

Volume 26, Issue 46
November 22, 2021



The NLIHC team is grateful for all our members and partners whose support is vital to our work to ensure the lowest-income people in America have decent, accessible, and affordable homes. Thank you!

Memo to Members & Partners will take a short break for the Thanksgiving holiday. There will be no *Memo* on Monday, November 29. *Memo* will return on December 6. We wish you a safe, healthy, and happy Thanksgiving.

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- NLIHC Seeks ERASE Project Coordinator

NLIHC in the News

- NLIHC in the News for the Week of November 14

Emergency Rental Assistance

Some ERA Programs Close Application Portals as They Project Expending Funds

While many Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) programs funded by the U.S. Department of the Treasury continue to distribute funds slowly, others have received enough applications to allocate all funds from both the first and second rounds of ERA funding. Some programs have closed their application portals while they wait to see whether the U.S. Department of the Treasury will reallocate additional funds to their states or jurisdictions. Other programs have remained operational while they urge Treasury to redistribute funds quickly. Several large ERA programs have indicated they do not have enough funds to meet the need of their low-income renters, including Texas, New York, Oregon, Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, Austin, TX, and Philadelphia, PA.

The first round of ERA funding (ERA1) was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, allocating \$25 billion toward emergency rental assistance. The second round of funding (ERA2) provided an additional \$21.55 billion as a part of the American Rescue Plan Act. ERA grantees can receive additional ERA1 funds through the reallocation process if they have obligated 65% of their initial ERA1 allocation and have demonstrated need for additional funds. Treasury will soon begin recapturing funds from grantees that have not expended at least 30% of their funds and will reallocate those funds to grantees who meet the eligibility criteria and submit a [request for reallocated funds](#).

Several programs are pausing or closing their programs while they wait for reallocated funds. The [Texas Rent Relief](#) program announced on November 3 that its application portal would close November 5, noting that requests for funds already exceeded their ERA1 and ERA2 allocation of over \$2.3 billion. [New York's](#) Emergency Rental Assistance Program has also stopped accepting applications from renters in all but seven counties. A [letter](#) from Governor Hochul to Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen indicated that the state's need exceeds available funding, particularly because the initial ERA1 allocation formula did not take into account the number of renter households within jurisdictions. Both the Texas and New York programs have posted a form that renters can fill out to be notified if more funding becomes available. Other programs that have closed while they wait for reallocated funds include the District of Columbia, the city of Austin, TX, and Richland County, SC. Oregon's Emergency Rental Assistance Program will pause applications on December 1 as they wait for additional funds.

Other programs have kept their application portals open, but they have signaled their need for reallocated funds to meet demand. In early October, Governor Baker [stated](#) that Massachusetts will seek additional funds. The city of Philadelphia also plans to apply for additional funds, as the city has already disbursed 87% of its direct ERA2 allocation. While the city has some additional ERA2 funds from the state, officials have said that this funding will only last several more weeks. The city of New Orleans has also disbursed the majority of its ERA1 and ERA2 funds but has already received a reallocation of \$23 million from the state of Louisiana.

These examples illustrate the continued widespread need for emergency rental assistance among low-income renters and highlight the need for swift reallocation by the U.S. Department of Treasury to jurisdictions with overwhelming demand. Recommendations for the reallocation process are detailed in NLIHC's report, [Emergency Rental Assistance Spending and Performance Trends](#).

NLIHC continues to track ERA programs, including whether they are open, permanently closed, or on hold, at: <https://nlihc.org/rental-assistance>

Coronavirus, Disasters, Housing, and Homelessness

FEMA Holds Civil Rights Summit on Equity; NLIHC Speaks on Panel of Leaders for Equitable Disaster Recovery

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) held a day-long Civil Rights Summit, “CR Summit 2.0,” on November 17. The summit, hosted by FEMA’s Office of Equal Rights (OER), included updates from FEMA on its efforts to improve equity in its Individual Assistance, Hazard Mitigation Grant, and other programs. Opening the summit, FEMA Administrator Diane Criswell highlighted the agency’s recent efforts to advance equity, while promising to continue these efforts. FEMA personnel also detailed the importance of highlighting racial and economic inequality as the agency continues its mission of assisting communities before, during, and after disasters. NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel spoke on a panel of leaders for equitable disaster recovery.

Although a variety of FEMA programs were addressed throughout the day, discussion around specific equity issues experienced by historically marginalized communities were sparse, except for the final panel—a discussion with leaders for equitable disaster recovery. The panel included NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel; Pacific Union Conference Director Charlene Sargent; National Council on Independent Living Executive Director Reyma McCoy McDeid; NAACP Director of Partnerships Annalise Setorie; and League of United Latin American Citizens Director of Policy and Legislation Bill Moreno. Panelists discussed specific issues of inequality perpetuated by FEMA programs and the changes needed.

The panel encouraged FEMA to increase its equity efforts, while highlighting the reforms still needed to make the country’s disaster recovery system equitable. “NLIHC has worked on disaster housing recovery for 15 years since Hurricane Katrina and, from this experience, we have reached a simple conclusion: America’s disaster housing recovery system is fundamentally broken,” said Diane. “It consistently exacerbates the housing crisis, solidifies segregation and racial inequities, and deepens inequality. Reform is possible and long-overdue.”

Access NLIHC resources on Disaster Recovery at: <https://bit.ly/3HFAJW0>

Coronavirus Updates –November 22, 2021

National Updates

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD on November 10 announced [\\$74 million](#) in Indian Community Block Grant – American Rescue Plan (ICDBG-ARP) grants to 68 Tribal communities. View a breakdown of the awards by recipient [here](#).

Reporting

The [Arizona Mirror](#) reports on the Treasury Department’s requirement that slow-spending emergency rental assistance (ERA) programs submit program improvement plans to the department by November 15. The plans must explain how the state and local grantees will address barriers to distributing ERA to households in need. The article highlights [NLIHC’s report](#) on ERA spending and performance trends.

[NPR](#) reports eviction filings have increased sharply since the federal eviction moratorium ended on August 26. The race to distribute federal emergency rental assistance (ERA) is more urgent than ever, but some ERA programs are still implementing practices that delay and block families from receiving aid.

The [New York Times](#) examines the growing eviction crisis hitting communities across the country, particularly those communities with limited renter protections and poor-performing emergency rental assistance programs. Housing advocates and experts say the true extent of the eviction crisis is understated by available data on evictions.

[CNBC](#) reports at least eight states and more than 20 cities have eviction protection policies in effect.

[Bloomberg CityLab](#) discusses the states and localities at risk of losing federal emergency rental assistance (ERA) funds if they do not submit to the Treasury Department a program improvement plan demonstrating their commitment to ensuring ERA reaches households in need. The article highlights some of the worst-performing states and cities, noting that states with Republican governors make up the majority of programs that failed to hit the federal spending threshold.

State and Local News

Arizona

[Rental assistance](#) has been a lifeline for many Arizonans throughout the pandemic, but the various rental programs established over the past year have different regulations and restrictions, creating confusion for tenants and landlords. Rent relief is needed more than ever as eviction filings in Maricopa County have doubled since the federal eviction moratorium ended in August.

California

The [Los Angeles Times](#) reports the city and county of Los Angeles have rented nearly 1,400 rooms in nine hotels for people experiencing homelessness as of this November. The Biden administration [announced](#) on November 9 FEMA will extend reimbursement of costs of eligible non-congregate sheltering through April 1, 2022. Los Angeles County, which operates two of the hotels, is reviewing how the FEMA extension might impact its plans to continue using the hotel sites.

[Politico](#) reports on California's efforts to reduce homelessness through Project Homekey – a statewide program to convert hotels and motels into affordable housing. California provided temporary shelter to over 48,000 people in hotel rooms during the pandemic through Project Roomkey. Within months, the state launched an effort to convert hotel rooms into permanent housing using federal coronavirus relief funds. Congress provided [\\$5 billion](#) in homelessness resources through the American Rescue Plan Act that can be used to purchase and convert non-congregate shelters into permanent housing.

Florida

Despite being approved for \$4,900 in rent relief through Our Florida, a Florida man was evicted when his [landlord refused](#) to accept the assistance.

Georgia

[Georgia Public Radio](#) reports slower-spending states, like Georgia, were required to submit a program improvement plan to the Treasury Department by November 15 explaining how they will address barriers to distributing Emergency Rental Assistance funds. [NLIHC's new report](#) says Georgia's slow distribution of rental assistance is concerning due to the state's large renter population.

Illinois

The reopening of the Illinois Rental Payment Program (ILRPP) will be [delayed until Monday, December 6](#). According to the Illinois Housing and Development Authority, the reopening is delayed because vendors need additional time to ensure the application platform is functioning properly.

There have been [300,000 household utility disconnections](#) across Illinois since June 2021. Fifty-two organizations across Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa have established a #NoAmerenShutoffs coalition to urge utility companies and Governor J.B. Pritzker to suspend shutoffs and evictions amid the ongoing pandemic.

[Rock Island County](#) is experiencing a rise in eviction filings since the federal eviction moratorium ended in August.

Indiana

The Indiana Supreme Court implemented a pre-eviction diversion program on November 1 to help landlords and tenants access federal rental assistance. Some advocates and officials are [concerned that landlords](#) will decide to proceed with the eviction process rather than utilize the pre-eviction diversion options. According to WBBA public radio, 6,000 eviction cases have been filed in Indiana since the federal eviction moratorium ended.

Maine

August has seen a substantial increase in homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic, and residents expect this trend to continue as pandemic-related eviction protections expire. The [Kennebec Journal](#) reports city officials are considering long- and short-term solutions to homelessness, including providing emergency shelter and expanding the supply of affordable housing. [Two local hotels](#) recently stopped partnering with the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program to house individuals in long-term stays, leaving more than 40 residents scrambling to find housing.

Missouri

The University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law's Tenant Representation Initiative has [prevented hundreds of COVID-related evictions](#) by providing legal counsel. In collaboration with the United Way of Greater Kansas City, the Tenant Representation team uses federal coronavirus relief funds to provide rental assistance throughout Jackson County and Kansas City, Missouri.

New Jersey

The application period for New Jersey's emergency rental assistance program closes on December 15. Renters can apply for funds at njdca.onlinepha.com or call 609-490-4550 to enter into a lottery. Learn more about available resources for New Jersey residents [here](#).

New York

New York state's eviction moratorium, which expires January 15, 2022, allows landlords to challenge a tenant's hardship declaration by submitting a sworn statement claiming the tenant has not lost income during the pandemic. Tenant advocates with the Legal Aid Society say judges have begun scheduling eviction hearings, even if landlords have insufficient evidence to support their claim about their tenants' financial status.

Ohio

The [Ohio Valley Resource](#) examines how the affordable housing shortage, COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change have collided in the Ohio Valley.

Oregon

Oregon Housing and Community Services [announced](#) on October 12 the state will pause accepting new applications for the [Oregon Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#) (OERAP) for six weeks, starting on December 1. Oregon Housing and Community Services estimate nearly \$289 million in federal emergency rental assistance allocated to Oregon has been requested, and the program will be fully subscribed. After

December 1, the agency encourages rental to apply for other rent relief programs across the state to receive the 60-day safe harbor period (90 days in Multnomah County and unincorporated areas of Washington County).

Texas

[Eviction filings are on the rise](#) across Texas after the federal eviction moratorium ended and as rental assistance funds are running out. The Texas Rent Relief Program stopped taking applications, and tenants across the state say their landlords have refused rental assistance funds. Housing advocates say a new law will make evictions even more traumatic for tenants forced from their homes. The legislation ([HB900](#)) eliminates all landlord liability for destroying tenants' possessions during evictions.

The [Fort Worth Star-Telegram](#) reports Tarrant County made changes to its rental assistance program to align with Treasury Department guidance on allowing applicants to self-attest if they cannot provide certain documents. Applicants will still need a photo ID and the landlord will still be required to provide a copy of the lease and statement of the amount of back rent owed. Since the Texas Rent Relief Program stopped accepting new applications, the responsibility of keeping tenants housed falls solely on localities.

Vermont

Vermont Governor Phil Scott [extended the state's non-congregate sheltering program](#) through March 2022 following the Biden administration's decision to extend FEMA funding through April 1, 2022. Homeless advocates have been camping on the statehouse steps for the past month to protest the state's homeless policies. Even with the new funding, however, there may be a shortage of hotel rooms.

Guidance

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [Interim Guidance on People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness](#) – Updated November 4, 2021

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Winter Planning Resources](#) – Updated November 2021
- [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: COVID-19 Preparedness Checklist for Shelter Facilities](#) – November 2021
- [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Meeting Winter Shelter Needs and Mitigating Health Risks](#) – November 2021
- [COVID-19 Informational Flyer: What to Do in a Shelter When Someone Shows COVID-19 Symptoms](#) – November 2021

FEMA

- [FEMA Funding for COVID-19 Response Continues](#) – November 10, 2021

Disaster Housing Recovery Updates – November 22, 2021

Advocacy

Chrishelle Palay, NLIHC board member and director of the [Houston Organizing Movement for Equity \(HOME\) Coalition](#), joined last week's Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC) Disaster Recovery Working Group to discuss "[But Next Time](#)," a limited-series podcast on community-based disaster response and recovery. The four-part podcast, one of five innovative media projects created by the [Rise-Home Stories Project](#), will lift up

powerful narratives of collective action transforming how communities prepare for and respond to climate-fueled natural disasters. Check out the [official trailer](#) and the [Spanish-subtitled trailer](#).

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD announced on November 16 an award of more than [\\$5.3 million](#) in federal disaster relief and recovery assistance to Lake Charles, Louisiana to assist the city's recovery from Hurricanes Laura and Delta. The new Community Development Block Grant Declared Disaster Recovery Funds (CDBG-DDR) are intended to help Lake Charles communities rebuild and become more resilient to future disasters.

Are you a housing provider in or near a disaster-impacted area? If you have vacant units, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) wants to know! The agency is operating a pilot program to collect information on alternative housing for those displaced from their homes by disasters. Let HUD know via their survey form [here](#). Filling out this form is completely non-binding, and information will be shared directly with HUD offices and FEMA.

FEMA

FEMA released a [statement](#) on November 15 on President Biden signing the "Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act" into law. The bipartisan infrastructure deal provides FEMA an additional \$6.8 billion to address climate change through mitigation projects and establishes a new cybersecurity grant program. These funds complement additional mitigation grant programs, including the [\\$3.46 billion](#) FEMA committed through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program in August, and the [\\$1.16 billion](#) for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities and Flood Mitigation Assistance grant programs.

Reporting

The [Washington Post](#) outlines how FEMA's hazard mitigation program failed to save a community that applied for help four years before a wildfire scorched the California town. As natural disasters increase in frequency and intensity, the Biden administration is directing more resources toward mitigation, but this shift may be difficult. FEMA has spent only \$1.5 billion of the \$11 billion allocated to the [FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants program](#) over the last decade. Most of the funds are stuck in bureaucratic delays, leaving communities waiting years to start on urgently needed mitigation work. The *Washington Post* analysis found that FEMA is about half as likely to fund grants for rural areas, and that lower-income counties and areas where white people are a minority face longer delays in getting grants approved.

As climate disasters become more frequent and costly, federal officials are directing resources to reinforcing America's infrastructure before those disasters strike. According to [CNN](#), about \$50 billion of President Biden's infrastructure package is marked for climate resilience, which includes projects like replacing roads to withstand extreme rainfall, wildfire prevention, and shoring up reservoirs. FEMA will use most of its \$6.8 billion allocation for mitigation projects, such as elevating homes that have been repeatedly impacted by flooding.

After reviewing a state-mandated Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, the Santa Barbara (California) Board of Supervisors identified low-income renters, people experiencing homelessness, mobile home residents, people in overcrowded homes, people of color, and undocumented immigrants as some of the groups [most at risk for climate change-related impacts](#). The county will use the report to create policies to prepare for, respond to, and recover from damage caused by climate change-related hazards, including wildfires, severe weather, flooding, and droughts.

Flooding

Washington Governor Jay Inslee declared a [state of emergency](#) on November 15 following days of severe wind and rain that led to [extensive flooding in parts of the state](#). The flooding displaced more than [500 Whatcom County residents](#) from their homes. Of those residents, approximately 280 moved to three shelters quickly stood up in response to the flooding.

Hurricanes

After Hurricane Ida devastated many working-class immigrant communities in September, killing 45 people in the New York metro region, about 20 families displaced from their homes have been residing at the Radisson Hotel. [Documented NY](#) reports many of the hotel guests received letters from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development stating they would need to check in to shelters in Brooklyn just days before they were forced from their hotel rooms. A city representative told *Documented* that the mayor and New York City Emergency Management extended the guests' stay at the Radisson for an additional six nights, but she declined to discuss any long-term solutions for the displaced Ida survivors.

Wildfires

Over a year has passed since the Almeda Fire hit Southern Oregon, destroying thousands of homes and displacing those households. FEMA provided housing and direct assistance to some residents, but many households who did not qualify for aid [continue residing in hotel rooms](#) across Jackson County. As of October, there are 431 wildfire survivors staying in Jackson County hotels. FEMA replaced just 25 of the 700 homes that were destroyed by the fire in Talent. Oregon is working to bring about 80 additional modular homes into the county through Oregon Housing and Community Services, but a specific timeline or location has yet to be announced.

HoUSed Campaign

House Votes to Advance “Build Back Better Act” with Historic Affordable Housing Investments

The House of Representatives voted on November 19 to approve the “Build Back Better Act” by a near party-line vote of 220-213. The \$1.75 trillion economic recovery package includes more than \$150 billion in affordable housing and community development investments, including significant funding for NLIHC's [HoUSed campaign's top priorities](#):

- \$25 billion to expand housing vouchers to [over 300,000 households](#)
- \$65 billion to preserve the nation's deteriorating public housing infrastructure
- \$15 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to build and preserve over [150,000 affordable, accessible homes](#) for households with the lowest incomes

The Build Back Better Act now moves on to the Senate, where further changes to the bill's provisions are expected. Before being brought to the Senate floor for a vote, President Biden, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), centrist Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Krysten Sinema (D-AZ), and other senators must agree to the final size and scope of the bill. A recent analysis from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated the bill would increase the federal deficit by \$367 billion over 10 years but did not take into consideration significant additional revenue that would come from increased tax enforcement. Any further cuts to the overall size of the Build Back Better Act could put the bill's affordable housing investments at risk.

Senate Majority Leader Schumer says the chamber will vote on Build Back Better in December, and congressional leaders hope to enact the bill before Congress adjourns at the end of the year. Because changes in the Senate are expected, however, the bill will need to go back to the House for a final vote to approve the updated legislation before being sent to the president's desk for his signature. The timeline could slip into 2022.

To enact this ambitious bill, President Biden and congressional leaders need the support of every Democratic senator and nearly all Democratic representatives. Advocates should continue weighing in with their members of Congress about the importance of these historic affordable housing investments and why funding for rental assistance, public housing, and the Housing Trust Fund are critical to your communities.

Take Action

Please [email and call your senators](#) and urge them to support the **Build Back Better Act and its historic investments in affordable housing, including rental assistance, public housing, and the Housing Trust Fund.**

Thank you for your advocacy!

Join Today's National HoUsed Campaign Call for Universal, Stable, Affordable Housing

Join today's (November 22) national HoUsed campaign call from 2:30-4 pm ET. We will discuss the latest developments on the "Build Back Better Act," its historic affordable housing investments, and ongoing advocacy needed. Lauren Lowery from the National League of Cities (NLC) will join the call to discuss NLC's Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Technical Assistance Program. Chad Ruppel from HUD will share information about HUD's new emergency housing voucher dashboard. We will hear an update on NLIHC's End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) project with a guest speaker, Michelle Gilbert from Lawyers Committee for Better Housing. We will also receive updates from the field. Register at: <https://bit.ly/3c9kamF>

NLIHC hosts national HoUsed campaign calls every week. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, we will not be holding a call next week (November 29), but will return to our regular schedule on Monday, December 6.

Recording Available of November 15 National HoUsed Call

At our most recent (November 15) national call on "HoUsed: Universal, Stable, and Affordable Housing," we discussed advocacy efforts to prevent evictions in HUD housing, provided updates on the "Build Back Better Act," heard field updates from the field, and more.

Deborah Thrope of the National Housing Law Project (NHLP) discussed a [letter](#) led by NHLP and NLIHC and signed by 49 national, state and local advocacy organizations urging HUD to do more to prevent evictions in HUD-assisted housing. The letter was sent in response to a rule HUD issued requiring providers of public and Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) housing to give tenants facing eviction for nonpayment of rent at least 30 days' notice before a tenant must vacate a unit, and requiring housing providers to inform tenants of the availability of emergency rental assistance (see *Memo*, [10/12](#)). In the letter, advocates argue that HUD can and must do more to prevent evictions for nonpayment of rent in its properties (see *Memo*, [11/15](#)).

NLIHC's Sarah Saadian provided updates on the Build Back Better Act and next steps for advocacy. Negotiations on the bill will continue into December, so continued Congressional advocacy is still necessary. Sarah shared resources for setting up in-district meetings with members of Congress during the Thanksgiving and winter recesses. NLIHC's Emma Foley and Sophie Siebach-Glover shared insights from NLIHC's [new report](#) on emergency rental assistance (ERA) spending and performance trends.

Sarah Robbins from the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness discussed the organization's efforts to ensure people experiencing homelessness receive stimulus checks issued in past coronavirus relief legislation.

Reginald Black from the People for Fairness Coalition in Washington, DC gave an update on the state of homelessness in DC, and Tram Hoang from Keep St. Paul Home discussed her organization's efforts to put a rent stabilization ordinance on the ballot in St. Paul.

NLIHC hosts national calls every week. Our next call will be today, November 22, at 2:30 pm ET. Register for the call at: <https://tinyurl.com/ru73qan>

Watch a recording of the November 15 call at: <https://bit.ly/3oJsgIH>

View presentation slides: <https://bit.ly/30Dctmo>

Federal Budget and Appropriations

Appropriations Negotiations Stall as December 3 Deadline Draws Near

Congress passed on September 30 a continuing resolution (CR) extending current funding levels for the federal government until December 3, 2021 (see *Memo*, [10/4](#)), but since the CR was enacted, little headway has been made in finalizing federal appropriations for fiscal year (FY) 2022, and an additional CR will be needed. How long that CR will last is being debated.

The Senate Appropriations Committee released the text of several FY22 spending bills in [October](#), including a Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) bill that would [increase HUD funding by \\$5.7 billion](#) over FY21 enacted levels. However, Senate appropriators have yet to reach an agreement on topline funding numbers for the FY22 omnibus spending package. House Appropriations Chair Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Senate Appropriations Chair Patrick Leahy (D-VT) are considering enacting another short-term CR after the Thanksgiving recess that would extend funding further into December, with the goal of enacting a final FY22 spending package before the end of the year.

Republicans on the Appropriations Committee have expressed skepticism of moving an appropriations package before the end of the year, particularly with the Senate slated to begin work on the "Build Back Better Act" after the Thanksgiving recess. Senate Appropriations Vice Chair Richard Shelby (R-AL) anticipates enacting another CR that would push appropriations into February or March of 2022, and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has threatened a year-long CR that would maintain FY21 funding levels for the entirety of FY22.

Long-term CRs have [devastating consequences](#) for affordable housing and community development programs and the people they serve. Because the cost of housing and development programs are tied to market rates, which generally rise every year, flat funding to these vital programs acts as a cut and reduces the number of people served.

Congress

Senate Designates November as National Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month

Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Joe Manchin's (D-WV) bipartisan resolution designating November as Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month passed the Senate on November 16 with unanimous approval. NLIHC, the Opportunity Starts at Home campaign, and other youth and homelessness advocacy groups

supported the resolution, which aims to bring attention to the estimated 1.4 million children experiencing homelessness across the country.

“Every child deserves to have a roof over their head and a warm place to sleep at night,” said Senator Manchin. “Unfortunately, that is not the case for more than 9,500 children in West Virginia and over a million children across the country.” Senator Collins added that the resolution recognizes the hard work of businesses, organizations, schools, and volunteers to prevent youth homelessness.

Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Chris Coons (D-DE), Gary Peters (D-MI), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Jack Reed (D-RI) also supported the introduction and passing of the resolution.

Read the resolution at: bit.ly/3BLbFZn

Opportunity Starts at Home

Research Shows Housing and Neighborhoods Shape Child Poverty

Children’s HealthWatch recently released a [new research article](#) that explores the connection between housing and child poverty. The article reviews how historical housing policies are linked to child health outcomes, examines four key housing domains that impact child and family health, and provides multi-level solutions. The article makes the case for reducing child poverty and advancing health equity through stronger housing policies.

“Understanding how housing inequities among families with children are rooted in structural racism is important for identifying opportunities to engage in ongoing and collective work as pediatricians to lift children out of poverty,” write the article’s authors.

Children’s HealthWatch is a steering committee member of the Opportunity Starts at Home multi-sector affordable homes campaign. Read the full research article at: <https://bit.ly/32bvvpk>

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](#).

Research

Jurisdictions Increasingly Favor Market-Reliant Local Affordable Housing Tools

An article published by the Urban Institute, “[The Rise of Market-Reliant Affordable Housing Tools](#),” examines the changing use of three local-level affordable housing tools: housing trust funds, mandatory inclusionary zoning, and zoning incentives. The researchers found that localities increasingly rely on policies that provide incentives for or require private-market actors to produce affordable housing as part of their regular business instead of publicly funding the development of affordable housing through tools such as housing trust funds. Density bonuses were the most popular zoning incentive employed by localities.

The researchers employed data from the Urban Institute’s *2019 National Longitudinal Land Use Survey* (NLLUS). The survey was sent to planning staff in every city or other jurisdiction with at least 10,000 residents

located in the 50 largest U.S. metropolitan areas by population. Results from the 2019 survey were compared with data from the 2003 NLLUS to examine changes over time.

Zoning incentives were the most popular local affordable housing tool among communities. Forty-nine percent of communities in the United States used zoning incentives, while 16% used inclusionary zoning, and 17% used housing trust funds. Density bonuses were the most popular zoning incentive, with 36% of communities using them. Regionally, the usage of density bonuses varies, with the Northeast having 41% of communities using them compared to 70% in the West, 23% in the South, and 14% in the Midwest. In all regions, the densest cities and communities with the highest property values were most likely to use density bonuses.

While the popularity of zoning incentives such as density bonuses remained stable, inclusionary zoning became more common. Sixty-nine percent of communities used density bonuses in 2003 compared 68% in 2019. Inclusionary zoning was used in 25% of communities in 2003 compared to 35% of communities in 2019. Among repeat respondents, 23 communities stopped using inclusionary zoning during this period, while 48 communities implemented it. Communities that added inclusionary zoning were more likely to have a higher population density and be in the Midwest or South.

The prevalence of housing trust funds declined. Housing trust funds were used in 31% of communities in 2003, while only 18% of communities used them in 2019. Fifty-nine percent of communities with a housing trust fund in 2003 no longer had one by 2019. Communities with more expensive housing and higher population densities were more likely to have housing trust funds despite a general decline in the usage of housing trust funds.

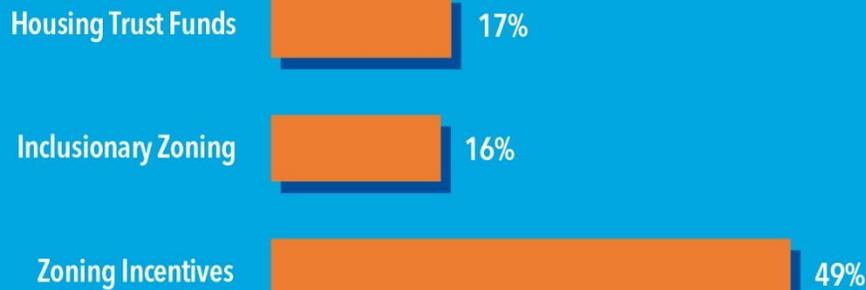
These changes in local affordable housing practices indicate a shift from relying on local government funding to relying on private market mechanisms to provide affordable housing. The authors argue this shift, combined with limited federal funding for deeply targeted subsidies, negatively impacts low-income households. Inclusionary zoning and zoning incentives often serve households higher up the income ladder and typically fail to address the housing needs of both low- and moderate-income households at a meaningful scale. The authors conclude inclusionary zoning and zoning incentives are insufficient to address affordable housing needs on their own. Additional policies are needed.

Read the article at: <https://urbn.is/3wXKg5B>

Fact of the Week

Jurisdictions Favor Market-Reliant Local Affordable Housing Tools, Such as Zoning Incentives

Share of Jurisdictions with Key Local Affordable Housing Policies (2019)



Source: Urban Institute. (2021). *The Rise of Market-Reliant Affordable Housing Tools: Findings from the National Longitudinal Land Use Survey*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://urbn.is/3kHOSrK>.
Note: Based on Urban Institute analysis of the 2019 National Longitudinal Land Use Survey (NLLUS). N = 753 to 915 respondents. The figure includes all census “place”-level jurisdictions in NLLUS with populations greater than 10,000. Variables are nonexclusive.



Source: Urban Institute. (2021). *The Rise of Market-Reliant Affordable Housing Tools: Findings from the National Longitudinal Land Use Survey*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://urbn.is/3kHOSrK>.
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From the Field

Tennessee Allocates \$400 Million in Services for People with Disabilities

Governor Bill Lee of Tennessee announced that [\\$400 million of federal COVID-19 relief funds will be used to provide home- and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#) to individuals with disabilities and elderly individuals. This investment is made possible with funds from Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which provides qualifying states with a temporary 10% increase to their Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for certain HCBS expenditures between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022. States must use the funds exclusively for Medicaid HCBS services by a deadline of March 31, 2024, or they will be lost. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved Tennessee’s \$400 million allocation, and TennCare, Tennessee’s Medicaid program, will oversee distribution of these funds, working closely with the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD). This is the largest one-time investment in HCBS in the state’s history.

CMS created a [toolkit](#) to help state partners plan their funding. The toolkit lists multiple ways a state can use the money to improve their HCBS. CMS urges states to do this by expanding eligibility and increasing access to HCBS, offering a broader range of these services, making long term investments into HCBS, taking action to strengthen the direct service workforce by increasing the salaries of direct support professionals, and acknowledging the deciding factors of health discrepancies amongst the elderly and people with disabilities. TennCare built upon these recommendations, gathering extensive stakeholder input in developing the HBCS spending plan. “Tennessee is excited to begin implementing the initial spending plan which prioritizes services for people who need them and investments in the front-line work force who deliver them. The plan reflects input from a variety of stakeholders both as part of broader discussions related to the HCBS delivery system and

specifically linked to this funding. Tennessee is committed to investing these funds in ways that will have sustainable impact on the Medicaid HCBS service delivery system and on the lives of those we serve and their families,” says Katie Moss, deputy chief of long-term services and supports with TennCare.

Community advocates are also enthusiastic about this spending plan. April Burn-Norris from Tennessee’s Community Bridges Inc., “Under the Tenn Care CHOICES Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)/Long Term Services Supports (LTSS), the adult children of aging parents can be paid as caregivers. If the proposed plan to spend \$400 million on these programs will ensure that eligible adult children are paid to provide care to their nursing home eligible disabled parents, it would be a great way to assist under-staffed nursing facilities and an opportunity to help otherwise financially burdened Tennesseans. I look forward to seeing the resources spent on this program address the need for paying more adult children to provide care to their nursing home eligible disabled parents in Tennessee.”

Tennessee's HCBS spending plan focuses on three key areas of opportunity: 1) to improve access to HCBS for persons supported and family caregivers; 2) to invest in HCBS workforce capacity and competency; and 3) to invest in HCBS provider capacity.

Additionally, the plan aligns with two priorities established by [Governor Lee](#) and the Tennessee General Assembly prior to the pandemic: 1) to “provide services to 2,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities,” resulting in a reduction of the TennCare Employment and Community First CHOICES program waiting list by more than half; and 2) to “invest in recruitment, training and retention of frontline support staff to better serve Tennesseans with disabilities.”

Thanks to the proposed HCBS spending plan, individuals and families in Tennessee will be able to access resources to live a more dignified life.

Events

Join NLIHC for #GivingTuesday on November 30: Give for Affordable Homes!

With #GivingTuesday coming on November 30, NLIHC encourages you to [give for affordable homes!](#)

NLIHC’s ability to mobilize the affordable housing community and advance bold affordable housing solutions has been clearly demonstrated during our response to the pandemic and our push for anti-racist policies to achieve long-term universal, stable, affordable homes for those most in need. We have mobilized thousands of advocates on our many calls/webinars, sign-on campaigns, and other calls-to-action. We leveraged that strength and our high-quality research and policy analysis to have a strong, ongoing impact on members of Congress and the administration. Decision makers have relied on NLIHC for our advice and guidance, often incorporating our specific policy recommendations into their solutions. The pandemic housing and homelessness resources and protections enacted have been historic, as have the administration’s and Congress’s proposals for long-term housing solutions – in all cases strongly influenced by NLIHC policy recommendations.

NLIHC’s state and local partners have been at our side and doing essential on-the-ground work. With NLIHC’s launch of two major campaigns in 2021 – the [End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions](#) (ERASE) project and the [HoUSed campaign](#) for long-term anti-racist universal, stable, affordable housing policies – NLIHC has been able to support dozens of these partners with subgrants, technical assistance, peer-learning opportunities, and more. There has never been a more important moment for the work of NLIHC and our state and local partners than right now – as decision makers consider the “Build Back Better Act” with truly historic [affordable housing investments](#).

On #GivingTuesday this year, give to NLIHC or seek out the homeless services and affordable housing providers and advocates in your community and support their work.

How to support NLIHC and our partners on #GivingTuesday:

- [Use your voice](#) to call for federal solutions to ensure people with the lowest incomes have access to decent, affordable homes. Your participation in this advocacy with decision makers is the most important gift you can give!
- [Become a member](#) of NLIHC or [support](#) NLIHC's work to increase affordable housing for people with the greatest needs.
- Connect with one of NLIHC's [state partners](#) to support them in their work.
- [Sign up for updates](#) and calls to action from NLIHC.

Find your NLIHC state partner at: <https://bit.ly/2W8dnRX>

Donate to NLIHC at: <https://nlihc.org/donate>

Thank you for your advocacy and your support!

Organizing Awards

Nominate an Organization or Campaign for NLIHC's 2022 Organizing Awards

NLIHC encourages affordable housing advocates to submit nominations for the 2022 Annual Organizing Awards. Two awards will be granted for organizations or campaigns that organized to successfully expand funding for affordable housing development, strengthen renters' rights, combat homelessness, mobilize tenants, or achieve other victories that support the lowest-income households. Submit nominations [here](#) by 5 pm ET on Friday, December 17, 2021.

The NLIHC Organizing Awards recognize outstanding achievements during 2021 in statewide, regional, citywide, neighborhood, and/or resident organizing that furthers NLIHC's mission of achieving socially just public policy to ensure people with the lowest incomes in the U.S. have quality, affordable, accessible homes. Special consideration will be given to nominations that incorporate tenant- or resident-centered organizing and leadership. The awards will be featured at the NLIHC 2022 Virtual Housing Policy Forum in spring 2022.

An Organizing Awards Committee composed of NLIHC board members and previous award winners will determine this year's honorees. NLIHC will provide two representatives of each honored group complimentary Forum registrations and one hotel room for the next in-person Policy Forum, as funding allows. Organizing award winners will also be featured at the 2022 Virtual Policy Forum, which provides an opportunity to share their recent victories with attendees from across the country. To see past achievements honored with this award, review our [list of past winners](#).

To be eligible, nominated organizations must be current NLIHC members. Organizations can [become members online](#). Applicants may self-nominate. NLIHC board members and Award Committee members may not nominate an organization with which they are employed or affiliated.

For more information, email Courtney Cooperman, housing advocacy organizer at: ccooperman@nlihc.org

NLIHC News

NLIHC Careers

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of November 14

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of November 14:

- “Protestors Rally to Demand Swifter Distribution of Almost \$1B in Rental Assistance,” *Newsweek*, November 16 at: <https://bit.ly/3oKnZ7T>
- “The federal poverty line struggles to capture the economic hardship that half of Americans face,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, November 16, at: <https://bit.ly/3FGaX29>
- “No Home for the Holidays?” *The Boston Globe*, November 17, at: <https://bit.ly/3cBtcsO>
- “The House Just Passed Biden’s Build Back Better Bill: What’s in It?” *Time*, November 19, at: <https://time.com/6121415/build-back-better-spending-bill-summary/>

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