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Budget and Appropriations

Congressional Leaders Eye Temporary Funding Measure to Keep Federal Government Funded into December and Avoid October Shutdown – Take Action!

Lawmakers will not return to Capitol Hill until after Labor Day, but already discussions are underway about how to keep the federal government funded after September 30, when the new fiscal year begins, and avoid a government shutdown. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) agree that a short-term spending measure – known as a continuing resolution (CR) – will be necessary to keep the federal government funded and give members of Congress more time to reach a final agreement on fiscal year (FY) 2024 spending bills.

CRs maintain the previously appropriated year's level of funding for federal programs for a specified period of time. Because the cost of housing and development rises every year, [it is crucial](#) that HUD's affordable housing and homelessness assistance programs receive increased annual appropriations just to maintain the current number of people and communities served. Leaders are reportedly discussing a CR that would extend government funding to December 8, although there is no final agreement on how long the CR would last. Once the CR expires, Congress would need either to pass all 12 fiscal year 2024 spending bills, enact another short-term CR to continue negotiations, or risk a government shutdown.

Along with the CR, Congress will likely aim to pass a supplemental spending measure to provide additional funding for FEMA's disaster relief programs, which are slated to run out of money by the end of August, and additional assistance for the war in Ukraine. Republican lawmakers in states hit by disasters – including Speaker McCarthy – requested additional assistance from the White House to help with recovery efforts in their communities.

However, even as House Republicans request additional aid, it is not clear whether a clean CR and supplemental spending measure will easily pass the House. Members of the far-right House Freedom Caucus (HFC) are inviting a shutdown and vowing to oppose a CR unless it includes draconian cuts to spending and other harmful provisions that would not pass the Senate. HFC members owe their outsized influence to a deal struck with Speaker McCarthy to secure the votes needed to win his leadership role. Under the terms of the deal, HFC members agreed to vote for Speaker McCarthy in exchange for several procedural concessions, including allowing a single member of the House to force a vote to recall him from his position at any time.

HFC members are still strategizing on how to exact even steeper funding cuts from the FY24 budget, after pressuring Republican leaders in the House to write FY24 spending bills to roughly FY22 levels – which would result in cuts to domestic spending of almost \$131 billion. Thanks to the determined, relentless work of housing advocates around the country, at a time when domestic programs were facing prospective cuts of up to 30%, the House's draft FY24 appropriations bill provided a 10% increase to HUD funding. While still insufficient to cover the level of need, this increase is a testament to the power of our collective action.

Together, we can [achieve historic protections and resources](#) for renters with the lowest incomes, and together we can continue to fight the ongoing threat of cuts to HUD's vital affordable

housing and homelessness resources. Advocates should use NLIHC's [Legislative Action Center](#) to call or email their members of Congress and urge them to expand – not cut – funding for HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness programs in the FY24 budget.

NLIHC also released an updated [Congressional Recess Toolkit](#) that provides advocates with ideas, advice, and tips on how to set up in-district meetings with their members of Congress, along with talking points, sample op-eds, sample social media messages, and more. Advocacy over August recess will be crucial in setting the stage for resumed negotiations on the federal budget when Congress returns in September and for warding off ongoing threats to HUD's vital programs.

Background

Members adjourned for recess on July 27 after months of contentious budget negotiations that culminated in vastly different spending proposals from the [House](#) and [Senate](#). The discrepancies between the House and Senate appropriations bills set the stage for what will likely be a tumultuous September on Capitol Hill. Congress only has until September 30 – the start of the new federal fiscal year – to enact all 12 appropriations bills or pass a continuing resolution (CR) in order to keep the federal government funded and avoid a shutdown. Given how far apart the House and Senate are on their FY24 spending bills, and the fact that far-right members of the House are already refusing to vote for a clean CR that does not cut federal spending, members are raising alarms about a likely government shutdown on October 1.

While advocates across the country have done tremendous work to ensure that neither the House nor Senate FY24 spending bills drastically cut funding for vital HUD programs, including rental assistance and Homeless Assistance Grants, the road to enacting a final FY24 spending bill with sufficient HUD funding is steep. With members of Congress back in their home states and districts, August recess is the perfect time for advocates to set up in-district meetings with their members to stress the impact and importance of increased HUD funding in any final appropriations bill.

Take Action!

Thanks to the hard work of advocates across the country who mobilized to weigh in with their elected officials, HUD's vital rental assistance, homelessness assistance, and tribal housing program were spared from cuts in both the House and Senate bills. We still have work to do to ensure these funding levels remain in a final bill, and that other critical programs, such as Public Housing, are also fully funded.

Keep making your voice heard, and tell Congress that it cannot balance the federal budget at the expense of people with the lowest incomes! Advocates can take action TODAY in the following ways:

- [Contact your senators and representatives](#) to urge them to expand – not cut – investments in affordable, accessible homes through the FY24 spending bill!
- August recess is the perfect time for advocates to schedule in-district meetings with their members of Congress to urge them to support higher funding for affordable housing and

homelessness programs. Check out NLIHC's updated [Congressional Recess Toolkit](#) for information on how to set up in-district meetings, meeting tips, talking points, and more!

- Join over 2,000 organizations by signing on to a [national letter](#) from the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding ([CHCDF](#)), calling on Congress to oppose budget cuts and instead to support the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY24.

Want to Support NLIHC's Work? Become a Member!

One way to support NLIHC and this work is by becoming an NLIHC member. NLIHC membership is open to individuals, organizations, corporations, and government agencies, and annual membership dues are suggested amounts, meaning you can join at any amount that works for you.

You can join easily online at nlihc.org/membership – or contact outreach@nlihc.org with any questions.

HoUsed Campaign for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes

House Financial Services Committee Democrats Send Letter to FHFA Urging Agency to Provide Robust Tenant Protections

Democrats on the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Financial Services sent a [letter](#) to Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) Director Sandra Thompson on August 23 urging the agency to use its full authority to provide permanent, meaningful protections for tenants living in FHFA-financed properties.

Led by the Committee's Ranking Member, Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA), the letter was signed by Representatives Al Green (D-TX), Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Juan Vargas (D-CA), Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), Nikema Williams (D-GA), Ritchie Torres (D-NY), and Steven Horsford (D-NV). The letter requests that the FHFA take meaningful action to protect renters from egregious rent increases and evictions while also:

- Setting reasonable limits on rent increases for FHFA-backed properties.
- Implementing standards to ensure FHFA-backed housing is safe, accessible, high-quality, and energy efficient.
- Ensuring tenants' right to organize through tenant associations and tenant unions and creating an Office of Tenant Protections to enforce the new rules and regulations developed by FHFA.
- Strengthening anti-discrimination protections – including protections from source-of-income discrimination – and ensuring compliance with fair housing laws.
- Prohibiting evictions without just- or good-cause.

“In the wake of the pandemic, we have seen exponential pressures on renters and the housing market, showing how volatile our nation's housing crisis has become and the challenges it poses

to equitable economic recovery,” writes Ranking Member Waters in the letter. “Maintaining the status quo is no longer sufficient...FHFA has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect renters and help stabilize our nation’s housing market for all.”

Read the letter from Ranking Member Waters and the other House Finance Committee Democrats [here](#).

Join Today’s (August 28) National HoUsed Campaign Call for Universal, Stable, Affordable Homes!

[Join](#) today’s (August 28) national HoUsed campaign call from 2:30 to 4:00 pm ET. NLIHC’s Noah Patton will discuss housing stability and the outlook for long-term recovery following recent disasters in Hawaii, California, Washington State, and Texas. Kate Reynolds of the Urban Institute will share [new data](#) showing as many as one in five renters face pressure to move from their current homes, with some moving involuntarily in order to avoid retaliation, rent hikes, or eviction. We will also receive field updates, share the latest news from Capitol Hill, and more. [Register for today’s call here](#).

Homelessness and Housing First

HUD Approves Modification to Housing Choice Voucher Program to Support Homelessness Solutions in Los Angeles

On August 18, HUD [approved](#) requests by the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) and Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) to modify Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program admissions requirements to accelerate efforts to help people experiencing homelessness obtain housing.

Responding to [requests](#) from city and county housing officials, HUD approved a waiver that will exempt the Los Angeles housing authorities from rules that required housing agencies to verify a household’s income before issuing a housing voucher. This type of requirement often delays access to the assistance needed by people experiencing homelessness to move into stable, affordable homes. The waiver will allow local housing providers to issue vouchers to people experiencing homelessness and then verify their income through independent, third-party sources within 60 days.

HUD has approved several additional waiver requests from LACDA and HACLA to facilitate and expedite the leasing process for people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles. HUD approved a waiver on the Social Security, residency, and homelessness requirements for the HCV program in July, allowing applicants to self-certify that they meet these requirements to move into housing and delaying the receipt of the documents at admission. Housing authorities will work to collect verification once individuals are in permanent housing.

“For too long, the system responded to unhoused Angelenos with a 30+ page questionnaire asking for proof that they were low income instead of with the housing they needed,” [said Mayor Karen Bass](#). “This critical agreement will prevent people from languishing in interim housing because of the need to prove income and other factors. This announcement addresses major roadblocks, putting housing first and bureaucracy last.”

Read HUD’s press release at: <https://tinyurl.com/7ebs7vu7>

Read Mayor Bass’s press release at: <https://tinyurl.com/347r7v4h>

Disaster Housing Recovery

Disaster Housing Recovery Update – August 28, 2023

Congressional and National Updates

Congress remains [unlikely](#) to replenish FEMA’s Disaster Relief Fund any time soon. While lawmakers on both sides of the aisle recognize the urgent need to do so – FEMA is projected to run out of reserves early next month – the congressional schedule and a host of other pressing matters makes a quick replenishment of the fund improbable.

Meanwhile, the recent [demands](#) expressed by the House Freedom Caucus – which suggest the high likelihood of a government shutdown – make replenishment even less likely.

The White House [released](#) a request for a supplemental spending bill that included \$12 billion in funding for FEMA’s Disaster Relief Fund. No funds were requested for HUD’s long-term recovery programs.

The Brookings Institution released a [report](#) on the need to consolidate and streamline federal disaster recovery programs and agencies, arguing that the current patchwork of federal agencies requires improved interagency coordination and reforms for FEMA.

The Government Accountability Office released a [report](#) requesting that HUD develop greater data collection guidance to support analysis of block grant funds, including funds associated with the agency’s Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program.

The National Governors Association’s Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force [held](#) a meeting at this year’s National Governors Association annual convening. The prospect of permanently authorizing the CDBG-DR program – a goal supported by NLIHC’s Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition’s (DHRC) – was not discussed.

Disaster Updates

Maui Wildfires

The number of those missing following the wildfires that tore through portions of Maui has [ballooned](#) to more than 1,000. Authorities are urging those who may have lost loved ones to donate DNA samples in order to help identify bodies. Currently, the death toll stands at 115.

The fires [destroyed](#) 2,200 buildings – 86% of which were residential – mostly in the City of Lahaina. In total, 10 square miles of Maui’s 735-square-mile surface area burnt during the fires.

According to [Maui County](#), there are currently 11 hotel shelters housing those whose homes were damaged or destroyed. In addition, there are 28 meal distribution sites, three social service sites, and two water distribution sites currently operational, along with various medical, logistical, and supply distribution areas.

Hawaii emergency managers faced significant public scrutiny in the aftermath of the fires, specifically regarding the lack of evacuation warnings issued before the disaster spiraled out of control. Road closures [complicated](#) the evacuation. Some closures were established due to the fires themselves, while others were put in place because of power lines brought down by high winds.

President Biden [toured](#) impacted areas of Maui on August 21 and promised to provide federal assistance for local authorities and families.

Maui has [become accustomed](#) to wildfires. A blaze in 2018 destroyed over a dozen homes, after which authorities warned that a repeat scenario could be even more destructive.

A list of resources to assist survivors of the Maui fire is available [here](#).

Tropical Storm Hillary

In a meteorologically [rare event](#), a tropical cyclone originating in the Pacific Ocean impacted portions of southern California, Arizona, and Nevada on August 20 and 21. Tropical Storm Hilary impacted communities across the region, leading to [catastrophic flooding and mudslides](#) in mountainous and desert areas. Several non-profits are [operating](#) assistance programs.

For those experiencing homelessness in the region, the risk from catastrophic flooding was severe. Housing and community mutual aid organizations [worked](#) to move those living on the street into emergency shelters and hotel rooms in advance of the storm. However, [many viewed](#) the preparations as incomplete, leaving those who might be affected unaware or unprepared for the storm.

Mutual aid groups shouldered the difficult [job](#) of providing direct assistance to many of Los Angeles’s homeless residents in advance of Tropical Storm Hilary, despite receiving little assistance from city authorities.

For many survivors of Hurricane Ian, persistent extreme heat is [proving](#) to be a second disaster, especially for individuals vulnerable to heat-related health impacts, such as individuals with disabilities and older residents.

[Several](#) people were reported missing in the mountains east of Los Angeles in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Hilary.

Washington State Wildfires

More than 200 homes have [been destroyed](#) by wildfires in areas outside of Spokane in eastern Washington State. The fires, which as of late last week had killed two people, remain active at varying levels of containment.

Firefighters made some progress over the course of last week, [allowing](#) highways to reopen across the region.

The town of [Medical Lake](#) was significantly impacted by the wildfires, leading to the displacement of 5,000 residents. Many are returning to find their homes destroyed.

The wildfires were [fueling](#) air quality advisories across the Pacific Northwest.

Tropical Storm Harold

Severe rainfall raised [concerns](#) of catastrophic flooding in the southern portion of Texas as Tropical Storm Harold roared ashore on August 22. The storm [dissipated](#) over Texas on August 23.

The storm [triggered](#) flash floods and power outages and threatened to create multiple tornados as it plowed through the region. Damage assessments are ongoing.

Northeast Floods

After catastrophic flooding, many Vermonters are making [hard choices](#) about where and whether to rebuild.

Vermont's lone landfill is [struggling](#) to handle the surge in flood debris as debris removal efforts shift into full swing in many parts of the state thanks to FEMA Public Assistance. Currently, the landfill is at capacity but is [keeping pace](#).

FEMA [announced](#) that it would be shipping manufactured housing units to areas affected by flooding to serve as temporary homes for those whose homes were destroyed during the disaster. Authorities estimate that up to 250 housing units needed extreme repairs following the floods. Displaced families are receiving rental assistance funds from FEMA, but many still have nowhere to turn given the lack of housing stock. The manufactured homes should be set up by mid-to-late September.

Some families impacted by flooding are still [waiting](#) on federal assistance to begin repairing their flood damaged homes.

HUD

HUD PIH Invites Certain PHAs to Apply for Fifth MTW Cohort

HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) issued [Notice PIH 2023-20](#), inviting public housing agencies (PHAs) with 1,000 or fewer combined units of public housing and Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) to apply for the fifth cohort of the so-called Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration Expansion. This fifth cohort, called the MTW Flexibility II Cohort, will test the overall effects of Expansion PHAs using various MTW "flexibilities," with a focus on "administrative efficiencies." Notice PIH-2023-20 allows Expansion PHAs to use any MTW waivers and associated activities allowed in the [MTW Operations Notice](#), which enables Expansion PHAs to impose work requirements, time limits, and increased rents on residents – policies that do not address the three MTW statutory objectives of increasing housing choice, promoting self-sufficiency, and reducing PHA costs. (See NLIHC's [summary and critique](#) of the MTW Operations Notice.)

The first MTW Expansion Cohort is also evaluating overall MTW flexibilities for 30 PHAs with 1,000 or fewer combined units of public housing and Housing Choice Vouchers (see *Memo*, [10/22/18](#) and [7/15/19](#)). PIH anticipates adding another 30 PHAs through the MTW Flexibility II Cohort and evaluating the effects over a five-year period of the MTW flexibilities that were chosen.

PHAs applying to participate in the new cohort must prepare an MTW Plan and application package that are subject to a public engagement process. Specifically, a PHA must publish a notice that a hearing will be held on the full MTW Plan and application package. The draft MTW Plan and "Administrative Efficiencies Information" (see below) must be available for public inspection for at least 30 days before a PHA submits an MTW Plan and application package to PIH. The PHA must conduct a public hearing to discuss the MTW Plan and Administrative Efficiencies Information and invite public comment. A PHA's Board of Commissioners must then approve the MTW Plan and application package by resolution no fewer than 15 days after that public hearing.

NLIHC is concerned about the lack of specificity regarding the timing of the public hearing within that 30-day period. If a PHA Board must approve an MTW Plan and application package no fewer than 15 days after the public hearing, within the 30-day minimum public inspection time frame, residents may be left with only 15 days to obtain and assess an MTW Plan in order to submit comments at the hearing.

An applicant's MTW Plan must describe how it relates to the three MTW statutory objectives: giving households incentives to achieve economic self-sufficiency, increasing housing choice, and reducing costs. NLIHC observes that with the possible exception of the asset building and landlord incentives cohorts, it is not at all clear how MTW will help residents achieve economic self-sufficiency or greater housing choice.

An MTW Plan must also discuss how a PHA plans to continue to engage residents and the broader community in the development and implementation of its local MTW program. A PHA must describe any planned engagement efforts with the local community, including any outreach

to racial and ethnic minorities, persons with limited English proficiency, persons with disabilities, families with children, and groups representing such persons.

An MTW Plan must describe the types of initiatives a PHA seeks to implement in its local MTW program and why. However, PIH does not require a PHA to list discrete activities. The discussion should be organized under the three statutory objectives of the MTW Demonstration: self-sufficiency, housing choice, and cost effectiveness. In addition, a PHA must list or describe its proposed uses of MTW Funds, describing whether or how it plans to mix public housing and HCV funds to be used for other activities. An MTW Plan must discuss any major plans affecting a PHA's public housing stock due to its participation in the MTW Demonstration.

To address Administrative Efficiencies Information, a PHA must list which MTW waivers and associated activities it would be interested in implementing from a list of eight, including the following: eliminating income deductions, changing the standard deduction, altering income reexamination schedules, altering physical inspection schedules, altering utility allowances, and allowing self-certification of household assets.

Brief MTW Background

In 1996, Congress established MTW, initially authorizing HUD to admit up to 30 PHAs into the demonstration. Congress later increased that limit to 39 by 2011. Under MTW, HUD can waive nearly all provisions of the "United States Housing Act of 1937" and its accompanying regulations. This includes most of the main rules and standards governing public housing and HCVs, with some exceptions such as civil rights, labor, and environmental laws. MTW agencies are also allowed to shift public housing Capital and Operating Funds and HCV assistance (including Administrative Fees and Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)) to purposes other than those for which they were originally appropriated – a process referred to as "fungibility."

In addition to the three MTW statutory objectives, the statute requires MTW agencies to: (1) serve the same number of low-income households as they would have without MTW funding flexibility; (2) serve a mix of families by size comparable to the mix they would have served if they were not in MTW; (3) ensure that 75% of the families they assist have income at or less than 50% of area median income; (4) ensure that assisted units meet housing quality standards; and (5) establish a reasonable rent policy.

The "Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016" authorized HUD to expand the MTW Demonstration to an additional 100 high-performing PHAs over a seven-year period to end in 2022. PHAs were to be added to the MTW demonstration in groups (cohorts), each of which will be overseen by a research advisory committee to ensure the demonstrations are evaluated with rigorous research protocols, quantitative analysis, and comparisons to control groups. Each cohort of MTW sites will be directed by HUD to test one specific policy change.

The MTW Expansion cohorts initially were numbered, but with the withdrawal of the work requirements cohort (Cohort 3) PIH is dropping the numbering system in their titles. However, the PIH Notices associated with them had those original numbers. The numbered cohorts and their aims are as follows:

- Cohort 1 evaluates the overall impact of MTW flexibilities on PHAs with fewer than 1,000 units.
- Cohort 2 (focusing on rent reform) evaluates the impacts of different rent structures (see *Memo*, [5/17/21](#)). NLIHC has published a [detailed summary and critique](#) of Cohort 2.
- Cohort 3 was to evaluate the impacts of work requirements; however, PIH withdrew work requirements (see *Memo*, [6/1/21](#)).
- The landlord incentives cohort, initially called “Cohort 4,” will evaluate incentives to landlords to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program (see *Memo*, [2/7/21](#)).
- The asset building cohort will evaluate policies and practices that help residents build financial assets or build their credit assessments (see *Memo*, [5/2/22](#), [10/11/22](#), and [10/31/22](#)) and a [detailed summary](#).

Read Notice PIH-2023-20 announcing MTW Flexibility II Cohort at: <https://tinyurl.com/43bw7tuy>

Find more information about the MTW expansion on NLHC’s public housing webpage at <https://bit.ly/3rVoezs> and on [page 4-68](#) of NLHC’s *2023 Advocates’ Guide*.

Explore PIH’s MTW Expansion website at: <https://bit.ly/3vGMMNy>

HUD Office of Multifamily Housing Reminds Owners That Tenant Organizations May Use Community Rooms for Tenant Organizing Activities

HUD’s Office of Multifamily Housing Programs (Multifamily) distributed an [email](#) reminding owners and managers of private housing assisted by the Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) program that they must “reasonably” make community rooms and other spaces appropriate for meetings available to residents for meetings. Tenant organizations and a property’s tenants in general can request use of these spaces to carry out a tenant organization’s business, address issues related to living environments, or establish a tenant organization.

24 CFR part 245 sets out tenant participation rules for the PBRA program and clearly states that owners must recognize tenant organizations and consider their concerns. Section 245.110 defines a “legitimate tenant organization” as one that is established by tenants, represents all tenants, operates democratically, meets regularly, and is independent of owners. Section 245.120 is the section that requires community rooms or other spaces suitable for meetings to be available to tenant organizations.

Read the Multifamily email at: <https://tinyurl.com/stv253zj>

Read NLIHC’s “Key Features of Part 245” at: <https://tinyurl.com/shnu3as7>

Read 24 CFR part 245 at: <https://tinyurl.com/2ma8j65d>

Multifamily’s “Residents Rights and Responsibilities” brochure is available in [English](#) and [other languages](#).

Events

Register for 9/13 Joint NLIHC, HIP, RF Webinar on Tenant Experiences with ERA

[Join us](#) on September 13 from 2 to 3 pm ET for a webinar featuring researchers from NLIHC, the Housing Initiative at Penn (HIP), and the Reinvestment Fund (RF) who will present findings from their jointly authored and soon-to-be-released report, *Beyond Housing Stability: Tenant Experiences with the Emergency Rental Assistance Program*.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact caused millions of people to fall behind on their rent, placing them at risk of eviction and increased exposure to a life-threatening virus. More than 8 million renter households – the great majority of them low-income and disproportionately people of color – were behind on their rent by the end of 2020. In response, the federal government created the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program, a temporary initiative administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and designed to help low-income renters address rent and utility arrears, and appropriated an unprecedented \$46.55 billion in funding.

The new report – which will be released on August 31 – utilizes applicant-level administrative and survey data to evaluate how tenants and landlords experienced the ERA program, measuring tenant outcomes, examining tenant experiences applying for ERA, and assessing the ERA program’s success in promoting housing stability, financial security, health, and child well-being during a national emergency.

In addition to staff from NLIHC, presenters will include:

- Cypress Marrs, Housing Initiative at Penn
- Rebecca Yae, Housing Initiative at Penn
- Emily Dowdall, Reinvestment Fund

Register [here](#).

From the Field

Alaska Housing Summit Convenes Cross-Sector Partners to Discuss Affordable Housing Challenges and Solutions

The [Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness](#) (an NLIHC state partner) and the [Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness](#) (an NLIHC member) held an “Alaska Housing Summit” on August 21. The hybrid summit brought together advocates, service providers, funders, policymakers, and other stakeholders to discuss Alaska’s affordable housing challenges and solutions. Panelists reviewed data about Alaska’s housing needs, showcased creative solutions to expand access to affordable housing across the state, and proposed programmatic

and policy changes to meet the unique needs of Alaskans. The summit agenda foregrounded the experiences of, and opportunities for, Alaska Native people, who make up nearly 20% of the state's population and disproportionately experience poverty, housing insecurity, and homelessness.

The summit began with an acknowledgement of the unceded lands of the Dena'ina people. Panelists then spoke about the state of housing in Alaska, citing NLIHC's [Gap report](#), which shows that only 35 rental homes are available and affordable for every 100 extremely low-income households in the state, and NLIHC's [Out of Reach report](#), which shows that an hourly wage of \$26.32 is needed in order to afford a modest two-bedroom rental home in Alaska. Representatives from the [Association of Alaska Housing Authorities](#), an NLIHC member, explained how the 12 regional housing authorities in the groups' network are the primary housing developers in the state and that costs for labor, materials, fuel, and infrastructure have increased dramatically, while federal funding has been flat for decades. A panel of local housing providers meanwhile showcased how they have creatively leveraged limited funds to complete new projects and highlighted the necessity of partnerships in overcoming the many barriers to developing and operating affordable housing in rural communities.

The keynote discussion underscored the connections between affordable housing, healthcare, and community safety and was moderated by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness's regional coordinator. Commissioners from the state's Departments of Family and Community Services and Health, along with the Alaska Mental Health Trust and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, discussed ways they are collaborating to improve access to services, including supportive housing. The final panel focused on innovative solutions being piloted in Alaska, as well as policy and program changes needed to solve the affordable housing crisis. An update was also provided on the status of [Housing Alaskans: A Public-Private Partnership](#), a statewide trust fund established over the past year to catalyze housing development across the state (see [Memo](#), 10/11/22). The Partnership recently awarded its first round of funding to six non-profits, which will support the development of 80 new homes.

Representative Mary Peltola (D-AK) of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) of the U.S. Senate provided remarks via video, with both noting the importance of affordable housing to the economic vitality of the state and identifying measures they are taking in Congress to bring more housing resources to Alaska. Senator Sullivan also announced an upcoming visit to Alaska by HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge. During the visit, her first trip to Alaska in this role, Secretary Fudge will participate in a roundtable discussion with the state's Congressional delegation and housing leaders to learn more about the unique challenges Alaskans face and the programmatic changes needed to ensure federal funds reach the populations most in need. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) attended the summit in person and also gave remarks, noting that housing is "probably the most significant statewide issue we face right now" and that "everything is coming down to housing." The Senator touted the new infrastructure funding she supported that is helping address development challenges in Alaska, along with the Senate's recent reauthorization of the "Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act" (see [Memo](#), 8/14). She thanked the many service providers and advocates in attendance and implored attendees to look to her office as a partner.

The Alaska Housing Summit was sponsored in part by an NLIHC grant to support the engagement of multi-sector partners in housing advocacy through NLIHC's [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) campaign. More than 100 people attended in person, along with more than 80 people who attended virtually. Organizers were pleased to bring so many housing stakeholders together to celebrate recent successes, build new partnerships, and further advocacy efforts. They look forward to participating in the upcoming meeting with the HUD Secretary and continuing to expand their coalitions to include more multi-sector partners in the future.

“Events like the Alaska Housing Summit are important for our ongoing advocacy efforts,” remarked Brian Wilson, executive director of the Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness. “Our geography spans over 660,000 square miles, most of which isn’t connected by a road system. Having an opportunity for Alaskans from all corners of the state to convene in person to celebrate our successes and strategize how to overcome Alaska’s unique challenges doesn’t happen very frequently. The Opportunity Starts at Home campaign was pivotal in making this happen.”

“We are grateful to all the presenters who made the event possible, and the work they are doing in their communities,” said Owen Hutchinson, director of external relations for the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness. “Alaska has unique challenges to developing affordable housing and the innovations and partnerships that make it possible are because of the people we heard from at the summit. We are excited to work closely with the state departments and our partners in producing many more community-based projects.”

Opportunity Starts at Home

New Research Explores Connections between Residential Segregation and Health

A new [article](#) published in *Health Affairs* examines the connections between residential segregation and health. The paper shares an overview of the history of segregation in the U.S., explains the links between segregation and health disparities, summarizes the literature on the connections between residential segregation and health, and assembles a list of recommendations for future research. “Residential segregation is a fundamental, structural determinant of health because of its role in mediating exposure to key social determinants of health, including education, income, employment, and housing, among others,” writes the study’s author. Read the article [here](#).

Research

Number of Renters with Worst Case Housing Need Hits Record High

HUD released an Executive Summary of its forthcoming *Worst Case Housing Needs 2023 Report to Congress* on August 21. According to the summary, HUD estimates that a record-high 8.53 million very low-income renter households had worst case housing needs in 2021,

surpassing the previous high of 8.48 million in 2011, following the 2007-2009 recession. Renters with worst case housing needs have incomes below 50% of area median income (AMI), do not receive housing assistance and either spend more than half of their incomes on housing costs or live in severely inadequate housing, or both. Housing (un)affordability is a much more prevalent problem than housing quality, as fewer than 3% of worst case housing needs cases in 2021 could be attributed to severely inadequate housing quality.

Overall, 44% of very low-income renters had worst case housing needs in 2021, an increase from the 42% identified in 2019. The rate differed by race and ethnicity. Fifty-three percent of very low-income Asian renters had worst case housing needs in 2021, as did 47% of Hispanic, 44% of non-Hispanic white, and 39% of non-Hispanic Black very low-income renters. The previous report indicated that Black, non-Hispanic very low-income renters are less likely to have worst case housing needs partly because they are more likely to receive housing assistance. Without assistance, though, Black renters in the private market are more likely than white renters to have a severe housing problem.

HUD attributes the increase in worst case housing needs in 2021 to a number of factors, the most significant of which is the formation of new households, which increases the demand for housing. The other factors, in order of significance, include a loss of affordable and available rental housing for very low-income renters, an increase in the number of very low-income renters, and a reduction in the share of very low-income renters receiving assistance. Some of these factors mirror the findings of NLIHC's analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) data, indicating a significant increase in the number of extremely low-income renters and a decrease in affordable homes available for them between 2019 and 2021 ([Memo, 3/20](#)).

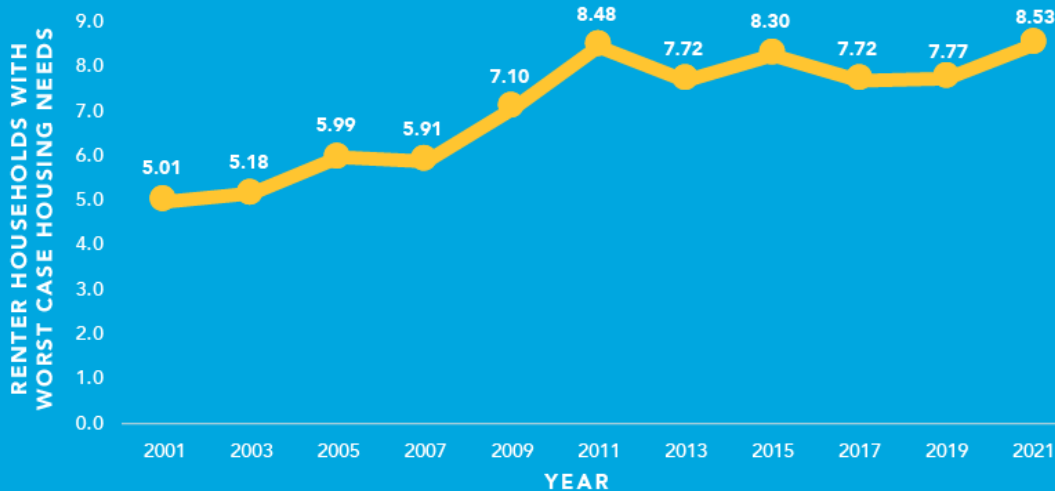
To address worst case housing needs among very low-income households, HUD calls for a broad strategy at the federal, state, and local levels that supports market production and access to affordable homes and provides rental assistance to the most vulnerable renters.

Read the summary at: <https://bit.ly/44oDogV>

Fact of the Week

Worst Case Housing Need among Very Low-Income Renters Hits Record High in 2021

Renter Households with Worst Case Housing Needs, 2001 to 2021 (in millions)



Note: Households with worst case housing needs have incomes below 50% of area median income, do not receive housing assistance, and spend more than half of their income on housing costs, live in physically inadequate housing, or both. Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Worst Case Housing Needs, 2023 Report to Congress, Executive Summary.



Note: Households with worst case housing needs have incomes below 50% of area median income, do not receive housing assistance, and spend more than half of their income on housing costs, live in physically inadequate housing, or both. Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Worst Case Housing Needs, 2023 Report to Congress, Executive Summary.

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of August 20

The following are some of the news stories to which NLIHC contributed during the week of August 20:

- “Is There Light at the End of the Tunnel in Los Angeles?” *City Watch LA*, August 25 at: <https://tinyurl.com/22fbwd79>
 - “In Maui and across America, climate change and extreme weather are hurting housing affordability” *CNN Business*, August 21 at: <https://tinyurl.com/33pdjuyn>
 - “Wallet Watch: American credit card debt reached unprecedented high this summer” *MLive*, August 21 at: <https://tinyurl.com/42vwww5u>
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NLIHC News

Where to Find Us – August 28

- [Florida Housing Coalition Statewide Affordable Housing Conference](#) – Orlando, FL, August 28 (Dan Emmanuel)
- [Great Lakes Indian Housing Association Quarterly Meeting](#) – Baraboo, WI, September 6 (Courtney Cooperman and Kayla Laywell)
- [Annual Utah Housing Matters Convention](#) – Midway, UT, August 28-30 (Sid Betancourt)
- Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey Monthly Member Meeting – Virtual, September 8 (Lindsay Duvall)
- Ability Housing, Inc. Annual Summit – Kissimmee, FL, September 12-13 (Diane Yentel)
- [National Alliance of Resident Services in Affordable and Assisted Housing \(NAR-SAAH\) Conference 2023](#) – New Orleans, LA, September 12-15 (Sid Betancourt)
- [New York Downstate Independent Housing Forum](#) – Virtual, September 13 (Lindsay Duvall)
- Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities September Housing Committee Meeting – Virtual, September 18 (Courtney Cooperman)
- [Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York Annual Conference](#) – Saratoga Springs, NY, September 19 (Lindsay Duvall)
- New York Regional Housing Collaborative – New York, NY, September 20 (Lindsay Duvall)
- [Housing Oregon Industry Support Conference](#) – Portland, OR, September 27 (Courtney Cooperman)
- National Coalition for the Homeless Conference – Washington, DC, September 30 (Diane Yentel)
- Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region Advocacy Committee Meeting – Virtual, October 20 (Courtney Cooperman)
- [Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing](#) – Los Angeles, CA, November 3 (Sarah Saadian)
- [Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency](#) Conference – Hershey, PA, December 7 (Sarah Saadian)

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