

## Preface

*By Sheila Crowley, President and CEO, National Low Income Housing Coalition*

“For more than 30 years, the National Low Income Housing Coalition has led the way in advocating for decent, affordable housing in America. Their latest *Out of Reach* annual report on rental housing affordability shows a growing need to preserve and expand the current stock of affordable rental housing. The hardships faced by many low-income renters in an economy recovering from the recession and record foreclosures make this need all the more urgent. We are grateful for the NLIHC’s efforts, and we will continue our partnership to ensure that more Americans have better access to decent and affordable rental housing.” Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi – April 2010

Speaker Pelosi is one of our nation’s leaders who understands that good housing is fundamental to individual and family well-being, just as good schools, access to good health care, well-paying jobs, and income security are. The current housing crisis, precipitated by predatory lending and the bubble in housing prices, made explicit how central stable, affordable housing is to our people, our communities, and our economy.

It also has exposed the long standing structural deficit of good housing for the people who labor in the low wage workforce and elderly and disabled people who live on fixed incomes. This is the story of *Out of Reach*. While many public officials have cited *Out of Reach* for years, it took the larger housing crisis that has enveloped the nation to bring the story into full public view.

The watchword in today’s housing policy debate is “balance.” We need greater balance between homeownership and renting, and equal respect paid to both. We need greater balance in federal housing subsidies, the majority of which goes to higher income people through the tax code. We need greater balance between our desire for square footage and our care for our planet. We need greater balance in housing choices in every community, so that all members, no matter age, income, family status, health, or race, have equal access to safe decent and affordable homes.

The purpose of *Out of Reach* is to make sure that every public official and every housing advocate, at the local, state, and national level, has sound and easily accessed data to argue for housing justice and make decisions about allocating public resources. I must first acknowledge the late Cushing Dolbeare, who founded the National Low Income Housing Coalition and produced *Out of Reach* for its first several years in the 1990s. Successive NLIHC staff have stayed true to the methodology, while enhancing *Out of Reach* with new data and analyses each year. This year Research Analyst Megan DeCrappeo, Research Director Danilo Pelletiere, Communications Associate Taylor Materio, and Research Intern Elisabeth Teater have taken *Out of Reach* to a new level of excellence.