Memo To Members & Partners
A weekly newsletter from the National Low Income Housing Coalition

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# Emergency Rental Assistance

## NLIHC Joins White House Panel on Advancing Equity through the American Rescue Plan

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel joined a panel discussion at the White House on May 25 for an event celebrating the release of a new report by the Biden administration, "Advancing Equity through the American Rescue Plan." The event brought together Biden administration officials, key partners, and others for wide-ranging discussions about the administration's approach to ensuring an equitable recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The panel on which Diane appeared featured leaders from non-governmental organizations who had worked with the administration to make critical changes to ensure that programs created in response to the pandemic would serve people with the lowest incomes and people of color.

In her remarks, Diane discussed NLIHC's successful effort to persuade Congress to pass legislation making $46.5 billion in emergency rental assistance available to the lowest-income renters at high risk of eviction during the pandemic. Thanks to actions taken by the administration at the behest of NLIHC and thousands of advocates and the on-the-ground work of many of those advocates, Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) programs have now made more than 5.3 million rental assistance payments, mostly to the lowest-income people and to people of color. Diane shared how NLIHC collaborated with state and local partners, program administrators, impacted people, and the White House to build a national infrastructure to distribute these vital resources to the tenants most in need. She also explained how NLIHC worked to develop robust tracking systems for monitoring ERA disbursal and conducted research about best practices for program design and implementation that influenced Treasury to issue new guidance to improve program performance.

Diane concluded by calling for the creation of a permanent ERA program using the infrastructure built during the pandemic. People facing emergencies or sudden economic shocks will continue to need the kind of immediate assistance that could be provided by a permanent ERA fund, she said, and Congress should act now to ensure that the lowest-income renters have access to emergency rental assistance beyond the pandemic.

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## NLIHC Releases Research Brief Finding 23 State Grantees and DC Could Exhaust ERA Funds by End of 2022 Despite Outstanding Need

NLIHC released on May 26 a new research brief, *Balancing Act: An Analysis of Remaining Emergency Rental Assistance Funds, Reallocation, and Outstanding Need*. The brief analyzes emergency rental assistance (ERA) spending trends, projects when state and large local grantees may exhaust their ERA1 and ERA2 funds, and estimates the amount of funding the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) could reallocate from slow-spending to fast-spending grantees. The brief finds that by December 2022, 23 state grantees and the District of Columbia could exhaust their ERA1 and ERA2 funds if current spending trends continue, despite remaining need among renter households. Read the brief here.

In recent months, the pace of ERA1 and ERA2 spending has slowed nationally. The decrease in spending rates reflects two distinct spending patterns among grantees: many slow-spending grantees are continuing to spend a combination of ERA1 and ERA2 funds slowly, while fast-spending grantees have nearly exhausted both their ERA1 and ERA2 allocations. To determine when grantees may exhaust their ERA funds, NLIHC evaluated ERA1 and ERA2 spending trends for all state grantees and the local grantee within each state that received the largest direct allocation from Treasury. NLIHC estimates that 22 state grantees, the District of Columbia, and 60% of local grantees included in the analysis will exhaust their current ERA1 funds by the end of May 2022 unless they receive additional ERA1 funds through reallocation. Even if a grantee's funds are not exhausted, some programs have chosen to close their application portals, having obligated a significant share of their funds.

Thus, eligible households that have yet to apply may be left without assistance at an even earlier date than that predicted by NLIHC for the exhaustion of ERA funds.

The report finds significant disparities in grantees' resources and abilities to satisfy outstanding need in their states as indicated by the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey. According to ERA spending data through March 2022, the amount of ERA funds remaining per renter household behind on rent ranges from $39,000 in Vermont to just over $1,370 in New York. The impact of the discrepancy in resources and outstanding needs is made clearer when one considers the low cost of housing in states like Vermont compared to the high cost of housing in many areas of New York.

To an extent, Treasury can better balance grantees' remaining funds with outstanding needs through the reallocation of ERA1 and ERA2 funds. Thus far, Treasury has reallocated over $2.1 billion of ERA1 funds, and a third round of ERA1 reallocation, as well as the first round of ERA2 reallocation, will occur soon. Based on NLIHC's analysis, between $4.1 billion and $5.1 billion of ERA1 and ERA2 could be reallocated based on current guidance and available data. The current reallocation process will only be able to address the disparities between grantees' remaining funds and the continued need for assistance among renters in limited ways.

The brief recommends that Treasury quickly reallocate ERA to ensure that the finite amount of remaining funds are distributed to those grantees with the highest needs. Furthermore, while assistance has been impactful for millions of households, ERA was designed to provide only short-term financial assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic and cannot be used to address the long-standing housing crisis in America. Thus, Congress should draw on lessons learned through the implementation of ERA to authorize and fund a permanent program to support households experiencing financial shocks, such as the program envisioned in the "Eviction Crisis Act" co-sponsored by Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Rob Portman (R-OH).

Read the brief at: https://bit.ly/3PJ3Ewg

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## Budget and Appropriations

### Reconciliation and Appropriations Negotiations Ongoing as Congress Adjourns for Memorial Day Recess – Take Action!

Congress has recessed for Memorial Day until June 6, but before leaving the Capitol, Senate Democrats reported progress on reaching a potential outline for a revived reconciliation package. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) – the lone Democratic holdout in the Senate on last year's "Build Back Better Act" – have continued negotiations, giving congressional Democrats and advocates hope that enacting a reconciliation bill this year is still possible.

Senator Manchin maintains that any reconciliation package should focus on increasing federal revenues by changing the tax code and using new revenues to fight inflation, address climate change, draw down the federal deficit, and reduce prescription drug costs. The cost of housing is the single largest component of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), a key measure of inflation, and addressing the rising cost of housing is central to decreasing inflationary pressure on households, especially in the long term.

While some congressional Democrats set an unofficial deadline of Memorial Day (May 30) for reaching an agreement on the framework for a revised reconciliation package, Senator Manchin's revived interest in negotiations has rekindled member optimism about reaching an agreement this year. However, the window for taking action is closing: with midterms in November, if a deal is not reached by the August recess, a reconciliation bill will probably not be enacted this year.

It is vital that Congress include in any reconciliation package the significant funding for targeted affordable housing investments included in the "Build Back Better Act," including for the HoUSed campaign's top priorities:

- $25 billion to expand housing vouchers to more than 300,000 households.
- $65 billion to preserve public housing for its 2 million residents.
- $15 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to build, preserve, and operate more than 150,000 units of affordable, accessible homes for households with the lowest incomes.

Budget reconciliation – which allows the Senate to pass legislation with a simple majority of 51 votes, rather than the 60 votes usually required in the chamber – represents the best opportunity to enact the bold, large-scale investments in affordable housing needed to address the severe lack of deeply affordable rental homes. However, the annual appropriations process is also vital to ensuring continued and expanded funding for HUD's affordable housing programs.

Senate Appropriations Chair Patrick Leahy (D-VT) announced that he intends to convene appropriations leaders in the House and Senate – including Senate Appropriations Ranking Member Richard Shelby (R-AL), House Appropriations Chair Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), and House Appropriations Ranking Member Kay Granger (R-TX) – once Congress returns from its Memorial Day recess. Appropriations leaders are still searching for a compromise on topline spending numbers for the fiscal year (FY) 2023 spending package and hope to avoid a significant delay in enacting a final bill after the FY22 bill stalled for almost six months.

With Chair Leahy and Ranking Member Shelby both slated to retire at the end of the year, members are feeling optimistic they will be able to find a compromise and enact an omnibus spending package for FY23. Even without an agreement on topline funding numbers, appropriators in the House will likely move forward with drafting FY23 spending bills, using President Biden's FY23 budget request as a benchmark. House appropriators set a tentative schedule for Appropriations subcommittees to review and vote on their respective bills during the period June 13-22 and for a full committee review and vote during the period June 22-30.

NLIHC and our partners in the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF) are leading our annual 302(b) letter to demand that Congress provide the highest possible level of funding for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY23. Advocates should contact their members of Congress and urge them to support significant funding for NLIHC's top priorities:

- $32.13 billion for the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program to renew all existing contracts and expand housing vouchers to an additional 200,000 households.
- $5.125 billion for the Public Housing Capital Fund to preserve public housing, and $5.06 billion for the Public Housing Operating Fund.
- $3.6 billion for HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants program to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- $100 million for legal assistance to prevent evictions.
- $300 million for the competitive tribal housing program, targeted to tribes with the greatest needs.

**Take Action**

Advocates should contact their senators and representatives to urge them to support the highest funding possible for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs in the FY23 spending bill and any budget reconciliation package. Use our call-in script to help create your own message to Congress!

Organizations can also take action to push for increased federal affordable housing investments:

- Sign your organization on to our annual 302(b) letter supporting the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY23.
- Join over 1,800 organizations around the country in support of historic investments in rental assistance, public housing, and the Housing Trust Fund in any reconciliation bill that moves forward.

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## Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness

### House Appropriations Committee Holds Hearing on FEMA's FY2023 Budget Request

The U.S. House Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Homeland Security held a hearing on May 25 regarding FEMA's fiscal year (FY) 2023 budget proposal. The budget proposal requests nearly $29.5 billion, amounting to a nearly $600 million increase over the FY22 request. In her opening statement at the hearing, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell lauded the agency's work responding to worsening natural disasters and improving the equity of agency programs.

Administrator Criswell informed committee members that $23 million of the amount requested would be used to hire 23 regional interagency coordinators at FEMA regional offices to ensure that the agency is addressing underserved communities. She also explained that $3.4 billion would be set aside for the agency's mitigation grant programs, which help state and local governments decrease the risks of future disaster damage. The Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), which provides the bulk of funding for agency operations and assistance programs, would receive $19.7 billion through the budget.

Questions from committee members ranged across topics, from cyber security to utility transformer prepositioning. Chairwoman Roybal-Allard raised questions about how prior oversight and anti-fraud efforts may have created a disaster recovery system that is overly restrictive and fails to provide disaster survivors the assistance they need. Administrator Criswell responded by pointing to recent FEMA reforms regarding title documentation and stated that the agency was examining ways that definitions used by FEMA – such as the "safe, sanitary, and habitable" repair standard currently employed by the agency – prevent assistance from reaching those most in need. When asked by Ranking Member Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN) whether FEMA was doing enough to ensure that survivor needs are being verified before providing assistance, Administrator Criswell stated that she believed the agency had been too restrictive in the past and that agency efforts would be directed at ensuring that those most in need of assistance were able to receive it.

View a recording of the hearing at: https://bit.ly/39YJRIF

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### HUD Releases Allocation Notice Detailing Process for 2020 and 2021 Long-Term Recovery Funds

HUD has published an allocation notice for the March 2022 distribution of long-term recovery funds for 2020 and 2021 disasters. The notice, published in the *Federal Register*, details the requirements and rules regarding the implementation of long-term disaster recovery programs funded through HUD's Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program. The rules apply to the nearly $3 billion released to 10 states and territories that experienced disasters in 2020 and 2021: Alabama, California, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Oregon, Puerto Rico, and Tennessee.

The notice covers a wide variety of subjects relevant to states and territories implementing long-term recovery programs and mitigation measures to protect communities against future disasters. The funds can be used for a broad range of activities, including the construction of new housing, the repair of damaged housing, the building and protection of infrastructure, and the funding of economic development programs. Eighty percent of program funds must be spent within areas that were designated by HUD as “Most Impacted and Distressed” (MID) by a disaster, and 70% of program funds must be used to benefit low- and moderate-income households (though this provision is waivable). Non-mitigation activities must be directly related to the impacts of 2020 disasters and must meet a “national objective” of the CDBG program. A percentage of each allocation must be spent on mitigation efforts to strengthen communities’ abilities to withstand future disasters.

The states and territories receiving funds will create action plans based on these rules. After formulating these plans, which will detail proposed uses for funds, states and territories will collect public comments on the plans and ultimately submit them to HUD for approval.

HUD officials had touted new language used in a similar notice published earlier this year, explaining that the language bolstered transparency, encouraged public input, and increased equity in the program. The new language includes a requirement that any state or territory collect public comments when seeking to waive the requirement that 70% of program funds assist low- and moderate-income families. The new language also requires that states and territories include information on how programs would affect racial and ethnic minorities within disaster areas and that public comments receive direct responses. However, while the new language describes equity goals more explicitly, the program still leaves those states and territories directly running programs with the tasks of identifying potential discriminatory distributions of program funds and instances in which information is potentially inaccessible.

Because the CDBG-DR program is unauthorized, new notices are required whenever Congress approves funding under the program. The “Reforming Disaster Recovery Act of 2021” – supported by the NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) – would formally authorize the program and allow for a more permanent and equitable framework to be created, ensuring that funds reach disaster survivors more quickly. That bill, introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI), Susan Collins (R-ME), Todd Young (R-IN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA), and Ron Wyden (D-OR), and in the House by Representative Al Green (D-TX), would implement important safeguards to ensure that disaster funds reach those most in need.

Read the new notice at: https://bit.ly/39V0BAK

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### Forecasters Predict 2022 Hurricane Season Will Bring Above-Average Number of Storms

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced its forecast for the 2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season on May 24. The forecast predicts above-average hurricane activity, which would make 2022 the seventh consecutive season with above-average activity. Forecasters believe that during this year’s hurricane season – running June 1 to November 30 – between 14 and 21 named storms will occur, with six to 10 of them becoming hurricanes, and three to six of those hurricanes becoming “major hurricanes” with windspeeds at or above 111 mph. NOAA’s prediction of above-average storm activity is based on the presence of an outgoing La Nina system, warmer sea surface temperatures in the Atlantic and Caribbean, and an enhanced African Monsoon season.

The new forecast comes as thousands of residents along the Gulf Coast are still struggling through the early stages of recovery from the 2021 Atlantic Hurricane Season, during which Hurricane Ida leveled portions of the Louisiana coast, destroyed homes across the eastern United States, and killed over 80 people. The storm was the fourth most costly hurricane in U.S. history. Even now, nearly 1,000 individuals in coastal Louisiana are still waiting to access temporary housing.

“Hurricane Ida spanned nine states, demonstrating that anyone can be in the direct path of a hurricane and in danger from the remnants of a storm system,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “It’s important for everyone to understand their risk and take proactive steps to get ready now by visiting Ready.gov and Listo.gov for preparedness tips, and by downloading the FEMA App to make sure you are receiving emergency alerts in real-time.”

Learn more about NOAA’s forecast at: https://bit.ly/38Tb3bF

Sign up for FEMA alerts at: https://bit.ly/3z1OaNS

Learn how to prepare for and what to expect during disasters with *Southerly Magazine*’s “Disaster Glossary,” available at: https://bit.ly/3wU1BNp

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## Coronavirus Updates – May 31, 2022

### National Updates

*U.S. Department of the Treasury*

The U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) updated its ERA Portal on May 20 to allow grantees to directly input their requests for reallocated ERA1 funds via the Portal, which is accessible through ID.me and Login.gov. Grantees requesting that their ERA1 funds be reallocated should also input their requests via the Portal.

Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo sent a letter to Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) recipients on May 16, urging states and localities to continue to use SLFRF to address the most pressing challenges facing our economy and communities, including expanding access to affordable housing. “Governments used SLFRF to help 770,000 households afford rent, mortgage, or utility costs in 2021, in many cases building on the national eviction prevention infrastructure developed over the last year,” wrote Deputy Secretary Adeyemo. “More broadly, SLFRF presents an opportunity to dramatically accelerate development and preservation of affordable housing, expanding access to safe, quality, affordable homes that are critical to the wellbeing of all Americans.”

### State and Local News

*Alabama*

The City of Birmingham approved the allocation of $6.6 million in additional emergency rental assistance (ERA) funds, which will allow the city to support residents whose ERA applications were accepted but were put on hold due to a lack of funding. The city distributed $10.2 million in ERA to 2,046 Birmingham residents last year. After the funds were spent, there were still several hundred approved applicants who were waiting for assistance.

*Arkansas*

Data indicate that the eviction rate in Arkansas in 2022 is the highest it has been in five years. Governor Asa Hutchinson rejected approximately $86 million in federal emergency rental assistance last month, arguing that rent relief was not needed in the state’s economy. Despite this claim, 2,855 evictions have been filed in Arkansas this year. This number is 60% higher than the number of evictions filed over the same period in 2018.

*California*

Governor Gavin Newsom's revised FY23-23 budget plan projects a $97.5 billion surplus and proposes to use a portion of that surplus to provide an additional $2.7 billion toward rent relief and $1.4 billion for utility assistance.

The *LA Times* provides an overview of the tenant protections still in place in Southern California. Some of the state restrictions on landlords have expired, leaving a patchwork of eviction bans and rent deferrals in place only in Los Angeles and certain other cities.

Santa Cruz County will close its final two Project Roomkey locations in the coming weeks, with about two dozen residents unsure of where they will go next. By the end of this fiscal year, the county will have spent $73 million on Project Roomkey.

*Colorado*

As evictions rise again in Arapahoe County after decreasing for several years due to COVID-19 eviction protections, the county recently launched an Eviction Clinic Pilot Program to provide free legal aid to tenants facing eviction. The *Denver Post* reports that the county will fund the three-year program using $1.5 million in American Rescue Plan funding. Attorneys with Colorado Legal Services will be available to counsel tenants three mornings a week at the Arapahoe County Community Services building.

*Connecticut*

As the number of evictions in Connecticut increases, the state legislature has allocated $5 million for eviction prevention programs through its Department of Housing. These investments include an expanded "rent bank" that will provide rental assistance to households facing eviction – typically those whose landlords have already started the eviction process.

*Florida*

According to the *Tallahassee Democrat*, housing and nonprofit partners in Florida are concerned about how they will support renters after they were given short notice that the state's emergency rental assistance program would abruptly close. Social service providers were given only two days of notice before the OUR Florida program was terminated. The end of the ERA program is compounding housing issues exacerbated by the pandemic, inflation, and skyrocketing rents.

Broward County, Florida, has received an additional $22 million in emergency rental assistance (ERA2). The ERA2 program includes several changes to increase access to assistance, including allowing applicants to self-attest to certain eligibility requirements and providing direct-to-tenant assistance.

*Georgia*

The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reports that two months after Gwinnett County received $25 million in new federal emergency rental assistance (ERA) funds, 96% of the money has been spent or committed. The county has spent nearly $8 million and approved an additional $16 million of the new ERA allocation for applicants.

*Illinois*

Some Illinois tenants report that their landlords have refused to participate in emergency rental assistance (ERA) programs by failing to provide the necessary documentation or signatures required for assistance.

*Indiana*

The City of Fort Wayne announced on May 23 that the Emergency Rental Assistance Program closed and will not be accepting new applications since the city has committed all available funds. Fort Wayne renters requiring rent and utility assistance can now apply to the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority by calling 211 or visiting www.IndianaHousingNow.org.

*Maine*

A Maine judge is blocking a motel in Wells from evicting long-term residents on short notice. The Majestic Regency Resort delivered notices to residents, who are using COVID-19 relief funds to live at the motel, announcing that they would have to leave in several days or be reported to the police for trespassing. The judge's temporary order remains in effect until a later hearing on the merits of the case.

*Maryland*

According to the *DCist*, a cap on rent increases in Montgomery County that was enacted during the pandemic expired on May 15. Advocates and some officials are concerned that the end of the cap and fee protections could lead to a steep increase in rent costs.

*Michigan*

The Gilbert Family Foundation pledged $13 million over three years to help low-income families facing eviction in Detroit. The donation to the Detroit Eviction Defense Fund will help an estimated 6,000 Detroiters a year.

*Minnesota*

A *Fox9* investigation revealed that landlords in Minnesota have used a legal loophole to evict tenants despite pandemic eviction protections. Potentially thousands of Minnesota renters were forced from their homes through 'off the books' evictions, which can be triggered by a notice to vacate that requires no justification and can be issued at the end of a lease or at any point during a monthly or verbal agreement.

*New Jersey*

Data obtained by the *ABC6* Action News Investigative Team show that eviction filings in Camden County have quadrupled from pre-pandemic levels. Eviction filings have more than doubled in Atlantic County from 2019 to 2022 and have nearly tripled in Burlington County.

*Ohio*

Despite having their evictions dismissed, renters in Columbus, Ohio, face barriers to obtaining housing. One Columbus landlord filed two evictions against a tenant during the pandemic while the tenant was waiting on a rental assistance payment from IMPACT Community Action. While both evictions were dismissed, the landlord recently told the tenant he will not renew her lease. Although the tenant has found other homes that fit her budget, she has been continually rejected due to the eviction filings on her records.

*Rhode Island*

Advocates for people experiencing homelessness protested outside Governor Dan McKee's State House office on May 12 to urge Rhode Island lawmakers to deploy 500 beds for the hundreds of people that are being evicted from hotels funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Funding for the hotels will stop at the end of next month, and advocates are urging officials to act quickly to find housing for the roughly 500 residents.

*Texas*

The City of Dallas stopped accepting new applications for its emergency rental assistance (ERA) program on May 22. Applications that have already been submitted will continue to be processed.

A Houston tenant was evicted even though she is awaiting help from the Houston-Harris County Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program. The tenant's landlord agreed to participate in the ERA program and by doing so was required to agree not to evict a tenant for nonpayment of rent while their application was being reviewed. An attorney representing the tenant reports that this is not an isolated incident and that similar situations are occurring across the board.

El Paso County Commissioners approved $2.8 million on May 16 for emergency rental assistance funds that will be distributed by United Way of El Paso.

*Virginia*

The Virginia Rent Relief Program stopped accepting applications on May 15. Through March 2022, the program distributed $713 million in aid to 104,990 households across Virginia. The Legal Aid Justice Center is concerned about a potential rise in evictions when many of the legal protections for tenants that were paired with rental assistance end on June 30.

There are growing concerns about a looming wave of evictions after Virginia's rental assistance program stopped accepting applications on May 15. Two rent relief programs are still available to help renters in Charlottesville. Nearly $400,000 in rental assistance is available in the city and Albemarle County. If the demand for assistance increases, the city council may consider using ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds to provide additional rental assistance.

The tenant advocacy group African Communities Together is working to prevent a wave of evictions in the Southern Towers complex in Alexandria, Virginia. Despite eviction protections enacted during the pandemic, the property owner still pursued eviction proceedings against some of the residents. Advocates are concerned that evictions could escalate since the Virginia Rent Relief Program has stopped accepting applications and many of the eviction protections for tenants that were paired with that program will soon expire.

Hundreds of families who live in public housing in Richmond are facing eviction. About 700 families are on Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority's at-risk list, with 300 households set to face eviction this summer.

*Wisconsin*

Dane County Executive Joe Parisi has asked staff to explore the feasibility of extending the county's emergency hotel shelter program for individuals experiencing homelessness due to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases in the community. Dane County is currently utilizing around 170 hotels to shelter people experiencing homelessness who are at higher risk and those in need of isolation and quarantine shelter. The county's program is currently set to close at the end of June, but Parisi asked county staff to speak with local hotels and service providers about potentially extending services into next year, given federal projections of a renewed surge in COVID-19 cases this fall.

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## Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – May 31, 2022

**FEMA**

An audit by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General found that FEMA did not collect information necessary for the accurate review of erroneous distributions of assistance. The audit also found that from 2015 to 2019, only 1% of funds were recouped by the agency – well below a legislatively enforced cap of 4%.

FEMA is facing increasing pressure to take action to prepare for wildfires, flooding, and the 2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season.

FEMA announced that it had made its first selections in this year's round of Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant programs, awarding a total of $91.2 million in grants to recipients. The agency also announced that it had selected 20 diverse communities to receive additional non-financial and technical assistance to build resilience.

**Biden Administration**

President Biden met with leaders of a federal emergency preparedness and response team on May 18 for an annual briefing on the Atlantic Hurricane Season outlook. The team includes the heads of FEMA, HUD, the Small Business Administration (SBA), the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the National Hurricane Center, as well as the administration's Homeland Security advisor.

**Alaska**

Approximately 50 residents of the Alaskan town of Manley Hot Springs remain displaced after an ice jam flooded their homes. Residents remain frustrated by the lack of guidance, as damage assessments for damage from this spring's flood season continue. Assessments must be collected before the state requests a disaster declaration from FEMA.

**Florida**

The Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference took place in Palm Beach County. Discussions focused on how better to coordinate local, state, and federal resources and on the impacts of inflation and monetary concerns on disaster recovery in the state.

**Louisiana**

The deadline to apply for the Lake Charles Housing Rehabilitation Recovery Program was May 27. Program administrators state that their goal is to rehabilitate 130 homes in Lake Charles. Currently, administrators have received more than 1,600 applications for assistance.

Nearly 8 months after Hurricane Ida devastated their communities, nearly 1,000 identified residents in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes have yet to receive emergency trailers for housing. Officials have pointed to a wide range of obstacles but admit that progress has been far too slow.

**Michigan**

Federal officials toured Gaylord to inspect damage to the town following an EF3 tornado in early May. Federal officials are collecting information on the impact of the storm, which killed two individuals and injured 44.

**New Mexico**

Between 10,000 and 18,000 people have been displaced by the Calf Canyon-Hermits Peak Fire in New Mexico. Although some residents have begun to return, at least 366 structures have been destroyed by the fire – a number that is sure to increase. As a result, FEMA has approved assistance for individuals and households in five of the most impacted counties.

**North Carolina**

One couple in Dudley that was lucky to survive Hurricane Matthew three years ago has spent the last 15 months residing in an extended stay motel paid for by North Carolina's recovery program, due to the slow pace of home construction.

**Ohio**

A recent article recounts how residents in Dayton are looking back on three years spent recovering from catastrophic tornados.

**Texas**

Texas's Government Land Office is pushing ahead with a plan to steer disaster mitigation funds to whiter, inland counties that are at lower risk of natural disasters, despite admonishment by HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO). FHEO found the state's plan to distribute Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funds was discriminatory because it prevented Houston and other coastal areas with large non-white populations from receiving funds to prevent future disaster damage.

The *Houston Chronicle*'s Editorial Board objected to the decision of Government Land Office Commissioner George P. Bush to push ahead with distribution plans for mitigation funding found by HUD's FHEO to be discriminatory.

**Resources and Reporting**

The *Washington Post* published an article detailing the rapidly increasing wildfire risks around the country. The article finds that by 2052, nearly half of those Americans exposed to wildfire risk will live in southern states.

An op-ed in *Fortune* magazine by Enterprise Community Partners CEO Priscilla Almodovar calls for the passage of the "Reforming Disaster Recovery Act," which would permanently authorize HUD's Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program and shorten the time necessary for disaster survivors to receive long-term assistance. Passage of the bill is a major priority for the NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition.

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## HoUSed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing

### Senator Hirono and Colleagues Introduce Bill to Expand Access to Housing, Health Care, Nutrition Assistance, and Other Supports for Immigrants

Senators Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Patty Murray (D-WA), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Ed Markey (D-MA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Alex Padilla (D-CA), and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) introduced the "Lifting Immigrant Families through Benefits Access Restoration Act of 2022" (S.4311) – known as the "LIFT the BAR Act" – on May 25. The bill would restore access to public programs for lawfully present immigrants by removing a five-year waiting period and other restrictions to accessing federal public benefits.

The “LIFT the BAR Act” would repeal harmful barriers created by the “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996” (PRWORA). PRWORA created an arbitrary five-year waiting period for immigrants to access vital healthcare and social service programs, including Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and certain housing assistance programs, including public housing, Housing Choice Vouchers, Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance, and some rural housing programs. These barriers stoked fear and confusion among immigrants and their families, reducing participation in essential social safety net programs.

The LIFT the BAR Act would amend PRWORA to align Section 214 of the “Housing and Community Development Act of 1980” with consistent eligibility requirements for recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), immigrants who are granted Special Immigrant Status (SIJS), and any other non-citizens federally authorized to be present in the U.S. If enacted, the “LIFT the BAR Act” would restore access to vital safety net programs for lawfully present immigrants by:

- Repealing key provisions of PRWORA that (1) restrict lawfully present immigrants’ eligibility for federal assistance programs; (2) allow states to adopt more punitive restrictions; (3) erect barriers for states or localities that wish to use their funds to establish more inclusive programs; and (4) restrict or deter access to critical services for immigrants with sponsors.
- Removing the five-year waiting period for those wishing to access Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP, TANF, and SSI.
- Redefining “qualified noncitizens,” a phrase used to define eligibility for many federal programs, to include any individuals who are lawfully present in the U.S.
- Establishing that individuals who have access to Affordable Care Act health insurance under current rules will not lose access to affordable coverage if they remain ineligible for Medicaid.

NLIHC supports the Senate bill and its House companion, which was introduced by Representatives Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) and Tony Cárdenas (D-CA) in September 2021 (see *Memo, 9/13/2021*). NLIHC earlier joined over 500 national, state, and local organizations in a national sign-on letter in support of the “LIFT the BAR Act.” The letter will be re-issued following the introduction of Senator Hirono’s bill.

“By denying health care and aid to otherwise-eligible people who are lawfully present, the five-year bar sets a dangerous precedent that makes the social safety net inaccessible to millions of families of color,” the letter states. “President Biden took a major step forward in ending the harmful public charge policy, but we must work proactively towards addressing a much longer standing injustice by ending the five-year bar. By doing so, Congress will be helping millions of immigrants who are lawfully present and their families to get the quality healthcare, nutritious food, safe homes, and economic security every family needs to thrive.”

Learn more about the “LIFT the BAR Act” at: https://bit.ly/3wPkqlP

View the sign-on letter calling on Congress to enact the “LIFT the BAR Act” at: https://bit.ly/3LSfp0r

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## Recording of May 23 National HoUSed Campaign Call Now Available

On NLIHC’s most recent (May 23) national call for the “HoUSed: Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing” campaign, we shared the latest updates from Capitol Hill, discussed a new report from PolicyLink on the intersection of racial inequity and the national shortage of affordable homes, heard about President Biden’s “Housing Supply Action Plan,” and received updates from our End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) project and other partners in the field. View a recording of the call at: tinyurl.com/2s3u68ba

NLIHC's Kim Johnson shared updates on the fiscal year (FY) 2023 appropriations process, a potential reconciliation bill, and the progress of the "Eviction Crisis Act." NLIHC is continuing to push for significant affordable housing investments in the FY23 appropriations bill and any reconciliation package moving forward, and we are urging advocates to continue contacting their members of Congress to demand support for robust funding for resources to address homelessness and the housing needs of people with the lowest incomes. National organizations can also join a sign-on letter in support of the bipartisan "Eviction Crisis Act" and its soon-to-be introduced companion bill, the "Stable Families Act," which would create a permanent emergency rental assistance program to ensure low-income households facing a sudden economic shock can receive financial assistance to remain stably housed.

Rasheedah Phillips, director of housing at PolicyLink, discussed findings from *The Shrinking Geography of Opportunity in Metro America*, a new report examining how racial inequity and the nation's severe shortage of affordable, available housing are disproportionately impacting Black renters. The report finds that working-class households – and Black and Latino households in particular – have extremely limited choices when it comes to affordable neighborhoods, and that most neighborhoods affordable to Black, Latino, and low-income renters are "lower opportunity neighborhoods." Accompanying the report is a dashboard tracking neighborhood affordability by opportunity level for low-income households in various racial groups.

Special Assistant to the President for Housing Supply and Urban Policy Erika Poethig joined the call to discuss President Biden's new "Housing Supply Action Plan" (see *Memo*, 5/16). The plan includes a series of measures designed to increase the supply of housing over the next five years, including (1) using federal transportation funds to incentivize jurisdictions to reduce restrictive local zoning laws; (2) supporting manufactured housing, accessory dwelling units, and small-scale developments; and (3) streamlining federal financing and funding sources to help lower costs and speed development. While the "Housing Supply Action Plan" is a welcome development, Congress must also take action to enact a budget reconciliation bill that includes the bold, targeted housing investments needed to address the root cause of the affordable housing shortage.

Tori Bourret and Sarah Gallagher from NLIHC's ERASE project shared two new reports. The first, *Promoting Housing Stability through Just Cause Eviction Legislation*, explores state and local advocacy efforts to enact "just cause" eviction laws, which aim to prevent evictions and promote housing stability by limiting the causes for which a landlord can evict a tenant or refuse to renew a tenant's lease. The second report, *Extending the Reach of Emergency Rental Assistance: Leveraging Federal Resources*, provides suggestions for how states and localities can extend the availability of emergency rental assistance by tapping into existing federal resources, including the $350 billion in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) allocated in the "American Rescue Plan Act."

Three ERASE cohort members – Alison McIntosh of Neighborhood Partnerships in Oregon, Abby Ng of Tenants and Neighbors in New York, and Ellen Davidson of the Legal Aid Society in New York – also joined the call to discuss the "just cause" eviction legislation proposed in their communities. Angela Stovall from JustFix.nyc provided the week's field update and shared a recently launched tool to help renters identify who owns their building. JustFix.nyc provides numerous resources for tenants, including a sample Letter of Complaint tool, a Rent History Online Form to request a copy of a unit's rent history, and a database of New York City's highest evicting properties.

National HoUSed campaign calls now occur every other week. Our next call will be held on June 6 from 2:30 to 4:00 pm ET. Register for the call at: tinyurl.com/ru73qan

Watch a recording of the May 23 call at: tinyurl.com/2s3u68ba

View presentation slides from the May 23 call at: tinyurl.com/2dc668z2

## Opportunity Starts at Home

### Campaign Releases New Podcast Episode on the Role of Landlords in Housing Discrimination

The Opportunity Starts at Home (OSAH) campaign has released a new podcast episode, "The Role of Landlords in Housing Discrimination." The episode – the thirty-fifth in OSAH's podcast series – features a discussion with Eva Rosen, an assistant professor at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy; Philip Garboden, a professor in Affordable Housing Economics, Policy, and Planning at the University of Hawaii Manoa; and Jennifer Cossyleon, a senior policy and advocacy manager at Community Change Action.

In the episode, the three participants discuss an article they published jointly in 2021 in the *American Sociological Review*, "Racial Discrimination in Housing: How Landlords Use Algorithms and Home Visits to Screen Tenants." The conversation explores their mixed methods approach to research, the different types of landlords operating in the housing rental market, inequitable screening practices, the importance of understanding intersectional discrimination, and what an equitable approach to matching landlords and tenants might look like.

Listen to the podcast episode here.

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## Our Homes, Our Votes

### Join Today's *Our Homes, Our Votes: 2022* Webinar on Voter Registration Messaging, Events, and Door-to-Door Canvassing

NLIHC's *Our Homes, Our Votes: 2022* webinar series features experts with frontline election experience who walk through every step of voter and candidate engagement activities and support housing organizations' nonpartisan election efforts. The next webinar, "Voter Registration Messaging, Events, and Door-to-Door Canvassing," will be held today (Tuesday, May 31) at 2:30 pm ET. Register for the webinar here.

The first step in expanding voter participation is to ensure low-income renters are registered to vote. In this webinar, we will review strategies to increase voter registration, overcome voter apathy, and ensure all communities recognize their stake in the outcome of elections. Panelists will also discuss how to host successful voter registration events and organize door-to-door canvassing operations in buildings and neighborhoods with low registration rates. The webinar will feature Laura Williamson, associate director of policy and research for democracy reform at Demos, Emma Steelman, president of Vote Huntsville, and Tia Turner, president of Love Huntsville.

To watch recordings of past *Our Homes, Our Votes* webinars and preview the topics of the full series, visit NLIHC's *Our Homes, Our Votes* website.

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### Become an *Our Homes, Our Votes* Affiliate!

*Our Homes, Our Votes* affiliates are nonpartisan organizations that are formally identified with the campaign and committed to carrying out its goals. Tenant associations, homeless service providers, tribal organizations, student groups, neighborhood organizations, and any other group working to deliver more housing voters to the polls is invited to become an *Our Homes, Our Votes* affiliate. There is no cost for being an affiliate, and affiliates can request free merchandise for community events. Affiliates also receive permission to use our campaign logos and images on co-branded materials, additional guidance and support from NLIHC staff, opportunities to have their work featured in NLIHC's *Our Homes, Our Votes* biweekly newsletter, and more! To sign your organization up as an affiliate, please fill out this form.

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## Research

### Public Housing Agencies Increasingly Rely on Programs Other than Public Housing

The Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation (PAHRC) has released a new report, "Beyond Public Housing: How Public Housing Authorities are Transforming the Way They Preserve and Expand Their Stock." The report examines trends in public housing agencies' (PHAs) involvement in affordable housing outside of the public housing program. PAHRC finds PHAs are increasingly relying on resources outside of public housing to build, preserve, and manage affordable housing as congressional support for public housing has declined over the last several decades.

The report documents how Congress shifted away from public housing in the 1960s as it prioritized public-private partnerships in the provision of affordable housing through programs such as Project-Based Section 8, Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs), the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), and the HOME program. Congress has also implemented reforms through programs such as HOPE VI, the "Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act" (QHWRA), the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI), and the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) that have further transitioned PHAs away from public housing towards providing housing through public-private partnerships and leveraging private capital. The Faircloth amendment to the QHWRA effectively prevented PHAs from increasing their public housing stock beyond the number of units they maintained in October 1999, meaning PHAs have since relied on non-public housing programs to expand their affordable housing. Over half of PHAs that have owned or managed properties outside of public housing, however, did so prior to the implementation of HOPE VI and subsequent reforms such as QHWRA.

According to the report, 40% of PHAs now own or manage homes assisted by federal subsidies other than public housing. Fifty-eight percent of PHAs own or manage Project-Based Section 8 properties; 46% own, manage, or sponsor properties subsidized through LIHTC; and 32% own or manage properties subsidized through the HOME program. Nearly half of PHAs that own or manage properties outside of public housing only own or manage one such property. Such PHAs tend to be small, with portfolios of fewer than 250 homes. PHAs that own or manage multiple properties outside of the public housing program tend to be larger PHAs that own or manage over 1,250 homes.

In total, 1,664 PHAs own, sponsor, or manage approximately 384,592 homes not subsidized through the public housing program. These homes account for approximately 30% of the PHA stock. Nearly two-thirds of these homes are funded through LIHTC, 36% through Project-Based Section 8, 11% through project-based HCVs, 6% through Section 515, 6% through HOME, and 3% through HUD-insured mortgages. In some cases, more than one subsidy is associated with a home due to the layering of subsidies. Thirty-eight percent of homes owned or managed by PHAs outside of the public housing program were formerly public housing that were redeveloped or repositioned through HOPE VI or RAD.

The report concludes with several policy recommendations. Specifically, the report calls for Congress to adequately fund public housing, increase funding for preservation and new construction, repeal the Faircloth amendment so that PHAs can build new public housing that provides deep affordability, and expand support for training and technical assistance so that PHAs, particularly smaller ones, have the capacity to utilize development resources outside of public housing. The report also argues that states should amend their LIHTC qualified allocation plans (QAPs) to incentivize deep income targeting and redevelopment projects, so that PHAs can more easily acquire tax credits to recapitalize their public housing stock.

Read the report at: https://bit.ly/3thmiSz

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### New Research Finds Public Housing Agencies File Nearly 6% of Evictions

A new report published in *Cities*, "Eviction from Public Housing in the United States," highlights trends in eviction filing rates among public housing agencies (PHAs). Using data from 1,243 PHAs spanning 26 states, the report finds that, on average, 7.6% of tenants in public housing receive an eviction filing annually, representing 5.8% of all eviction cases nationally. Eviction filing rates vary greatly across PHAs, however, with PHA-filing rates largely reflecting eviction trends in the corresponding private rental market. Socio-demographic characteristics were also associated with filing rates. PHAs that housed greater shares of Black households, households with children, and extremely low-income households had higher eviction filing rates.

The researchers merged eviction filing data purchased from LexisNexis with data on public housing units from HUD's *Picture of Subsidized Housing* to estimate the number of evictions filed in public housing. The analysis found that while PHAs manage 3.5 out of every 100 rental housing units, PHAs account for 5.8 of every 100 eviction filings, representing a disproportionately high number of eviction filings. On average, PHAs file for eviction against 7.6% of their renter households annually.

There is, however, significant variation across PHAs. While some PHAs file nearly no evictions, others file evictions for more than 20% of renter households residing in their units each year. Part of this variation may be a result of variation in eviction rates across rental markets generally. The authors find that PHA eviction filing rates are highly associated with eviction rates in their corresponding private rental markets. A 1% increase in eviction filings in the private market is associated with a 1% eviction filing increase for PHAs in the same area. Virginia and South Carolina exhibited the largest median filing rates among both PHAs and within the private market, with filing rates exceeding 20% of renter households. This suggests that PHAs' eviction practices are not immune to influence from local or state policies, such as landlord-tenant laws.

The research also found that within each state, eviction filings are higher for PHAs that have greater shares of Black households, households with children, and extremely low-income households. A 10% increase in the share of Black renters, for example, was associated with a 10% increase in a PHA's eviction filing rate. A 10% increase in the share of households with children is associated with a 9.3% increase in filings, while a 10% increase in the share of renters earning less than 30% of the area median income is associated with a 7.1% increase in filings. The researchers found that for Black renters, this relationship held when comparing PHAs within the same county, suggesting that even within the same local contexts, Black households face increased risk of eviction and displacement from public housing.

The purpose of public housing is to provide affordable and stable housing to low-income renters who may struggle to access and maintain housing in the private market. Evicting households from public housing does the opposite, however, since eviction filings appear permanently on tenants' housing records, significantly limiting households' future housing stability. The authors suggest that clearer federal policies around tenant dispute resolution and allowable eviction actions could reduce eviction rates within PHAs. The authors also suggest learning from PHAs that have managed to keep eviction rates low and applying best practices across agencies.

Read the report at: https://bit.ly/3lEwvnP

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## Resources

### NLIHC Releases New Podcast Episode on the Intersections of Housing and Healthcare

NLIHC has released a new episode in our podcast series "The Home Front," which focuses on housing policy priorities, advocacy efforts by NLIHC and our partners, and other important topics. The new episode, "The Intersection of Housing and Healthcare," features Dr. Brandon G. Wilson, director of the Center for Consumer Engagement in Health Innovation at Community Catalyst. Dr. Wilson discusses the work of Community Catalyst and the organization's efforts to tie healthcare and housing together. He also shares a range of ideas about how to integrate healthcare and affordable housing and examines the intersections of racial equity and healthcare.

Listen to the podcast episode via one of the following streaming services: Apple Podcast, Spotify Podcast, Google Podcast, or SoundCloud.

Connect with NLIHC through social media on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

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## Events

### Join Upcoming Tenant Talk Live Webinar for Renters and Resident Leaders on the Importance of Making Significant Federal Investments in Public Housing

NLIHC will host "Tenant Talk Live" – a webinar with and for renter and resident leaders – next Monday, June 6, at 6 pm ET. Advocates from the Human Rights Watch, Save Section 9, and NLIHC will come together to discuss the importance of preserving public housing through significant federal funding. Register for next week's Tenant Talk Live webinar at: https://bit.ly/361rmy2

In 1974, the Nixon administration placed a moratorium on the building of public housing that has resulted in little new public housing being constructed in the last 40 years. In the wake of the moratorium, advocates have focused on preserving the remaining public housing stock. One of the biggest challenges for public housing advocates is the lack of federal funding received by public housing agencies (PHAs) each year. Humans Rights Watch (HRW) interviewed New York City public housing residents, who drew attention to the consequences of low investments in the country's public housing stock, including poor living conditions and lack of repairs. Public housing has often been cited by residents as a useful resource for people with the lowest incomes, but it can be difficult to live somewhere that is in disrepair with minimal support. Congress can address these problems by making significant investments in public housing.

In the upcoming webinar, staff from NLIHC will be joined by Jackson Gandour, researcher at Human Rights Watch; Ramona Ferreyra, advocate with Save Section 9; and Mrs. Loraine Brown, resident board member with NLIHC. We hope you will join our panelists to learn more about the history of public housing and how you can advocate for significant investments in our country's remaining public housing stock.

And remember: Tenant Talk Live would not be possible without tenants like you! We strive to connect and engage with tenants and tenant leaders through our webinars. If you are a low-income tenant and have a topic you would like to propose for an upcoming Tenant Talk Live meeting, or if you would like to participate as a speaker on an upcoming call or webinar, please email Sidney Betancourt at: sbetancourt@nlihc.org

Register for the next Tenant Talk Live webinar at: bit.ly/361rmy2

Stay up to date on Tenant Talk Live events via the Facebook group

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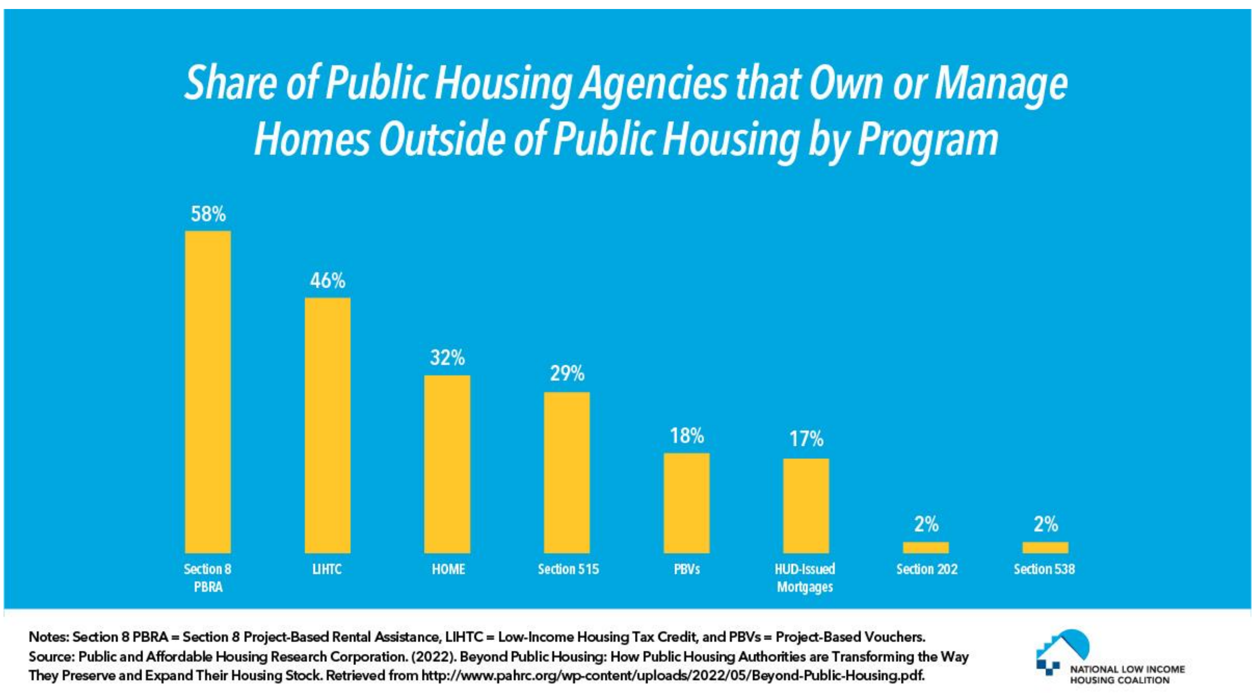
## Fact of the Week

### Many PHAs Own and Manage Housing Stock Outside of Public Housing




Source: Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation. (2022*). Beyond Public Housing: How Public Housing Authorities are Transforming the Way They Preserve and Expand Their Housing Stock.* Retrieved from http://www.pahrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Beyond-Public-Housing.pdf.

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## From the Field

### New Hampshire Invests $100 Million of American Rescue Plan Funding in Increasing Affordable Housing Development

New Hampshire has approved a plan to invest $100 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds in the state's housing infrastructure. The InvestNH initiative was proposed in February by Governor Chris Sununu and the state's Department of Business and Economic Affairs as a way to increase the number of available rental units in the state. Advocates successfully pushed for the plan to include income limits on certain projects to increase housing affordability for lower-income households. The final plan was approved by New Hampshire's Executive Council on May 4, 2022, and implementation will begin soon.

Like many states, New Hampshire has struggled for years due to a dearth of housing stock and increasing rents, putting affordable housing out of reach for many residents. InvestNH's primary project dedicates $60 million of flexible, supplemental funding for a capital grant program for the development of new multifamily rental housing. Applicants must demonstrate that units in their projects will be available only to tenants earning 80% or below of the area median income (AMI) or will have rent restrictions that do not exceed the maximum affordable rent for tenants at or below 80% of AMI. For projects with fewer than 15 units, applicants will be required to commit to a rent cap below the maximum rent affordable to households earning 80% of the median income in the area of the property.

The plan includes other provisions to incentivize multifamily housing development and combat some of the administrative barriers that often thwart affordable housing development at the local level. For example, it allocates $30 million in grants to municipalities that issue permits for eligible housing. Another $5 million will support municipalities as they review their zoning codes, identify barriers to affordable housing development, and propose and adopt changes to these regulations.

The affordability provisions of InvestNH are an improvement on the governor's original proposal. Some members of the Executive Council raised concerns that the initial plan did not guarantee dedicated funding for affordable housing and did not protect against funding being spent on luxury apartments. The administration had argued that the omission of affordable housing requirements was intended to allow projects to move forward flexibly and quickly and pledged not to use the funding for high-income rental housing. Nevertheless, the Executive Council paused further consideration of the proposal until the governor's office addressed affordability. Once further details were revealed, the Executive Council passed the InvestNH proposal in a 4-1 vote.

Housing advocates – such as Housing Action New Hampshire, an NLIHC state partner – were pleased to see that such a large amount of funding will be invested in the state's housing supply and that the funds will be used to promote long-term housing affordability. They plan to work with policymakers on successful implementation of the funds.

"The affordable housing crisis in New Hampshire is directly linked to the lack of supply of rental housing," stated Elissa Margolin, director of Housing Action NH. "It was gratifying to see our lawmakers in every branch and at every level prioritize ARPA [American Rescue Plan Act] resources for this. Housing Action NH will stay engaged and advocate for this new program's successful implementation."

Housing Action New Hampshire has been pushing to provide better tools to help communities respond to the demand for more housing. In addition to InvestNH's initiative, SB 400, the Community Toolbox Bill, would provide a foundation of enabling policies, economic incentives, improved timelines, and a more transparent local review process. After the New Hampshire House of Representatives tabled the measure, a Committee of Conference restored many of the provisions through a new legislative vehicle. If approved, housing advocates can celebrate the passage of a new Tax Increment Financing tool, speedier timelines for local planning and zoning boards, density provisions, and enhanced training opportunities for planning and zoning board members.

For more information about these advocacy efforts and Housing Action New Hampshire, contact Elissa Margolin at elissa@housingactionnh.org.

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## NLIHC in the News

### NLIHC in the News for the Week of May 22

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of May 22:

- "If You're Not Investing in Affordable Housing, You Should Be," *Multi-Housing News*, May 25 at: https://bit.ly/3GoQwbu
- "Biden is doubling down on dense, affordable housing," *Quartz,* May 25 at: https://bit.ly/3wSiyaP
- "Lost and found, eventually: Hempstead's $4.7M in federal rent relief," *Newsday*, May 26 at: https://nwsdy.li/3M3Vs6R

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## NLIHC News

### Where to Find Us – May 31

NLIHC staff will be speaking at the following events in the coming months:

- Supportive Housing Network of New York Conference Advocacy Panel – Plenary Panel, New York, June 2 (Diane Yentel)
- National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) Annual Conference, Workshop: "Internal Operations: An Equity Approach" – Washington, DC, June 2 (Renee Willis)
- University of North Carolina Greensboro's Housing Hangout, "Homeownership, Part 1: Racial Equity in Home Ownership" – Virtual, June 3 (Renee Willis)
- 2022 Just Economy Conference (NCRC), "Housing Justice Perspectives: Key Issues in Fair & Affordable Rental Housing" – Panel Discussion, – Washington, DC, June 13 (Sarah Saadian)
- Habitat for Humanity, Advancing Black Homeownership – Washington, DC, June 14 (Renee Willis)
- Montana Housing Partnership, "Table Talk" – Virtual, June 15 (Courtney Cooperman)
- Orange County United Way – Housing Policy Made Simple – Virtual, July 12 (Diane Yentel)
- Princeton Community Housing Gala – Keynote, Virtual, July 21 (Diane Yentel)
- HousingNext Grand Rapids Michigan Policy Conference – Grand Rapids, MI, August 16 (Diane Yentel)
- Idaho Housing and Finance Association Annual Housing Conference – Keynote, Boise, ID, August 22-23 (Diane Yentel)
- AARP Housing Workshop Plenary Panel – Virtual, September 22 (Diane Yentel)

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Chantelle Wilkinson, Housing Campaign Manager, x230
Renee Willis, SVP for Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, x247
Rebecca Yae, Senior Research Analyst–COVID-19 Response, x256
Diane Yentel, President and CEO, x225