



# MEMO MEMBERS

*The Weekly Newsletter of the National Low Income Housing Coalition*

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## NLIHC ANNUAL HOUSING POLICY CONFERENCE IS HERE

Walk-ins are welcome at NLIHC's 2009 Housing Policy Conference and Lobby Day, to be held April 19-22, at the Capital Hilton Hotel at 16th and K Sts., NW, Washington, DC. HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, House Financial Services Chairman Barney Frank (D-MA), and White House Domestic Policy Council Director Melody Barnes are the three of the plenary speakers.

Monday and Tuesday will be packed with plenary events, workshops and networking. Sessions at this year's conference will cover topics including the National Housing Trust Fund, renters and foreclosures, low income housing tax credits, the future of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and federal housing finance, homelessness prevention, the reauthorization of the McKinney-Vento Act, the federal budget and appropriations, and much more.

There will be a reception on Monday night at which the 3rd annual Cushing N. Dolbeare Media award winners will be honored.

The 27th Annual Housing Leadership Award Reception will be held on Tuesday evening. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and NLIHC's own Sheila Crowley will be recognized for their work in establishing the National Housing Trust Fund. This reception will be held at the Washington Court Hotel and registration is separate from conference registration.

Details can be found at <https://www2398.sslldomain.com/nlihc/conference/index.cfm>

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## OUT OF REACH 2009

### Housing Wage Increases to \$17.84

NLIHC released its annual Out of Reach report in a conference call with the media on April 14. Out of Reach 2009 reports that the national average two-bedroom Housing Wage rose to \$17.84, up from \$17.32 last year. The Housing Wage is the hourly wage that a household must earn in order to afford the Fair Market Rent (FMR), assuming full-time, year-round employment. This year's Housing Wage translates to an annual income of \$37,105.

The report finds that someone earning the federal minimum wage of \$6.55 must work 109 hours per week to afford the national average two-bedroom FMR of \$928. Consistent with last year's findings, there is no metropolitan area or rural county in the country where even the one-bedroom FMR is affordable with a full-time job at the prevailing minimum wage.

In 30 states, more than two full-time minimum wage jobs are required to afford the two-bedroom FMR.

During the press call, Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, noted that housing affordability for renters is expected to suffer as unemployment continues to rise and rents largely remain stable. Mr. Baker called for federal policies that would transform the growing stock of vacant foreclosed homes into rental housing for very low income households. Sheila Crowley, president of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, echoed those sentiments, advocating for \$5 billion in FY10 funding for the National Housing Trust Fund and an expansion of the housing choice voucher program by 200,000 vouchers each year for the next 10 years.

"The longstanding structural deficit of rental homes that the lowest income people can afford, exacerbated by the economic recession, will surely lead to more people becoming homeless," Ms. Crowley said on the report's release. "We hope that Out of Reach will demonstrate to policy makers the urgency of acting now to increase the supply of affordable housing and housing assistance for those who are hit hardest by the recession."

Published since 1989, Out of Reach compares the cost of rental housing with household incomes, each state's minimum wage, and average renter wages in every state, metropolitan area, and county in the country. Rental costs and household incomes reflect FMRs and median family incomes published by HUD, and renter wages are based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The introduction to Out of Reach connects the new local data to the unemployment and foreclosure crises, provides state-level findings, and provides several tables showing rankings among states and regions.

The report and additional Out of Reach data are available at [www.nlihc.org/oor2009](http://www.nlihc.org/oor2009).

With the release of Out of Reach 2009, NLIHC has updated its Congressional District Profiles with the Out of Reach data. Congressional District Profiles are fact sheets that contain housing data for each of the 435 congressional districts and

the District of Columbia. The profiles provide information on the shortage of affordable rental housing and the incidence of housing cost burden for the districts. Out of Reach 2009 data for metropolitan areas and counties in the district are included to demonstrate local rent levels and subsequent Housing Wages for communities in the district. Recent data from the American Community Survey is also used to provide information on the state as a whole.

Congressional District Profiles, which are frequently used by advocates on lobby visits and in other discussions with policymakers, are available on NLIHC's website at [www.nlihc.org/detail/article.cfm?article\\_id=3810&id=61](http://www.nlihc.org/detail/article.cfm?article_id=3810&id=61).

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## CAPITOL HILL

### Advocates Hope Spring Showers Will Bring Legislative Flowers

Both the House and Senate will reconvene on April 20 following the Spring district work period, and the coming weeks are expected to be busy ones for housing-related legislation. Advocates anticipate the following issues will be at the top of lawmakers' agenda:

**Budget and Appropriations.** The House and Senate are expected to act on a joint FY10 budget resolution by early May. On April 3, the House and Senate each matched the President's request for a \$3.5 trillion budget. But, in the details, the House and Senate budgets would provide about \$7 billion and \$15 billion less, respectively, than the President's request for domestic programs (see Memo, 4/3). Both the House and Senate budget resolutions include language allowing for the capitalization of the National Housing Trust Fund in FY10.

The budget resolution sets an overall guideline for federal spending and provides specific spending limits to the appropriations committees. In May, June and July, the House and Senate appropriations committees are expected to take action on their respective FY10 spending bills. One of the first actions of both the House and the Senate appropriations committees is to then divide up their spending authority from the budget resolution among the 12 appropriations subcommittees, including the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies subcommittee. October 1 is the start of the new fiscal year, the deadline for completing action on the FY10 appropriations bills.

For FY10, NLIHC is advocating for full funding for Section 8 project-based and voucher renewals, increased funding for public housing and for 200,000 new, incremental housing vouchers, among other increases. Apart from the HUD appropriations

process, NLIHC is also advocating for at least the \$1 billion that President Obama has requested for the National Housing Trust Fund. See FY10 recommendations at: <http://www.nlihc.org/doc/budget-and-approps-ltrhead.pdf> and <http://www.nlihc.org/doc/NHTF-new-vouchers.pdf>

**Renter Protections and Predatory Lending.** The House Financial Services Committee will hold a hearing on H.R. 1728, the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act, on Thursday, April 23, at 1 pm in room 2128 of the Rayburn House office building. H.R. 1728, which was introduced March 25 by Representatives Brad Miller (D-NC) and Mel Watt (D-NC), is intended to eliminate many of the predatory lending practices that underlie the current foreclosure crisis. In addition, the bill contains a provision that would protect renters in foreclosed properties; these protections have been sought by NLIHC and low income advocates (see, Memo 3/27).

The Committee is expected to mark up the bill soon after the hearing.

**Preservation of Federally Assisted Housing.** House Financial Services Committee Chair Barney Frank (D-MA) will likely introduce this spring comprehensive legislation to encourage the preservation of the country's privately owned, federally assisted housing. This legislation is expected to address many areas of concern to advocates, including a right of first purchase for preservation-minded purchasers, non-preemption of federal and state preservation laws, and the creation of a preservation database to permit advocates to monitor the status of federally assisted projects.

**Section 8 Voucher Reform.** The Section 8 Voucher Reform Act (SEVRA) is expected to be introduced in House this spring by House Financial Services Chair Barney Frank (D-MA). A discussion draft of the bill is expected to be released sometime in April and, after introduction, the House Committee on Financial Services could move the bill quickly through committee. A Senate version of the legislation is expected to be introduced after the House's.

NLIHC strongly supports the SEVRA legislation. In the 110th Congress, SEVRA legislation passed the House but did not move out of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs. The bill for the 111th Congress is expected to include a funding distribution system for the voucher program that make voucher renewal funding more reliable for public housing agencies, landlords and tenants. The bill will likely simplify the process by which rents are set for voucher holders and residents of public and project-based Section 8 housing. The bill is also expected to include proposals to make HUD's Fair Market Rents more accurate and, thus, improve how well they can be used in more housing markets. The bill will also include provisions to improve the portability of vouchers.

It remains unclear whether provisions to expand the current Moving to Work public housing agency demonstration program to more PHAs will be included in the re-introduced SEVRA bill. The bill from the 110th Congress, H.R. 1851, did expand and rename the Moving to Work program (to the Housing Innovation Program) while adding some resident protections and limits on the deregulatory goals of the demonstration.

NLIHC opposed the expansion because the demonstration has not been evaluated and, while some of the PHAs with MTW authority can demonstrate how the program benefited voucher holders and public housing residents in their programs, there is sufficient evidence that residents were time-limited out of affordable housing assistance, that rent burdens increased significantly for others, and that some PHAs imposed new policies that effectively prohibited the lowest income people from accessing their housing programs.

Enacting SEVRA would bring a variety of efficiencies and improvements to this program for currently assisted tenants, housing authorities and the hundreds of thousands of people on PHA waiting lists across the country. Enactment would also increase the likelihood of not only fully funding the renewal of all existing vouchers in FY10 but also securing additional funds for 200,000 new vouchers in FY10, a goal of NLIHC and many other housing organizations.

**CRA Modernization.** Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) introduced H.R. 1479, The CRA Modernization Act of 2009, on March 12 (see Memo, 3/13). The CRA, or the Community Reinvestment Act, requires banks to meet the credit needs of low and moderate income neighborhoods that they serve. H.R. 1479 would reform and expand the CRA to cover additional institutions such as independent mortgage companies, penalize banks that engage in predatory or other abusive lending practices, and expand the obligation under CRA to include lending and services to minority communities. Advocates have been supportive of these changes. The Financial Services Committee is expected to hold a series of hearings on the bill and its impacts, likely be held in May and June. Advocates are urged to ask their members of Congress to co-sponsor H.R. 1479.

## Committee to Consider HUD Nominees

The Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs will hold a hearing on April 23 on the President's nominations of Ron Sims to be HUD Deputy Secretary (see Memo, 2/6) and Peter Kovar to be the HUD Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (see Memo, 3/6). The committee must vote the nominations out of committee before the full Senate considers the nominations.

The nomination hearing for Mr. Sims and Mr. Kovar will begin at 10 am in room 538 of the Dirksen Senate office building.

The Senate has three other pending nominations for high-level positions at HUD, including Deputy Secretary. The nominees, and posts for which they have been nominated, are: Helen R. Kanovsky, General Counsel; David Stevens, Assistant Secretary for Housing and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Commissioner; and John Trasviña, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (see Memo, 3/27). A hearing date has not been set for these other nominees.

## McKinney-Vento Chart Compares New Bills, Current Law

NLIHC has updated a side-by-side chart highlighting the differences between current law and the new, identical bills introduced on April 2 in both the House and Senate to reauthorize HUD's McKinney-Vento homeless assistance programs (see Memo, 4/3).

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH) of 2009 was introduced on April 2 in the House by Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI) and in the Senate by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI). The bills, H.R. 1877 and S. 808, are very similar to legislation that passed the House of Representatives last October during the 110th Congress (see Memo, 10/3/08).

In addition to authorizing \$2.2 billion annually for the McKinney-Vento programs, the legislation would streamline the program and place an emphasis on homelessness prevention and the rapid re-housing of people who become homeless. The three separate HUD McKinney-Vento homeless assistance programs (the Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care, Moderate Rehabilitation/Single Room Occupancy) would be consolidated into a single Continuum of Care Program. Likewise, the Emergency Shelter Grant program would be modified as the Emergency Solutions Grants program, with a focus similar to the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) established in the stimulus package.

Other key provisions of the bill include an expanded definition of homelessness and the establishment of a nationwide goal to ensure that individuals and families who become homeless return to permanent housing within 30 days.

The side by side can be found here: <http://www.nlihc.org/doc/McKinney-Reauthorization-side-by-side.pdf>

## THE ADMINISTRATION

### President to Nominate Márquez for CPD

President Obama announced on April 17 his intention to nominate Mercedes Márquez to be the HUD Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development (CPD).

Ms. Márquez has been the General Manager of the City of Los Angeles Housing Department since 2004. Ms. Márquez also served as the Senior Counsel to HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo and as HUD's Deputy General Counsel for Civil Rights and Fair Housing during the Clinton administration, where she worked on fair lending and fair housing enforcement and on rural housing and economic development policy, according to the White House press release.

In the private sector, Ms. Márquez worked for McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc., a nationwide housing development firm, and was a partner at Litt & Márquez, where she practiced public interest litigation.

HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) administers the McKinney-Vento homeless assistance programs; Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); HOME; Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP); Rural Housing and Economic Development; and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), among other programs.

This office also administers the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) formula grants established by 2008's Housing and Economic Recovery Act and this year's funds from the \$787 billion stimulus bill for the \$2 billion second round of NSP competitive grants and the \$1.5 billion of Homelessness Prevention Funds.

It is expected that CPD will administer the National Housing Trust Fund.

A key aspect of the CDBG, HOME, ESG and HOPWA block grant programs is the Consolidated Plan (ConPlan), for which CPD also has responsibility. The ConPlan represents one process and one document for the planning and application requirements for these four block grants. A critical element of each ConPlan is each grantee's certification that it is "affirmatively furthering fair housing" and taking proactive steps to advance fair housing. Housing advocates believe that HUD should do more to enforce affirmatively furthering fair housing requirements, and plan to work with the new CPD Assistant Secretary on these and other issues.

The Senate will have to confirm Ms. Márquez's nomination. No hearing has been scheduled yet by the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.

Link to the President's press release at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/President-Obama-Announces-More-Key-Administration-Posts-4/17/2009/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/President-Obama-Announces-More-Key-Administration-Posts-4/17/2009/)

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## FROM THE FIELD

### NY Advocates Rally to Restore Funding for Community-Based Housing Development

Advocates across New York state were recently able to restore operating funding for community-based housing nonprofits, but had mixed success in restoring funding for other housing priorities.

Nearly 300 affordable housing advocates sporting bright yellow caps emblazoned with "Restore Full Funding to NPCs and RPCs" rallied in Albany, the state capital, in late February. The slogan referred to Governor David Paterson's (D) proposed cuts to two programs that provide operating support to community-based nonprofits that develop and operate affordable housing.

New York State has provided operating support for community-based nonprofit housing organizations through the Neighborhood and Rural Preservation Programs, which currently assist 153 Neighborhood Preservation Companies (NPCs) in urbanized areas, and 65 Rural Preservation Companies (RPCs). The programs provide these organizations a reliable stream of funding to cover the administrative and planning costs necessary to run broad-based programs designed to preserve and promote housing opportunities for low and moderate income people.

The Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York State and The New York State Rural Housing Coalition, both NLIHC state partners, organized the advocates for the annual Legislative Action Day. Speaking of the proposed cuts at the rally, State Senate Housing Committee Chair Pedro Espanada said, "We shouldn't take them sitting down!"

Throughout March, advocates maintained the energy sparked by the rally, convincing leaders in the New York Senate and Assembly to overcome the Governor's proposed cuts and fully restore funding for the two imperiled programs. Meeting later in the month, New York State Rural Advocates hosted its annual Legislative Reception at which Assembly Housing Chair Vito Lopez assured attendees that the Assembly would include restorations to the NPC and RPC programs. Consequently, each NPC would continue to receive about \$89,000 and each RPC about \$86,000 to support their work. Although happy to have dodged drastic cuts, advocates have long sought appropriations that would provide each NPC/RPC with at least the \$97,500 called for in enabling legislation.

NPCs and RPCs develop and rehab housing in areas where household incomes are below 90% of the area median income, developing affordable housing assisted with HOME, CDBG, and other dollars. NPCs and RPCs also manage affordable housing, assist first-time home buyers, organize tenant associations, provide tenant counseling and job training, in addition to other services. The legislation creating the programs also recognized the value of resident involvement in neighborhood preservation activities.

Although relieved that operating support will not be slashed, advocates remain disappointed that other state housing programs were not restored, including cuts of over \$200 million to the state's major capital programs, and cuts to the Rural Rental Assistance Program which leverages federal Rural Development Section 515 funds.

On a more positive note, funds were completely restored to the SRO Supportive Services program. This will enable all 18,484 existing supportive housing units, as well as 1,500 units opening this year, to receive supportive services. The Supportive Housing Network of New York, another NLIHC state partner, worked particularly hard to restore funds for this program. Full funding was also restored to homeless prevention programs and programs providing operating and supportive services for housing serving youth aging out of foster care and chronically homeless people with HIV/AIDS.

For more information, contact Blair Sebastian, Executive Director, New York State Rural Housing Coalition, [blair@ruralhousing.org](mailto:blair@ruralhousing.org), or Joe Agostine, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York State, [agostine@npcnys.org](mailto:agostine@npcnys.org).

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## NEWS & EVENTS

### NLIHC Funder Honored

Bob Hohler, Executive Director of the Melville Charitable Trust, has been named Distinguished Grantmaker of the Year by the Council on Foundations. The award is the Council's most prestigious.

Mr. Hohler has led the Melville Charitable Trust, a Connecticut-based private foundation, for the past 18 years. In that time, the Trust has played a major role in creating the solutions that will end homelessness.

"Mr. Hohler has helped to create and implement the Trust's core grantmaking philosophy that philanthropy must work with and support government to effectively address issues of poverty including health disparities, access to education, and, most importantly, access to safe, decent and affordable housing," the Council on Foundations said in announcement of the award. "He has led the Trust in highly creative grantmaking strategies."

The Melville Charitable Trust has been a major supporter of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, providing the primary support for the National Housing Trust Fund Campaign. "No one has done more than Bob to make clear the importance of national housing policy advocacy to ending homelessness," said NLIHC President Sheila Crowley. "This honor is well deserved."

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## NLIHC NEWS

### NLIHC Has Staff Opening

NLIHC is seeking a Research Analyst who will be responsible for data analysis using data from the U.S. Census, HUD, other public source, and NLIHC's own data collection, and preparation of research reports. Requirements include strong oral and written communication skills; demonstrated professional experience with GIS, databases, SPSS or similar statistical packages, and large datasets; advanced degree in Sociology, Geography, Public Policy, or a similar field; and a commitment to social justice. Experience or coursework in survey research a plus. NLIHC offers a competitive compensation package. Send cover letter and resume to Deputy Director, NLIHC, 727 15th Street NW, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20005. Applications accepted until position is filled. EEO/AA.

## FACT OF THE WEEK

### Two-Bedroom Housing Wage Tops \$30 in Six Metro Areas

In six metropolitan areas in the U.S., someone with a full-time, year-round job must earn over \$30 per hour in order to afford their area's two-bedroom Fair Market Rent, assuming they spend no more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities.

	<b>Two-Bedroom Fair Market Rent</b>	<b>Housing Wage</b>
Stamford-Norwalk, CT	\$1,703	\$32.75
San Francisco, CA	\$1,658	\$31.88
Honolulu, HI	\$1,631	\$31.37
Westchester County, NY	\$1,610	\$30.96
Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA	\$1,590	\$30.58
Nassau-Suffolk, NY	\$1,581	\$30.40

Source: Wardrip, K.E., Pelletiere, D., & Crowley, S. (2009). *Out of Reach 2009*. Washington, DC: National Low Income Housing Coalition. Retrieved April 15, 2009 from [www.nlihc.org/oor2009](http://www.nlihc.org/oor2009).

### NLIHC STAFF

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- Angela Chen** Administrative Assistant, x224
- Linda Couch** Deputy Director, x228
- Sheila Crowley** President, x224
- Danna Fischer** Legislative Director / Counsel, x243
- Ed Gramlich** Outreach Director, x314
- Elisha Harig-Blaine** Outreach Associate, x316
- Jake Kirsch** Outreach Associate, x 244
- Jay Klein** Outreach Intern
- Ellen Lathrop** Legislative/Communications Intern
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- Khara Norris**, Development Associate, x242
- Danilo Pelletiere** Research Director, x237
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- La'Teashia Sykes** Outreach Associate, x247
- Michelle Goodwin Thompson** Director of Finance &  
Information Technology, x234
- Keith Wardrip** Senior Research Analyst, x245
- Greg White** Housing Policy Analyst, x230

### ABOUT NLIHC

The National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated solely to achieving equitable federal policy that assures affordable, accessible, and healthy homes for the people with the lowest incomes in the United States.

Established in 1974 by Cushing N. Dolbeare, NLIHC educates, organizes, and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing within healthy neighborhoods for everyone.

### TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

NLIHC membership is the best way to stay informed about affordable housing issues, keep in touch with advocates around the country, and support NLIHC's work.

NLIHC membership information is available on our website, at [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org), or by fax, mail, or e-mail. Just e-mail us at [membership@nlihc.org](mailto:membership@nlihc.org) or call 202-662-1530 to request membership materials to distribute at meetings and conferences.