared this

guidance for elected officials and advocates seeking to minimize obstacles and maximize uptake of rental aid, and to ensure these critical federal resources reach households with the greatest needs and are distributed equitably.

Elected officials, program administrators, and advocates should incorporate the following best practices into state and local ERA programs: 1) center equity in the design and implementation of programs; 2) prioritize households with the greatest needs; 3) partner with trusted community-based organizations; 4) simplify applications and allow self-attestation; 5) engage landlords; 6) provide direct-to-tenant assistance; and 7) incorporate racial equity in performance measurements.

Read “How to Establish and Improve Emergency Rental Assistance Programs: Suggestions for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Elected Officials” at: <https://bit.ly/3nvsKky>.

Updates on Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Programs – Landlord Requirements

NLIHC tracks state and local emergency rental assistance programs created or expanded in response to COVID-19 and collects [in-depth](#) information on each program. As of April 28, NLIHC had identified 267 emergency rental assistance programs funded through the \$25 billion Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program appropriated by the December 2020 Consolidated Appropriations Act. These 267 ERA programs account for nearly \$18 billion of the \$25 billion allocated.

Using publicly available information from program websites and documents, NLIHC’s database tracks information on ERA program design and implementation, including landlord requirements. Some of the requirements of landlords are primarily for administrative purposes or for determining financial need, such as collecting landlord W-9 forms and rental ledgers of unpaid rent. Other requirements are intended to increase housing stability for tenants once assistance is received. These requirements include waiving late fees, preventing future rent increases, forgiving a portion of rent, or restricting evictions for a period of time during and sometimes after rental assistance is disbursed. From publicly available documents, NLIHC identified at least 64 ERA Treasury programs that require at least one of these concessions. Due to limitations of publicly available data, however, the number is likely higher.

The most common landlord concession is eviction restrictions. Of programs in which we identified landlord concessions, 77% impose eviction restrictions and 41% require landlords to forgive any late fees accumulated during the covered period. Twenty-seven percent of programs with landlord concessions require landlords to accept a decreased payment amount, with the remaining portion of rent to be forgiven by the landlord. Many programs requiring decreased payment amounts, however, are in California, where state legislation has largely dictated rental assistance program design.

Programs should carefully balance landlord requirements in order to both encourage landlord participation and to bolster future housing stability for tenants. Recent research shows that concessions required of landlords can influence their participation. Surveys of Philadelphia landlords by the [Housing Initiative at Penn](#) found that nearly 78% of landlords thought waiving late fees was a reasonable or somewhat reasonable requirement. By comparison, only 37.5% of landlords found it reasonable or somewhat reasonable to require landlords to forgive back rent (see [Memo 11/9](#)). Despite these findings, [King County, WA](#) was able to leverage bulk payments to engage landlords, all of whom either accepted 80% of rent owed, waiving the rest, or accepted the equivalent Fair Market Rent. The program was intended specifically for large landlords, with 10 or more tenants. King County found that offering bulk payments for multiple households was an effective method for disbursing payments and forgiving back rent, with the large landlord program serving 64% of all ERA-assisted households.

Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs Posts Updates to Coronavirus Q&A Guides

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs (Multifamily), which oversees contracts with private owners of HUD-assisted properties, updated two sets of Questions and Answers on April 26: "[Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)" and "[Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Eviction Moratorium Order](#)." The most recent previous updates for each were issued on April 2 (see *Memo*, [4/12](#)).

There is only one change in "Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)," which adds Q25 (page 18) in the subsection "Moratorium on Evictions under the CARES Act" of the "CARES Act and Additional Resources Available for Response" section. Multifamily clarifies that although the eviction moratorium in the CARES Act expired, the 30-day notice to vacate requirement for nonpayment of rent is still in effect for CARES Act covered properties.

"Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Eviction Moratorium Order" has two updates. Q6 has links to updated CDC declaration forms in eight languages. Q1 is revised to reflect changes to requirements individuals must meet in order to be protected from eviction for nonpayment of rent by the CDC eviction moratorium, which was extended to June 30 (see *Memo*, [3/29](#)). A clause was added to a paragraph in Q1 indicating that the CDC Order "only applies to the extent its application is not prohibited by federal court order."

"Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)" is at: <https://bit.ly/3e2FcFf>

"Questions and Answers for Office of Multifamily Housing Stakeholders: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Eviction Moratorium Order" is at: <https://bit.ly/3e29KXZ>

More information about Project-Based Rental Assistance is on [page 4-64](#) of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

HUD REAC Physical Inspections to Resume for Public Housing and Multifamily Housing

HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge [announced](#) on April 23 that HUD will resume physical inspections on June 1 for public housing and multifamily housing. Guidance in the form of [Inspector Notice No. 2021-01](#) and the [REAC Updated Frequently asked Questions \(FAQs\) for Inspections](#) were posted on the HUD Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) website on April 27. Also posted on the site is a one-page [flyer for residents](#) explaining that inspections will resume and listing resident rights.

Thirteen months ago, in response to the coronavirus pandemic and following public health guidance, HUD suspended most in-person housing inspections by REAC. In consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), public housing agencies (PHAs), and Multifamily housing owners and property managers (POAs) received a [letter](#) from Secretary Fudge on April 23 informing them that HUD had developed detailed protocols guiding all aspects of the inspection process.

The [flyer for residents](#) lists resident rights, such as the right to tell the PHA, POA, or inspector that they are uncomfortable with others entering their home during the pandemic. If this occurs, the inspector will randomly

select another home to inspect. Residents have the choice to be present during an inspection or to leave. The flyer explains the purpose of the inspection and outlines the four-step inspection process that includes advance notice of a pending inspection (although there is no indication of how far in advance the notice must be provided).

[Inspector Notice No. 2021-01](#) and the [REAC Updated FAQs for Inspection](#) provide guidance for resuming physical inspection requirements with COVID-19 related precautions using Uniform Physical Inspection Standards (UPCS) and National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) demonstration (see *Memo*, [8/26/19](#), [9/16/19](#)). The guidance applies to all property types subject to REAC inspections, including HUD-assisted and insured properties as well as NSPIRE demonstration and related inspections.

Effective June 1, REAC will expand inspections of high priority properties, selecting public housing and Multifamily properties for inspection based on a variety of factors, such as insured/non-insured status, time elapsed since a previous inspection, risk indicators, field office inquiries, ideal future inspection date, PHA requested inspections, and historic physical inspection scores. In addition, REAC will inspect properties that have volunteered for NSPIRE.

Prior to an inspection, REAC will notify the property at least 28 days before an inspection, which is an increase from the 14-day notice initiated in February of 2019 (see *Memo*, [2/25/19](#)). The REAC inspector will call again and provide written notice to a PHA or POA to schedule an inspection 14 days ahead of an inspection. The inspector will follow up with the property two days before an inspection to re-confirm the inspection and ensure nothing has changed.

During the 28-day, 14-day, and two-day calls, the inspector will ask whether there are any known COVID-19 cases on the property. Although neither guidance document directly states it, presumably if there are COVID-19 cases inspection will be rescheduled. On inspection day, if a unit randomly selected for inspection has an occupant who has contracted COVID-19, the inspector will replace that unit with an alternate unit.

A PHA or POA may require an inspector to have their temperature checked prior to inspections. Inspectors may ask about the health status of property staff and residents. Residents are allowed to refuse an inspection; in such instances an alternate unit will be inspected.

REAC inspectors will follow CDC recommended guidance for travel, social distancing, use of hand-sanitizer and wearing of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks and gloves throughout an inspection. PPE must be worn throughout all phases of the inspection process, including masks and gloves, even if local requirements do not require masks and gloves.

During inspections, if residents choose to stay, the inspector and PHA/POA representatives should follow social distance protocols. If social distances cannot be maintained, the inspector must not enter the unit or must leave the unit. The inspector then marks the unit as un-inspectable and goes to an alternate unit.

During a phone call with stakeholders the day before the Secretary's announcement PIH and Multifamily staff provided additional information not in the media release, Secretary's letter, or the new guidance. For example, HUD will consider a property high priority for inspection if it previously had a REAC score less than 60 or had not been inspected for a long time. High-priority properties were notified on April 26 that they were on the high-priority list and should expect an inspection by the end of calendar year 2021. High-priority public housing properties will be inspected using the NSPIRE's "[life-threatening deficiencies](#)" standards, even if the PHA did not volunteer to participate in NSPIRE. PIH will continue to forego issuing Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) scores during the pandemic. All high-priority Multifamily properties will be scored based on UPCS.

The HUD media release from April 23 is at: <https://bit.ly/2S30jic>

Secretary Fudge’s April 23 letter to PHAs and Multifamily owners and operators is at: <https://bit.ly/2Pwt6Lj>

Inspector Notice No. 2021-01 is at: <https://bit.ly/3vpkDZA>

The REAC Updated FAQs for Inspections is at: <https://bit.ly/2QxwBlg>

The one-page flyer for residents is at: <https://bit.ly/3nsV472>

NSPIRE’s life-threatening deficiency standards are on the [NSPIRE Resources webpage](https://bit.ly/3e2Syl8) at: <https://bit.ly/3e2Syl8>

The REAC homepage is at: <https://bit.ly/3xwCXlg>

More information about public housing is on [page 4-30](#) of NLIHC’s *2021 Advocates’ Guide*.

More information about Multifamily housing is on [page 4-64](#) of NLIHC’s *2021 Advocates’ Guide*.

SNAPS Office Issues Waiver Expanding Eligibility for ESG-CV Rapid Re-housing Assistance

The Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS) in HUD’s Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) issued [Notice CPD-21-05](#) allowing supplemental Emergency Solutions Grants-Coronavirus (ESG-CV) funds provided by the CARES Act (see *Memo*, [4/6/20](#), [6/15/20](#)) to be used to provide rapid re-housing (RRH) assistance to individuals and families in the form of short- and medium-term rental assistance where they are currently living and receiving time-limited subsidies funded by another source that will expire within 30 days. The individuals and families must have met the definition of “homeless” before entering their current housing. Eligible individuals and families may also receive housing relocation and stabilization services. The notice also allows recipients and subrecipients to accept inspections conducted by other providers indicating that the housing is safe and sanitary, instead of having to conduct their own habitability inspections before providing RRH assistance funded by ESG-CV.

In addition to continuing support for individuals and families who meet existing requirements in the ESG rapid re-housing assistance program, the waiver allows a recipient to expand RRH beneficiaries to include those who meet all of the following criteria:

Qualify as “homeless” (as defined in the ESG regulation) immediately before moving into their current housing;

Have been residing in their housing receiving time-limited rental assistance provided by homeless assistance program other than the ESG program. A homelessness assistance program means assistance limited to or reserved, either federally or locally, for people who are “homeless” as defined in the ESG regulation. Examples of a homelessness assistance program other than the ESG program include time-limited rental assistance that was funded under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program or the Coronavirus Relief Fund and provided only to people who qualified as “homeless;”

Have no overlap in rental assistance between the non-ESG program and the ESG program, due to exhaustion or expiration of the non-ESG assistance or program funds;

Do not have a gap of more than one month (or equivalent number of days) between the end of the non-ESG rental assistance and the beginning of their ESG RRH rental assistance; and

Do not have resources or support networks (beyond an eviction moratorium) such as family, friends, or other social networks, needed to keep their existing housing without ESG assistance.

Notice CPD-21-05 is at: <https://bit.ly/3319phU>

More information about ESG is on [page 4-84](#) of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

HUD Affirms Unemployment Benefit and Child Tax Credit Are Not Income

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs (Multifamily), which oversees contracts with private owners of HUD-assisted properties, sent an [email to stakeholders](#) on April 29 stating HUD has determined that the \$300 per week Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) provided to individuals who are collecting regular unemployment insurance must be *excluded* from a household's annual income calculation. In addition, the monthly child tax credit payment of up to \$300 per week that will be provided by the "American Rescue Plan Act" (ARPA) from July 2021 through December 2021 is also exempt from household income calculations.

The 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act and the ARPA amended three provisions to strengthen and extend unemployment benefits in the CARES Act, and the ARPA provides the monthly payment from the enhanced child tax credit.

The email states that owners and agents may remind residents that the \$300 per week unemployment benefit and the child tax credit are not included in their annual calculation of income, and that these extra funds can be used as a resource to help with unpaid rent.

The Multifamily email is at: <https://bit.ly/3aL7cvd>

More information about Project-Based Rental Assistance is on [page 4-64](#) of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

Additional Coronavirus Updates – May 3, 2021

National Updates

Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced plans to [distribute \\$800 million](#) to support students experiencing homelessness under the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief – Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) fund. ED announced state allocations for the \$800 million total allocated in the American Rescue Plan and will distribute \$200 million in funding on Monday.

Department of Housing and Urban Development

[HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge held a Zoom call](#) with House Financial Services Committee Chairwoman Maxine Waters, Colorado Governor Jared Polis, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan, and San Francisco Mayor London Breed to discuss the nearly \$5 billion in American Rescue Plan (ARP) homelessness assistance funds. The nearly \$5 billion in HOME-ARP funding is the first of two homelessness-related funding opportunities from the ARP that HUD will release. In the coming weeks, HUD will announce allocation of funding for emergency vouchers for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

The Department of Treasury and IRS [continue to urge](#) people who do not normally file a tax return and have not received Economic Impact Payments, including [people experiencing homelessness](#), to file a 2020 tax return so

they can receive the benefits they are entitled to, including the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit, the Child Tax Credit, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. Filing a 2020 tax return will also assist the IRS in determining whether someone is eligible for an advance payment of the 2021 Child Tax Credit, which will begin to be disbursed this summer.

Advocacy and Research

The National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) released updated [research](#) on how women of color are disproportionately behind on rent and mortgage payments during the pandemic.

Researchers from the Eviction Lab released a new [research article](#) outlining eviction filing patterns in the U.S. in 2020 and analyzing the efficacy of eviction moratoriums. The authors estimate that at least 1.55 million fewer eviction cases were filed in 2020 than in a normal year, but report that filing rates exceeded historical averages when eviction protections lapsed. Black and female renters received a disproportionate share of eviction cases filed during the pandemic. Access the article, “U.S. Eviction Filing Patterns in 2020” [here](#).

Reporting

The Associated Press outlines how struggling households can access the two rounds of federal emergency rental assistance. The article directs renters to NLIHC’s emergency rental assistance [database](#).

The New York Times reports that only a small portion of the more than \$46 billion in federal emergency rental aid has reached landlords and tenants. Housing experts, however, point out that careful preparation by state and local governments may ensure these resources reach tenants with the greatest needs. “Getting the money out fast isn’t necessarily the goal here, especially when we focus on making sure the money reaches the most vulnerable people,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel. The article cites [research](#) from NLIHC, NYU Furman Center, and the Housing Initiative at Penn.

CNN provides an overview of the historic \$70 billion in housing and homelessness resources provided in the federal coronavirus relief packages. Housing experts hope these critical funds will be distributed quickly but also strategically. “This funding could be transformational and reduce homelessness across the country. It won’t end it, but it could make a real dent,” said NLIHC’s Diane Yentel.

CNBC examines how the tireless efforts of housing organizers, activists, and policy experts over the past year have kept tens of millions of renters in their homes. NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel says these victories over the past year – the federal eviction moratorium and billions of dollars in housing and homelessness resources – are the result of decades of work by affordable housing advocates and activists.

Reuters reports on its investigation into large corporate landlords, like Invitation Homes, that are driving the eviction crisis by continuing to force tenants from their homes, despite the federal eviction moratorium. In response to media reports and housing advocates’ repeated calls to strengthen and enforce the CDC moratorium, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Federal Trade Commission [announced](#) in late March they would start investigating eviction practices, particularly by major multistate landlords.

State and Local News

Arkansas

Organizers with [Arkansas Renters United](#) have partnered with the Democratic Party of Arkansas and the Young Democrats of Arkansas to inform renters about the CDC eviction moratorium and the steps they must take to be protected. Advocates say many evictions are happening simply because renters do not know about the moratorium. The groups say it has knocked on 14,000 doors across the state and intervened in more than 130 evictions.

California

According to [Tenants Together](#), while Latino people make up 57% of renters in California, but only 35% have applied for rental assistance statewide. [KPBS](#) reports the San Diego Housing Commission is conducting targeted outreach about available rental assistance to the Latino community by placing ads in English and Spanish language media, sending postcards in Spanish to 170,000 households and posting ads on public transportation.

Maryland

[Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott](#) announced the city is exploring the potential purchase of hotels to use as permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness. Baltimore city has been housing hundreds of residents in hotels during the pandemic, and advocates have called on city officials to tap into the estimated \$670 billion Baltimore will receive from the American Rescue Plan to acquire and convert properties such as hotels and motels into permanent housing.

Minnesota

[MPR](#) reports the Minnesota legislature has proposed competing plans for an eviction moratorium “off-ramp.” The House will soon vote on a bill ([H.F. 12](#)) to extend limits on evictions for people behind on rent, impose rules around lease non-renewals, and restrict the ability of landlords to raise rents. This legislation differs from a bill ([S.F. 1470](#)) passed by the Republican-led Senate that allows evictions after one month for some renters but halts most actions for longer than that.

An op-ed in the [Star Tribune](#) urges state legislators to enact an eviction moratorium “off-ramp” that steps back the moratorium with intentionality and sustains the housing stability of renters across Minnesota. The authors say there must be a commitment to protecting all renters, particularly renters of color who are most likely to experience housing instability and loss of their homes through formal or informal eviction.

Missouri

The [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) reports that the St. Louis County Council on April 27 approved a measure to halt temporarily 600 evictions that resumed earlier this month, but not without pushback from landlords and some council members who say the legislation is not enforceable against a standing court order. The council voted 4-2 to approve the measure that enforces federal health officials’ guidance to halt evictions through June 30 by barring landlords from filing evictions.

New Mexico

The [Santa Fe Reporter](#) reports that Santa Fe officials included funding for several eviction prevention measures in the proposed city budget for fiscal year 2022, including \$75,000 for a tenant/landlord eviction hotline. The budget would add \$1.8 million to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund this year, with a significant amount of that money allocated for emergency rental assistance. According to the grassroots advocacy organization [Chainbreaker Collective](#), as many as 5,700 Santa Fe residents could face eviction in the wake of the pandemic. Chainbreaker Collective and the California-based research firm Human Impact Partners [hosted a panel](#) on the findings in its [report](#) and efforts needed to prevent a crisis when the moratoriums are lifted.

New York

New York lawmakers are considering [legislation that would extend eviction protections](#) through August 31, 2021. In addition to tenant protections, the bill would extend mortgage and tax foreclosure prevention for homeowners and small landlords. Housing advocates have raised [concerns](#) that the current moratorium would expire before the state launches its more than \$2 billion emergency rental assistance program. [Spectrum News](#)

reports that tenant advocates rallied in Foley Square on April 26, calling on elected officials to extend the statewide eviction moratorium and speed up the creation of the rental assistance application process.

Oregon

The [Oregonian](#) reports that as of April 15, Multnomah County had allocated less than 12% of the \$8 million in federal rental assistance funds it had received. The county and other local agencies say they are moving deliberately to ensure the funds reach the households most in need. Alison McIntosh, a spokesperson for the Oregon Housing Alliance, says she believes it is more important that agencies focus on getting rental assistance to the households most at risk of eviction, even if that takes additional time.

Texas

[Houston Public Media](#) reports that landlords filed [more than 2,000 evictions](#) in Houston and judges continued hearing thousands of cases during a six-week period when Mayor Sylvester Turner claimed evictions were on hold.

The [Associated Press](#) shares how a Dallas lawyer, Mark Melton, has taken up a mission to help people facing eviction during the pandemic. Melton has recruited over 175 attorneys who have assisted more than 6,000 people, helping renters under eviction protections and how to access rental assistance. Despite the federal eviction moratorium, landlords continue to evict tenants, and many renters show up in court without legal representation or unaware of their rights. “Without representation, the majority of tenants lose their cases and ultimately are evicted,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel.

Virginia

[NPR](#) reports that many residents in a close-knit immigrant community at the Southern Towers, an apartment complex in Alexandria, have been hit hard by the pandemic and threatened with eviction over the past year. About 60% of the 4,000 residents who live at Southern Towers are immigrants, mostly from Africa, and the majority of tenants are Black. A tenant organizing group called [African Communities Together](#) reports that CIM Group, a Los Angeles-based private real estate company that acquired Southern Towers in August 2020, has aggressively sought to evict residents, despite the ongoing pandemic and eviction moratoriums. The aggressive eviction filings have caused widespread fear among the residents, many of whom self-evict or must show up to court without legal representation.

Washington

The [Seattle Times](#) and [Business Insider](#) report that Washington is the first state in the U.S. to guarantee lawyers for low-income tenants facing eviction. Governor Jay Inslee signed a right to counsel guarantee as part of a larger bill aimed at preventing evictions when the federal eviction moratorium expires on June 30. The new law ensures free access to legal aid for tenants who receive public assistance or who have incomes 200% of the federal poverty level or below.

Wyoming

[Wyoming Public Media](#) reports that Wyoming’s \$200 million Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) will start accepting applications on April 29. The article cites NLIHC’s [FAQ on COVID-19 and rural communities](#). Learn more about Wyoming’s ERAP program [here](#).

Guidance

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

[Frequently Asked Questions: HHS/CDC Temporary Halt in Residential Evictions to Prevent the Further Spread of COVID-19](#) – Updated April 13, 2021

[Multifamily Q&A: CDC Eviction Moratorium](#) – Updated April 26, 2021

[Multifamily Q&A for COVID-19](#) – Updated April 26, 2021

[CDBG-CV Program: Economic Development Quick Guide](#) – April 2021

[HUD Office of Native American Programs \(ONAP\): American Rescue Plan Act Programs](#)

Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – May 3, 2021

The NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition convenes and supports disaster-impacted communities to ensure that federal disaster recovery efforts reach all impacted households, including the lowest-income and most marginalized people who are often the hardest-hit by disasters and have the fewest resources to recover.

Learn more about the DHRC’s policy recommendations [here](#).

FEMA Updates

Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas on April 27 [swore in Deanne Criswell](#) as FEMA’s 12th administrator, the first woman confirmed to serve in this role. NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel sent a [letter](#) to Administrator Criswell congratulating her on her confirmation and requesting a meeting on behalf of the DHRC. A [supplemental memo](#) was sent along with the letter, laying out potential administrative reforms that the agency could make to immediately and significantly improve equity and accessibility of FEMA programs. Read NLIHC’s [4/28 Memo](#) for more information.

FEMA released a [Request for Information](#) asking for public input on policy changes that the agency could make to “effectively achieve FEMA’s mission in a manner that furthers the goals of advancing equity for all, including those in underserved communities, bolstering resilience from the impacts of climate change, particularly for those disproportionately impacted by climate change, and environmental justice.” This is an excellent opportunity for us to further DHRC’s goal of improving access to recovery funding for those most impacted by disasters. We will be asking for input on what to include in a DHRC-wide submission. The deadline to submit comments is June 21.

The [Washington Post](#) reports that approval rates for FEMA’s Individual Assistance (IA) program have plummeted just as natural disasters have become more frequent and severe. In 2021 so far, FEMA has approved only 13% of IA applicants – its lowest rate yet. The article highlights FEMA’s response in Iowa: Of the 22,000 Iowans who applied for aid, 19,000 people received notices saying they were not eligible. According to an advisory council established by Congress, key FEMA programs are less accessible to underserved communities, particularly people with the lowest incomes.

[Roll Call](#) reports that staffing at FEMA is at critical lows due to the agency’s work fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, which experts say is setting back preparation for hurricanes. FEMA is responding to 118 major disasters across the country, 59 stemming from COVID-19. With about five weeks to prepare for hurricane season, 77% of staff are already deployed, according to a memo released at a daily briefing on April 25.

HUD Updates

The [Biden administration announced](#) on April 19 the release of a final \$2 billion in Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funding approved for Puerto Rico almost two years ago. HUD also announced the removal of onerous restrictions unique to Puerto Rico that limited the island’s access to CDBG-DR recovery funds that were allocated following Hurricane Maria in September 2017. The HUD Office Inspector General (OIG) released a [report](#) on April 22 commenting on the initial implementation of these bureaucratic obstacles and chronic delay of recovery funding to Puerto Rico.

The HUD OIG cited several recommendations for improving the CDBG-MIT and related programs to avoid such delays in the future. Recommendations included permanently authorizing CDBG-MIT and related programs. The DHRC-supported “[Reforming Disaster Recovery Act](#)” would do exactly that, while also improving transparency and ensuring these important recovery dollars reach those most in need of assistance after a disaster. The bill is sponsored by Representatives Al Green (D-TX) and Anne Wagner (R-MO) and successfully passed the House of Representatives last year. See NLIHC’s [4/28 Memo](#) for more information.

[NBC News](#) and the [Washington Post](#) report on the HUD OIG’s report and the Biden administration’s decision to eliminate the restrictions implemented by the Trump administration.

Flooding, Severe Storms, & Tornadoes

President Biden approved a [major disaster declaration](#) for Kentucky on April 23, making Individual Assistance and Public Assistance available to residents affected by the severe storms, flooding, and mudslides that occurred from February 27 to March 14, 2021. Kentuckians in Breathitt, Clay, Estill, Floyd, Johnson, Lee, Magoffin, Martin, and Powell counties can now [apply for federal disaster assistance](#), including grants for temporary housing, home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other disaster-related needs.

President Biden approved a [major disaster declaration](#) for Alabama on April 26, making federal disaster aid available to residents in the areas affected by the severe storms, straight-line winds, and tornadoes from March 25-26, 2021. [Homeowners and renters](#) who suffered damage in the eight designated counties can apply for FEMA’s Individual Assistance.

Winter Storm

Louisiana homeowners and renters who sustained property damage or loss caused by the severe winter storms have [two weeks left to register and apply](#) for federal disaster assistance.

Congress

House Financial Services Committee to Hold Hearings on the Impact of Climate Change, Artificial Intelligence on Housing

House Financial Services Committee (HFSC) Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) announced on April 27 several full committee and subcommittee hearings for the month of May, including a hearing on examining housing resiliency with climate change and another on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to address racial discrimination in housing and financial services.

The hearings include:

- “Built to Last; Examine Housing Resilience in the Face of Climate Change” (Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development, and Insurance)—[May 4 at 12 pm ET](#)

- “Equitable Algorithms: How Human-Centered AI can Address Systemic Racism and Racial Justice in Housing and Financial Services.” (Task Force on Artificial Intelligence)—[May 7 at 12 pm ET](#)

Read Chairwoman Water’s full announcement at: <https://bit.ly/3xtsRlg>

Unless otherwise noted, hearing and votes will be broadcast live at: <https://financialservices.house.gov/live/>

Visit <https://financialservices.house.gov/calendar/> for the most up-to-date schedule of HFSC hearings and witnesses list.

HUD

HUD Withdraws Equal Access Rule

HUD published in the *Federal Register* on April 27 a withdrawal of its proposed rule “[Making Admissions or Placement Determinations Based on Sex in Facilities Under Community Planning and Development Housing Programs; Withdrawal; Regulatory Review.](#)” The step will remove the previous administration’s harmful anti-transgender proposal from HUD’s upcoming Spring 2021 Unified Agenda and Deregulatory Actions. The decision was first announced last week, as HUD reaffirmed its commitment to equal access to housing, shelters, and other services, regardless of gender identity (see *Memo*, [04/26](#)).

HUD had announced in 2019 plans to gut protections for transgender and gender-nonconforming people experiencing homelessness by removing a crucial provision in the Equal Access Rule of 2016 (see *Memo* [05/28/2019](#)). This announcement came a day after former HUD Secretary Ben Carson had testified before the House Financial Services Committee that no such changes would be made to the Equal Access Rule—suggesting that either he lied to Congress or that he was uninformed about what was going on in his agency. Nonetheless, the rule was consistent with the previous administration’s [anti-transgender rhetoric](#).

HUD the published in July 2020 its proposed anti-transgender changes to the Equal Access Rule, “[Making Admission or Placement Determinations Based on Sex in Facilities Under Community Planning and Development Housing Programs](#)” (see *Memo*, [07/27/2020](#)). The proposal relied on harmful stereotypes about transgender people (particularly transgender women) and failed to provide evidence that HUD’s nondiscrimination policy created widespread privacy or safety concerns. HUD also relied on individual anecdotes without providing data to demonstrate a larger issue, cynically invoking survivors of domestic and sexual violence to attempt to lend credibility to its discriminatory proposal. Despite admitting that data were lacking, HUD based its justifications at that time on anecdotal evidence and dangerous stereotypes, undocumented “religious freedom” assertions, and unfounded regulatory burdens on shelters.

In response to the proposed rule, the [Housing Saves Lives Campaign](#) was launched, calling on individuals, organizations, Members of Congress, and public officials to submit public comments against the proposal during a 60-day comment period. NLIHC and Housing Saves Lives organizations hosted a successful [Week of Action](#) to support individuals and organizations as they drafted their comments. Over 66,000 public comments were submitted, one of the largest public comment campaigns ever in response to a HUD regulation.

The April 27 withdrawal of this harmful proposed rule was a win for fair housing advocates and exemplifies the current administration’s commitment to combat discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.

Read HUD’s rule “Making Admission or Placement Determinations Based on Sex in Facilities Under Community Planning and Development Housing Programs; Withdrawal; Regulatory Review” at: <https://bit.ly/3vuXaGi>

Read HUD’s press release at: <https://bit.ly/3sKron5>

HUD PIH Issues Notice Providing Public Housing Operating Fund Shortfall Funding

HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) issued [Notice PIH-2021-12](#), making a \$25 million public housing Operating Fund set-aside available to public housing agencies (PHAs) experiencing a financial shortfall or at risk of a shortfall. The “2021 Appropriations Act” set aside the \$25 million and the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the act directs that highest priority be given to PHAs with 249 or fewer public housing units and that have less than one month of reserves.

For the purposes of *Notice PIH-2021-12*, PIH defines a financial shortfall as a PHA having less than two months of operating expenses held in reserve. Eligibility for the Shortfall Funding Program will be based on the amount of a PHA’s Monthly Operating Reserves (MOR). The amount of funding that a PHA is eligible to receive under the set-aside is equal to the difference between a PHA’s MOR for the PHA fiscal year end and the amount that is equal to two months of MOR for that PHA.

The notice links to a [list of PHAs eligible](#) for shortfall assistance and the amount each is eligible to receive. Following the congressional Joint Explanatory Statement regarding priority in providing shortfall funding, PIH established six groups of PHAs based on their number of public housing units:

1. PHAs with fewer than 100 units
2. PHAs with at least 100 and not more than 249 units
3. PHAs with at least 250 and not more than 499 units
4. PHAs with at least 500 and not more than 1,249 units
5. PHAs with at least 1,250 and not more than 6,599 units
6. PHAs with at least 6,600 units

PHAs that received shortfall funding in FY20 are eligible to receive shortfall funding in FY21. The Notice describes circumstances enabling some PHAs that converted under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) to be eligible for shortfall funding.

All PHAs that receive shortfall funding will receive an award letter that identifies actions not specific to the PHA that the PHA can take to improve their financial performance. These actions are operational improvements that PIH has historically recommended to insolvent PHAs. PIH encourages PHAs to consider the impact on residents and supportive service programs when determining next steps. The list of actions are:

- Reduce costs/increase revenue
- Increase program rent revenue by improving occupancy and evaluating rent collection policies and actions
- Consider selling property/assets in accordance with HUD’s disposition regulations
- Convert properties through a RAD conversion and possibly with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.
- Reposition capital assets that are beyond their useful life
- Seek additional financing (e.g., debt, equity, cash flow) through your municipality, finance authority, and housing trust fund
- Renegotiate contracts with workforce and/or vendors

- Restructure the agency’s organization and staff
- Evaluate utility consumption and energy policies and consider implementation of energy conservation measures and agreements to reduce energy costs

PHAs that receive shortfall funding are required to collaborate with their HUD Field Office to identify specific issues at the PHA and develop a plan identifying actions that the PHA can take to improve their financial performance. The Field Office will document these efforts by creating an improvement plan. Shortfall funding will be recaptured from PHAs that do not sufficiently collaborate with their Field Office to develop an improvement plan.

Notice PIH-2021-12 is at: <https://bit.ly/3eBE9uY>

The list of eligible PHAs is at: <https://bit.ly/3eHo8E6>

The PIH Shortfall Funding website is at: <https://bit.ly/3nC8Qo7>

More information about public housing is on [page 4-30](#) of NLIHC’s *2021 Advocates’ Guide*.

HUD PIH Updates HCV Data Dashboard

HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) has enhanced the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Data Dashboard to help public housing agencies (PHAs) maximize the impact of their HCV programs. The updated dashboard will also be useful for resident leaders and advocates. The dashboard will now showcase key HCV leasing and budget utilization statistics at the national, state, and PHA level.

The dashboard includes the following aggregate data points: budget and leasing utilization, reserve balances, program attrition and new admissions, per unit cost trends, project-based voucher portfolio, leasing potential, and special purpose voucher utilization. The dashboard will also allow users to compare metrics for different PHAs side by side. In addition, all data will be available at the individual PHA level and will include Moving to Work (MTW) agencies.

During a call with stakeholders, PIH staff described various features, including “leasing potential,” which is the number of additional vouchers a PHA could lease for a full 12 months while maintaining reserves as a percentage of budget authority, based on PHA size. For PHAs with 500 or more units, the desired reserve size is 12%. For PHAs with between 250 and 500 vouchers the desired reserve size is 6%, and for PHAs with fewer than 250 vouchers the desired reserve is 4%. The percent of total vouchers with leasing potential is the leasing potential divided by the total program units under a PHA’s annual contribution contract (ACC).

Currently, the national leasing potential is 95,500 units, meaning that 95,500 vouchers are not available to households who need them. PIH has set a goal of reducing that to 45,000 units. For a more specific example, the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee is among the top ten PHAs with leasing potential. Milwaukee currently has the potential to lease 2,229 more vouchers, representing 29.5% of all of its voucher authority. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles is also among the top ten, but its leasing potential is 3,588 unused vouchers, representing 7% of its voucher authority.

The updated dashboard, along with a tutorial on how to use the dashboard and an extensive user guide and data dictionary, is available at: <https://bit.ly/3vu67zJ>

Questions or suggestions on how to improve the dashboard can be sent to hcvdashboard@hud.gov, an account that is routinely monitored by the developer of the tool.

More information about the HCV program is on [page 4-1](#) of NLIHC’s *2021 Advocates’ Guide*.

HUD Releases New Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Tenant Data

HUD released 2018 data on Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) tenant characteristics. The data include income, race, disability status, and family composition of tenants living in LIHTC housing. Since the passage of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA) in 2008, HUD has required state agencies that administer the LIHTC program to submit demographic and economic data on tenants.

The median annual income of households living in LIHTC housing was \$17,522, ranging from \$5,856 in Puerto Rico to \$24,834 in Hawaii. Approximately 47% of LIHTC households had extremely low incomes, reporting incomes at or below 30% the area median gross income (AMGI). To help with rental payments, 41% of households in LIHTC housing reported receiving some form of additional rental assistance. Of those receiving federal rental assistance, 48% utilized a housing voucher (Housing Choice Voucher or Project-Based Voucher). Thirty-three states, however, did not report data on the source of federal rental assistance.

The report indicates that 36% of all LIHTC households spent more than 30% of their income on rent, making them “housing cost burdened.” Approximately 8% of all LIHTC households spent more than 50% of their income on housing, making them “severely housing cost burdened.”

The report also presents data on the race and ethnicity of heads of households. Under fair housing laws, however, tenants are not required to share this information. Forty-one percent of households did not report the race or ethnicity of the head of household. Of the data collected, 38% heads of household were white, 27% were Black/African American, and 3% were Asian. Approximately 3% of heads of households were American Indian or Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. About 11% of heads of households reported Hispanic as their ethnicity.

In terms of disability status, 11% of households included at least one member with a disability. Approximately 34% of households had at least one member 62 years of age or older and 35% of households had at least one member under the age of 18.

The 2018 LIHTC tenant data are available at: <https://bit.ly/3ev0B9e>

NLIHC Leadership Awards

EVENTS

Tenant Talk Live on Environmental and Housing Justice Today!

[Join](#) resident leaders and NLIHC staff for *Tenant Talk Live*. Low-income people often bear the brunt of natural disasters and extreme weather—and this problem is apparent in the United States as low-income renters end up exploited by our disaster recovery system. Speakers from West Street Recovery in Houston, TX will join us to discuss the work they are doing to make disaster recovery more just and equitable for people with lower incomes. *Tenant Talk Live* takes place today at 6 pm ET (5 pm CT, 4 pm MT, 3 pm PT). Register at: <https://bit.ly/3dNekGP>

The most recent edition of *Tenant Talk Live* featured attendees brainstorming best practices and priorities to take back to their housing advocacy circles.

Tenant Talk Live provides opportunities for residents to connect with NLIHC and one another, share best practices, and learn how to be more involved in influencing federal housing policies and to lead in their communities.

NLIHC is committed to connecting and engaging with resident leaders in new, robust ways. If you are a low-income resident and have a topic you would like to propose for peer-sharing or if you want to be a speaker on an upcoming call/webinar, email: karbuckle@nlihc.org

Register for *Tenant Talk Live* at: <https://bit.ly/3dNekGP>

Housing Justice Network to Hold Webinar on Tenant Organizing in Federal Housing Programs

The Housing Justice Network (HJN), a field network of more than 1,600 community-level housing advocates and tenant leaders hosted by the National Housing Law Project, will hold a webinar to discuss tenant organizing in federal housing programs. The webinar will cover funding, outreach and education, enforcement, and advocacy with HUD. The webinar will take place on Wednesday, May 5 at 2:30 pm ET. Register [here](#)

HJN received NLIHC's 2021 Sheila Crowley Housing Justice Award on April 28. More about this award is at: <https://bit.ly/3xzIIUT>

Also save the date for another webinar, "Access to Housing, Disaster Relief, and Homelessness Assistance Programs for Immigrants: What Legal Advocates Need to Know," on May 12 at 1:30 pm ET.

Opportunity Starts at Home

ZERO TO THREE Releases Report on Opportunity Disparities among Young Children

Research

Research Explores Reasons for FEMA Application Denials in Puerto Rico

An article in *Housing Policy Debate*, "[Deemed Ineligible: Reasons Homeowners in Puerto Rico Were Denied Aid After Hurricane María](#)," identifies several key reasons homeowner applicants were denied or received insufficient assistance from FEMA's Individuals and Households Program (IHP) after Hurricane Maria. The author, Ivis Garcia, concludes that FEMA officials' lack of cultural competence and lack of knowledge about property rights in Puerto Rico were common elements in all of these reasons for denial and underpayment.

Following Hurricane Maria in 2017, Garcia moved to Puerto Rico and worked with the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) at NLIHC to connect with recovery stakeholders using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) framework. Garcia formally interviewed 25 recovery stakeholders and attended various convenings through which she identified IHP application denials for homeowners as a key issue for the recovery.

She found several specific barriers for homeowners in the IHP program. These included:

- Inability to schedule an inspection
- Missing an inspection appointment
- Issues with the inspection
- Insufficient funds for repairs
- Duplicate applications
- Inability to prove ownership.

Many survivors lacked access to telephone and internet or had to leave Puerto Rico entirely, making it difficult to either schedule or follow through on the property inspections required for IHP assistance. For those who were able to participate in an inspection, many had FEMA inspectors who did not speak Spanish or who did not conduct thorough inspections. In some cases, FEMA denied assistance based on applicants having duplicate addresses. However, it is common in Puerto Rico for multiple floors of a building to share an address but contain separate households, or for multiple homes on a parcel to share an address.

Inability to prove ownership was the leading reason for denial of assistance. Seventy-seven thousand homeowner applicants were denied assistance because they could not verify their status as homeowners. Puerto Rico’s non-standardized address system led to unnecessary FEMA rejections when properties showed more than one address or an inexact address for a homeowner applicant. At the same time, many homeowners were rejected because they simply lacked a title or alternative documentation to demonstrate ownership of their home.

According to Garcia, FEMA denied many of these homeowners because it failed to recognize non-traditional housing arrangements or that Puerto Rico’s Civil Code grants certain property rights even without a title, which is different from the standard U.S. property rights framework. FEMA was slow to adopt self-declarative statements of property ownership and, when it did, failed to reach out to many applicants who it had already denied.

Homeowners unable to prove ownership were often treated as renters by the IHP program and only reimbursed for damage to their personal belongings and not damage to the structure of their homes. This led to underpayment of assistance for many homeowners and contributed to an anemic recovery. FEMA’s lack of cultural competence played a key role in this failure.

“Deemed Ineligible: Reasons Homeowners in Puerto Rico Were Denied Aid After Hurricane María” is at: <https://bit.ly/3aQQ47d>

CARES Funding Proved Critical for Homeless Services, but More Planning is Needed to Ensure People Experiencing Homelessness Receive Vaccines

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) released a fourth report as part of its series on homeless system responses during COVID-19. The report, [*Voices from the Field: Responding to COVID-19*](#), provides the results from a fourth round of surveys with Continuums of Care (CoCs) on how COVID-19 has impacted people experiencing homelessness and the systems that serve them. The results suggest that CoCs were able to acquire space for non-congregate temporary shelter due to the CARES Act, that more planning is needed to vaccinate people experiencing homelessness, and that more crisis housing is needed.

NAEH sent online surveys in February and March 2021 to representatives of CoCs, advocates, and service providers, and received responses from 147 unique CoCs, 113 advocates, and 453 service providers.

The survey asked CoCs and direct service providers about vaccination plans in their area. Fifty-six percent of the CoCs said that homeless status was used in the prioritization process for vaccination. Slightly less than half (49%) affirmed that their community had a plan in place to conduct mass vaccinations of people experiencing homelessness, though that was only true for one in three CoCs in rural areas. Most CoC respondents indicated they did not have plans to track vaccination status in their Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or another database, which the authors note might impede efforts to gauge how well people experiencing homelessness are being served. Among respondents speaking for shelters and other direct service providers, 76% knew of clients who had tested positive for COVID-19, and 27% had experienced an outbreak among their clients. Sixty-one percent said that at least some of their clients had begun receiving vaccinations. The vast majority of these providers (86%) reported they were educating their clients about vaccination resources, and 57% were providing a space for vaccinations.

The surveys asked respondents about their crisis response housing. Among those who had stopped operating crisis response beds (e.g., hotel/motel rooms), 43% reported that funding limitations had played a role. Seventy-nine percent of responding CoCs indicated that they were still operating crisis response beds, and the vast majority indicated that available funding was critical to being able to continue operations. On average, CoCs added 66 non-congregate beds between 2020 and 2021. While FEMA announced in February 2021 that it would reimburse 100% of eligible activity costs tied to non-congregate shelter, only 47% of CoCs said they were planning to participate. When asked why they were not participating, CoCs cited being left out of decision-making by city or county officials, concerns about the speed of reimbursement, or insufficient staffing to manage the efforts.

Surveys sent to CoCs also asked about the 2021 annual Point-in-Time count, which aims to provide a snapshot of homelessness by producing a count of those experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on one night in January. A third of respondents reported they cancelled their attempt to count people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in 2021, and among those who did go forward with a count, 85% had to make changes to their methodology because of the pandemic.

The full series of reports and resources is at: <https://bit.ly/3nuu0nU>

The most recent report is at: <https://bit.ly/3e09ZCP>

Housing Counseling Supports Renters in Crisis

A recent article by the Urban Institute, “[Housing Counseling to Support Renters in Crisis](#),” found that as demand for rental counseling increased during the pandemic, counseling agencies pivoted away from services focused mainly on homeownership to expand or adapt services for renters, while also shifting from in-person to virtual service. These changes required agencies to move rapidly on policies aimed at renters’ housing stabilization.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a precarious situation for many renters. According to one estimate, nearly 20% of renters could not pay at least some part of their rent in 2021. Housing counseling is a tool that can help renters and landlords navigate debt and housing instability. Housing counseling for homeowners helps equip consumers to find, finance, rent, and maintain a home, while rental counseling focuses on budgeting and understanding affordable rental costs, making sound rental housing decisions, understanding tenant rights and responsibilities, managing rental payments, and navigating financial shocks. Some organizations help renters find and apply for assistance programs, connect with legal services, or negotiate payment plans with landlords. However, current rental needs surpass the capacity of most counseling agencies. Currently, only 58% of the

1,560 HUD-approved housing counseling agencies appear to offer rental counseling. Housing counseling has the potential to help those facing housing and financial instability during and after the pandemic.

This brief explores the ways housing counseling has responded to the needs of renters in crisis and the resources required to strengthen counseling services. Based on interviews with 18 leaders from eight housing organizations about their experiences with housing counseling during the pandemic, the researchers found that virtual counseling services have provided agencies with more flexibility to assist renters during the pandemic. The shift from in-person counseling to remote services has provided many benefits to agencies and renters, like the reduction in time spent on engaging with services and the ability to cover a larger geographic area. However, there are equity challenges with virtual services. Limited access to technology, discomfort with remote services, and a lack of language- or culturally appropriate services may limit access to services for groups affected by COVID-19.

The researchers found that renters need more direct rental assistance and support to meet basic needs. Many counselors noted that compared to homeowners, renters have fewer assets, savings and resources. When asked what renters needed most during the ongoing crisis, providers pointed to direct rent, financial, or cash assistance and legal assistance. Counselors need increased access to information about available rental assistance and legal expertise to help renters find resources. To serve their clients, counselors need better tracking of rental assistance programs, direct assistance resources, court diversion services, eviction services, and more information about tenants' rights.

Providers face capacity and funding constraints. Housing counseling providers do not currently have the expertise or staff needed to meet renters' needs. Providers commented that HUD's requirements for housing counseling funding put unwarranted restrictions on how services could be provided. For example, HUD's counseling framework requires counselors to create a budget and housing affordability analysis with clients, which is inappropriate for clients who are in a financial crisis due to the pandemic. Making the HUD housing counseling funding more flexible would better support counseling agencies during this national crisis. Finally, landlords – especially small, “mom and pop” landlords – are often absent from rental counseling services. Housing counseling could help landlords navigate debt, preserve their credit or avoid foreclosure.

The housing counseling system is a promising framework for supporting renters in crisis, but new resources, approaches and partnerships are required. More research needs to be done to understand the extent to which counseling services are reaching marginalized populations and vulnerable renters.

Read the full article at: <https://urbn.is/3n9YZFG>

Complexity of LIHTC Financing Increases Development Costs

The Turner Center for Housing Studies at the University of California at Berkeley released a report on “[The Complexity of Financing Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Housing in the United States](#),” analyzing trends in the structure of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) financing and explores ways to simplify it. The authors conclude with policy recommendations to make the financing of LIHTC development more efficient.

The authors used a combination of qualitative interviews with stakeholders and quantitative analyses of project-level data for the report. The team conducted interviews with 30 stakeholders with expertise in LIHTC development. Because there is not a national database tracking development costs for LIHTC properties, project-level data for the quantitative analysis were collected from 11 LIHTC syndicators and combined with HUD's LIHTC property database to create a dataset of 3,029 LIHTC properties representing all 50 states.

The authors found that an average of 3.5 permanent financing sources in LIHTC projects between 2000 and 2018, with 4% deals tending to have more layers of financing than 9% deals. Projects that combined 4% and 9% credits tended to have the fewest layers of financing. The complexity of LIHTC financing increased in recent years. In new construction projects with 9% tax credits, for example, the average number of hard or soft loans per project doubled from 2 in 2000 to 4 in 2017. Projects serving extremely low-income households and special populations tended to have more layers of financing, and financial complexity varied across markets. Areas with higher development costs tended to have more layers of financing.

The greater complexity of LIHTC deals results in greater development costs through increased staff time and legal fees associated with each additional layer of financing. Specialized requirements and a lack of coordination between funding cycles for different layers of financing also adds to the total cost of LIHTC development by increasing development timelines and associated costs.

The authors offer policy recommendations to make the financing of LIHTC projects more efficient and to help contain costs. First, the authors recommend reducing the fragmentation of funding streams by consolidating them wherever possible at the federal and state levels, so that at least the same amount of total funding is available through a smaller number of sources. The authors also advocate for the federal government to better align deadlines and program requirements across housing production programs. Finally, the authors propose bringing disparate funding streams under the administration of fewer agencies and improving the capacity of those agencies to coordinate resources.

“The Complexity of Financing Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Housing in the United States” is at: <https://bit.ly/3gL6SQU>

Fact of the Week

From the Field

Washington State Advocates Secure Wins for Renters’ Rights and Funding for Affordable Housing

Affordable housing advocates in Washington State won significant housing and homelessness victories in the 2021 Legislative session. The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, an NLIHC state partner, pushed lawmakers in the state to pass bills that prevent jurisdictions from banning shelters and supportive housing, create a dedicated source of funding for ongoing rental assistance and housing stabilization efforts, and establish state-level renter protections.

State lawmakers approved a two-year state budget that extends through mid-2023 and appropriates [\\$10.6 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funds and \\$59 billion in state revenue](#). This appropriation includes \$658 million in federal resources to extend the state’s rental assistance program.

Washington has had a moratorium on residential evictions in place since March 2020 that is set to end on June 30. For the moratorium to expire without causing mass evictions, the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance pushed lawmakers to pass a suite of legislation and budget investments to create an “off-ramp.”

Legislators passed S.B. 1277, providing permanent funding for eviction prevention and housing stability services through the creation of a new \$100 document recording fee on real estate transactions. The fee will generate almost \$150 million per year. Twenty percent of the funds will go toward operating permanent supportive housing and a small amount will go toward a landlord mitigation program that reimburses landlords for excessive damage. Sixty percent of the remaining funds are designated for project-based vouchers, housing

services, rapid rehousing, emergency housing, and acquisition, with a priority on serving people who are chronically homeless or living unsheltered. Funds can also be used for the state’s Eviction Prevention Rental Assistance Program, rental assistance for people experiencing homelessness, foreclosure prevention services, and tenant education and legal assistance.

The Eviction Prevention Rental Assistance Program will provide resources to households at risk of becoming homeless or experiencing housing instability. This permanent program mirrors Washington’s emergency rental assistance program, which is currently disbursing federal COVID-19 relief funds. In prioritizing racial equity, the program requires that communities of color be served in proportion to the number of people at risk for homelessness by race. The bill also sets aside funding to be awarded to community-based organizations that are governed by and serve marginalized communities that have long suffered from discriminatory housing policies.

State lawmakers passed measures that provide renters facing eviction with a right to counsel and establish just cause eviction protections. S.B. 5160 establishes a right to counsel to ensure [that tenants who receive public assistance or have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line](#) and are facing eviction have free legal representation. While cities across the country, including Seattle, have enacted similar measures, Washington became the first state to enact state-level right to counsel.

The passage of H.B. 1236 established [just cause protections](#), which limit the reasons for which tenants can be evicted and require landlords to state a reason when ending or refusing to renew a lease. In Washington, the reasons that an ongoing lease can be terminated include nonpayment of rent, violation of a program requirement of subsidized housing, unlawful activities, or if a landlord wants to live in or sell the unit. The bill effectively ends the practice of giving tenants “no cause” notices with little advance warning.

Lawmakers also invested \$175 million into the state Housing Trust Fund and \$120 million to rent or purchase properties that can be quickly converted to shelter or housing. The budget set aside \$6 million to encourage cities to tap Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) resources to move people experiencing homelessness into non-congregate shelters by dedicating funds to cover costs that FEMA rejects. In total, the legislature dedicated \$1.7 billion to meet the housing needs of people experiencing homelessness.

These three bills and budget investments make up the off-ramp from the eviction moratorium that advocates say is necessary to prevent evictions. Advocates continue to push for Governor Inslee to extend the eviction moratorium as the pandemic continues and at least until the protections created by the legislature are in operation. According to the *Census Pulse Survey*, [over 160,000 people in Washington were behind on rent in March](#) and at least 350,000 were meeting their spending needs using unsustainable methods like borrowing from friends or family, selling assets, or using their savings. People of color, who are disproportionately renters, disproportionately work in low-wage jobs, and were hit hardest by the health and economic impacts of the pandemic, made up the majority of people behind on rent. The eviction moratorium and these tenant protections will protect thousands of Washington residents and prevent racial inequity in housing outcomes from growing worse.

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance worked closely with other organizations to pass H.B. 1220, which prevents cities from banning shelters, transitional housing, or permanent supportive housing; requires jurisdictions planning under the Growth Management Act to identify policies that create racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion; and to identify and implement policies to undo that harm.

According to Washington Low Income Housing Alliance Executive Director Rachael Myers, “We had extraordinary champions in the legislature fighting for these policies but without a ground game that included sustained and persistent advocacy, we wouldn’t have seen this level of progress. Tenants who were at risk of losing their homes told their stories in testimony, at virtual legislative meetings, and to the media, over and over. In the last year over 6,500 advocates across the state contacted their lawmakers calling on them to protect people experiencing homelessness and prevent people from losing their homes during the pandemic.

We've never seen that level of advocacy before, and it worked! These measures not only provide critical protections and resources for renters struggling to stay housed amidst the ongoing pandemic, but they establish more permanent housing resources to address the underlying affordable housing crisis. We'll come out of the pandemic in a better place than we started – and we intend to keep building on that momentum.”

For more information about the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, please contact Rachael Myers at rachaelm@wliha.org or visit: <https://www.wliha.org/>

To read more about legislative victories visit: <https://www.wliha.org/blog/sine-die-2021>

NLIHC Regains a State Partner in Connecticut

The NLIHC board of directors unanimously approved Partnership for Strong Communities in Connecticut as the newest NLIHC state coalition partner. The organization joins 63 other statewide organizations devoted to policy solutions to ensure safe, decent, affordable, and accessible housing for the lowest-income people. With these additions, NLIHC now has state partners in 43 states and the District of Columbia.

Partnership for Strong Communities is a statewide nonprofit policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ending homelessness, expanding affordable housing, and building strong communities in Connecticut. Since 1998, the Partnership has successfully advocated for more than \$2.3 billion in public funding in Connecticut which has helped build homes and created programs to end chronic homelessness. The Partnership engages in advocacy efforts, produces original research, and brings together the coalitions needed to create systemic change in Connecticut housing policy.

Learn more about Partnership for Strong Communities at: pschousing.org

NLIHC News

NLIHC Seeks Board Members!

NLIHC members and partners are encouraged to submit nominations (or self-nominate!) to fill current vacancies on the NLIHC board of directors. NLIHC is seeking to fill three low-income and one national partner board member positions. Nominees for board membership must be current dues-paying NLIHC members or be employed by a current dues-paying NLIHC member organization. Send a brief biographical description or resume and a statement of interest to NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel at dyentel@nlihc.org by close of business on May 28.

NLIHC's board consists of six low-income persons (defined as individuals with incomes less than 50% of their area median income), six representatives of allied national organizations, six representatives of NLIHC state partners, and up to seven unrestricted or at-large NLIHC members. NLIHC is seeking nominations for three low-income and one national partner board members to assume their duties in August 2021.

At least 90% of NLIHC board members must be people with low incomes or individuals who are or have been engaged directly in working on meeting the housing needs of low-income people. In selecting board members, NLIHC strives to achieve a broad diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, and geography, including representation from both urban and rural communities.

Board members are elected for 3-year terms and can be nominated to serve up to three terms. The board meets in person twice a year in Washington, DC, once in conjunction with our annual forum in the spring and once in the fall. The board also meets by conference call in the summer. Attendance at board meetings is required, with exceptions for illness or emergencies. Generally, new board members are elected by existing board members at the annual board meeting held in the spring. All board members serve on at least one standing committee of the board and all board members can be members of the NLIHC Policy Advisory Committee. Committees meet by conference call. All new board members attend an orientation soon after their election.

NLIHC subsidizes travel and lodging expenses of low-income board members to attend board meetings. All others are expected to cover their own travel and lodging expenses, unless doing so would prevent an otherwise qualified person from serving on the board. In addition to paying NLIHC membership dues, all board members are asked to make financial contributions to NLIHC at the level they are able. We strive for 100% board giving.

The best way to be considered for board membership is to get involved in the activities of NLIHC, particularly by serving on the Policy Advisory Committee and attending NLIHC's virtual and in-person events. The NLIHC Nominating Committee will review the level of a potential board member's involvement in his or her own community or state/national housing advocacy activities and accountability to a constituent base.

To make a nomination or self-nominate, send a statement of interest and bio or resume to Diane Yentel at dyentel@nlihc.org by May 28.

NLIHC Is Hiring!

NLIHC Seeks Research Specialist–COVID Response

NLIHC seeks a research specialist to further the coalition's research on housing-related responses to the coronavirus pandemic and economic crisis. The research specialist will work with other members of the NLIHC research team to carry-out research, including data collection and analysis, on rental assistance and other housing policies intended to aid low-income renters. This is a one-year position.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Collect data on state and local housing-related responses to the coronavirus pandemic
- Collect and analyze data about the design and implementation of emergency rental assistance programs
- Collect and analyze federal housing-related expenditure data, including spending through FEMA, the CARES Act, Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA), and other federal programs
- Participate in NLIHC working groups related to the coronavirus and other disasters
- Disseminate NLIHC research to the general public, members, and partners through writing reports and blogs, creating visualizations, and other means
- Participate in other research as assigned
- Prepare materials for webinars, briefings, conferences, and similar events organized by NLIHC and other partner organizations
- Contribute to NLIHC's weekly e-newsletter *Memo to Members & Partners* by identifying and summarizing new research relevant to NLIHC members' interests
- Attend and participate in NLIHC staff meetings, events, Board meetings, and trainings
- Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

Applicants should possess at least a bachelor's degree, a commitment to social justice, knowledge of research methods, and some knowledge of affordable housing, homelessness, or fair housing policies. Candidates should have strong analytical, writing, and editing skills, oral and interpersonal communications, organizational skills, and attention to detail. Applicants should also be proficient in the Microsoft Office suite. Experience with statistical software and/or GIS also a plus.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. NLIHC is located in Washington, DC, but the analyst will work remotely, at least initially.

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, and two writing samples to Bairy Diakite, operations manager, and Andrew Aurand, vice president for research, at: bdiakite@nlihc.org and aurand@nlihc.org

NLIHC Seeks Development Coordinator

NLIHC seeks a development coordinator who will have prime responsibility for a portfolio of development/fundraising activities for the Coalition. The activities, along with those of a second development coordinator with a separate portfolio, will ensure the Coalition secures the necessary resources to support its mission of advancing socially just public policy to ensure the lowest-income people in America have decent, accessible, and affordable homes. The individual will also support NLIHC with other key operational and event-management needs. The coordinator will report to the NLIHC chief operating officer.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Coordinate/manage reports, proposals, relationship management, and research/prospect development for all non-corporate foundations.
- Track progress on current grants and reports due, as well as other requirements for each non-corporate funder, and draft reports and proposals. Coordinate calls and meetings with current and new funders.
- Coordinate/manage NLIHC's end-of-year fundraising campaign, including Giving Tuesday and holiday appeal – drafting language (postcards, emails, etc.), creating outreach list, mailing them out, etc.
- Handle inquiries about individual giving, particularly end-of-year requests to contribute stocks or other donations, and cultivate individual donors as needed.
- Collaborate closely with operations manager on all event coordination for the Annual Housing Policy Forum.
- Develop and maintain registration pages for the Housing Policy Forum.
- Enter registrations for complimentary Housing Policy Forum attendees where necessary (special members, event sponsors, AG authors, VIP/invitees, etc.)
- Coordinate/manage NLIHC special members renewals, invoicing, provision of benefits, procurement of ads and complimentary event registrations, and efforts to recruit additional special members. Track progress on special member benefits (ads needed for the annual Leadership Awards Celebration, publications to be mailed, etc.)
- Coordinate uploading of new lists secured from partners into Salesforce/Mailchimp. Monitor incoming data to Salesforce for any irregularities.
- Ensuring all grant agreement and follow-up information is up-to-date and accurate in Salesforce database.
- Coordinate with contracted agency (currently Cogency Global) on state charitable registrations, ensuring annual registrations for all states in which registrations are required.
- Using NLIHC's Program Summary report, prepare first draft of *Annual Report* narrative for review by COO. Produce list of previous year donors and their giving levels for *Annual Report*.

- Monitor NLIHC’s various webpages that recognize donors for any missing logos, ensure updates are made.
- Maintain files of copies of all acknowledgment/grant letters.
- Assist in the coordination of other events and activities for which fundraising is involved, such as NLIHC’s anniversary events.

Organizational/Operations Support

- Support COO with various operations activities.
- Ensure successful NLIHC business licenses and Good Standing reports with DC government.
- Attend all meetings of the NLIHC Board of Directors and Board committees, as needed. Participate in staff meetings, retreats, trainings, and all Coalition events.
- Other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS: To receive serious consideration for this position, an applicant should have the following attributes and background:

- A bachelor’s degree.
- A strong commitment to the alleviation of poverty and social justice (affordable housing knowledge/experience a plus).
- Demonstrated strong organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Excellent communications skills, both orally and in writing.
- Experience successfully building and maintaining professional partnerships and relationships.
- Experience in funder/donor research and cultivation, proposal- and report-writing, and fundraising appeals.
- Experience in event coordination.
- Experience using Salesforce CRM a plus.
- An ability to work in a diverse, fast-paced environment.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS: An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. This is a full-time position located in Washington, DC, though candidates residing outside the DC area may be considered and telework is being implemented during the pandemic.

JOB APPLICATION PROCESS: Send a cover letter, resume, and two writing samples to: Bairy Diakite, Operations Manager, NLIHC, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20005 or via email at bdiakite@nlihc.org. The cover letter should describe the candidate’s interest in and relevant experiences for the position and include salary requirements and the names and contact information for at least three people serving as candidate references. (NLIHC will not contact references before consulting with the candidate.)

NLIHC Seeks Housing Advocacy Organizer

NLIHC seeks a housing advocacy organizer who will be responsible for maintaining and expanding NLIHC membership and mobilizing advocates on federal policy priorities to advance the Coalition’s mission. This is a one-year position that will play a key role in designing and implementing field strategies for various campaign efforts such as the NLIHC HoUSed campaign for long-term solutions to homelessness and housing poverty, the *Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020* non-partisan civic-engagement project, coronavirus emergency rental assistance, federal budget priorities, and other campaigns. The housing advocacy organizer supports outreach activities, develops materials for use by state and local advocates, and supports low-income renters with organizing guidance and tools. The housing advocacy organizer reports to the field director.

Responsibilities/Duties

Field and Campaign Organizing, Education, and Activation

- Field and Campaign Organizing: Mobilize state partners, members, endorsers, and supporters on federal affordable housing policy issues. Generate letters and calls to legislative offices; assist organizations and constituents with meetings and media opportunities; generate resolutions, endorsements, and sign-ons; work with broad issue-based campaigns to raise the issue of housing.
- Field Activity: Track field activity, including member participation in call-in days and e-mail actions; prepare reports on activities, as requested. Maintain and enhance member and contact database for organizational/field needs; expand its use to distribute congressional profile data and timely, targeted calls to action that advance NLIHC goals.
- Education and Activation: Participate in meetings of national housing and other advocates to engage in strategy discussions, including HoUSed campaign policy group, Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC), and others as necessary. Create, update, and distribute materials, as needed, including calls-to-action, postcards, fact sheets, endorsement forms, brochures, and stickers. Identify conference and other speaking opportunities for Coalition staff; exhibit and present, as needed.
- Communications: Write (on a rotating basis among housing advocacy organizers) a weekly article for NLIHC's e-newsletter, *Memo to Members and Partners*, highlighting the field work of state partners or other NLIHC members. Help maximize use of the NLIHC website and social media tools, including webinars, videos, and blogs, to engage members. Draft articles for the *Tenant Talk* publication produced for low-income renters. Assist communications staff in generating media ideas and opportunities for work happening in the field.

State Partners

- NLIHC State Partner Meetings: Assist in the planning and convening of biannual NLIHC state partners' meeting. Participate in state partner conference calls.
- State Activities: Track all field activity in the assigned states, including member participation in call-in days, email actions, and prepare reports on activities as requested. Promote activities of state partners through social media and NLIHC communication platforms.
- Growing the State Partner Coalition: Identify and cultivate potential new state partners in places where NLIHC is lacking a strong advocacy lead.

Membership

- Membership Recruitment: Identify sources for prospective members and coordinate ongoing membership drives, including among Housing Week of Action organizers, budget letter signers, HoUSed campaign endorsers, and Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition members. Engage pre-members through video and email; track effectiveness of contact. Undertake activities to achieve annual increases in membership. Reply to all inquiries from current members and potential new members. Use all other interactions as opportunities to secure new memberships.
- Membership Engagement and Retention: Welcome new Coalition members and build relationships with members in assigned states through personal calls, e-mails, and other outreach. Provide prompt and accurate responses to all inquiries about membership concerns. Track status of all members, send renewal notices in timely manner, and follow up as needed. Undertake activities to achieve a 90% or higher member retention rate.
- Resident Outreach: Support resident participation in NLIHC and partner organizations activities. Assist in developing content for *Tenant Talk*, NLIHC's resident newsletter. Convene tenant groups, as determined by NLIHC management.

- Administration: Coordinate or assist in mailings to members and other partners. Maintain hard copy files of member records. Produce membership reports and lists, as needed. Maintain and update databases and contact lists, ensure accuracy of all data. Perform data entry and data cleaning; run reports and queries as needed to support work of NLIHC. Assist in implementation of member survey.

Organizational Support

- Meetings: Attend and participate at meetings with NLIHC Board of Directors; participate in staff meetings, state coalition meetings, trainings, and all Coalition events.
- Interns: Assist with the recruitment and supervision of Field interns.
- Other: Other duties as assigned to maximize organizational effectiveness toward achievement of NLIHC mission

Qualifications

Applicants must possess a bachelor's degree and have at least two years of work experience in U.S. elections and/or direct assistance to low-income communities (additional years of experience preferred; exceptional candidates with fewer may be considered). Applicants should have a strong commitment to social justice. Candidates should have strong analytical, writing, and organizational skills, as well as a keen attention to detail. Applicants should also be proficient in the Microsoft Office suite. Familiarity with Salesforce CRM database preferred.

An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and a generous benefits package. This is a temporary full-time position located in Washington, DC, but NLIHC will be flexible about location (depending on the pandemic).

Interested candidates should submit a resume, cover letter with salary requirement, and one writing sample, to Renee Willis, vice president for field and communications and Bairy Diakite, operations manager at: rwillis@nlihc.org and bdiakite@nlihc.org

NLIHC Seeks Website and Graphic Design Specialist

NLIHC seeks a website and graphic design specialist who will be responsible for managing NLIHC websites and electronic communications, designing print and electronic publications and materials, developing and maintaining the NLIHC brand through all external materials, and assisting with the development and execution of communications and marketing strategies.

Responsibilities:

WEBSITE & ELECTRONIC MEDIA

- Manage and maintain NLIHC's websites, taking into account functionality, appearance, content, and performance.
- Design and post materials, including *Memo to Members and Partners e-newsletter*; design and maintain topical areas of the websites; ensure the accuracy, relevance, and timeliness of all posted materials; make recommendations for revisions and reorganization.
- Work closely with team leads to ensure accuracy and relevance of material on website.
- Assist with design and distribution of mass e-communications. Manage use of Mailchimp, and other mass e-communication platforms.

PUBLICATIONS

- Execute design and production of all print and electronic materials, graphics, and reports; collaborate with other teams in design process.
- Assist with the planning and distribution of publications and materials; manage the process as necessary.

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

- Track and analyze communications metrics for website(s), *Memo to Members and Partners*, and webinars; prepare reports as necessary.
- Provide graphic support to comms team lead responsible for managing and expanding the Coalition's social media platforms and utilizing new social networking tools, including webinars and videos.

EVENT SUPPORT

- Assist in the development and execution of the event marketing assets and strategies.
- Design and produce all print and electronic materials related to events, including awards, giveaways, signage, and any other presentation elements.
- Design and assist with management of online content related to the events and registration.
- Manage the photography for the event and other communications elements as needed.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

- Attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and Board committees, as needed.
- Participate in staff meetings, retreats, trainings, and all Coalition events.
- Other duties as assigned.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

To perform successfully in this role, incumbent should possess skills identified below:

- At least 2 years of experience with digital strategy and website development.
- At least 1-3 years of experience in creative design.
- Training in communications, marketing, and/or website and graphic design.
- Must be able to organize, multi-task, and prioritize multiple projects at a time.
- A Bachelor's degree is required

To perform successfully in this role, incumbent should possess skills identified below:

- Strong knowledge of graphic designing, layout, and creative visual elements
- Experience working in Drupal and WordPress
- Experience with Google Analytics
- Advanced HTML and CSS skills
- Proficient with the Adobe Creative Suite, specifically Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and Outlook)

Recommended but not required: Proficient video editing with Premiere Pro and/or After Effects

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS: An equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, NLIHC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. This is a full-time position located in Washington, DC, though candidates residing outside the DC area may be considered and telework is being implemented during the pandemic.

JOB APPLICATION PROCESS: Send a cover letter, resume, and portfolio link or attachments of graphic design samples to: Bairy Diakite, Operations Manager, NLIHC, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20005 or via email at bdiakite@nlihc.org. The cover letter should describe the candidate's interest in and relevant experiences for the position and include salary requirements and the names and contact information for

at least three people serving as candidate references (NLIHC will not contact references before consulting with the candidate).

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of April 25

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

- “Federal aid to renters moves slowly, leaving many at risk,” *New York Times*, April 25 at: <https://nyti.ms/3u8uK4O>
 - “Homeless relief is on the way, but the crisis could get worse as evictions loom” *CNN*, April 25 at: <https://cnn.it/3eZbIrp>
 - “How to line up rent aid,” *Yahoo Finance*, April 26 at: <https://yhoo.it/3t74qqk>
 - “Burning Man, motel vaccinations, eviction law help: News from around our 50 states,” *USA Today*, April 28 at: <https://bit.ly/3eKvmlL>
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NLIHC Staff

Kyle Arbuckle, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x227
Olivia Arena, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x209
Xavier Arriaga, Policy Analyst, x231
Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245
Victoria Bourret, Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy, x244
Jen Butler, Director, Media Relations and Communications, x239
Alayna Calabro, Policy Analyst–COVID-19 Response, x252
Josephine Clarke, Senior Executive Assistant, x226
Bairy Diakite, Operations Manager, x254
Emma Foley, Research Intern, x249
Dan Emmanuel, Senior Research Analyst, x316
Ed Gramlich, Senior Advisor, x314
Kim Johnson, Housing Policy Analyst, x243
Jameil Johnson, Graphic Design/Communications intern
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
Fonzi Mendoza, Research Intern
Khara Norris, Senior Director of Administration, x242
Neetu Nair, Research Analyst, x291
Noah Patton, Housing Policy Analyst, x227
Ikra Rafi, Creative Services Specialist, x246
Catherine Reeves, Development Coordinator, x234
Sarah Saadian, Vice President, Public Policy, x228
Sophie Seibach, Field Intern
Brooke Schipporeit, Housing Advocacy Organizer, x233
Kevin Tan, Graphic Design/Communications intern

Dan Threet, Research Analyst, x202
Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Manager, x230
Renee Willis, Vice President for Field and Communications, x247
Rebecca Yae, Senior Research Analyst–COVID-19 Response
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225