A weekly newsletter from the National Low Income Housing Coalition

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## **HoUSed** Campaign

- Representative Torres Leads 106 Colleagues in Letter to House Leadership Urging Inclusion of Affordable Housing Resources in Infrastructure Package
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Negotiations Continue as Senate Democrats Prepare Budget Resolution
- House Financial Services Committee Holds Hearing on "Building Back a Better, More Equitable Housing Infrastructure for America"
- Join NLIHC's National HoUSed Campaign Call for Universal, Stable, and Affordable Housing Today at 2:30 pm ET
- Recording Available of July 19 National Call on HoUSed: Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing

## **Emergency Rental Assistance**

- New Treasury Data Show June Uptick in ERA Spending as Eviction Moratorium Expiration Looms
- New NLIHC Report Examines How ERA Programs Implement Direct-to-Tenant Payments
- NLIHC Summarizes Household Pulse Survey Findings on Renter Experiences during Pandemic
- Register Today for NLIHC's ERASE Webinar Series for Emergency Rental Assistance Program Stakeholders

## **Eviction Moratorium**

- White House Hosts Second Virtual Convening on Eviction Prevention
- Representative Clyburn Sends Letters to Corporate Landlords to Investigate Pandemic Evictions
- New Database on Eviction Laws Compares State and Local Eviction Processes

## Congress

- NLIHC to Testify at Congressional Hearing on Federal Efforts to Keep Americans Housed during the Pandemic
- Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Preserving and Improving Federally Assisted Housing

## **Budget and Appropriations**

• Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding Sends Letter to Congressional Leadership and Appropriators on FY22 Spending Bill

## HUD

• HUD Releases Notice of Funding Opportunity for Eviction Prevention Program

## Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness

- Senators Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Implement Important Reforms for Long-Term Disaster Recovery Funding
- NLIHC Responds to FEMA Request for Information on Diversity and Inclusion, Recommends Numerous Disaster Recovery Reforms
- HUD PIH Posts Fourth Update of Emergency Housing Voucher FAQs
- HUD CPD Updates and Offers Webinar on ESG-CV Waiver Notice
- HUD to Hold CARES Act Virtual Conference on July 27-28
- Additional Coronavirus Updates July 26, 2021
- Disaster Housing Recovery Updates July 26, 2021

## **Opportunity Starts at Home**

• Catholic Charities Urges Federal Government to Provide Post-Pandemic Housing Resources

## Research

• Weak Landlord-Tenant Laws Can Increase Post-Disaster Eviction Rates

## Resources

- Slides and Recording Available from NHLP Webinar on Saving Section 515 Rural Housing
- National Alliance to End Homelessness Announces Webinar on Services for Emergency Housing Voucher Recipients

## Fact of the Week

• Jurisdictions Spent \$1.5 Billion in Emergency Rental Assistance Funds in June, Much Remains Unspent

## From the Field

- Vermont Advocates Celebrate Affordable Housing Funding, Urge Rental Safety Legislation
- Maine Passes Eviction Prevention and Affordable Housing Legislation

## NLIHC News

• NLIHC Seeks ERASE Project Coordinator

## NLIHC in the News

• NLIHC in the News for the Week of July 18

## **HoUSed** Campaign

# **Representative Torres Leads 106 Colleagues in Letter to House Leadership Urging Inclusion of Affordable Housing Resources in Infrastructure Package**

Representative Ritchie Torres (D-NY) led 106 of his colleagues in a <u>letter</u> to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) urging the inclusion of affordable housing resources in the upcoming infrastructure package. The letter calls for the HoUSed campaign's <u>top priorities</u> to be included in the bill: multi-year, mandatory funding for housing vouchers to pave the way to universal housing assistance; at least \$70 billion to address the capital repair backlog in public housing; and \$45 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to construct and preserve housing affordable to the lowest-income people.

The letter notes these three proposals should be considered "a minimum" investment, and that Congress should make additional investments in the construction and preservation of affordable housing in Tribal and rural areas; fund lead abatement and healthy home initiatives; and provide homeownership assistance for historically marginalized people.

"Without proportional affordable housing investments, there is no path for an equitable recovery and long-term financial stability for low- and middle-income American families," write the representatives. "If we fail to act now, our nation's economic growth will continue to be held back."

Read the letter at: https://tinyurl.com/kvx3y4z7

## **Bipartisan Infrastructure Negotiations Continue as Senate Democrats Prepare Budget Resolution**

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) called a procedural vote on July 21 that would have allowed senators to begin debate on a \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure deal. Senators rejected the procedure, citing the lack of legislative text and the need for additional time for ongoing discussions and noting the senators leading negotiations anticipate reaching a deal on the package as soon as today, July 26. Majority Leader Schumer is expected to schedule another procedural vote this week.

While negotiations on the bipartisan infrastructure bill continue, Senate Budget Chair Bernie Sanders (I-VT) has instructed his staff to begin drafting a fiscal year 2022 budget resolution with reconciliation instructions that determine how the resolution's \$3.5 trillion will be allocated by Senate committees. The Senate is expected to take up debate over the reconciliation package the first week in August before senators are scheduled to leave DC on August 9 for recess. To begin debate on the reconciliation bill, the Senate must first reach an agreement on the bipartisan package. Failing to reach an agreement, the bipartisan provisions will be folded into the reconciliation package, bringing the total funding target to \$4.1 trillion. Majority Leader Schumer has stated his commitment to keeping the chamber in session as it takes to complete both packages.

Voting on a budget resolution is the first step towards enacting a reconciliation package, which only requires 50 votes to pass the Senate instead of the usual 60 required in the chamber. As negotiations continue, advocates should weigh in with their members of Congress and tell them to include the robust resources necessary to address the nation's severe shortage of affordable, accessible housing for the lowest-income people. This infrastructure and recovery legislation is an extraordinary and unique opportunity to invest in proven affordable housing solutions, including rental assistance, public housing, and the national Housing Trust Fund, at the scale

necessary. NLIHC urges advocates to continue contacting members of Congress to remind them that housing is infrastructure and must be included in any reconciliation package.

Find out how to contact your members of Congress at: https://tinyurl.com/yb9goyt6

View HoUSed campaign policy priorities at: https://tinyurl.com/4sfyxzrm

# House Financial Services Committee Holds Hearing on "Building Back a Better, More Equitable Housing Infrastructure for America"

The House Financial Services Committee held a <u>hearing</u> on July 20 titled, "Building Back a Better, More Equitable Housing Infrastructure for America: Oversight of the Department of Housing and Urban Development." HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge served as the hearing's sole witness, her first hearing before the committee as secretary. In her opening testimony, Secretary Fudge stated, "The president's 2022 budget is just one part of his commitment to make generational investments into America's housing. In addition to the vital support contained in this budget, the president has called for sweeping new housing investments through his 'Build Back America' agenda. These investments would help build or restore more than two million affordable homes. The 'Build Back Better' agenda would help more families of modest means realize the dream of homeownership, expand the supply of affordable rental housing, and help revitalize our public housing stock." The president's FY22 <u>budget requests \$68.7 billion</u> for HUD, a 15% increase over FY21 appropriated levels.

Some Republican members of the committee addressed the administration's delays in distributing emergency rental assistance (ERA) to tenants and landlords. Ranking Member Patrick McHenry (R-NC) questioned Secretary Fudge about the reasons for these delays and why Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen was not present at today's hearing. Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) noted that Secretary Yellen was neither required nor asked to attend the hearing. Chairwoman Waters reminded the committee that Secretary Yellen will be required to attend later in the year with an update on ERA disbursements. Secretary Fudge corrected Ranking Member McHenry's remarks, stating that not only is ERA largely Treasury's responsibility rather than HUD's, but also that allocations to states and localities have already been made. She went on to say that it is now the responsibility of the state and localities to disburse the money to tenants and landlords and that delays in doing so are not coming from HUD.

Representatives Gregory Meeks (D-NY), Madeleine Dean (D-PA), and Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) spoke about the importance of prioritizing public housing capital repairs. Representative Meeks stated such investment is necessary "so that individuals can live in decent apartments, in a timely fashion, which they can afford." Secretary Fudge maintained that repairs to public housing are a matter of great importance to HUD. One of NLIHC's top policy priorities is to provide significant funding to address the capital repair backlog in public housing.

Representatives Alma Adams (D-NC), Cynthia Axne (D-IA), and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) emphasized the need to expand emergency rental assistance vouchers. In response to expanding vouchers, Secretary Fudge stated that the focus needs to be on expanding the affordable housing supply first, so there are more opportunities for people with vouchers to find housing. Representatives Axne and Ocasio-Cortez stressed the need to hold state and local governments accountable for emergency rental assistance funds not reaching landlords and tenants. Expanding the supply of rental homes, vouchers, and rental assistance is a major priority of NLHC for the infrastructure package.

View the full hearing at: https://tinyurl.com/5cw8j5ub

Read Secretary Fudge's opening testimony at: <u>https://tinyurl.com/55ydckh9</u>

See NLIHC's analysis of President Biden's FY22 budget request for housing at: https://tinyurl.com/na7dv97m

## Join NLIHC's National HoUSed Campaign Call for Universal, Stable, and Affordable Housing Today at 2:30 pm ET

Join today's (July 26) national HoUSed campaign call from 2:30-4pm ET. Per Olstad from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) will join us to share a new emergency rental assistance (ERA) digital toolkit and soon-to-be released ERA program locator. Madeline Youngren and Sarah Abdelhad from the Legal Services Corporation will talk about their recently launched Eviction Laws Database. We will also discuss findings from two new NLIHC research publications; get the latest from NLIHC's ERASE project; hear the latest updates from the field and Capitol Hill; and more.

Register for the call at: <u>https://bit.ly/3ub2sWM</u>

## Recording Available of July 19 National Call on HoUSed: Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing

During the most recent (July 19) national call on "HoUSed: Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing," HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge joined us to discuss the historic opportunity to get significant housing investments in the infrastructure bill. Dan Threet from NLIHC provided an overview of this year's data from NLIHC's *Out of Reach 2021*. We were also joined by Roxy Caines from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities who discussed details about an upcoming Child Tax Credit Navigator training. We heard the latest from NLIHC's ERASE Project, learned about a new NLIHC research brief on direct-to-tenant assistance, discussed how to advance the HoUSed campaign's priorities through the infrastructure package, and received field updates.

NLIHC's Dan Threet gave an overview of the Coalition's *Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing* report. The report found the National Housing Wage is \$24.90 for a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent (FMR) and \$20.40 per hour for a one-bedroom apartment at FMR; nowhere in America do minimum wage workers earn enough to afford a decent two-bedroom apartment at FMR.

Roxy Caines from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities discussed the <u>Child Tax Credit</u> and provided <u>outreach resources</u> and guidance on how to access payments. NLIHC's Sarah Gallagher, Rebecca Yae, and Emma Foley provided End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) updates, shared information on ERASE's upcoming <u>webinar series</u>, and gave an overview of NLIHC's new <u>brief</u> on direct-to-tenant payment implementation for emergency rental assistance programs.

NLIHC's Sarah Saadian provided updates and stressed the need to <u>call members of Congress</u> and urge them to co-sponsor "<u>Housing is Infrastructure Act</u>" and the "<u>Ending Homelessness Act</u>." If enacted, the bills would provide the robust resources needed to ensure the lowest-income and most marginalized households have safe, affordable, and accessible homes. Sarah Owsley from Empower Missouri and Meleah Spencer from The Kitchen, Inc., Eric Hauge from HOME Line Minnesota, and Anya Lawler from Public Interest Advocates in California provided field updates.

NLIHC hosts national calls every week. On today's call we will be joined by Per Olstad from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), who will share a new toolkit and soon-to-be released ERA program locator from CFPB. Register for today's call (Monday July 26, at 2:30 pm ET) at: <u>https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan</u>

Watch a recording of the July 19 call at: https://tinyurl.com/sfum4yfp

View presentation slides at: https://tinyurl.com/4n6jsem8

View NLIHC's full Out of Reach Report at: https://tinyurl.com/3vttx92x

## **Emergency Rental Assistance**

# New Treasury Data Show June Uptick in ERA Spending as Eviction Moratorium Expiration Looms

The <u>Department of Treasury</u> on July 22 released updated emergency rental assistance spending data, revealing an uptick in spending in June. By the end of June, grantees had paid out a total of \$3 billion of the \$25 billion allocation appropriated by the December 2020 "Consolidated Appropriations Act" (ERA1), almost doubling the amount paid out by the end of May. Despite the increased pace of distribution, only 12% of the allocation had been paid out as of June 30, just a month before the CDC eviction moratorium is set to expire. Further, while several states and localities are ramping up their fund distribution, many more remain stagnant. Only five states distributed more than 20% of their funds, and only 10% of localities distributed more than 50%.

The amount of ERA funding paid out to households has doubled during each reporting period, increasing from \$256 million in the first quarter (January to March) to \$1.5 billion in June. The number of households served has also been steadily increasing, with 84,676 households served in Q1 and 290,519 households served in June. Since the program began, 633,453 households have been served.

States increased spending from 4% to 10% between May 31 and June 30. State allocations represent approximately \$18 billion of the total \$25 billion in funding. Localities increased spending from 13% to 20% over the same period. Despite these increases, many states and localities have spent little to none of their allocations. Of particular concern are large states with high numbers of low-income households. The state of Florida, for example, served only 237 households and paid out .2% of its allocation by the end of June. The state of New York has served no households and expended none of its funding.

Though the Treasury data is critical to assess ERA spending holistically, program-specific data dashboards provide real-time updates of how some programs are doing. The State of Texas, for example, distributed 34% of its funds by the end of June, but distributed nearly 50% of their funds as of mid-July according to the state <u>dashboard</u>. On the other hand, the state of Wyoming, has only spent .9% of its funds according to the state <u>dashboard</u>, only marginally higher than the .5% reported in the Treasury data.

The publicly available data are essential to enhance transparency and accountability of state and local ERA1 programs. The data illustrate how critical it is that low-spending grantees adopt best practices quickly before the CDC eviction moratorium ends, as detailed in NLIHC's <u>research and case studies</u> and outlined by the <u>Department of Treasury</u>.

Access ERA1 data at: https://bit.ly/3zr76mo

## New NLIHC Report Examines How ERA Programs Implement Direct-to-Tenant Payments

A new NLIHC report, *Direct-to-Tenant Payment Implementation: Increasing Flexibility and Equity in Emergency Rental Assistance Programs*, outlines why direct-to-tenant payments are needed in emergency rental assistance (ERA) programs and how program administrators can implement this feature. The report recommends that programs implement low-barrier, direct-to-tenant assistance with minimal additional documentation requirements, and that programs make clear in their public-facing materials and outreach that direct-to-tenant assistance is available. Programs should also pair direct-to-tenant assistance with housing stability services to ensure tenants can remain stably housed after they receive payment, even if landlords act in bad faith.

Using data from interviews with program administrators, the report addresses six key features of direct-totenant payments: landlord outreach, outreach tracking, ensuring accountability, tenant requirements, tenant payments, and direct-to-tenant payment transparency. The programs interviewed represent a variety of program types and sizes, including a highly centralized state program (Texas Rent Relief), a decentralized state program (Maine Emergency Rental Assistance), a large local program (Allegheny County Emergency Rental Assistance), and a mid-sized local program (Cameron County Emergency Rental Assistance).

The report finds that direct-to-tenant payments are critical to enhance equity and meet the needs of low-income renters. A <u>survey</u> conducted by NLIHC, the Housing Initiative at Penn, and the NYU Furman Center found that nearly 50% of ERA programs operating in 2020 identified landlord participation as a barrier. Providing direct-to-tenant assistance can serve as a bridge to assist tenants whose landlords are apprehensive or wary about participating in the program. In doing so, programs can promote equity by ensuring they are serving those most in need, including those with lower incomes, households of color, households with someone experiencing a disability, households with children, and households who are more likely to have been economically impacted by COVID-19.

The report also provides an overview of the Department of Treasury's guidance and policies related to direct-totenant payments. Treasury strongly encourages the use of direct-to-tenant payments for ERA1 when landlords do not respond to program requests or refuse to participate outright. For ERA2, Treasury requires that programs provide direct-to-tenant assistance when landlords do not participate. Treasury also allows programs to pay tenants directly first and immediately under ERA2, rather than making the initial payment offer to landlords.

Read the report at: <u>https://bit.ly/3kKpfHN</u>

Resources related to direct-to-tenant implementation are on the NLIHC Resource Hub at: <u>https://nlihc.org/resource-hub</u>

## NLIHC Summarizes Household Pulse Survey Findings on Renter Experiences during Pandemic

Last week NLIHC released *The Road Ahead for Low-Income Renters*, which summarizes research largely conducted during the pandemic on renters' experiences and their needs going forward. The note summarizes findings from the Census Bureau's *Household Pulse Survey*, rent payment trackers, and research conducted by NLIHC, the Housing Initiative at Penn, the Urban Institute, and other sources.

Approximately 6.5 million renter households were behind on rent in early July, though the surveys do not yet provide an estimate of the aggregate size of accumulated rental arrears. Surveys suggest that many renters have paid rent only by relying on unsustainable methods like taking on additional debt or cutting back on basic needs. The note also explains why there is reason to believe that renters of color, low-income renters, and renters with lower educational attainment are experiencing greater struggles.

The summary note describes the challenges emergency rental assistance programs face in getting assistance to all renters in need and erasing accumulated arrears. Multiple independent surveys suggest that many renters remain unaware of available resources: over one-fourth of the lowest-income renters cannot access online

applications at home, and many renters may disqualify themselves or hesitate to apply because of documentation requirements. Renters who have taken on debt to keep current on rent may be ineligible for assistance, even if they will face greater challenges in the future as a result.

The summary note is at: <u>https://bit.ly/3BtDsyA</u>

# **Register Today for NLIHC's ERASE Webinar Series for Emergency Rental Assistance Program Stakeholders**

Register today for NLIHC's End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) <u>Webinar Series</u>. This three-part series (July 28, August 4, and August 11 from 3-4:30 pm ET) will provide emergency rental assistance (ERA) program administrators, state and local partners, and community stakeholders with tools and best practices to ensure that ERA reaches households experiencing the worst impacts of the pandemic—including households of color, people with disabilities, and immigrant communities—in time to prevent housing loss and eviction. Register for the webinar series <u>here</u>.

With the federal CDC eviction moratorium expiring on July 31, NLIHC calls on state and local partners to ensure that: 1) tenants and landlords in need know about and can access ERA; 2) ERA applications are flexible, streamlined, and low barrier; and 3) ERA programs are connected to other tenant protections and ultimately successful in preventing evictions.

Each webinar will address one core focus area of the ERASE Call to Action: that ERA programs are visible, accessible, and preventive.

## **"Visible: Ensuring Equitable Outreach, Marketing and Targeting of Emergency Rental Assistance"** on July 28, 2021, 3-4:30 pm ET

This webinar will focus on tools and best practices that emergency rental assistance programs should incorporate to ensure outreach efforts and resources are effectively reaching neighborhoods and communities, including communities of color, with the greatest risks and needs for assistance.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Peggy Bailey, senior advisor on rental assistance, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Moderator
- Barbara Poppe, national homelessness expert and former executive director of USICH
- Samantha Batko, senior research associate, Urban Institute
- Terry Hickey, deputy director of housing and community development at the Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services
- Joél Arvizo-Zavala, Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs and Department of Workforce Services
- Santa Clara County Homelessness Prevention System

Register at: <u>https://tinyurl.com/r4w39cwh</u>

## "Accessible: Creating Flexible, Streamlined and Low Barrier Application Processes" on August 4, 2021, 3-4:30 pm ET

Households most in need may have difficulty navigating lengthy applications and meeting burdensome documentation requirements in time to avoid a looming eviction. This webinar will cover strategies that state

and local programs can incorporate into program design to support flexible, streamlined, and low barrier application processes to facilitate access to and disbursement of financial support to landlords and tenants and support progress toward racial equity and justice.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Rebecca Yae, senior research analyst, NLIHC
- Claire Stanley, public policy analyst, National Disabilities Rights Network
- Verónica Soto, director, City of San Antonio, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department
- Gregory Zlotnick, director of pro bono programs at the St. Mary's University School of Law's Center for Legal and Social Justice
- Erin Barbee, senior vice president of programs and fund development, DreamKey Partners, North Carolina

Register at: https://tinyurl.com/r4w39cwh

## **"Preventive: Connecting Emergency Rental Assistance to Courts and Tenant Protections"** on August 11, 2021, 3-4:30 pm ET

This webinar will highlight strategies to prevent eviction, housing displacement and homelessness by offering flexible, holistic, and preventative interventions and creating formal partnerships with state and local courts to support eviction prevention and diversion in coordination with ERA programs. We will hear from national partners regarding tenant protections that can be aligned with emergency rental assistance as well as from state and local programs on how they are using data to track eviction cases and conduct advocacy.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Trevor Samios, vice president, Connected Communities, Winn Companies
- Webb Brewer, general counsel for ERA, Memphis and Shelby County Emergency Rental Assistance Program
- Greg Payne, director, Maine Housing Coalition

Register at: https://tinyurl.com/r4w39cwh

## **Eviction Moratorium**

## White House Hosts Second Virtual Convening on Eviction Prevention

The White House hosted a second <u>virtual eviction prevention convening</u> on July 21 to help municipalities quickly deliver rental assistance and develop community-specific eviction-prevention plans. The convening highlighted best practices and actions taken by cities since the first <u>White House Eviction Prevention Summit</u> on June 30, which featured a public plenary with key administration officials and a series of breakout sessions with teams from nearly 50 cities to develop eviction prevention plans for their local areas (see *Memo*,  $\frac{7/6}{0}$ ).

White House American Rescue Plan Coordinator Gene Sperling delivered opening remarks, emphasizing the Biden administration's commitment to prevent evictions and their devastating consequences. He highlighted <u>new data</u> released by the U.S. Department of the Treasury on the <u>Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program</u>, which showed that more than \$1.5 billion in ERA was delivered to eligible households in June – more than

what was distributed in the previous three reporting periods combined. While the data indicate substantial progress in the distribution of ERA, Sperling emphasized we must do much more to deliver these critical resources and keep families in their homes.

Mr. Sperling urged state and local officials to use the flexibility provided by the administration to distribute ERA swiftly to households in need. "When we say that you can use more self-attestation, categorical eligibility, factual predicates, bulk payments, that you can help tenants directly – that's not just allowing, it's not a suggestion – we are encouraging, we are asking people to do what they can," said Mr. Sperling. "This is not a time to hide behind being overly conservative, overly cautious, or overly complacent. There is too much at stake."

Noel Poyo, deputy assistant secretary for community economic development at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, emphasized the Biden administration's <u>whole-of-government approach</u> to preventing evictions and outlined <u>key policy changes</u> Treasury has made to the ERA guidance. Per Olstad from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) spoke about resources to support renters, homeowners, and landlords, including the <u>interagency housing assistance portal</u> and <u>CFPB's housing insecurity media toolkit</u>.

Speakers from across the country discussed best practices on topics such as leveraging partnerships with nonprofit and community organizations to streamline access to ERA and eviction diversion programs and providing culturally and linguistically relevant outreach and education. Another panel addressed strategies for engaging landlords with intentional outreach efforts, strategic messaging campaigns, and hands-on assistance to help landlords and tenants navigate the ERA application process.

The convening featured panels on how mayors, judges, and philanthropy can take an active role in local efforts to keep renters in their homes. Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer highlighted how their cities are utilizing ERA funds and American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for eviction prevention strategies such as rental assistance, right-to-counsel, and rapid rehousing. Chief Magistrate of Cobb County Judge Brendan Murphy and Judge Rachel Bell, presiding judge over the Davidson County General Sessions Court, spoke about efforts to inform tenants and landlords about ERA and eviction diversion programs, utilize housing court navigators, and employ other strategies to slow the eviction process and allow more time for ERA to reach households.

Access the readout of the second White House Eviction Prevention Convening at: https://tinyurl.com/2mhju5ru

Watch the recording of the convening at: <u>https://tinyurl.com/3mrbws48</u>

## **Representative Clyburn Sends Letters to Corporate Landlords to Investigate Pandemic Evictions**

Representative James Clyburn (D-SC), chair of the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, sent letters on July 19 to corporate landlords <u>Invitation Homes</u>, <u>Pretium Partners</u>, <u>Ventron Management</u>, and the <u>Siegel</u> <u>Group</u> requesting information about their high rates of evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, the four companies have filed for over 5,000 evictions during the pandemic. Court records and news reports show these companies have filed to evict tenants protected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) eviction moratorium, as well as tenants who have applied for or received emergency rental assistance to pay rental arrears.

"The failure of some large landlord companies to comply with eviction moratoria or to cooperate with rental assistance programs is creating significant hardship for tenants affected by the coronavirus crisis and could contribute to a needless housing crisis as our nation recovers from the pandemic and its economic fallout," Chair Clyburn wrote to the companies. "Some landlords have acted responsibly during the pandemic,

complying fully with eviction moratoria and working cooperatively with tenants to obtain federal rental assistance funds, but those large landlord companies that have moved to evict people aggressively have had a substantial negative impact on struggling American families."

Chair Clyburn will hold a <u>hearing</u> on July 27 titled "Oversight of Pandemic Evictions: Assessing Abuses by Corporate Landlords and Federal Efforts to Keep Americans in Their Homes," at which NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel will testify. The hearing will address the effective use of emergency rental assistance funds, highlight best practices and the successes of the American Rescue Plan, and identify what further actions need to be taken to prevent a housing crisis and keep families in their homes.

Read the hearing notice at: https://tinyurl.com/tnnw6mtj

Read the letter to Invitation Homes at: <u>https://tinyurl.com/bjb9cf2k</u>

Read the letter to Pretium Partners at: https://tinyurl.com/jdkt32px

Read the letter to the Siegel Group at: <u>https://tinyurl.com/44zh5b4r</u>

Read the letter to Ventron Management at: https://tinyurl.com/d6zh8pja

### New Database on Eviction Laws Compares State and Local Eviction Processes

The Center for Public Health Law Research at Temple University and the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) have released the <u>LSC Eviction Laws Database</u>, an online interactive tool that allows users to examine state, territory, and local eviction laws. The laws and procedures in the dataset were in effect as of January 1, 2021.

The state/territory dataset contains information on landlord-tenant law concerning all aspects of the eviction process, including permissible causes of evictions, filing timelines, notice requirements, post-judgment proceedings, and other process-related details. For each element, the database links to the relevant portion of state, territory, or local law. An interactive map allows users to highlight states and territories that share select features. The dataset includes information on all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau. The local dataset contains state/territory-, county-, and local-level eviction laws for 30 jurisdictions across the country.

Because some jurisdictions had temporary COVID-related measures affecting eviction proceedings on January 1, 2021, the database includes notes indicating how the laws were affected. Executive orders and uncodified law that affected the eviction process were not included in the database when existing non-COVID related law remained effective on January 1, 2021. Where COVID-related statutes or amendments were incorporated into existing statutes, and the permanent provisions were not effective on January 1, the requirement in the amended statute was included in the database.

The LSC Eviction Laws Database is part of a larger project called "<u>The Effect of State & Local Laws on</u> <u>Evictions</u>," a congressionally-directed study to investigate the unmet legal needs surrounding eviction in the United States.

See <u>Memo, 2/20/18</u> and <u>3/9/20</u> for more on legal surveillance work performed by the Center for Public Health Law Research on fair housing, landlord-tenant laws, and nuisance ordinances.

Find the tool at: <u>https://bit.ly/3eIwWKC</u>

### Congress

## NLIHC to Testify at Congressional Hearing on Federal Efforts to Keep Americans Housed during the Pandemic

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel will testify at a House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus hearing, "<u>Oversight of Pandemic Evictions: Assessing Abuses by Corporate Landlords and Federal Efforts to keep Americans in their Homes</u>," on Tuesday, July 27 at 10:30 am ET. The hearing will address misconduct by large-scale corporate landlords during the pandemic, including the failure of some landlord companies to comply with the federal eviction moratorium issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or accept emergency rental assistance (ERA). Additionally, the hearing will focus on ERA best practices and what further action must be taken to prevent an historic wave of evictions this summer and fall.

Diane will address the federal response to pandemic-related housing needs, including the essential protections provided under the CDC eviction moratorium and the \$46.5 billion for ERA to assist low-income renters address rent and utility arrears. She will highlight best practices for state and local implementation of ERA based on NLIHC's tracking and analysis of more than 1,000 state and local rental assistance programs created or expanded during the pandemic, including over 450 programs funded through the \$25 billion appropriated for the Treasury ERA program under the December 2020 COVID-19 relief package. Diane will outline additional federal actions needed to improve the distribution of ERA and address the urgent need for Congress or the White House to extend and strengthen the moratorium to prevent further spread of COVID-19 and to give states and cities more time to distribute critical ERA resources. In addition to addressing immediate solutions to keeping millions of renters stably housed, Diane will discuss long-term solutions to the underlying shortage of affordable homes and robust protections for the lowest-income renters.

Despite the availability of ERA funds and the eviction moratorium, some large landlords have aggressively moved to evict tenants throughout the pandemic. Representative James Clyburn (D-SC), chair of the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, sent letters on July 19 to four corporate landlord groups requesting information their eviction practices during the pandemic (see *Memo*, 7/26). NLIHC has raised similar concerns about growing reports of landlords, including those who receive federally backed loans through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, who continue to evict renters from their homes without consequence. At the end of March, NLIHC and more than 2,300 national, state, and local organizations and elected officials <u>urged</u> the Biden administration not only to extend the eviction moratorium but also to address the order's shortcomings and enforce its protections.

Watch the hearing at: https://tinyurl.com/ywwbw7kf

### Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Preserving and Improving Federally Assisted Housing

The Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs (BHUA) Committee Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development on July 20 held a hybrid <u>hearing</u> titled "Safe at Home: Preserving and Improving Federally Assisted Housing." The hearing addressed health and safety risks that exist in federally assisted housing, including lead, radon, mold, fire hazards, lack of safety equipment, overcrowding, and the effects of unsafe homes on families and children. Members of the subcommittee and panelists described how COVID-19 has exacerbated these issues and discussed the legislation and funding needed to adequately address them. Witnesses included Dave Jacobs, chief scientist at the National Center for Healthy Housing; Jennifer Keogh, deputy director of the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority; and Sharon Vogel, executive director of the Cheyenne River Housing Authority, chairwoman of the United Native American Housing Association and NLIHC board member.

In Chairwoman Tina Smith's (D-MN) opening statement spoke about a fire that led to the death of five residents in a 25-story public housing complex that had no fire sprinklers. Shortly after the incident, Chair Smith introduced the "Public Housing Fire Safety Act" (see *Memo*, <u>12/18/2019</u>), which was reintroduced recently in both the House and Senate (see *Memo*, <u>04/19</u>). "These health and safety risks are not limited to public housing and federally-assisted housing alone," she said. "But the federal government has a special obligation to make sure that homes supported by or funded by taxpayers are safe and free of known hazards. And I hope that this hearing will raise awareness for all Americans about these health and safety risks."

Ranking Member Mike Rounds (R-SD) stated that while a lack of resources can be seen as a primary issue in federally assisted homes safety, he believes there are efficiency issues at the agency levels that need to be addressed before additional funding is allocated. Ranking Member Rounds, who represents a state with a significant share of Native Americans, also shared his concerns on the state of Native American housing: "According to the National American Indian Housing Council, 40% of on-reservation housing is inadequate, a fact that is unmistakable to me every time I drive through a reservation back home and see many of the homes boarded up and unfit for us," he stated. The ranking member said that one of the most pressing housing issues on reservations is overcrowding. According to a HUD report, nearly 16% of American Indian and Alaska Native households experienced overcrowding, compared to the national average of 2.2%.

Sharon Vogel spoke with Ranking Member Rounds about the unique challenges facing Native American families in federally assisted housing. Rural isolation delays the response time of first responders and the lack of fire stations locally poses a great risk to Native American families. Another issue is methamphetamine contamination inside those federally assisted housing. "We have an epidemic of meth use in our tribal communities," said Vogel, "and the residual effects of the use of meth in our homes leaves our elders and young children—those with compromised health conditions in very vulnerable positions is also a big concern of ours."

Ranking Member Rounds discussed the impacts of the reauthorization of the Native American Housing and Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA), which has recently been introduced in the Senate (see *Memo*, <u>07/06</u>). Vogel said that the reauthorization of NAHASDA would allow for reinstatement of the drug elimination program and encourage drug prevention activities. Reauthorization of NAHASDA would also allow rent structures to be determined by the Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs) and reauthorize the HUD Tribal-VA Supportive Housing Program. Vogel described how overcrowding creates stress on homes and without proper ventilation, mold can deteriorate homes.

The panelists discussed investments needed to ensure federally assisted homes are green and climate-ready and to address the racial disparities in housing safety. The panelists supported for improvements in HUD's inspection standards across all federally assisted programs.

Watch the full hearing, read witness testimonies, and explore related legislation at: <u>https://bit.ly/3BynXp1</u>

More about NAHASDA is on page 5-29 of NLIHC's 2021 Advocate's Guide.

See NLIHC's HoUSed Campaign's "Key Legislation" at: https://bit.ly/3x0p5z2

## **Budget and Appropriations**

## Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding Sends Letter to Congressional Leadership and Appropriators on FY22 Spending Bill

The NLIHC-led Campaign for Housing and Community Development (<u>CHCDF</u>) sent a <u>letter</u> on July 23 to congressional leadership and appropriators urging Congress to enact the highest possible funding for housing and community development programs for fiscal year (FY) 2022 as soon as possible this year. CHCDF is an education, strategy, and action coalition representing over 70 national housing and community development organizations.

The FY22 spending legislation is the first annual spending bill in a decade that is not limited by the low spending caps required by the Budget Control Act that have prevented Congress from investing in affordable housing at the scale necessary. If enacted, the <u>House proposal</u> would provide substantial federal investments in affordable homes and increase the availability of housing assistance to families with the greatest needs. Overall, the House spending bill would fund HUD at \$56.5 billion, an increase of \$6.8 billion above FY21 and \$314 million below the president's 2022 budget request. CHCDF urges the Senate to look to the House FY 22 THUD bill and, when more generous, to the president's request for the FY 22 HUD bill.

Read the letter at: <u>https://bit.ly/3kKZJC8</u>

Read NLIHC's analysis of the House FY22 THUD bill at: <u>https://bit.ly/3BzpTxB</u>

## HUD

## HUD Releases Notice of Funding Opportunity for Eviction Prevention Program

HUD released <u>a notice of funding opportunity</u> on July 20 for the Eviction Protection Grant Program. The program will provide \$20 million in financial support to experienced legal service providers across the country to provide free legal assistance to low-income tenants facing eviction. This grant program helps individuals and families, including people of color, people with limited English proficiency, and people with disabilities—all of whom disproportionately face eviction—avoid eviction or minimize the disruption and damage caused by the eviction process.

In addition to legal representation, the grant can be used for:

- Navigation and assistance responding to court actions, such as assistance filing forms
- Creating and promoting eviction diversion programs
- Assistance filing eviction-related fair housing complaints
- Assistance to tenants navigating the eviction process, including paperwork to arrange school transfers or allow children to remain at their current school, arrangements for continuation of healthcare, access to resources to obtain stable housing, among other uses
- Referrals to other service providers like case workers to obtain rental assistance, counselors for housing or financial counseling, Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) programs, health care services, and related stabilizing measures to help tenants avoid or mitigate the negative impacts of eviction
- Education and outreach to tenants on their rights related to eviction, available resources, and the eviction process

The deadline for government and nonprofit entities to apply is September 8.

## Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness

# Senators Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Implement Important Reforms for Long-Term Disaster Recovery Funding

Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI), Susan Collins (R-ME), Todd Young (R-IN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) introduced the "<u>Reforming Disaster Recovery Act</u>" on July 22. The bill is strongly supported by NLIHC and its Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) – a group of over 850 local, state, and national, organizations working to ensure that all disaster survivors receive the assistance they need to fully recover. The bipartisan bill contains <u>critical reforms</u> proposed by DHRC members to help ensure the federal government's long-term disaster recovery program, the Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program, better serves disaster survivors with the lowest incomes and their communities.

The CDBG-DR program is currently unauthorized, meaning that HUD must create and publish new rules and regulations each time funds are approved by Congress for the program. These additional requirements prevent sorely needed long-term recover funds from reaching disaster survivors quickly. The "Reforming Disaster Recovery Act" would permanently authorize the CDBG-DR program and direct HUD to codify program requirements, allowing states to anticipate program rules and prepare before disasters strike. The bill would also cement the requirement that funds be used to assist low-income disaster survivors, authorize "quick-release" funding to support state and local capacity in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, and allow HUD to assist disaster-damaged communities without waiting for congressional approval.

"Right now, the law mandates that communities in crisis wait for Congress to pass a disaster funding bill before they can even apply for help from HUD," said Senator Schatz, chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations' Housing Appropriations Subcommittee, in a <u>press release</u> announcing the introduction. "This bill changes the law so they no longer have to wait. As soon as a disaster strikes, HUD can help communities begin the process of recovery."

"With natural disasters increasing in frequency and intensity, it is critical that states have the necessary resources to respond in order to protect public safety, property, and our economy," said Senator Collins, ranking member of the Housing Appropriations Subcommittee, in the same press release. "Our bipartisan legislation would allow communities to immediately focus on helping families and local businesses recover instead of navigating the federal bureaucracy in the wake of a natural disaster."

Read the text of the bill at: <u>https://bit.ly/36Xkouw</u>

Read Senator Schatz's press release announcing the introduction at: https://bit.ly/3x2A8XE

## NLIHC Responds to FEMA Request for Information on Diversity and Inclusion, Recommends Numerous Disaster Recovery Reforms

NLIHC submitted a <u>comment</u> to a FEMA Request for Information on Equity and Inclusion in agency programs on July 20. The response highlights the many instances where FEMA policies and programs prevent disaster survivors – including people of color, individuals experiencing homelessness, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes – from accessing the assistance they need to fully recover.

NLIHC's response was created with assistance from members of the NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition – a group of over 850 local, state, and national organizations working on to ensure that all disaster survivors receive the assistance they need to fully recover – and highlighted the connection between economic and racial inequality and resilience to disasters and climate change impacts. It also outlined numerous policy changes that FEMA could immediately implement to improve access to life-saving assistance for communities of color and other underserved groups.

NLIHC's comment addresses the entire length of FEMA's participation in the disaster response and recovery process, referencing the failure of FEMA to ensure that local and state emergency response plans to consider the unique needs of unhoused individuals, individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency, and households with low incomes. The comment specifically addresses the numerous administrative and bureaucratic roadblocks experienced by disaster survivors attempting to access federal disaster recovery assistance, including FEMA's continuing insistence that survivors provide <u>title documentation</u> to prove they own their disaster-damaged homes and the lack of a clear appeals process if assistance is denied.

The request, initially <u>published</u> in the *Federal Register* in April, requested public comment on ways that agency programs and policies "perpetuate systemic barriers to opportunities and benefits for people of color and other underserved groups" as well as additional actions or changes the agency could pursue to address the disproportionately high and adverse climate-related impacts on disadvantaged communities." This request was prompted by executive orders issued by the Biden Administration requesting that federal agencies evaluate their programs in the wake of stagnating inequality and worsening climate-change. While the initial comment period was scheduled to end in June, FEMA extended the deadline by a month to ensure that enough substantive comments were received. FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell referred to the request during a recent congressional hearing on the agency's future priorities.

Read NLIHC's Response to FEMA's Request for Information at: https://bit.ly/2V5sejg

## HUD PIH Posts Fourth Update of Emergency Housing Voucher FAQs

HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) has posted a <u>fourth update</u> to its frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program created by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Public housing agencies (PHAs) were eligible to apply for 70,000 EHVs (see *Memo*, <u>5/10</u>), and PIH announced the EHV allocations available to 696 PHAs (see *Memo*, <u>5/17</u>). The fourth version updates ten FAQs from the previous version (see *Memo*, <u>6/14</u>) and adds five new FAQs. The FAQs most important to residents and advocates are highlighted here.

Under the category of "Eligibility," Q4 (page 2) discusses documentation that organizations must ask for from households applying for EHVs who claim that they do not have a support network. The update adds, "Certifying organizations may include institutional feeder agencies such as correctional settings, health agencies, nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals, in-patient institutional settings, etc."

A new Q8 (page 3) explains that the definition of "family" is the same as it is for the regular Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program: a person or a group of persons a PHA approves to live in a unit with assistance under the program. The term "family" used in the EHV or HCV context encompasses a family that is comprised of a single individual as well as a family consisting of "a group of persons."

Q10 (page 4) has discussed the type of documentation acceptable when determining that a family falls under one of the four EHV eligibility categories. The update adds that sample certifications recently posted on the EHV website is acceptable documentation for <u>survivors of domestic violence</u>, <u>dating violence</u>, <u>sexual assault</u>, <u>stalking</u>, or <u>human trafficking</u>. Once a PHA receives documentation from a Continuum of Care (CoC) or

Victims Service Provider (VSP) that a family falls under one of the four eligibility categories, no further documentation is needed from the CoC or VSP. The EHV website has also posted a <u>sample certification of homelessness</u>.

Updated Q11 clarifies that youth between the ages of 18 and 24 are eligible for EHVs. Youth under 18, however, must be part of a family that includes a person 18 years or older for the family to be eligible for an EHV.

Under the category of "Partnerships and Collaborations," updated Q16 and Q17 offer more details for residents and advocates not familiar with the CoC terms "Victims Service Providers (VSP)" and "Coordinated Entry (CE) system."

Under the category of "Administrative and Service Fees," Q78 (bottom of page 20, top of page 21) is indicated as "updated," when it is in fact new. The FAQ states that services fee funding received by a PHA for EHVs cannot be used to pay rental arrears, including debts owed to a PHA. However, PHAs, CoCs, and other service providers may choose to refer families to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) or other state and local programs that may help with a tenant's credit history. The Treasury Department's Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program would also be a good resource for rental and utility arrearages.

New Q79 states that the income limits for EHVs are the same as for the regular HCV program.

"Emergency Housing Vouchers, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) v.4" is at: https://bit.ly/3rulOGA

Sample Certification of Homelessness (English) is at: https://bit.ly/3zkZsK3

Sample Certification of Homelessness (Spanish) is at: https://bit.ly/3kGq4RD

Sample Certification for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and/or Human Trafficking (English) is at: <u>https://bit.ly/3wZVJjA</u>

Sample Certification for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and/or Human Trafficking (Spanish) is at: <u>https://bit.ly/3xX965w</u>

Sample Human Trafficking Certification (English) is at: https://bit.ly/3eJOaam

Sample Human Trafficking Certification (Spanish) is at: https://bit.ly/3eG3FjL

NLIHC previously <u>summarized</u> key FAQs from the three previous FAQs that might be of most interest to residents and advocates.

The Emergency Housing Voucher website is at: <u>https://bit.ly/3wdoeuG</u>

## HUD CPD Updates and Offers Webinar on ESG-CV Waiver Notice

HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) issued <u>Notice CPD-21-08</u> reestablishing waivers of Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) requirements implementing the \$3.96 billion supplemental ESG funds (ESG-CV) provided by the CARES Act. The notice also announces new requirements. *Notice CPD-21-08* supersedes <u>Notice CPD-20-08</u> (see Memo, <u>9/8/20</u>). The CPD Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS) will conduct a webinar about the updated ESG-CV notice on **Thursday, July 29, 2021 from 1-2:30** 

**pm ET**. Registration is not required, but SNAPS recommends joining the webinar 15 minutes before the start time. Join the webinar at: <u>https://adobe.ly/3zn0dT0</u>

The notice reminds readers that to receive ESG-CV funds, jurisdictions had to submit a Substantial Amendment to their Annual Action Plans. The CARES Act has an August 16, 2021 deadline for submitting Substantial Amendments. Unlike conventional Substantial Amendments, the 30-day consultation and public participation requirements are waived. However, a jurisdiction must publish a description of activities to be funded with ESG-CV and whether planned activities have occurred.

Highlighted changes in *Notice CPD-21-08* include:

- 1. *Emergency Shelter Activities*. Removes the prior January 31, 2022 deadline for using ESG-CV for the costs of providing emergency shelter.
- 2. *Temporary Emergency Shelter Activities*. Removes the prior January 31, 2022 deadline for using ESG-CV for the costs of providing temporary emergency shelter. Also, jurisdictions ("recipients") may convert temporary emergency shelter acquired or improved with ESG-CV into emergency shelter without triggering disposition requirements.
- 3. *New Eligible Activities*. New eligible activities include:
  - Loaning cell phones with wireless plans to assisted people ("program participants") so that they can obtain and maintain housing
  - Providing personal protective equipment to assisted people
  - Providing laundry services to people living in unsheltered locations
  - Making vaccine incentive payments to people experiencing homelessness
  - Providing furniture and household furnishings to assisted people while they are receiving rapid rehousing or homelessness prevention assistance
  - Providing essential services to people receiving rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention assistance as well as those living in hotels and motels paid for with ESG-CV
  - Paying for renters' insurance for people receiving rapid re-housing or homelessness prevention assistance
  - Assuring that the coordinated entry system can quickly prioritize and connect people to appropriate housing and services to prevent and respond to coronavirus
  - Providing sponsor-based rental assistance for people receiving rapid re-housing or homelessness prevention assistance
- 4. *Aligning Eligibility and Re-evaluation Income Limits.* The income limit to be eligible for homelessness prevention and to continue to receive homelessness prevention or rapid re-housing assistance is raised from 30% of median family income to "very low-income" (in general, 50% of median family income).
- 5. *New Rental Assistance Allowances.* Jurisdiction or subrecipients providing project-based rental assistance may pay for rent for a maximum of 30 days from the end of the month in which a unit was vacated while a jurisdiction or subrecipient attempts to house another household in that unit. In addition, if a household moves into a unit in the middle of the month, the initial payment of a half month's rent does not count toward a household's total rental assistance. Also, jurisdictions and subrecipients may allow households to enter into subleases when receiving rapid re-housing or homelessness prevention assistance.
- 6. *Helping Current ESG Program Participants Maintain Housing*. Waives the prior 24 months in a 3-year period limit for receiving services or rental assistance. Also, if someone moves into a unit in the middle

of the month, the initial payment of a half-month's rent does not count toward a household's total rental assistance. In addition, the Notice removes the 12-month limit on medium-term rental assistance.

- 7. *Permanent Housing Habitability and Housing Quality Standards*. Jurisdictions and subrecipients must ensure that housing meets minimum habitability standards established in 24 CFR 576.403(c) or Housing Quality Standards (HQS) established under 24 CFR 982.401 before helping people remain or move into housing. In addition, jurisdictions may provide housing relocation and stabilization services for people receiving homelessness prevention assistance without conducting habitability or HQS inspections.
- 8. *Housing Stability Case Management*. Jurisdictions and subrecipients may pay for housing stability case management for up to 60 days (instead of 30 days) while people seek housing.
- 9. *Making Subaward Funds to Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Authorities*. Removes the prohibition on jurisdictions and subrecipients making subawards to Indian Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities.
- 10. *Including Indian Tribes in the Definition of "Subrecipient."* Waives the definition of "subrecipient" to expressly include Indian Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities.
- 11. *Providing Additional Flexibilities for Puerto Rico and the Territories*. Waives the definition of "State" to include an instrumentality of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Also, the definition of "Territory" is waived to include an instrumentality of a Territory.

Notice CPD-21-08 is at: https://bit.ly/3iFgmN4

More about ESG-CV is on page 10-47 of NLIHC's 2021 Advocates' Guide.

More about the regular ESG program is on page 4-84 of NLIHC's 2021 Advocates' Guide.

## HUD to Hold CARES Act Virtual Conference on July 27-28

HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) will hold a two-day virtual conference to discuss how jurisdictions can use supplemental funds made available by the CARES Act. The act provided supplemental funds amounting to \$5 billion in Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV), \$3.96 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants Coronavirus (ESG-CV) and \$65 million in Housing Opportunities for Persons With HIV/AIDS Coronavirus (HOPWA-CV). The virtual conference will cover topics related using CDBG-CV, HOPWA-CV, and ESG-CV funds. All coronavirus funding must be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic. While the conference is intended for jurisdictions that received CARES Act funding, advocates might also value learning how they can more effectively advocating for priority uses.

Topics include rental assistance, housing instability, housing models, rehousing strategies, targeting homelessness, rural coronavirus response, state CV implementation, broadband, HOPWA-CV implementation, duplication of benefits, economic development, and CDBG national objectives.

The virtual conference takes place on July 27 and 28. Register at https://bit.ly/2UdeiUa

Information about CDBG-CV is on page 10-15 of NLIHC's 2021 Advocates' Guide.

Information about ESG-CV is on page 10-47 of NLIHC's 2021 Advocates' Guide.

Information about HOPWA-CV is on page 10-44 of NLIHC's 2021 Advocates' Guide.

Information about regular CDBG is on page 8-4 of NLIHC's 2021 Advocates' Guide.

Information about regular ESG is on page 4-84 of NLIHC's 2021 Advocates' Guide.

Information about regular HOPWA is on page 4-81 of NLIHC's 2021 Advocates' Guide.

## Additional Coronavirus Updates – July 26, 2021

#### **National Updates**

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD released a <u>Notice of Funding Opportunity</u> for the Eviction Prevention Grant Program, which will provide \$20 million in grant funds to nonprofit and government entities providing legal aid to low-income tenants at risk of eviction. Applications are due September 8, 2021.

HUD announced on July 21 that it is making <u>over \$19 million</u> available to help HUD Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) agencies address discriminatory housing practices related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Provided through the American Rescue Plan Act, the funds will allow agencies to respond to fair housing inquiries, provide education and outreach activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and address fair housing issues impacting individuals facing housing instability, including those who may face displacement due to discriminatory evictions and foreclosures.

HUD is holding a two-day <u>CARES Act Virtual Conference 2021</u> on July 27-28, 2021. The conference will address CDBG-CV, HOPWA-CV, and ESG-CV inspired topics related to the implementation of their respective CARES Act funding. Register for the conference at: <u>https://hudcaresact.org/register/</u>

HUD's Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs will hold a <u>webinar</u> on Thursday, July 29, 2021 from 1-2:30 pm ET to discuss the updated <u>ESG-CV Notice CPD-21-08</u>.

## Department of Treasury

Treasury announced that more than <u>\$1.5 billion</u> in emergency rental assistance (ERA) was delivered to households in June. The monthly number of households served grew by about 85% over the previous month and nearly tripled since April. 290,000 households were served in June, <u>up from 160,000 served in May and</u> <u>approximately 100,000 in April</u>. While this represents significant progress, much more work is needed to ensure tenants and landlords can take advantage of this historic funding available to keep people housed.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) <u>announced</u> on July 15 that in the first monthly payment of the expanded and <u>newly-advanceable Child Tax Credit</u> from the American Rescue Plan passed in March, roughly \$15 billion dollars were paid to families that include nearly 60 million eligible children.

#### Reporting

The <u>Washington Post</u> reports on <u>new data from Treasury</u> showing more than \$1.5 billion in emergency rental assistance (ERA) reached households in June, more than the total distributed between January and May. NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel says efforts to ramp up assistance are having a positive effect, but ERA has not come close to reaching all households at risk of eviction. Only about \$3 billion of the \$46 billion Congress has provided has been spent on rent, utilities, and arrears.

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel and Representative Ritchie Torres (D-NY) joined the <u>*Cross*</u> <u>*Connection*</u> on July 17 to speak about the affordable housing crisis and how to create a housing safety net in our country.

<u>CBS News</u> discusses the race to distribute billions in emergency rental assistance before the federal eviction moratorium ends on July 31. "If the federal eviction moratorium expires and this rental assistance doesn't reach tenants in time, we will be looking at a historic wave of families losing their homes this summer and fall with all the long-term consequences and long-term harm that that does to families and communities and the country," said NLIHC's Diane Yentel.

As the expiration of the CDC eviction moratorium looms, many tenants fear emergency rental assistance (ERA) will not reach them in time. "There's a cliff at the end of the federal eviction moratorium and unless states and cities do more and do it faster and better to get that emergency rental assistance to the tenants who need it, then we will see a historic wave of evictions and housing instability this summer and fall," <u>said NLIHC's Diane</u> <u>Yentel</u>.

<u>NPR's Morning Edition</u> discusses California's efforts to create permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness by purchasing and converting existing properties into nearly 6,000 new units. Advocates hope Project Roomkey and Homekey are evidence that California is starting to treat homelessness as the public health emergency it is. Diane Yentel, president and CEO of NLIHC, says Project Homekey has become a national model, with Washington and Oregon following in California's footsteps.

NLIHC's Diane Yentel spoke to <u>ABC7 News</u> about the pandemic's impact on low-income renters, efforts to distribute emergency rental assistance, and the need for long-term solutions. "The pandemic exposed and exacerbated the pre-existing affordable housing crisis," said Diane.

The <u>New York Times</u> provides information on COVID-related eviction protections, unemployment insurance, student loans, and other pandemic relief programs that are expiring soon. Billions of dollars of federal emergency rental assistance (ERA) remain available, and NLIHC is tracking a list of <u>state and local ERA</u> programs.

#### **State and Local News**

#### Arizona

In <u>Phoenix</u>, about \$32 million of the \$51 million the city received in federal emergency rental assistance (ERA) remains to be distributed. With the federal eviction moratorium expiring soon, the city is racing to distribute ERA to tenants in need. Housing advocates fear a flood of eviction filings in Phoenix, a city that regularly tops lists for the highest number of eviction filings nationwide, when the moratorium expires on July 31.

#### Connecticut

<u>Connecticut housing advocates</u> expect a surge of evictions and rise in homelessness when the federal eviction moratorium expires. The state developed the <u>UniteCT Program</u> to distribute roughly \$400 million in federal emergency rental assistance. About \$17.3 million had been approved for 2,352 households as of June 23. Advocates are urging state officials to require landlords to participate in the rental assistance program, noting that some are starting to evict tenants before applying for assistance.

#### Hawaii

With Hawaii's eviction moratorium ending in August, <u>Maui officials</u> will join landlord and tenant attorneys, mediation administrators, and rent and utility administrators for a roundtable on available federal, state, and county support for struggling renters.

#### Illinois

Illinois Governor Pritzker announced on July 14 that the state's <u>eviction moratorium</u> will end on August 31. Governor Pritzker will issue an executive order on July 23 that will allow new eviction cases to be filed beginning August 1. A Chicago law will require landlords seeking to evict tenants to show proof that they attempted to work out an agreement during the two months after the state's ban is lifted.

The <u>Illinois Supreme Court</u> announced it will implement a <u>triage period during August</u> in which state courts will focus on referring newly filed cases to state emergency rental assistance programs. Landlords filing evictions must prove they have provided tenants with a <u>declaration form</u> stating they are eligible for protection from eviction and that they have not received a completed form from the tenant.

#### Minnesota

Minnesota enacted a <u>law</u> on June 29 to phase out the COVID-19-based eviction moratorium. HOME Line posted a <u>timeline</u> of how the eviction moratorium phaseout will work, along with <u>key facts</u> and a list of <u>frequently asked questions</u>. HOME Line is also hosting a <u>series of webinars</u> on the eviction moratorium phaseout.

#### New Jersey

*The Gothamist* reports that as New Jersey courts face an <u>avalanche of eviction cases</u>, state Chief Justice Stuart Rabner issued a new <u>order</u> that changes some aspects of the court process for landlords and tenants. The changes include most of the <u>recommendations</u> issued by tenant advocates, landlord representatives, and court staff in April. <u>Under the changes</u>, all proceedings will occur remotely, and courts must provide both parties the opportunity to use technology on-site if necessary. Additionally, landlords must provide lease agreements and tenants must submit statements before trial.

A <u>bill waiting for Governor Phil Murphy's</u> signature would protect tenants from being evicted for nonpayment if they certify that they were impacted by the pandemic and have applied for rental assistance.

#### Oregon

Oregon Housing and Community Services is offering a free training on Monday, July 26 at 1 pm PT/4 pm ET for advocates and volunteers interested in helping low-income Oregonians apply for new federal rental assistance benefits. Join the Zoom meeting <u>here</u>.

#### Pennsylvania

<u>*CityLab*</u> highlights Philadelphia's eviction diversion program, which has already averted hundreds of evictions and plans to circumvent thousands more. Since the program launched in September, landlords and tenants have had more than 2,300 sessions with mediators or counselors. The program has resulted in more than 1,500 successful mediations to date, with 90% concluding with payment arrangements or other positive resolutions.

#### Texas

The <u>Texas Supreme Court</u> on July 19 released a new emergency order extending the state's voluntary eviction diversion program through October 1. The Texas Eviction Diversion Program, which creates an alternative to evictions when both tenants and landlords agree to participate, was set to expire on July 27.

*Houston Public Media* reports thousands of evictions filed in Houston that have been paused due to the federal eviction moratorium could resume when the moratorium expires at the end of July. Houstonians, unlike renters in New York, Los Angeles, Austin, and other states and localities that have enacted their own protections, will have no protections in place when the CDC eviction moratorium expires.

#### Vermont

The expiration of the federal eviction moratorium on July 31 is raising concerns that <u>thousands of Vermont</u> <u>residents</u> – potentially more than 9,500 renters, according to census data from early June – could face eviction over the next two months. Vermont Public Radio reports that only 16% of the over 3,000 applications for Vermont's emergency rental assistance program have received funds.

#### Virginia

<u>Virginia's eviction moratorium</u> has expired, and one of the state's most significant eviction protections, the requirement that landlords apply for rent relief on their tenants' behalf, will expire at the end of July.

#### Washington, DC

D.C. lawmakers approved <u>emergency legislation</u> on July 13 that will gradually phase out tenant protections. Tenant advocates say the legislation does not provide adequate protection for people whose eviction cases were pending before the pandemic. Advocates are also concerned about lingering issues with the STAY DC application process, including its onerous application process.

Learn about the status of eviction moratoriums in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia.

#### Wisconsin

<u>Homeless service agencies across Wisconsin</u>, particularly in Milwaukee, Madison, and Green Bay, report growing numbers of people experiencing homelessness. About 67,000 families in Wisconsin are behind on rent, and almost that many more are concerned they are about to fall behind and face eviction. <u>Milwaukee officials</u> recently announced plans to use \$30 million of the city's American Rescue Plan Act Fiscal Recovery Fund allocation for affordable housing initiatives to address potential displacement of Milwaukee residents due to the economic effects of COVID-19.

#### Guidance

#### Department of Housing and Urban Development

- <u>CDBG-CV Co-Managing Disaster Recovery and CARES Act Programs Quick Guide</u> July 2021
- <u>Notice CPD-21-08</u>: Waivers and Alternative Requirements for the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program Under the CARES Act – July 19, 2021
- <u>COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Long-Term Financing of Permanent Supportive Housing</u> <u>Projects</u> – July 2021
- <u>COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Project Funding and Structure Brief: Master Leasing</u> July 2021
- ESG-CV Prevent, Prepare, and Respond Tieback Flexibilities Quick Guide July 2021

## Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – July 26, 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 <u>here</u>.

DHRC Updates

The NLIHC-led DHRC submitted on July 20 a <u>comment letter</u> to <u>FEMA's Request for Information on Equity</u> <u>and Inclusion</u>. NLIHC's comment letter addresses the negative impacts that FEMA programs, regulations, and policies have on the lowest-income and most marginalized survivors and how those failures reinforce vulnerabilities to climate change, housing insecurity, and racial segregation.

NLIHC Senior Research Analyst Dan Emmanuel joined last week's (7/20) DHRC Disaster Recovery Working Group call to discuss the new report from NLIHC and the Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation, "Taking Stock: Natural Hazards and Federally Assisted Housing." The report finds that one-third of federally assisted rental homes are located in areas at high risk for negative impacts from natural hazards like flooding, hurricane winds and storm surge, and wildfire. Read the <u>report</u> and check out the <u>Taking Stock</u> <u>Mapping Tool</u>.

<u>Texas RioGrande Legal Aid</u> (TRLA), a long-time partner of the DHRC, has <u>sued FEMA</u> for failure to respond to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request regarding Winter Storm Uri. La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE), an advocacy group involved in disaster recovery efforts in the Rio Grande Valley, filed a FOIA request three months after Winter Storm Uri, which killed 136 people in Texas and caused at least \$195 billion in damages. FEMA's failure to disclose the rules and procedures it uses in determining disaster aid negatively impacts people whose claims were denied and those who received far less than the cost of repairing their property.

#### Reporting

<u>NBC News</u> reports three of the wealthiest states – California, New Jersey, and Washington – are expected to receive more than half of the first wave of grant funding through FEMA's new Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program. Of the more than 500 communities that received no funding, many lack the resources to prepare for extreme weather, which is raising concerns that more advantaged communities won big, while poor areas remain in need. In some cases, disadvantaged areas do not have the funds for the matching part of the grant or lack the resources to develop a competitive grant application.

#### Flooding

President Biden approved a <u>major disaster declaration for Michigan</u> in response to the severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes that occurred on June 25 and 26. FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) is available to impacted individuals in Washtenaw and Wayne counties.

#### Severe Heat

An op-ed in <u>USA Today</u> discusses the significant health consequences of climate change, highlighting the dangers of the severe heat and wildfires. At least 150 deaths have been attributed to the severe heat in the Pacific Northwest during the recent heat wave, with the elderly and unhoused populations especially impacted.

## Wildfires

In preparation for potential poor quality air quality conditions during this wildfire season, the Seattle Human Services Department, in partnership with the Office of Emergency Management and Public Health – Seattle and King County, is planning to <u>support unsheltered individuals</u> by opening up cleaner air shelters and conducting outreach.

The <u>Bootleg Fire</u> has burned at least 70 homes and more than 100 outbuildings. At least 2,000 homes have been evacuated during the fire and another 5,000 threatened.

## **Opportunity Starts at Home**

### **Catholic Charities Urges Federal Government to Provide Post-Pandemic Housing Resources**

In a recent *National Catholic Reporter* article, Catholic Charities calls on the federal government to ensure families are stably housing throughout the pandemic. The organization has 164 member agencies that advocate for social justice and provide services to people in need including affordable housing. In the article, Catholic Charities calls for the government to address housing needs post-pandemic, explores the housing crisis, and states the organization's commitment to housing for all. Catholic Charities is a Steering Committee member of the *Opportunity Starts at Home* multi-sector affordable homes campaign.

"Housing is a human right," said Curtis Johnson, vice president of housing strategy at Catholic Charities USA. "Each person must have safe, affordable housing. For the common good, we believe that government at all levels has a social responsibility to ensure that persons are adequately housed."

Read the full article <u>here</u>.

Follow the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign on social media: <u>Twitter</u>, <u>Instagram</u>, <u>Facebook</u>, and <u>LinkedIn</u>. Be sure to <u>sign up</u> for our e-newsletter to get the latest updates about the campaign, including new multi-sector partners, <u>calls to action</u>, events, and <u>research</u>.

#### Research

### Weak Landlord-Tenant Laws Can Increase Post-Disaster Eviction Rates

A new paper in *Housing Policy Debate*, "<u>Preventing Evictions after Disasters: The Role of Landlord-Tenant</u> <u>Law</u>," examines how landlord-tenant laws in four states affected eviction rates following natural disasters. In states with laws and policies that generally favor landlords, eviction rates increased by 16% to 42% in disasteraffected areas, even if the state also had some tenant protections in place. In contrast, where landlord-tenant law is generally oriented toward protecting tenants from displacement and uninhabitable conditions, there was no significant increase in the eviction rates in areas affected by disasters.

The authors examine evictions during disaster recovery periods in Florida, Connecticut, South Carolina, and Alabama. Drawing on an existing typology of state landlord-tenant laws, the authors characterize Florida's landlord-tenant legal environment as *pro-business* (pro-landlord), Connecticut's as *protectionist* (pro-tenant), and South Carolina's and Alabama's as *contradictory* (mixed). In pro-business states, fewer landlord-tenant statutes exist, provisions tend to favor landlords, and few if any statutory protections support renters around maintenance issues. In protectionist states, landlord-tenant law more often includes tenant-friendly policies like rent control, charging interest on security deposits, or offering stronger nondiscrimination clauses. In contradictory states, landlord-tenant law contains a mixture of pro-landlord policies and statutory protections for renters.

The study explores the rise in neighborhood-level eviction rates, using Eviction Lab census block group-level data on eviction judgements for the year prior to and the year following each storm. The authors studied patterns in Connecticut following Hurricane Sandy in 2012, in Florida and southern Alabama after flooding in 2014, and in South Carolina following Hurricane Joaquin in 2015. In each state, researchers compared counties eligible for Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) assistance to contiguous counties not eligible for assistance. The disaster-affected areas and nonaffected areas had similar poverty rates and similar shares of renter households in each respective area. The researchers controlled for socio-economic factors, race and

ethnicity, median age of the housing stock, and the percentage of rent-burdened households, to ensure a fair comparison between affected and unaffected areas.

In Florida, the pro-business state, eviction rates rose by 33% in disaster-affected counties, compared to nonaffected counties. In Alabama, rates rose by 42% in affected counties compared to non-affected counties, while in South Carolina, rates rose by 16% following the storm. In Connecticut, however, the eviction rate was not significantly higher in disaster-affected areas. The results indicate that evictions increase sharply following natural disasters in places where landlord-tenant law generally favors landlords, even if they are mixed with tenant protections. Further research is needed to identify which specific tenant protections or pro-landlord provisions affect evictions.

Read the study at: <u>https://bit.ly/3hT1OtU</u>

#### Resources

## Slides and Recording Available from NHLP Webinar on Saving Section 515 Rural Housing

The National Housing Law Project (NHLP) held a webinar on July 14 informing advocates about how they can protect low-income residents of private housing that has Rural Development (RD) Section 515 assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The <u>recording</u> and <u>slide presentation</u> of the webinar are now available.

More than 145,000 Section 515 units have been prepaid, and virtually all Section 515 units will reach mortgage maturity by 2050. This means that properties containing such units are in danger converting to unaffordable market-rate housing. NHLP experts will offer pre-litigation and litigation opportunities for preserving Section 515 homes.

USDA's Rural Development is not administering prepayments according to federal law and is not doing enough to protect against mortgage maturity. Consequently, low-income residents in Section 515 projects face potential rent increases and displacement. Rural communities could permanently lose a critical supply of affordable housing.

More information about RD 515 is on page 4-77 of NLIHC's 2021 Advocates' Guide.

#### National Alliance to End Homelessness Announces Webinar on Services for Emergency Housing Voucher Recipients

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) is hosting a <u>webinar</u> on July 28 at 1:30 pm ET on coordinating services for emergency housing voucher (EHV) recipients.

The 70,000 EHVs allocated in the American Rescue Plan present an opportunity for communities to significantly reduce – and in some cases, end – homelessness. Pairing vouchers with wrap-around services can ensure long-term housing stability for tenants who need additional support to remain housed. The webinar will provide advocates with important information on strategizing to maximize resources and braid together funding streams to ensure EHV recipients are able to receive the stabilization support they need.

Register for the NAEH webinar at: https://tinyurl.com/4ve29nn4

## Fact of the Week



Jurisdictions Spent \$1.5 Billion in Emergency Rental Assistance Funds in June, Much Remains Unspent

Source: Emergency Rental Assistance Program Monthly Compliance Report, June 1-30, 2021.

## From the Field

## Vermont Advocates Celebrate Affordable Housing Funding, Urge Rental Safety Legislation

Vermont's recent legislative session included both wins and setbacks for housing advocates. Vermont advocates secured historic levels of funding for affordable housing in the state's FY22 budget, but Governor Phil Scott vetoed "An Act Relating to Improving Rental Housing and Safety" (<u>S.79</u>), which would have standardized and improved the system of code enforcement and rental housing safety.

The FY22 state budget bill (<u>H. 439</u>) included critical funding for multiple affordable housing programs. The Legislature allocated \$168.8 million for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), the key state agency in funding non-profit affordable housing development. Of the appropriation, \$144 million is dedicated to housing. In tandem with VHCB's annual base budget, the funding represents the highest allocation to affordable housing in the state's history. Funding targets initiatives that increase permanent housing, temporary shelter facilities, safe shelters and housing for low-income and at-risk populations, and "affordable housing initiatives" that range from housing for farmworkers to mixed-income housing. The budget bill fund weatherization and climate-related measures.

The budget bill also includes \$31 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for programs such as the Affordable Community-Scale Renewable Energy Program, Efficiency Vermont's Electric Efficiency Fund, and the Home Weatherization Assistance Program. In addition, \$41 million was allocated to the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program, including \$30 million to cover motel room fees. The transportation bill (<u>H.433</u>) invests in efficient, safe, and renewable transportation and electric vehicle infrastructure for qualified non-profit dwellings.

Despite these victories, advocates were disappointed with the Governor Scott's decision to veto the Rental Housing Safety Bill. Housing advocates across the state fought for the bill, which presented an opportunity to improve the state's aging housing stock by standardizing code enforcement, increasing awareness of housing resources, and offering rehabilitation money to landlords and new homeowners. Provisions included creating a statewide rental registry, shifting the responsibility of rental safety inspection and code enforcement from municipalities to the Division of Fire Safety, clarifying regulations related to the eviction moratorium, and establishing the Vermont Housing Investment Program and a Homeownership Revolving Loan Fund.

The Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition, an NLIHC state partner, championed the bill alongside including Vermont Legal Aid, Vermont Landlords Association, and the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. The governor <u>stated</u> that while he was committed to improving Vermont's long-term rental housing stock, he believed the legislation would "discourage everyday Vermonters from offering their homes, rooms, or summer cabins for rent, not as a primary business but as a means to supplement their income." He urged the legislature to continue supporting the Vermont Rental Housing Investment Program and the Vermont Homeownership Revolving Loan Fund, which also received funding through the FY22 appropriations bill.

"The Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition represents more than 90 organizations that create, manage, and promote affordable housing," said Cindy Reid, chair of the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition Steering Committee. "We strongly supported S.79, the statewide rental housing safety bill. While we are disappointed by the governor's veto, we will continue to work to advance this legislation – this is a setback not a defeat. The governor has been a huge supporter of housing efforts in Vermont – we will work with him and his administration to find a way to advance this bill."

Learn more about the 2021 legislative session in Vermont at: https://tinyurl.com/59xkskvp

#### Maine Passes Eviction Prevention and Affordable Housing Legislation

The Maine Legislature on June 10 passed key legislation and allocated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for affordable housing. The legislation will create a commission to address zoning and land-use barriers to housing development, help reduce evictions, and allocate federal funds for a variety of key affordable housing initiatives. "An Act to Reduce Homelessness by Reducing Evictions" (L.D.1508), signed into law by Governor Janet Mills on June 21, aims to reduce preventable evictions throughout the state. Additionally, L.D.609, "Resolve, To Establish a Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions," was signed by Governor Mills on June 15, creating a 15-member commission to identify needed changes to local zoning and land-use laws in order to address the state's affordable housing shortage.

"An Act to Reduce Homelessness by Reducing Evictions" (L.D.1508) mandates that landlords attach a "plainlanguage notice" written by the judicial branch to all future eviction notices. The notice will include key information for tenants about the eviction process, how to request mediation, and how to access rent relief and legal assistance. The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC), an NLIHC state partner, <u>analyzed</u> 2,300 eviction court files from around the state, demonstrating the need for eviction prevention practices and were used to inform advocacy for the bill. MAHC <u>reported</u> that landlords had legal representation in 81% of eviction cases, while tenants were only represented in 20% of cases, and that those with the benefit of legal counsel were 85% more likely to avoid an eviction judgment. This discovery and the legislative campaign for L.D.1508 prompted the creation of a <u>new partnership</u> between Pine Tree Legal Assistance and MaineHousing to expand legal aid for tenants facing eviction. The partnership is funded in part by ARPA dollars.

<u>L.D.609</u> creates a commission to examine data on housing shortages for low-income and middle-income households, review state housing regulations, identify effective zoning and land use changes utilized by other

states and municipalities, reconsider existing zoning laws, and incorporate racial equality as a key outcome for future zoning laws. The bill mandates that the commission will comprise five public members, including one member from an organization that advocates for low-income or middle-income renters or homeowners and one from a local or statewide organization promoting civil rights that has racial justice or racial equity as its primary mission. The bill was championed by House Speaker Ryan Fecteau and has been a top priority of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC), a NLIHC state partner.

Finally, Governor Mills signed into law legislation authorizing expenditure of nearly \$1 billion in federal fiscal recovery funds, including \$50 million to provide more affordable housing. "An Act To Provide Allocations for the Distribution of State Fiscal Recovery Funds" (L.D.1733) included \$10 million to support homeless shelters and \$1.5 million to support housing navigators.

"There is a great deal to celebrate from this year's legislative session," said Greg Payne, director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. "The passage of these meaningful, bipartisan housing initiatives will allow us to create more energy-efficient, affordable homes across the state, reduce evictions and move towards critical zoning and land use reforms."

## **NLIHC News**

## NLIHC in the News

### NLIHC in the News for the Week of July 18

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of July 18:

- "Rent relief programs ramped up in June, but fears mount that momentum may be coming too late," *Washington Post*, July 21 at: <u>https://wapo.st/36TRFa9</u>
- "Where is the money? Millions risk eviction over delayed U.S. aid," *Bloomberg News*, July 22 at: <u>https://bloom.bg/36T542a</u>
- "Rent relief efforts slowly ramp up as millions could soon face eviction," *CNN*, July 23 at: <u>https://cnn.it/3izDaNS</u>

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