

**Volume 26, Issue 39**  
**October 4, 2021**

## **HoUsed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing**

- Immediate Action Needed! Protect Housing for People Most in Need in “Build Back Better Act!”
- Representative Omar and Senator Merkley Introduce Affordable HOME Act
- Join NLIHC HoUsed Campaign Call for Universal, Stable, and Affordable Housing Today at 2:30 pm ET
- Recording Available of September 28 National HoUsed Campaign Call

## **Budget and Appropriations**

- Congress Passes Short-Term Continuing Resolution to Keep Federal Government Funded until Dec. 3

## **Eviction Prevention**

- NLIHC Urges States and Localities to Implement Eviction Protections after Supreme Court Ended CDC Moratorium

## **Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness**

- Congress Approves \$28.6 Billion in Supplemental Recovery Funding for 2020 and 2021 Disasters
- Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition Requests Meeting to Discuss Changes at FEMA
- Coronavirus Updates – October 4, 2021
- Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – October 4, 2021

## **Congress**

- Representatives DeLauro and Auchincloss Introduce Eviction Data Legislation
- NLIHC Submits Statement for House Financial Services Subcommittee Hearing on Eliminating Barriers and Increasing Economic Opportunity for Justice-Involved Individuals

## **HUD**

- HUD Revises HUD-VASH Implementation Guidance
- HUD PIH Posts Fifth Update of Emergency Housing Voucher FAQs
- HUD Extends NSPIRE Physical Inspection Pilot to 2023
- HUD HOME Program Extends Waiver Deadlines

## **Opportunity Starts at Home**

- Campaign’s Racial Equity Working Group Updates National Policy Agenda

## Research

- Racial Stereotypes Pervade Tenant Screening Processes

## Fact of the Week

- Poll Shows Bipartisan Support for Housing in Infrastructure Spending

## From the Field

- Louisiana Housing Advocates Aim to Hold Energy Company Accountable

## Events

- Join Today's Tenant Talk Live Webinar for Renters and Resident Leaders: The Intersection of Housing and Disability Rights
- NLIHC Board Member to Co-Host "But Next Time" Podcast on Community-Based Disaster Response and Recovery

## NLIHC News

- NLIHC's *Tenant Talk* on Housing and Disability Rights Now Available!
- NLIHC Welcomes Betty Ramirez as Research Analyst

## NLIHC in the News

- NLIHC in the News for the Week of September 26

## HoUSed Campaign

### Immediate Action Needed! Protect Housing for People Most in Need in ‘Build Back Better Act!’

President Biden and congressional leaders are crafting an agreement with moderate Democrats to drastically cut the “Build Back Better Act” economic recovery package. The *Washington Post* [reported on October 2](#) that “the administration’s housing proposal, which called for more than \$300 billion to build or retrofit over three million housing units, **may prove among the first to hit the cutting room floor.**” We cannot let them squander this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to end homelessness! **[TAKE ACTION NOW](#) to ensure that any cuts made to the overall package do not come at the expense of getting and keeping the country’s lowest-income people housed.**

#### Background

Congress and the administration continued work to advance a bipartisan infrastructure bill and the \$3.5 trillion reconciliation package containing NLIHC’s [HoUSed campaign’s top policy priorities](#): \$90 billion to expand housing vouchers, \$80 billion to make critically needed repairs to public housing, and \$37 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to construct, preserve, and operate deeply affordable housing.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) planned to bring the Senate-passed bipartisan infrastructure bill to the House floor for a vote on September 30, but the vote was postponed after House progressives refused to commit to passing the infrastructure bill unless substantial progress was made on the Build Back Better reconciliation package. Progressives are using the infrastructure bill as leverage to ensure the reconciliation package is also enacted.

Democrats’ narrow margin in the House means that Speaker Pelosi can afford to lose the votes of only three House Democrats. In the Senate, the even split between Democrats and Republicans makes every Democratic vote necessary to pass the Build Back Better bill. President Biden held meetings last week with Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), the two moderate Democrat holdouts in the Senate, in an attempt to reach agreement on a framework for the reconciliation package and a topline spending number.

Senator Manchin declared on September 30 that he would not support a reconciliation package costing over \$1.5 trillion – less than half of the \$3.5 trillion currently in the bill. Manchin’s significantly lower price tag has led to a flurry of negotiations over reconciliation spending, indicating a final package may include significant cuts to the programs currently in the bill.

It is critical that Congress use this once-in-a-generation opportunity to prioritize investing in decent, accessible, affordable housing for those with the greatest, clearest needs – people experiencing homelessness and people with the lowest incomes. If maintained at current levels, key investments in this bill could effectively end homelessness in the U.S.

Contact your senators and representatives and urge them to ensure that any cuts to the reconciliation package do not come at the expense of proven housing solutions for those with the greatest needs and to provide the highest possible funding levels for the [HoUSed campaign’s top priorities](#):

- \$90 billion to expand rental assistance to 1 million of the lowest income households,
- \$80 billion to repair and preserve public housing for over 2.5 million renters, and
- \$37 billion for the national Housing Trust to build and preserve 330,000 rental homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes.

Taken together, **these investments could effectively end homelessness in the U.S.** Any cuts to funding for these priority programs means fewer people safely and affordably housed.

### Take Action

1. **[Contact](#) your senators and representatives and urge them to provide the highest funding possible for the [HoUsed campaign's priorities in Build Back Better Act](#).** Educate your members of Congress on why investments in rental assistance, public housing, and the Housing Trust Fund are critical to your community.
2. **[Join](#) 1,600 organizations nationwide by signing the HoUsed campaign [letter](#).** This letter is one of the most effective ways to show congressional leaders the broad support for the HoUsed campaign's [priorities](#) for the infrastructure/economic recovery bill. Sign on to the letter [here](#).

**Thank you for your advocacy!**

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### Representative Omar and Senator Merkley Introduce Affordable HOME Act

Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) introduced on September 24 the "[Affordable Housing Opportunities Made Equitable \(HOME\) Act](#)," which would address the nation's housing crisis by providing significant funding for the construction of affordable housing.

If enacted, the Affordable HOME Act would:

- Provide \$70 billion for the public housing capital fund
- Repeal the Faircloth Amendment to allow for the construction of additional public housing units
- Allocate \$40 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to construct, preserve, and operate deeply affordable housing
- Include \$10 billion to provide federal down payment assistance, \$10 billion for the construction of permanent supportive housing under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants, and \$10 billion for the development of housing co-ops and community land trusts

These crucial investments would help lower the cost of housing by investing in the supply of deeply affordable housing, reduce chronic homelessness, and address systemic racism in housing policy.

"More than ever, bold policies are needed to ensure that the lowest income and most marginalized people have a stable, affordable, accessible home," said Diane Yentel, NLIHC's president and CEO. "I applaud Representative Omar for her continued leadership and dedication in advocating for solutions to America's housing crisis, such as those included in the Making Affordable Housing Opportunities More Equitable Act."

Read the bill at: <https://bit.ly/3EY4Zdk>

Read the congressional press release at: <https://bit.ly/3m5xw8f>

Read a summary of the bill at: <https://bit.ly/3ulrTWV>

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**Join NLIHC HoUsed Campaign Call Universal, Stable, and Affordable Housing Today at 2:30 pm ET**

Join today's (October 4) national HoUSed campaign call from 2:30-4 pm ET. We will provide the latest updates from Capitol Hill on the bold housing investments in the "Build Back Better" reconciliation package, and the urgent advocacy action needed to ensure these vital resources make it into the final package. Richard Cho and David Gonzalez Rice from HUD will join to discuss the Biden administration's new House America initiative. We will also hear about a new report on universal housing vouchers from the University of Pennsylvania; learn about the results of a recent poll from the Opportunity Starts at Home campaign; receive updates on emergency rental assistance spending and the latest from the field; and more.

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

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## **Recording Available of September 28 National HoUSed Call**

On our most recent (September 28) call on "HoUSed: Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing," we welcomed Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee Chair Sherrod Brown (D-OH). The senators each discussed their efforts to secure bold investments in housing assistance, construction, and preservation in the "Build Back Better Act," the \$3.5 trillion reconciliation package being debated in Congress.

Thanks to the leadership of congressional champions and the work of advocates across the country, the bill currently contains an historic [\\$327 billion](#) investment in affordable housing, including significant funding for NLIHC's [HoUSed campaign's top policy priorities](#):

- \$90 billion to expand housing vouchers
- \$80 billion to repair and preserve public housing
- \$37 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to construct deeply affordable housing

NLIHC's Sarah Saadian provided updates from Capitol Hill, including on discussions between moderate and progressive democrats on the bipartisan infrastructure bill, the continuing resolution to keep the federal government funded, and the "Build Back Better Act." Negotiations on the "Build Back Better Act" – including a final top-line funding number – are ongoing, so advocates should continue [taking action](#) and urge congress to maintain the targeted affordable housing investments currently in the bill.

Gene Sperling, senior advisor to President Biden, discussed eviction data and prevention at the federal level and encouraged emergency rental assistance (ERA) grantees to adopt the flexibilities in Treasury's guidance, including self-attestation and court diversion, to speed up the distribution of ERA funds and keep renters stably housed.

NLIHC's Emma Foley presented updated [ERA spending numbers](#), and NLIHC's Sarah Gallagher discussed the ERA best practices found in highest performing states. Willie "JR" Fleming, executive director of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign and ERASE Project grantee, joined to discuss the Campaign's success working with other advocates in Chicago to prevent evictions using ERA funds. Angelica Moran, a policy specialist from Idaho Voices for Children, discussed the organization's advocacy toolkit and day of action webinar with the goal of giving every Idahoan a stable and affordable home.

Our next national call will be on Monday, October 4 at 2:30 pm ET. We will hear about new research on universal housing vouchers from the University of Pennsylvania, highlight HUD's House America initiative, provide updates from Capitol Hill, hear the latest from the field, and more. Register for the upcoming call at: [tinyurl.com/ru73qan](https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan)

View presentation slides at: [tinyurl.com/m9fnzbhc](https://tinyurl.com/m9fnzbhc)

## Budget and Appropriations

### Congress Passes Short-Term Continuing Resolution to Keep Federal Government Funded until Dec. 3

Congress passed and the president signed a continuing resolution (CR) on September 30 extending current funding levels for the federal government until December 3, 2021, avoiding a government shutdown. The CR also contains funding to address the impact of national disasters and relocate Afghan refugees but does not suspend the nation's debt limit. Senate Republicans on September 28 blocked a CR passed by the House that would have suspended the nation's debt limit until December 2022.

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## Eviction Prevention

### NLIHC Urges States and Localities to Implement Eviction Protections after Supreme Court Ended CDC Moratorium

The Supreme Court ruled on August 26 to end a temporary stay by a lower court that had slowed legal challenges to the federal eviction moratorium issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In doing so, the Supreme Court's ruling invalidated the federal eviction moratorium, eliminating vital eviction protections that have kept millions of households – predominantly people of color – stably housed. With the Supreme Court striking down the eviction moratorium, NLIHC continues to urge state and local governments to take immediate action to protect tenants.

Local and state strategies should include:

1. **Creating or extending state and local eviction moratoriums.** The surging Delta COVID-19 variant, low vaccination rates in communities with high eviction filings, and the slow rate of distributing emergency rental assistance (ERA) highlight the need for eviction moratoriums. Moratoriums will provide state and local governments more time to ramp up their efforts to distribute ERA to households in need.
2. **Quickly distributing emergency rental assistance.** To date, about \$9.3 billion of the initial \$25 billion in ERA provided by Congress has been spent. While some states and localities have made significant progress in distributing aid, most communities need to do much more to distribute funds more quickly and effectively.
3. **Enacting additional renter protections.** Other measures, such as right to counsel, expungement of eviction records, and just-cause eviction standards, can help protect renters now and in the long term.

State and local governments must work to ensure their ERA programs are [visible, accessible, and preventive](#) of evictions. Understanding what states and localities can do to protect tenants is key to preventing evictions for households at risk.

As of September 27, 13 states, Washington DC, and 11 cities or counties have issued an eviction moratorium or eviction protections related to rental assistance applications. For example, six states, Washington DC, and seven other cities/counties **have an eviction moratorium in place** (dates of expiration are in parentheses).

- State: New Jersey (12/31/21); Illinois (10/3/21); California (10/1/21); Minnesota (6/20/22); New York (1/15/22); New Mexico (open)
- Cities/Counties: Washington, DC (1/1/22); Los Angeles County, CA (10/1/21); Oakland, CA (open); San Francisco, CA (10/1/21); Dekalb County, GA (9/30/21); St. Louis, MO (10/4/21); Austin, TX (10/16/21); Seattle, WA (1/16/22)

The timing and level of protection provided by eviction moratoriums vary by jurisdiction. Some states with moratoriums—like California—will maintain eviction protections tied to ERA applications after the state moratorium expires.

Many jurisdictions, including seven states and four cities and counties, have **enacted partial protections that halt or alter the eviction process related to rental assistance applications**. For example:

- In Connecticut (2/15/22) and Virginia (7/1/22), landlords cannot file for an eviction until they apply for ERA, among other conditions and protections.
- Eviction proceedings are paused for a set period while a household's ERA application is in process in four states and two cities/counties: Washington (10/31/21); Oregon (3/1/22); Massachusetts (4/1/22); Michigan (open); Bucks County, PA (12/31/21); Pittsburgh, PA (11/1/21).
- Nevada (6/5/23) and Washington, DC (1/1/22) recognize rental assistance applications as an affirmative defense to eviction.
- In Philadelphia, PA (open), the issuance of a writ of possession is not allowed while a rental assistance application is pending.
- In Dallas, TX (open), tenants have 60 days to apply for ERA before an eviction proceeds when they are responding to a COVID-19 eviction notice.
- Some jurisdictions require notice to tenant of available resources and eviction diversion programs, such as Michigan, Maine, and Texas.

To learn more about eviction moratoriums and partial protections in your area contact a local attorney or legal services organizations [here](#).

Many jurisdictions have used ERA housing stability funds and other federal funding to provide tenants with **access to legal counsel or to establish a right to counsel**, including:

- Cities: New York City, San Francisco, Newark, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Boulder, Baltimore, Seattle, Denver, Louisville, Milwaukee (universal representation), Rochester, NY (universal representation)
- States: Washington, Connecticut, Maryland
- Pilot Programs: Hennepin County, MN; Massachusetts; New Jersey; Richmond; Charlottesville; Sonoma County WA; Westchester County, PA; Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI

Further information is available from the National Coalition for the Civil Right to Counsel at: <http://civilrighttocounsel.org/>

Selected data presented here are from COVID-19 eviction prevention research from researchers at Wake Forest University School of Law, the Eviction Lab at Princeton University, and Yale University School of Public Health and are available at: <https://statepolicies.com/policy-by-topic/economic-precarity/housing/>

Access the NLIHC ERASE checklist of best practices at: [End-Rental-Arrears-to-Stop-Evictions.pdf](#)



## Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness

### Congress Approves \$28.6 Billion in Supplemental Recovery Funding for 2020 and 2021 Disasters

The continuing resolution (CR) [passed](#) by Congress on September 30 included \$28.6 billion in disaster relief supplemental appropriation. The funding had long been pursued by elected officials in Louisiana and other areas of the country struck by disasters over the last two years. The measure passed by a vote of 65-35 in the Senate and a vote of 254-175 in the House. The funding had been pursued strongly by the Louisiana congressional delegation, although two members of the delegation, Representatives Steve Scalise (R-LA) and Mike Johnson (R-LA), voted against the bill. The state has yet to receive any long-term federal recovery funding – funds desperately needed since hurricanes Laura, Delta, and Zeta struck the state in 2020.

The supplemental funding includes \$5 billion in Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds, which can be used for long-term housing recovery. Of these funds, \$1.61 billion will be directed to areas that experienced disasters in 2020. An additional \$40 million provides civil legal services working in disaster areas. The bulk of the remaining funding will be used for agricultural subsidies for disaster-impacted farmers.

With these important CDBG-DR funds approved, HUD now has 30 days to appropriate the funding to the various states that suffered disasters in 2020 and 2021. Allocations will be made based on the unmet needs of disaster-stricken communities in each state. HUD will then release regulations for the program, and states will then draft action plans describing the planned use of the funds. HUD must approve these plans before signing grant agreements with each state.

A recent [Urban Institute review](#) of the CDBG-DR process found that the housing rehabilitation process can take an average of 3.7 years, due to the program lacking official authorization. The NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition – 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 – continues to support the “[Reforming Disaster Recovery Act](#)” to accelerate this process. That bill, introduced by Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI), Susan Collins (R-ME), Todd Young (R-IN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), and Representative Al Green (D-TX), would permanently authorize the CDBG-DR program and ensure that funding reaches those most in need of assistance after a disaster.

Read a summary of the disaster relief supplemental at: <https://bit.ly/3D4DAV4>

Learn more about the “Reforming Disaster Recovery Act” at: <https://sforce.co/3B06iWC>

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### Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition Requests Meeting to Discuss Changes at FEMA

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel sent a [letter](#) to FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell thanking her for recent changes making disaster assistance easier to access and requesting a meeting on behalf of the NLIHC-led Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) – a group of over 850 local, state, and national organizations working to ensure that low-income households can access disaster assistance. “FEMA has taken a long-overdue and necessary first step towards building a more equitable federal disaster housing recovery framework,” Diane wrote in the letter. “We share your goal of a disaster recovery framework that is accessible to all, and we hope that the experience and expertise of the DHRC can help assist you and FEMA in reaching that goal.”

The letter comes after FEMA announced [major reforms](#) to its Individual Assistance (IA) program in September. For decades, FEMA required homeowners to submit title documents to receive assistance, and the agency refused to accept alternative documentation. This requirement effectively barred low-income homeowners –



predominantly households of color – from receiving the FEMA IA for which they were eligible. Residents living in mobile homes and heirship property owners were most severely impacted and wrongfully denied aid to rebuild their homes. Under FEMA’s new policy, these survivors can now self-certify ownership of their homes when they do not have other documentation, overcoming a major hurdle to recovery. FEMA will also allow all survivors to submit a broader array of documents to prove occupancy and ownership of their homes.

A [supplemental memo](#) was sent along with the letter outlining potential administrative reforms that the agency could make immediately to improve equity and accessibility of FEMA programs. These reforms include working with HUD to activate the [Disaster Housing Assistance Program \(DHAP\)](#) after future disasters, ensuring that individuals and families who were unhoused prior to a disaster are fully eligible for recovery assistance, and prioritizing mitigation grants that serve the communities with the greatest needs.

Read DHRC’s letter to Administrator Criswell at: <https://bit.ly/3op20Vf>

Read DHRC’s supplemental memo at: <https://bit.ly/32GFyuL>

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## **Additional Coronavirus Updates – October 4, 2021**

### **National Updates**

#### *Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)*

HUD and Treasury hosted an Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) webinar on September 23 featuring case studies of ERA grantees, community-based partners, and multifamily housing partners that have developed strong partnerships to provide rental support effectively and efficiently. The [recording](#) and [presentation slides](#) are now available.

HUD's Office of Affordable Housing Programs (OAHP) is hosting a [four-part webinar series](#) to review [Notice CPD-21-10](#). The notice establishes requirements for the use of ARP funds to provide homelessness assistance and supportive services. [Register today!](#)

HUD’s Office of Block Grant Assistance is hosting a four-part [webinar series](#) for Community Development Block Grant CARES Act (CDBG-CV) grantees on best practices of CDBG-CV project implementation. Learn more [here](#).

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) [announced](#) on September 27 [new and extended COVID-19 relief options](#) for borrowers recently or newly struggling to make their mortgage payments because of the pandemic and for senior homeowners with Home Equity Conversion Mortgages (HECMs) who need assistance to remain in their homes.

#### *Department of Treasury*

Treasury Deputy Secretary Adeyemo published a [letter](#) to all ERA grantees on September 24 providing further insight into how Treasury intends to approach the reallocation process. Further guidance on the recapture and reallocation process is expected in the coming days.

Treasury released its [August ERA report](#) on September 24 showing more than 420,000 households received ERA in August, totaling over \$2.3 billion in payments. Read Treasury’s [post](#) on the August data and [NLIHC’s statement and analysis](#) of the latest ERA spending data.

Treasury on September 24 posted a section on ERA [program and service design](#), which includes new [guidelines for ERA program online applications](#), including [example screens](#) and [guidelines for program websites](#).

## *U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)*

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) recently updated [its collection of federal guidance and resources](#) to help communities plan for, respond to, and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and environmental disasters. View the COVID-19 collection of guidance and resources [here](#).

### *Advocacy and Research*

The [National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development](#) (National CAPACD) [released findings from a survey of community-based organizations](#) working to protect low-income renters across the country from losing their homes. The survey findings demonstrate that many communities have not been protected by the CDC eviction moratorium. The survey also found that lack of outreach and in-language information, as well as a lack of cooperation from landlords, are significant barriers to accessing rental assistance programs.

### *Reporting*

The [New York Times](#) reports on the new data released by the U.S. Department of the Treasury on September 24 indicating Treasury disbursed more than \$2.3 billion in rental assistance to about 420,000 households in August. “Nearly 1.5 million families helped is meaningful progress, but the overall rate of spending emergency rental assistance remains too slow,” said NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel.

The [Washington Post](#) reports that while the amount of emergency rental assistance (ERA) reaching landlords and tenants increased slightly from July to August, many state and local ERA programs continue to struggle to distribute ERA. Some local program administrators continue to resist the Biden administration’s calls to reduce application requirements. The Treasury Department will release guidance on the reallocation process in the coming days.

The [Associated Press](#) highlights new data from the Treasury Department finding that states and cities distributed nearly 1.4 million emergency rental assistance (ERA) payments in August, picking up the pace from July. Treasury officials pointed to meaningful progress from New Jersey, New York, and South Carolina, as well as from New York, Los Angeles, and Miami-Dade County. Grantees that are not spending funds risk having ERA redirected to other states or cities.

## **State and Local News**

### *Alaska*

The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation [reopened applications](#) for another round of emergency rental assistance (ERA), but residents had to [apply by Friday, October 1](#).

### *Arizona*

The [Phoenix Family Services Center](#) is expanding its capacity to expedite distribution of emergency rental assistance (ERA). The city began hiring for 50 additional positions to help ensure clients can apply for and receive ERA. The center is now open Monday through Saturday from 7 am to 6 pm.

### *California*

In addition to touting the success of San Diego’s [COVID-19 Housing Stability Assistance Program](#), Mayor Todd Gloria on September 27 [announced a proposal](#) to establish a \$5 million legal defense fund to support struggling renters. The city’s housing assistance program has provided more than \$103 million in rent and utility assistance to nearly 12,000 households since launching in March. The mayor will present a proposal on October 5 to use \$5 million in federal CARES Act funds to create a program to provide eviction prevention education and legal aid.

The California COVID-19 Rent Relief Program marked another [milestone](#) on September 27 with \$650 million paid to 55,000 households. Beginning October 1, new state eviction protections will be in effect, but tenants must take steps to remain protected. Tenants must apply for rental assistance to be protected from eviction for nonpayment of rent.

The California Housing Partnership has been [closely tracking](#) the economic consequences of COVID-19 on California's renter households since the U.S. Census Bureau's *Household Pulse Survey* was first released in May 2020. Their research finds that nearly 1.5 years into the pandemic, renters across California are still bearing the economic brunt of COVID-19, experiencing high rates of wage loss and housing insecurity, and struggling to make rent, despite the availability of emergency rental assistance.

#### *Connecticut*

The [CT Post](#) reports that eviction numbers have increased from earlier in the pandemic. In July, there were about 395 eviction filings, while as of September 22, it is up to 658 for the month. Connecticut's statewide eviction moratorium ended in July 2021.

#### *Georgia*

The [Atlanta City Council](#) approved on September 20 approximately \$12 million in federal emergency rental assistance (ERA2) funds. The council also extended its contract with the United Way of Greater Atlanta to distribute ERA1 and ERA2 funds through January 31, 2022.

#### *Hawaii*

Governor David Ige expanded the free landlord-tenant mediation program to help renters catch up on rent before being evicted. According to the [Hawaii Tribune-Herald](#), the previous mediation sessions were only for tenants that were behind on four or more months of rent. Now, it includes tenants who are three months or more behind, and payments will continue month-by-month until they are caught up.

#### *Indiana*

After the federal eviction moratorium ended on August 26, Indiana has experienced a [spike in eviction filings](#). [Indiana's eviction filings](#) have jumped 22% above the pre-pandemic average since early September. Federal funds have been slow to reach tenants, and some landlords are choosing to evict rather than wait for rental assistance.

#### *Kansas*

Dozens of Lawrence residents are being evicted after the end of the federal eviction moratorium. A [Lawrence Journal-World](#) review of eviction cases filed in Douglas County District Court found that 44 evictions were filed in August and 36 have been filed in September (as of September 25). Processing delays with the [Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance \(KERA\) program](#) and landlords refusing to accept ERA have left many tenants at risk for eviction. According to the executive director of the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation, which is distributing KERA funds, taking advantage of the flexibilities provided by the Treasury Department – including the use of self-attestation – is speeding up the processing of rental assistance.

#### *Louisiana*

The City of [Lake Charles](#) established a rental assistance program through Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana using Community Development Block Grant – CARES (CDBG-CV) funds. The program provides up to \$650 in a 12-month period. Renters can also apply to the [Calcasieu Parish Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#).

There has been a surge of [New Orleans tenants](#) seeking emergency rental assistance, particularly as the statewide eviction moratorium expired on September 24. At least 1,600 tenants have applied for the New Orleans Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

### *Michigan*

Michigan is racing to meet the September 30 deadline to spend 65% of its ERA spending budget. Officials say they will meet the deadline, as they have spent about \$225 million of the \$622 million as of September 19. [Bridge Michigan](#) reports that over 34,000 families have been approved to receive the federal funds thus far.

### *Nevada*

The [Nevada Independent](#) reports the state has picked up its pace in distributing emergency rental assistance (ERA) and now ranks tenth in the nation for ERA disbursement. As of August 31, Nevada has distributed approximately \$79 million, or 42% of the funds it received as part of the first round of ERA.

### *New Mexico*

[New Mexico agencies](#) are racing to distribute at least \$104 million in federal emergency rental (ERA) assistance by September 30 or risk forfeiting funds. As of mid-September, New Mexico has spent or assigned \$51 million of ERA.

### *Oklahoma*

While evictions have resumed in Oklahoma, there is still [financial help available](#) for tenants struggling to pay their rent and utilities. As of mid-September, Community Cares Partners has spent \$61,000,000 for rent and utility assistance.

### *Oregon*

The State of Oregon will be hiring an [outside company](#) to process emergency rental assistance (ERA) applications for the next round of funding to avoid a backlog of applications.

### *Texas*

According to the [Austin Monitor](#), Travis County will employ two efforts encouraged by the Treasury Department to accelerate the distribution of emergency rental assistance: categorical eligibility and bulk payments.

### *Virginia*

The [Alexandria City Council](#) voted unanimously on September 28 to increase the city's capacity to support households at risk for eviction. The council allocated \$457,000 for two service navigators and two housing relocator positions; storage assistance for household belongings; and additional legal services provided by the [Legal Aid Justice Center](#).

### *Washington*

[King County officials](#) say the extension of Washington state's eviction moratorium bridge will not provide enough time to address all emergency rental assistance (ERA) applications. Governor Jay Inslee extended the statewide moratorium bridge to October 31. King County, however, believes there will still be 6,000-8,000 ERA applications to address after it expires.

## **Guidance**

*Department of Housing and Urban Development*

- [Additional Revision and Extension of December 2020 and April 2020 Memorandum – Availability of Waivers and Suspensions of the HOME Program Requirements in Response to COVID-19](#) – September 2021
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## Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – October 4, 2021

### National Updates

#### *Congress*

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards [met](#) with Congress last week in a bid to increase the amount of disaster recovery assistance headed to the state, which is still recovering from the impact of Hurricane Ida earlier this month.

The “Disaster Assistance Equity Act” ([H.R. 5298](#)) was introduced by Representatives Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), John Garamendi (D-CA), Andrew Garbarino (R-NY), Nancy Mace (R-SC), Paul Ruiz (D-CA), Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL), Lee Zeldin (R-NY), and David Rouzer (R-NC). The bill would ensure that fixtures and common areas of condominium communities, homeowners associations, and housing cooperatives are eligible for FEMA debris removal and repair assistance.

#### *U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness*

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) recently updated [its collection of federal guidance and resources](#) to help communities plan for, respond to, and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and environmental disasters. View the natural disaster collection of guidance and resources [here](#).

### Wildfires

FEMA aid after wildfires is not helping survivors to [rebuild their homes](#), and the COVID-19 pandemic is making it difficult for volunteer organizations to fill the gap in services. If a person is deemed eligible for FEMA assistance, the aid is not enough to make a fire-damaged home habitable.

### About DHRC

NLIHC’s [Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition](#) (DHRC) is a group of over 850 local, state, and national organizations working to secure disaster recovery funding and key reforms to ensure every survivor, including those with the lowest incomes and those most marginalized, receives the assistance they need to fully recover and ensure that their communities can withstand future disasters. Read the DHRC’s full list of priorities [here](#).

To find out more and get involved with the effort to approve disaster recovery funding and pass DHRC-supported reforms, [join](#) our Disaster Recovery Working Group that meets weekly on Tuesdays at 3 pm ET. If you haven’t joined already, [become a member](#) of the DHRC!

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## Congress

### Representatives DeLauro and Auchincloss Introduce Eviction Data Legislation

Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Jake Auchincloss (D-MA) on September 24 introduced the “We Need Eviction Data Now Act,” which would create a federal database to track evictions across the country and establish a federal advisory committee on eviction research to make policy recommendations based on eviction data. Representative DeLauro stated in a [tweet](#), “While we must continue the fight to extend the federal eviction moratorium, we must pass this bill that will allow us to track the magnitude of displacement among struggling families.”

“Nearly 6.5 million households are currently behind on rent and are at risk of losing their homes in the coming weeks and months as the pandemic continues to surge,” said NLIHC’s President and CEO Diane Yentel in a [press release](#) announcing the bill. “This impending eviction crisis underscores the need for both urgent action to keep renters stably housed now and long-term solutions, including the ‘We Need Eviction Data Now Act.’”

Read the press release at: <https://bit.ly/3ARo6TN>

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## **NLIHC Submits Statement for House Financial Services Subcommittee Hearing on Eliminating Barriers and Increasing Economic Opportunity for Justice-Involved Individuals**

NLIHC submitted on September 27 a [statement for the record](#) for the September 28 congressional hearing, “[Access Denied: Eliminating Barriers and Increasing Economic Opportunity for Justice-Involved Individuals](#).” The hearing, hosted by House Financial Services Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion Chair Joyce Beatty (D-OH), examined the many barriers to housing and opportunity faced by people exiting incarceration and those with histories of conviction.

In the statement, NLIHC encourages Congress and the Biden-Harris administration to work together to reduce barriers facing tenants with a conviction history in obtaining safe, stable housing. Recommendations include enacting the “Fair Chance at Housing Act,” which would require public housing agencies (PHAs) and owners of HUD-assisted housing to perform an individualized review of each applicant when considering the totality of circumstances and conviction history during the tenant screening process. Housing providers would be required to consider mitigating evidence of past convictions when presented by the applicant and would be barred from enacting harmful “one-strike” eviction policies that can result in the displacement of an entire family for even minor criminal activity from a single member of the household.

NLIHC also says in the statement that HUD should update its Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook and admission policies for Public and Indian Housing (PIH) to limit the discretion of public housing agencies in screening out potential tenants with a conviction history and mitigate collateral consequences of a conviction history. Moreover, the statement points out that policies disproportionately impacting justice-involved people may also violate federal Fair Housing Act provisions, noting that “the systemic bias inherent to the criminal-legal system has led Black, Latino, and Native people, as well as people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ community, to be disproportionately impacted by [barriers to housing].”

Read NLIHC’s statement at: [tinyurl.com/t5zeajbw](https://tinyurl.com/t5zeajbw)

Watch a recording of the hearing at: [tinyurl.com/5ykuv54](https://tinyurl.com/5ykuv54)

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## **HUD**

### **HUD Revises HUD-VASH Implementation Guidance**



HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) published a [Federal Register notice](#) on September 27 setting forth policies and procedures for administering the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. The notice, which replaces special rules published in the *Federal Register* on [March 23, 2012](#), includes provisions addressing family eligibility, portability, case management, and the turnover of HUD-VASH vouchers. It also outlines waivers or alternative requirements that are exemptions to the regular Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) tenant-based or project-based requirements that otherwise govern HUD-VASH assistance.

The HUD-VASH program combines HCV rental assistance for veterans experiencing homelessness with case management and clinical services provided at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers (VAMCs) and community-based outpatient clinics, or through a designated service provider (DSP) approved by the VA. Public housing agencies (PHAs) administer HUD-VASH vouchers.

New waivers and program flexibilities in the notice include:

1. Allowing a PHA to act in the role of the VAMC or DSP for the purposes of family selection in cases where a PHA has been previously approved for this authority
2. Allowing a PHA and owner to agree to amend a project-based voucher (PBV) Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract to re-designate a regular PBV unit as a unit specifically designated for HUD-VASH families
3. Authorizing PHAs to apply separate voucher payment standards for HUD-VASH families without additional PIH approval
4. Requiring PHAs to allow Special Housing Types, such as single-room occupancy (SRO) units, congregate housing, group homes, shared housing, and cooperative housing)

The notice also makes updates to existing requirements, including:

1. Allowing PHAs to house HUD-VASH veterans referred by the VA in a project-based voucher unit without selecting from a PHA's waiting lists or applying local preferences
2. Providing an additional explanation regarding the process for portability moves for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking
3. Adding details regarding case management requirements from the VAMC or DSP
4. Explaining that, in the case of a family break-up, the HUD-VASH assistance must stay with the HUD-VASH veteran; however, in the case of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, if the HUD-VASH veteran is the perpetrator the victim must continue to be assisted
5. Explaining that a Moving to Work (MTW) PHA can apply their approved MTW provisions to their HUD-VASH program if approved by PIH's Housing Choice Voucher office
6. Explaining how HUD-VASH waivers and flexibilities apply to HUD-VASH PBVs
7. Explaining HUD-VASH PBV exceptions under the Housing Opportunities Through Modernization Act (HOTMA). One example is that HUD-VASH PBVs are not subject to the PBV income-mixing cap that would otherwise limit the number of PBV units in a property to the greater of 25 units or 25% of all units. In other words, all units in a property could be PBVs if they are HUD-VASH PBVs
8. Explaining that when a HUD-VASH family is eligible to move from its PBV unit, the family must be able to move with a HUD-VASH tenant-based voucher
9. Adding an explanation of the HUD-VASH reallocation process through voluntary moves between PHAs and voucher recapture for future reallocation

The *Federal Register* notice is at: <https://bit.ly/3CVCNpu>

More information about the HUD-VASH program is on [page 4-26](#) of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

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

More information about the regular Project-Based Voucher (PBV) program is on [page 4-8](#) of NLIHC's 2021 *Advocates' Guide*.

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## **HUD PIH Posts Fifth Update of Emergency Housing Voucher FAQs**

HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) posted a [fifth update](#) 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 EHV's (see *Memo*, [5/10](#)), and PIH announced the EHV allocations available to 696 PHAs (see *Memo*, [5/17](#)). The new guidance adds 17 FAQs and updates one from the previous version (see *Memo*, [7/26](#)). The FAQs most important to residents and advocates are highlighted here.

Five of the new FAQs (pages 4-5) under the "Eligibility" section concern issues related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking:

- FAQ15 clarifies that in determining whether someone is eligible for EHV, a Continuum of Care (Coc) or Victim Service Provider (VSP) may accept an individual's self-definition of "fleeing or attempting to flee" domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.
- FAQ16 states that a minor child may be a victim, thereby making the family eligible for EHV.
- FAQ17 indicates that a family that previously received a Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) emergency transfer or otherwise moved because of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking may qualify for EHV.
- FAQ18 clarifies that non-citizens claiming eligible immigration status who are VAWA self-petitioners are eligible for EHV.
- FAQ19 explains that "imminent harm" refers to a tenant's belief or fear of the threat or danger of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, based on their experiences and responses to violence, threats, and trauma that they will face if they remain in the unit they currently occupy.

Four of the five new FAQs under the "Voucher Administration" section (pages 13-15) also concern issues related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking, including:

- FAQ38 addresses "mitigating circumstances" factors PHAs should consider regarding admitting someone into the EHV program who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking. Under VAWA, applicants and tenants may not be denied assistance or have assistance terminated under a covered housing program, including EHV, based on or as a direct result of the fact that the applicant or tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The FAQ cites [Notice PIH 2017-08](#), which describes examples of factors to consider when a PHA weighs "mitigating circumstances." For example, PHAs should consider that an adverse factor, such as poor rental history or poor credit history, may be a direct result of the applicant or tenant being or has been a victim.
- FAQ39 addresses a situation entailing someone applying for EHV who has a criminal history but who is also a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. The FAQ refers readers to [Notice PIH 2017-08](#) for examples of adverse factors that might be a direct result of violence.

FAQ21 (page 6) offers suggestions and reinforces existing Fair Housing Act guidance to ensure that eligible LGBTQ+ people have equal access to EHV. To reduce barriers to assistance, PHAs should strive to make the delivery of assistance and the administration of the EHV program open, inclusive, and welcoming to LGBTQ+ individuals and families experiencing homelessness. HUD strongly encourages PHAs, CoCs, and other referring partners to incorporate inclusive and culturally competent strategies to reduce barriers to assistance for the LGBTQ+ community. Referring partners should consider partnering with local organizations serving the LGBTQ+ community for assistance in conducting outreach to the LGBTQ+ community.

PHAs must provide equal access to EHV for LGBTQ+ individuals and their families, including when they have been unable to access housing or services from other providers. The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination because of sex, including sexual orientation and gender identity. HUD's Equal Access Rule also prohibits PHAs, CoCs, and other HUD-assisted housing providers from denying access to housing, housing programs, and homeless services because of a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. Therefore, PHAs and other HUD-assisted housing providers should have nondiscrimination policies that explicitly prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals and families. In addition, PHAs and other referring providers must recognize LGBTQ+ family units, including unmarried domestic partners, same-sex spouses, and persons who have child-rearing responsibilities even when those persons are not the biological or adoptive parents of the child.

Four FAQs are in the "Administrative and Service Fees" section (pages 21-22), and one is in the "Portability" section (page 27). FAQ42 (page 16) is updated.

"Emergency Housing Vouchers, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) v.5" is at: <https://bit.ly/3ihxadB>

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

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## HUD Extends NSPIRE Physical Inspection Pilot to 2023

HUD published a [Federal Register notice](#) on September 28 announcing the extension of the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate and Associated Protocols (NSPIRE) to April 30, 2023.

HUD sought public housing agencies (PHAs) and owners of private HUD-assisted multifamily properties in 2019 to volunteer for a Real Estate Inspection Center (REAC) pilot project called National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE). As indicated in an October 29, 2018 email, HUD intends to change the 20-year-old REAC physical inspection system to better reflect the physical condition of privately owned, HUD-subsidized housing (see *Memo*, [11/5/18](#)). According to a [Federal Register notice](#) on August 21, 2019, over the course of two years HUD sought to inspect 4,500 properties willing to adopt the NSPIRE model voluntarily (see *Memo*, [8/26/19](#)). A list of properties approved to participate in NSPIRE as of May 1, 2021 is at: <https://bit.ly/3q9ai1k>

The NSPIRE model has three major components:

- Three types of inspections: self-inspections by PHAs and owners and agents of private, HUD-assisted multifamily housing, inspections conducted by contractors and/or federal inspectors, and inspections conducted solely by federal inspectors. HUD will inspect participating properties at least once during the demonstration using the NSPIRE standards.
- Three categories of physical deficiencies: health and safety, function and operability, and condition and appearance. HUD states that ideally, each category could result in emergency work orders, routine work orders, and other maintenance.

- Three inspectable areas: inside (common areas and building systems), outside (building site and building envelope), and units (the interior of an individual home).

On a related note, HUD published a [proposed rule](#) in the *Federal Register* on January 13 presenting a new approach to define and assess housing quality among HUD programs, calling the approach NSPIRE. The intent of the proposed rule, along with the existing NSPIRE demonstration, is to improve HUD oversight by aligning the physical inspection regulations used to evaluate HUD-assisted housing across multiple HUD programs to create a unified assessment of housing quality. HUD programs currently evaluate housing quality using different inspection standards, protocols, and frequencies. NLIHC has issued a [detailed summary](#) of specific proposed NSPIRE provisions.

The *Federal Register* notice is at: <https://bit.ly/3kSOMOH>

The NSPIRE webpage is at: <https://bit.ly/2MQ9Lmr>

The NSPIRE resident engagement webpage is at: <https://bit.ly/3nD70BT>

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

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

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## HUD HOME Program Extends Waiver Deadlines

HUD's Office of Affordable Housing Programs (OAHP) issued a [memorandum](#) on September 27 revising and extending six coronavirus-related waivers for the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program. The waivers are effective as of September 30. OAHP, a division of HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD), issued pandemic-related waivers in an April 10, 2020 memorandum and a December 4, 2020 memorandum (see *Memo 12/14/20*) extended deadlines to September 30, 2021 (see *Memo 4/20/20*). Any statutory suspensions and waivers not extended by the September 27 memorandum expired on September 30, 2021.

Revisions in the new memorandum include:

- Extending the reduction of the match requirement by 100% to include FY22
- Restricting the waiver of the maximum per unit subsidy limit to projects that are currently underway or projects for which HOME funds will be committed on or before March 31, 2022
- Extending the waiver of on-site inspections of HOME-assisted rental housing to December 31, 2021 and extending the timeframe to physically inspect units that would have been subject to on-going inspections during the waiver period from 120 days after September 30, 2021 to 180 days after December 31, 2021
- Extending the waiver of annual re-inspections of units assisted with HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) to December 31, 2021
- Extending the four-year project completion deadline and clarifying the timing of the required written notification for any HOME project underway
- Extending the timeframe to March 31, 2022 for participating jurisdictions (PJs) to respond to findings of noncompliance

The September 27 memorandum is at: <https://bit.ly/3oecdNB>

More information about the HOME Coronavirus Waivers previously issued is on [page 10-20](#) of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

More information about the standard HOME program is on [page 5-6](#) of NLIHC's *2021 Advocates' Guide*.

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## Opportunity Starts at Home

### Campaign's Racial Equity Working Group Updates National Policy Agenda

The Opportunity Starts at Home multi-sector affordable homes campaign released an updated [national policy agenda](#) to reflect racial equity more strongly within the campaign's policy priorities. The updated policy agenda explains how the campaign's top priorities would advance racial equity and how racial disparities in housing impact other sectors, from healthcare and education to food security.

The policy agenda acknowledges the impact COVID-19 has had on renters with the lowest incomes across the nation, particularly BIPOC renters, and includes revised goals to reflect the robust solutions needed. These updates were made in consultation with the campaign's Racial Equity Working Group, which includes leading national organizations from housing, education, health, food security, faith, civil rights, child welfare, social work, criminal justice, and more.



Access the policy agenda [here](#).

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

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## Research

### Racial Stereotypes Pervade Tenant Screening Processes

An article in *American Sociological Review*, "[Racial Discrimination in Housing: How Landlords Use Algorithms and Home Visits to Screen Tenants](#)," explores how racial discrimination affects landlord screening practices, even in rental markets with little racial diversity. In interviews with and observations of 157 landlords in lower-cost markets, the authors found that renters who wanted to establish they would be "good tenants" often needed to present themselves as exceptions to racial and ethnic stereotypes.

The authors conducted interviews with 157 landlords and property managers in Baltimore, Cleveland, Dallas, and Washington, DC. The researchers asked landlords to describe the history of their businesses and their screening processes. They did not ask directly about discriminatory practices. The researchers also observed a subset of landlords as they interacted with prospective tenants. Approximately one third of the landlords and property managers interviewed were Black, and one third were white.

Larger and more professionalized landlords were more likely to report using formal screening mechanisms, such as third-party algorithms, which are meant to be race-blind. These landlords were less likely to indicate flexibility or to make exceptions for tenants. Screening algorithms account for legally observable traits such as income, credit score, criminal background, and eviction history, though the authors note that these traits are



often highly correlated with race. Some landlords intentionally used criteria as discriminatory proxies. For instance, in cities with source-of-income protection laws, some landlords used credit checks to avoid accepting housing vouchers.

Small-scale landlords were less likely to have access to formal screening mechanisms, and many indicated a preference for more informal methods like interviewing tenants or making home visits. In lower-cost markets, income and credit history may not differentiate potential applicants, so landlords were apt to introduce other criteria they thought would predict reliable rent payment, such as cleanliness, well-behaved children, polite language, marital status or their assessment of the renter's partner, and type of employment. The authors argue that in many cases, such criteria rely on anti-Black narratives of a "culture of poverty," and the onus is on applicants to show they are exceptions to racial stereotypes.

Forty-one percent of landlords who owned one to five units indicated they relied on "gut feelings" or intuitive judgments to differentiate renters, and the authors identify ways in which those judgments are affected by racial and gender stereotypes. One landlord who rented mostly to people of color labeled the applicants he rejected with racial slurs, differentiating them from the applicants he accepted, indicating how racist expectations affect screening even without strict racial preferences.

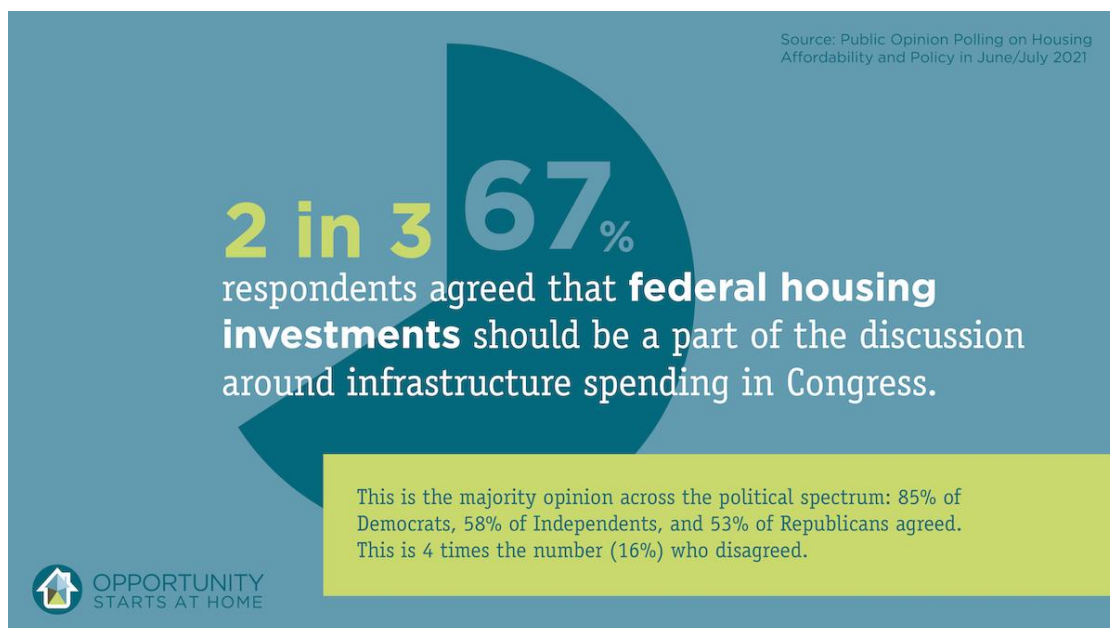
Nearly a quarter of landlords interviewed in Baltimore and Cleveland conducted home visits of prospective tenants' living spaces as part of routine screening practices. For some, applicants who refused home visits were automatically denied. By contrast, other applicants deemed trustworthy were spared this inspection. Landlords explained this practice was needed to determine whether applicants were lying about household size and composition and whether they would maintain a rental home. Approximately 80% of Baltimore landlords who conducted home visits referred to "professional tenants," who they believe bounce from landlord to landlord causing damage and not paying bills.

The paper is available at: <https://bit.ly/3ASUAgS>

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## Fact of the Week

### Poll Shows Bipartisan Support for Housing in Infrastructure Spending





## From the Field

### Louisiana Housing Advocates Aim to Hold Energy Company Accountable

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, Entergy New Orleans, the local power company, failed to restore power to more than 80% of residents within the first week after the storm. The power failure disproportionately impacted individuals with chronic conditions or who are medically frail and residents with low incomes, many of whom could not afford to evacuate or relocate. Entergy now seeks approval from the New Orleans city council to charge residents higher rates to cover storm costs. Louisiana advocates are speaking out to hold Entergy accountable for its failure to invest in infrastructure improvements and to ensure residents have consistent, high quality, affordable gas and electricity.

Of the deaths in New Orleans attributed to Hurricane Ida, nine were from “excessive heat during an extended power outage,” the Orleans Parish coroner found. Some also died from carbon monoxide poisoning as families used generators to power their homes.

Residents with low incomes in New Orleans already face a staggering burden in paying their utility bills. An analysis from NPR and ProPublica found that low-income residents in New Orleans face one of the highest energy burdens in the U.S., second only to Memphis, TN, according to a 2016 study from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. Half the city's low-income households spend more than 9.8% of their earnings on energy and a quarter of them pay more than 18.9%. In contrast, households across the nation pay about 3.5% of their income on average.

As an example, *NPR* reports: “Grace Hollins is among the New Orleanians spending a disproportionate amount on electricity. Typically, she pays \$300 a month for power, almost a fifth of her and her son's total monthly disability checks of \$1,600. ‘It's money I don't have,’ she said. In most American cities, a \$300 power bill for a 1,200-square-foot apartment would be excessive, and Hollins has struggled to keep up with hers. Six days after Ida knocked out Hollins' power, her son, Carl Hollins, dozed in the still afternoon heat of their shotgun apartment, its glass windows blown out by the storm.”

Despite previous hurricane damage that left its grid damaged, Entergy has not made significant investments in its power grid. Unless Entergy makes bold investments now, future storms will bring more prolonged outages. Rather than take responsibility for failure to improve their infrastructure, though, Entergy has asked for a rate increase to cover storm costs.

The Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA) – an advocacy partner of HousingLOUISIANA, an NLIHC state partner – and the Alliance for Affordable Energy have launched a campaign demanding action and accountability from Entergy and the New Orleans City Council and the Louisiana Public Service Commission. Their petition calls for an audit and investigation into Entergy, as well as no additional rate increases until Entergy is held accountable. The advocates call for a community-driven set of solutions, including a climate resilient power grid.

“The situation in Louisiana is a stark reminder that the high price for utilities isn’t simply affecting the folks struggling to pay those bills every month – it impacts the planet,” said Andreanecia Morris, president of GNOHA. “Harsh winters and blistering summers increase usage, increase emissions, spur climate change, and then those effects result in Hurricane Ida – a storm intensified by climate change. Combating climate change and ending housing insecurity are battles in the same fight, and we need better weapons: healthy, energy efficient housing and access to long-term support when a crisis hits.”

Louisiana advocates hope to shift the focus of disaster recovery from resilient individuals to resilient communities that build sustainable infrastructure and design standards that mitigate risk, decrease environmental impacts, and reduce households' energy costs. The advocates also hope to shift how resiliency itself is measured, pushing the message that resiliency should no longer be measured by how much devastation a community can survive but by the community's ability to protect and shelter the most vulnerable people from disasters, whether they are a pandemic, a hurricane, systemic racism, or crisis-caused changes in the local economy.

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## Events

### **Join Today's *Tenant Talk Live* Webinar for Renters and Resident Leaders: The Intersection of Housing and Disability Rights**

Join NLIHC's *Tenant Talk Live* – a webinar with and for residents and resident leaders – today, October 4 at 6 pm ET (5 pm CT, 4 pm MT, and 3 pm PT) to learn about disability justice and how it ties directly to housing advocacy. Sidney Betancourt, NLIHC housing advocacy organizer, will be joined by Laura Ramos, president of Everything for Accessible Community Housing Rolls! Inc. and Nicole Jorwic, senior executive officer of state advocacy and senior director of public policy at The Arc of the United States. NLIHC staff members will also give policy and emergency rental assistance (ERA) updates during the webinar.

NLIHC recently released [\*Tenant Talk: The Intersection of Housing and Disability Rights\*](#). This issue of *Tenant Talk* discusses how resident organizations can advocate for accessible housing. *Tenant Talk* spotlights Maryland's state legislature passing "right to counsel" and important advocacy efforts by National ADAPT. To coincide with the release of this issue, the October 4 *Tenant Talk Live* webinar will explore how advocating for disability rights and affordable housing are connected and why we cannot do one without the other.

*Tenant Talk Live* is an opportunity for renters to share their experiences and identify opportunities to make a change in their communities. NLIHC is committed to connecting and engaging with resident leaders in new, robust ways. If you are a low-income resident and have a topic you would like to propose or if you want to be a speaker on an upcoming call/webinar, please email: [sbetancourt@nlihc.org](mailto:sbetancourt@nlihc.org)

To stay up to date on *Tenant Talk Live* events, join our [Facebook group](#)!

Register for the October 4 *Tenant Talk Live* webinar at: <https://bit.ly/361rmy2>

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### **NLIHC Board Member to Co-Host "But Next Time" Podcast on Community-Based Disaster Response and Recovery**

Chrishelle Palay, NLIHC board member and director of the Houston Organizing Movement for Equity (HOME) Coalition, will co-host "But Next Time," a limited-series podcast airing next month. The series will lift up powerful narratives of collective action that are transforming how communities prepare for and respond to climate-fueled natural disasters.

The four-part podcast will include stories of community-led language-justice advocacy, tenant organizing, pandemic response, and more. The series will highlight courageous individuals who have stepped up to serve their communities, from a beloved radio host broadcasting crucial information in Spanish while the Tubbs fire engulfed Sonoma to moms fighting for housing justice in flooded Houston after Hurricane Harvey. These

community members demand change from those in power to ensure that the next time a climate-fueled disaster strikes, the response will be different.

The HOME Coalition, which Chrishelle directs, was created in 2017 in response to Hurricane Harvey to ensure all Houstonians recovered from that disaster in an equitable manner. She will host the podcast with Rose Arrieta, a multimedia journalist working as senior communications lead at Causa Justa. The senior producer and editor of the series will be independent documentary filmmaker Leah Mahan. “But Next Time” is one of five innovative media projects created by the [Rise-Home Stories Project](#). Rise-Home Stories was formed in 2018 when a group of multimedia storytellers and housing, land, and racial justice advocates (including from NLIHC) came together to reimagine the past, present, and future of our communities by transforming the stories we tell about them.

The first episode of “But Next Time” will air October 6 and October 12 on the [Making Contact](#) program. To access the show, check local listings or watch the [podcast feed](#).

Watch a preview of “But Next Time” at: <https://bit.ly/39T2BWR>

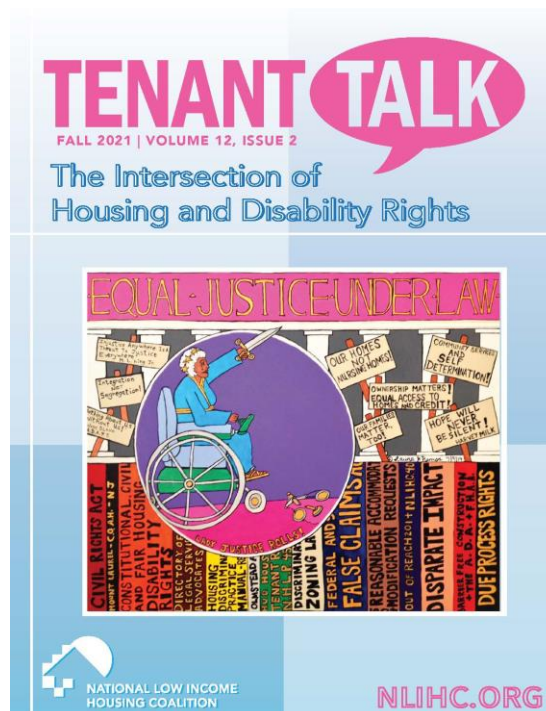
Learn more about “But Next Time” at: <https://bit.ly/3imBnwi>

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## NLIHC News

### NLIHC’s *Tenant Talk* on Housing and Disability Rights Now Available!

NLIHC released the [fall 2021 issue](#) of *Tenant Talk* on September 30. The semi-annual newsletter aims to engage residents in housing advocacy and to highlight innovative approaches and recent housing victories in communities throughout the United States. This issue focuses on the intersection of housing affordability and disability justice. Articles explore how resident leaders and resident organizations can take action to achieve accessible housing.



Disability justice should be included in all advocacy, but especially when fighting to expand affordable housing options for the lowest-income renters. Readers will learn more about *Olmstead v. L.C.*, a historic Supreme Court decision that established the illegality of segregating people with disabilities. This issue also informs readers about universal design, Medicaid-funded home- and community-based services, and the “Money Follows the Person” program.

This issue of *Tenant Talk* features articles on resident organizing such as National ADAPT's “Lives Worth Life” social media campaign and how Maryland passed right to counsel for renters facing eviction. Additional articles cover the expiration of the federal eviction moratorium, the upcoming infrastructure spending package, and much more!

*Tenant Talk* is available online at: <https://bit.ly/3inzMqm>

If you would like to receive a free print version of *Tenant Talk* through the mail, please complete this [quick and easy form](#) to let us know how many copies you would like to receive. Please share with your networks. Digital Spanish and large-print copies will be available in the coming weeks.

Join our next *Tenant Talk Live* webinar with and for residents on October 4 at 6-7 pm ET. Register at: <https://bit.ly/2XWf6yd>

Support the continued production of *Tenant Talk* and other NLIHC resources by becoming an NLIHC member. NLIHC is a membership organization open to individuals, organizations, corporations, and government agencies. Become a member at: <https://nlihc.org/membership>

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## NLIHC Welcomes Betty Ramirez as Research Analyst

The NLIHC research team welcomes Betty Ramirez, who will be responsible for developing a qualitative research project to capture the experience of tenants and property managers in LIHTC properties. Betty will use interviews and data resources to help us better understand the impact of housing markets and affordable housing policies on LIHTC tenant experiences. The project will help formulate policies to preserve housing stability for low-income tenants.

Betty received her Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of California, San Diego with a focus on Latin American and U.S. ethnic minority literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Her graduate studies explored Latin American and Chicana/o authors’ political commitment to literature as a vehicle for critiquing how socio-economic and political policies have impacted marginalized communities in major Latin American and U.S. southwest cities. Betty joined the NLIHC through the American Council of Learned Societies Leading Edge Fellowship. The fellowship promotes opportunities for Ph.D. graduates in the humanities to utilize the skills they acquired in doctoral programs in non-profit settings to foster social justice initiatives.

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## NLIHC in the News

### NLIHC in the News for the Week of September 26

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of September 26:

- “New California laws attack the state’s housing crisis,” *Forbes*, September 27 at: <https://bit.ly/39YgGT2>

- “Waters’ housing work hangs in the balance amid reconciliation cliffhanger,” *Roll Call*, September 28 at: <https://bit.ly/2Y48UnU>
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