



MEMO MEMBERS

The Weekly Newsletter of the National Low Income Housing Coalition

CAPITOL HILL

Congress, Memo on Recess

The Senate and House are now on August recess until September 8. The fall legislative agenda is full of housing issues, including appropriations, preservation, the Section 8 voucher reform bill, public housing issues and the Section 811 housing for persons with disabilities legislation. Memo will publish a back-to-work issue in early September.

In the meantime, however, Memo will take a one-week holiday. There will be no August 14 issue; Memo will return on August 21.

Choice Neighborhoods Directives Released

The Senate Committee on Appropriations made public its report on its FY10 HUD appropriations bill the week of August 3, Senate Report 111-69. The FY10 HUD spending bill passed out of Committee on July 30 (see Memo, 7/31). The Committee report provides additional information on the Committee's funding of the President's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative request.

The Senate Committee bill, which does not yet have a bill number, would fund the President's request for a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative at \$250 million for FY10. The House appropriations bill, H.R. 3288, does not fund Choice Neighborhoods. Rather, the House's bill would provide \$250 million, up from \$120 million in FY09, for the HOPE VI public housing revitalization program.

As proposed in the President's FY10 request for HUD, the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative would "build on the successes of public housing transformation under HOPE VI with a broader approach to concentrated poverty," according to HUD budget documents. The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative program seeks to address high poverty neighborhoods in a holistic way, beyond redeveloping only public housing, which is the focus of HUD's HOPE VI program. Public housing agencies (PHAs), owners of federally assisted housing and private owners would all be eligible to participate in the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative. The HOPE VI program is restricted to PHAs.

HUD has not put forth details of what the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative would look like. The House HUD appropriations bill did not fund the Initiative because, the House's report said, "the Committee on Appropriations is not the appropriate body to authorize a new initiative of this scale, especially when the Financial Services Committee has worked diligently over the

past several years to reauthorize HOPE VI."

The Senate report acknowledges the "lack of details" on the Initiative and would direct the HUD Secretary to submit a plan to the House and Senate appropriations committees within 60 days of the spending bill's enactment. The plan should include details on how HUD will define functioning, sustainable, mixed-income neighborhoods, as well as what specific goals the Secretary and grant recipients would have to meet, according to the report.

To quell PHA concerns that a pool of grant funds dedicated to public housing redevelopment, HOPE VI, would be replaced by a program with a much broader scope of applicants, the Senate Committee's report stipulates that not less than \$165 million of the \$250 million be awarded to projects where PHAs are the lead applicant.

The full Senate is expected to consider the FY10 spending bill in September.

See other articles throughout this issue of Memo for references to other programs within the report. Access NLIHC's updated budget chart at <http://www.nlihc.org/doc/FY10chart87.pdf>

Comprehensive Veterans Housing and Service Bill Introduced

Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), along with five co-sponsors, introduced the "Zero Tolerance for Veterans Homelessness Act of 2009" on July 30 (see Memo, 7/31). The bill, S. 1547, would provide funding for services and authorize an increasing number of vouchers annually for homeless veterans through FY14. The bill targets both veterans experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless.

The types of financial support that would be authorized by the bill include short- and medium-term rental assistance, security deposits, utility payments and moving costs. Rental assistance would be administered through a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) supported housing program. In FY10, 30,000 vouchers would be available and an additional 10,000 would be available each fiscal year until FY14, when 60,000 vouchers would be available.

The bill calls for case management services for each veteran receiving rental assistance, including housing services such as housing search, landlord-tenant mediation, landlord outreach,

credit repair, benefits access and referral to other federal programs. Additionally, case management would include referrals for mental health, substance abuse, health education, employment and parenting skills services

A new staff position, a “special assistant” in the Office of the Secretary at the VA, would be responsible for ensuring veterans’ access to housing resources and services and also coordinate all programs serving homeless veterans. The bill would require data collection on both housing and services, for which the bill would require coordination between the VA and HUD.

Additionally, the VA would have to develop a “Plan to End Veteran Homelessness” within one year of the bill’s enactment. This plan would include performing an analysis of VA and other federal programs, evaluating potential partnerships between programs, and recommending the merger, elimination or creation of programs.

The bill would also make newly constructed transitional housing projects eligible for service grants. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs and no action has been scheduled at this time.

Bill Introduced on Housing Services for Chronically Homeless

Senators Richard Burr (R-NC) and Jack Reed (D-RI) introduced on July 28 the “Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act” (SELHA; see Memo, 7/31). The bill would provide services to chronically homeless individuals and families moving into permanent supported housing. The bill would also provide five-year, renewable grants for public or nonprofit agencies to provide services for households moving into permanent supported housing.

Households could begin receiving services while experiencing homelessness and could continue receiving them once housed. Grants would target households that have been homeless longer than others, have high utilization rates of emergency systems of care, or have a history with the criminal justice or law enforcement systems.

A minimum of 80% of grant funds would have to serve households that meet the definition for chronic homelessness. As defined by HUD, an individual is chronically homeless if he or she is currently homeless, has experienced homelessness for one year or four times in the previous three years, and has a disability. Families, who are not included in HUD’s current definition but who would be considered chronically homeless for purposes of the bill, must be currently homeless and meet the history of homeless criteria and have a head of household with a disability.

Eligible service areas include mental health, substance abuse and recovery, life skills and access to benefits. If households move from permanent supported housing, they could continue to receive services for up to 90 days or until existing services are transitioned to other support agencies.

The bill’s grant performance measures include increases in housing stability, increases in employment and education, and reduction of problems related to substance abuse or mental health disorders. Baseline measures for performance outcomes are not included in the bill.

The services would be administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the Department of Health and Human Services. The bill does not authorize funds for these services.

The bill, S. 1523, was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. No action on the bill has been scheduled at this time.

Sen. Dodd Introduces Sustainable Communities Bill; Senate Bill Would Fund

Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) introduced legislation on August 6 to create an Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities within HUD.

The bill, The Livable Communities Act of 2009, S. 1619, would also create a competitive, comprehensive regional planning grant program that would provide funding to communities to do regional housing and transportation planning. Communities that receive planning grants would then be eligible to receive challenge grants to implement their plans by investing in public transportation, transit oriented development, redeveloping polluted sites, and affordable housing. Finally, building off a partnership announced last month, the bill would establish an Interagency Council on Sustainable Communities, formally convening HUD, the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies on these matters.

The bill would authorize \$100 million a year for four years for the comprehensive planning grants, for which consortia of local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, rural planning organizations, or regional councils would be eligible. Large metropolitan areas with 500,000 or more people could receive grants up to \$5 million, communities with between 200,000 and 499,999 people could receive up to \$1.5 million, and smaller metropolitan and micropolitan areas would be eligible for up to \$750,000.

Recipients of the planning grants would then be eligible for \$3.75 billion of authorized funds in increasing amounts over

three years to assist implementation of the comprehensive regional plans. Maximum grants range from \$100 million for large areas to \$35 million for medium-sized areas and \$15 million for small areas.

The bill would also require the director of the new Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities to produce two reports within a year of passage, one on incentives for energy- and location- efficient mortgages and the other on the development of a “housing location affordability index,” which would combine housing and transportation costs in determining the affordability of a person’s home.

The bill includes a number of specific references to low income, very low income, and extremely low income families, and providing affordable housing for these populations is an eligible use for both the planning and the challenge grants. However, there appears to be no particular emphasis on such projects in selecting grantees and no explicit requirement that grantees plan or undertake such projects. There is also no reporting requirement on the implications of plans and projects on low income, very low income, or extremely low income households.

The Senate Committee on Appropriations’ FY10 HUD spending bill would provide \$150 million for HUD’s Sustainable Communities Initiative. The Committee’s report on its HUD spending bill, made public the week of August 3 (see related article elsewhere in Memo), would provide the funds requested by HUD for FY10. The \$150 million includes \$100 million for Regional Integrated Planning Grants to be promoted by HUD, EPA and DOT; \$40 million local planning grants, with priority for localities within areas served by the regional planning grants; and \$10 million for HUD, in partnership with the DOT, to conduct research around this initiative. The House’s FY10 HUD spending bill also provided \$150 million for HUD’s Sustainable Communities Initiative.

The bill is cosponsored by Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Daniel Akaka (D-HI), and Charles Schumer (D-NY).

Two TARP Bills Introduced

Two bills related to the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) were introduced in the House on July 31.

Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) introduced H.R. 3452, which would impose an additional tax on bonuses received from certain TARP recipients and deposit this tax revenue into HUD’s Section 4 Capacity Building for Community Development program. HUD’s Section 4 program provides grants to intermediaries so they may help develop the capacity of nonprofit community development corporations to enhance their technical and administrative capabilities. The

grant allocations are limited to five national intermediaries: Enterprise Community Partners, the Local Initiative Support Corporation, Habitat for Humanity, Youthbuild USA and Living Cities/National Community Development Initiative.

The bill was referred to the House Committees on Ways and Means, and Financial Services.

On the same day, Representative Bob Inglis (R-SC) introduced H.Res. 714 to express the sense of the House that any interest or dividends repaid from the Troubled Asset Relief Program should be used solely for debt reduction. H.R. 3068, introduced earlier by House Financial Services Chair Barney Frank (D-MA), would use TARP funds to support several programs, including the National Housing Trust Fund (see Memo, 7/10).

H.Res. 714 was referred to the House Committee on Financial Services.

HUD

HUD Continues to Address Voucher Shortfall

HUD took further steps the week of August 3 to help public housing agencies (PHAs) deal with the shortfalls in funds to renew existing vouchers in FY09. As reported last week (see Memo, 7/31), approximately 15% of PHAs are believed to be facing voucher funding shortfalls for a myriad of reasons, including late passage of an FY09 funding bill that did not include adequate funding for the program, rising rents, and declining tenant incomes.

On August 4, HUD issued a notice to PHAs on the protocol HUD will use to allocate the remaining \$11 million in FY09 voucher contingency funds. The FY09 HUD appropriations bill provided \$100 million in voucher contingency funds; HUD has awarded \$89 million as of July 27. PHAs applied to HUD by a June 4 deadline to be eligible for the \$100 million in contingency funds. Another deadline, of August 14, is when HUD wants to hear from agencies experiencing voucher funding shortfalls.

HUD is not seeking additional applications for the remaining \$11 million. Rather, HUD will review applicants that met the June 4 deadline to determine which of these agencies now might qualify for the \$11 million. To the extent that agencies’ voucher costs, as a result of changes in tenant income or changes in rent and utility costs, are accelerating faster than HUD’s estimates anticipated, then HUD may approve funds from the \$11 million pool.

Also the week of August 3, HUD staff told housing advocates that it would re-issue Public and Indian Housing Notice 2005-9, which was issued on February 25, 2005, in response to the

2004 voucher funding crisis (see Memo, 3/4/05).

The notice provides guidance on “administrative flexibility” and actions PHAs may take to reduce their voucher program costs. These actions include, according to the notice, decreasing payment standards, even lower than the 90% of Fair Market Rent, if a HUD waiver is received; review of utility allowances for accuracy; restrictions on portability moves and moves within the PHA jurisdiction; increasing minimum rents to \$50; and termination of assistance, among other options.

On August 6, NLIHC issued an announcement to NLIHC members and partners, reiterating HUD’s communication with PHAs experiencing funding shortfalls to not terminate voucher holders. Instead, HUD is urging PHAs to contact HUD by August 14, as requested, so that HUD can clearly assess the nature and scope of the funding shortfall and seek appropriate remedies for the shortfall.

Media reports began surfacing in June that some housing agencies did not receive sufficient FY09 voucher funding from HUD to operate their voucher programs for the balance of 2009. The shortfall is of great concern to housing advocates. A typical way for PHAs to save resources in the voucher program is by not reissuing vouchers that are handed back in. But, the recession has caused people to hold onto their vouchers for longer periods of time, and PHAs have less ability to save funds through the attrition process. Attrition, of course, leads to fewer vouchers available and is not an ideal solution to funding shortfalls.

Housing agencies are also responding to insufficient voucher budgets by decreasing the value of vouchers. When payment standards are decreased, voucher holders must pay more toward rent or landlords must take rent reductions. Housing authorities have the discretion to set their payment standards from 90 to 110% of HUD’s Fair Market Rent for most households, with higher payment standards for disabled households.

PHAs’ discretion on setting the value of vouchers from 90 to 110% of Fair Market Rents allows for response to local rental market conditions. If PHAs facing shortfalls must decrease their payment standards down to 90% of Fair Market Rent, such decreases might make leasing affordable apartments at that rent impossible, leaving voucher holders to make up the difference from their extremely low incomes.

The Senate Committee on Appropriations makes reference to the voucher funding shortfall in its report on the FY10 HUD appropriations bill, Senate Report 111-69. “Currently, increased unemployment is raising the cost of vouchers for many public housing authorities across the country since PHAs must assume housing costs that tenants can no longer pay as a result of a loss of income,” the Committee’s report says. The Committee’s bill, which does not yet have a number, would provide \$150 million set-aside within the voucher account to allow the HUD Secretary

to make voucher funding allocation adjustments in FY10. The FY09 bill provided \$100 million for such adjustments.

Link to HUD’s August 4 notice, PIH Notice 2009-26, at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/hudclips/notices/pih/>

Link to NLIHC’s August 6 announcement at http://www.nlihc.org/detail/article.cfm?article_id=6336&id=27

FORECLOSURE CRISIS

Federal Reserve Board Moves to Implement Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act

The Federal Reserve System Board of Governors (FRB) issued a notice on July 30 providing information and examination procedures for the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act of 2009 (PTFA).

The Federal Reserve System consists of the FRB and 12 Federal Reserve Banks. The FRB and the Federal Reserve Banks regulate state-chartered member banks, bank holding companies, foreign branches of U.S. national and state member banks, and state-chartered U.S. branches and agencies of foreign banks. The notice is directed at the FRB’s consumer affairs officers, who have oversight over bank compliance with legal requirements, including the new tenant protection law.

The PTFA, which was enacted May 20 as title VII, division A of Public Law 111-22, provides that, after foreclosure, bona fide tenants must be given 90 days’ notice before being required to vacate the property. The law also allows tenants with leases that extend beyond 90 days to remain in the property for the remaining terms of their leases.

In the notice, the FRB provided guidance to the Federal Reserve Banks on the provisions of the PTFA and the actions needed to ensure compliance with the act. The notice also states that institutions regulated by the Federal Reserve System will be monitored to determine compliance with the law. “Given the importance of the protections this law provides to tenants, examiners are instructed, as part of consumer compliance examinations, to evaluate an institution’s awareness of the law, its efforts to comply, and its responsiveness to addressing implementation deficiencies,” the notice says.

The FRB notice can be found at <http://www.federalreserve.gov/boarddocs/caletters/2009/0905/caltr0905.htm>

Sens. Dodd, Kerry Make Renter Protection Floor Statement

Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) made a Senate floor statement on August 6 on the intent behind the Protecting Tenants in Foreclosure Act, which was enacted in May. Senators will periodically make statements to elucidate the legislative intent of a provision in order to smooth a new law's implementation.

"Under the new law, all bona fide tenants who began renting prior to transfer of title by foreclosure of their rental property must be given at least 90 days' notice before being required to vacate the property. In addition, these bona fide tenants are allowed to remain in place for the remainder of any leases entered into prior to the transfer of title by foreclosure," Senator Dodd said. "These leases may be terminated earlier only if the property is transferred to someone who intends to reside in the property and only if the tenants are given at least 90 days' notice of the fact of such sale. Successors in interest to properties with Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher tenants automatically assume the obligations of the former owner under the housing assistance payments contract. These basic protections are the law for tenants in every state, unless states have laws or practices that provide greater protections."

Senator Dodd also thanked Senator John Kerry (D-MA) for his work on the law, and spoke to the importance of the Act. "These protections are so important that Senator Kerry and I want to ensure that families and mortgage holders know their rights and obligations under the law," Senator Dodd said.

Thanking Senator Dodd for all of his work to assist low and moderate income families and tenants who need protections, Senator Kerry said, "I agree with Chairman Dodd that it is important that persons and entities acquiring properties by foreclosure follow the law, and that tenant families obtain the benefits the law was intended to provide."

Link to the Congressional Record statement at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getpage.cgi?dbname=2009_record&page=S8978&position=all

FROM THE FIELD

NJ Advocates Celebrate Law Allowing County Homeless Trust Funds

The New Jersey Advocacy Network to End Homelessness (NJANEH) and other advocates including the Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey (HCDNNJ), an NLIHC state partner, are celebrating passage of state legislation authorizing counties to create their own County

Homeless Trust Funds. After a two-and-a-half year effort, the bill passed the state Senate (30-6) on June 18 and the General Assembly (52-27) on June 25. Governor Jon Corzine's (D) approval is expected soon.

As part of the creation of the trust funds, the bill allows counties to create a dedicated source of funding for their homeless trust funds by imposing a \$3 document recording surcharge. The surcharge is estimated to generate \$5 million to \$6 million per year statewide.

Advocates based their campaign on the idea that current federal and state funds are inadequate to deal with high levels of homelessness in all 21 New Jersey counties. Because the fiscal and societal costs of homelessness are felt most acutely at the county level, advocates thought addressing homelessness should be a goal for counties.

Once advocates came up with language for a bill, they were successful in convincing legislators to become sponsors. The advocacy organizations also won the endorsement of more than 150 organizations, county executives, and freeholder boards (equivalent to other states' county commissioners). NJANEH, the lead organization of the effort, was pleased that the bill did not encounter any organized opposition.

In mid-May, HCDNNJ held a lobby day that was planned to take advantage of a scheduled Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee hearing on the bill. Advocates packed the hearing room, and representatives from four counties that would administer trust funds testified on the importance of the legislation.

In order to create a County Homeless Trust Fund, a county must have an established plan to end homelessness. Each county would be responsible for operating its own program, awarding grants for any of the following eligible uses:

- The acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of housing projects or units within housing projects that supply permanent affordable housing for the homeless or those at risk for homelessness;
- Rental assistance vouchers, either tenant-based or project-based, for use at affordable housing projects that provide permanent affordable housing for the homeless or those at risk of homelessness;
- Supportive services to help people obtain and/or maintain permanent affordable housing; and,
- Prevention services for those at risk for homelessness so that they can obtain and maintain permanent affordable housing.

The bill also requires counties electing to create a County Homeless Trust Fund to establish and seek the advice of a County

Homeless Trust Fund Task Force comprised of at least three homeless or formerly homeless people, and a representative from: the county, each of the three municipalities with the largest homeless population in the county, the organization responsible for plans to end homelessness, and three nonprofit organizations providing low income housing or assisting the homeless. Task Forces will assist in the creation of the homeless housing plan and implementation of the trust fund's homeless housing program, including assessing funding priorities, reviewing applications, and contributing to the annual report.

Counties may use up to 5% of the funds for program administration. Any funds that are not used after four years will be transferred to the Department of Community Affairs, which will contract with a community-based organization in the same county for uses consistent with those granted to County Homeless Trust Funds.

"This is a very significant step toward providing counties with the resources to end homelessness," NJANEH Chair Richard Brown said of the bill's passage. NJANEH will hold a forum for county representatives on implementation of the Homeless Trust Fund on September 15 from 9 am to noon at the state capitol.

For more information: Richard Brown, Chair, New Jersey Advocacy Network to End Homelessness, rbrown@njaneh.org

RESOURCES

NLIHC, CEPR Report Shows Effect of Recession on Rents, Home Prices

A report released August 6 by NLIHC and the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) provides an updated analysis of rents and home prices in 100 metropolitan areas. This report, the third in a series, finds that since the housing bubble burst two years ago, home prices are falling back into their historical relationship with rents in a growing number of housing markets. While this is likely an indication that home values have either already reached bottom or soon will in most markets, the report also cautions that in many markets, the local economy is suffering, which could put off the housing market recovery. The report concludes that in the long term, the housing market will be robust only with a strong economy in which people have the incomes to afford rents and mortgages.

The paper posits that the historical equilibrium sale price of a home is 15 times the annual rent of a nearby comparable home. Where in recent decades the ratio of median sales price to median annual rent hovered close to 15 to 1 (i.e. it took \$150,000 to buy a house that would rent for roughly \$10,000 per year) at

the peak of the bubble in 2007, this ratio exceeded 25 to 1 in many inflated markets. The paper defines a bubble market as one in which this "price-to-earnings" ratio exceeds 18 to 1.

The original analysis of these 100 metropolitan areas was completed in April 2008. In this third paper, the authors find that 14 out of the 27 markets considered inflated in April 2008 are no longer considered to be bubbles due to the fall off in prices. The authors also analyzed the ability of new homeowners to accumulate equity in five years, and find that while first-time homebuyers in 21 markets (including the remaining 13 bubble markets) are still not projected to have positive equity by 2013, this is five fewer markets than the year before.

This study, however, notes that this basic analysis of equity accumulation used in the original paper and subsequent updates relies on rents increasing at 3% a year. The demand for housing, however, generally declines with rising unemployment and falling incomes since fewer households form, households double up in units, and some households become homeless. All of these factors are likely to moderate the growth in rents in 2009 and perhaps beyond. In some areas average rents may even decline.

In light of these current economic trends, this paper takes the declining economy into consideration by doing a second analysis using 2009 rent projections that take variables such as employment and rental vacancy rates into consideration. The authors conducted a comparative analysis of 40 cities for which there were comparable data to see how the ability of households to accrue equity changes under these new assumptions. They found that the alternative projections generally still lead to increases in equity, but these increases happen at a slower rate, meaning that homeowners will be worse off if current market trends continue. Most alarming is that in some cities, homeowners who would expect to see gains in equity under the old assumptions may actually find themselves facing a loss when the failing economy is taken into consideration.

This comparative analysis emphasizes the fact that market stabilization will only occur if the broader economy recovers. In light of this, the authors provided policy recommendations such as the need to focus on stimulating the demand for housing through increased employment and incomes and not simply by incentivizing home purchases through homebuyers' tax credits. The authors also recommended implementing policies that keep people in their homes, such as the Right-to-Rent proposal, which would give homeowners who are foreclosed upon the option to remain in their homes as renters for an extended of time. Finally, the authors recommend capitalizing on lower home prices to provide more affordable housing with a call to fund the National Housing Trust Fund. This program could establish long-term affordability for those who will continue to need help after the economic recovery. It can also serve to

accelerate the recovery by providing jobs and absorbing excess housing.

The full report, “Hitting Bottom? An Updated Analysis of Rents and the Price of Housing in 100 Metropolitan Areas,” by Danilo Pelletiere, Hye Jin Rho, and Dean Baker is available at: <http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/100city-2009-08.pdf>

Opportunity Guide for Section 8 Administrators Released

The Poverty and Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) has released a guide for Housing Choice Voucher program administrators that highlights best practices for improving access to better schools, family health, and links to employment for families participating in the Section 8 voucher program.

The PRRAC guide is based in part on the lessons learned from the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program, which gave some Section 8 voucher holders the ability to move to lower poverty, racially integrated, high opportunity communities to test whether moving to such neighborhoods helped to overcome the disadvantages that many public housing residents face. One of the policy implications drawn from this experiment to date is that once these families relocate, services are still needed to connect them more effectively to opportunities in their new community. Ideally, these services would provide stability and enable the new residents to remain in these communities and benefit more from them. These services, especially those relating to health, employment, and education, are discussed in depth in the PRRAC guide.

In selecting best practices, PRRAC evaluated programs in Baltimore, Chicago, Bridgeport, and New Haven. The core elements of any high-functioning mobility program, according to the guide, include: participant recruitment that attracts eligible participants and minimizes applications from ineligible participants, recruitment and retention of landlords, pre-move counseling as well as intake proceedings and briefing potential participants, housing search assistance, post-move counseling, second move assistance, and a holistic approach to the family rather than a focus on just the head of the household.

In addition to these core elements, the PRRAC guide discusses health, employment and education programs as potential elements of a successful program. For example, in 2002, Metropolitan Baltimore Quadel (MBQ) was contracted to administer that region’s mobility program. As part of its contract, MBQ begins working with clients a year before their move and, among other activities, carries out a thorough intake health screening to take note of conditions such as asthma, pregnancy, or mental health issues that the applicants might have. These conditions are kept in mind when placing the

families. Within two years of relocation, MBQ visits the families at least five times. MBQ counselors also work with families to make connections between creating a budget and living in a healthful way, and, for example, may discuss the costs of groceries versus fast food.

The PRRAC guide, “Connecting Families to Opportunity,” can be found at: www.prrac.org/pdf/connectingfamilies.pdf

NHLP Releases Pamphlet on Utility Allowances

The National Housing Law Project (NHLP) has published a pamphlet regarding utility allowances in federally subsidized housing. NHLP has found that tenants around the country are being overcharged for rent because their “utility allowance”—the allowance that federally subsidized tenants receive to help pay for reasonable utility bills—is too low.

According to the pamphlet, rent plus utilities should not exceed more than 30% of a tenant’s monthly income. Because rent costs and utility costs combined cannot exceed the 30% of income, when a tenant’s utility costs are too high because utility allowances are too low, the resulting portion of 30% of a tenant’s income that comes from their rent payment is higher than it should be. The pamphlet provides tenant leaders with an overview of how utility allowances work, including how to find out how much utility allowance one receives, how to assess whether this allowance is too low, and how tenants can work together to gather information about rates.

The National Housing Law Project pamphlet, “Having Trouble Paying Your Utilities and Rent?” can be found here: <http://www.nlihc.org/doc/Utilityallowancepamphletfinal2.pdf>

ARRA Clearinghouse Updated Weekly; New HPRP, NSP, Weatherization Materials

NLIHC continues to maintain a clearinghouse of information about housing-related programs in the February’s stimulus bill, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). A number of materials from advocacy organizations were added recently.

Materials added about HUD’s Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) include a guide from the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) and three guides from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH). TAC’s “The New Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program” is a 12-page basic HPRP guide with a focus on extremely low income people with disabilities.

One of NAEH's new guides, "Homelessness Prevention: Creating Programs that Work," has 60 pages that can help organizations create a homelessness prevention program or improve an existing program. It includes information about the basics of prevention, start-up decisions and tools, interventions, and program evolution. A second, 16-page companion guide includes information about the nature and costs of homelessness and how to assess community needs and resources. The third guide, "Rapid Re-Housing: Creating Programs that Work," has 82 pages designed to help organizations develop Rapid Re-Housing programs. Among the many topics covered in the guide are: assessing the community and selecting a program structure, selecting a target population, screening and assessment, financial assistance, housing options, stabilization, and staffing issues.

HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) is the subject of another TAC guide, "Using the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to Help Create Permanent Supportive Housing."

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), run by the Department of Energy (DOE) recently had a flurry of activity related to Davis-Bacon prevailing wages. Three documents, including Notice 09-09, were added by DOE. In response, CAPLAW (the organization providing legal education and services to Community Action Agencies) issued an article and a Q&A paper.

The Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program launched a new "Implementing ARRA" website which includes a framing paper that highlights the emergence and nature of innovative ARRA implementation in metropolitan areas. While not exclusively housing-oriented, the paper and 11 "design snapshots" include examples of uses of NSP, WAP, and the DOE's Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, which NLIHC's ARRA Clearinghouse covers.

Access NLIHC's ARRA Clearinghouse at: <http://www.nlihc.org/template/page.cfm?id=207>

NLIHC Continues to Post State Partner Supported Research

The State Internet Research Repository (SIRR), NLIHC's library of state- and local-level housing research conducted by or for our state partners, continues to grow. The collection includes a wide variety of research, including reports, case studies, conference papers and presentations, fact sheets, and briefs.

Recent additions to SIRR include:

- A California report evaluating the extent to which two new programs created by a new state funding source in 2006 will reach households with low incomes. The Transit Oriented Development (TOD) program will create 3,600 homes within

walking distance of transit stations; 1,770 will be affordable to people with low incomes. The Infill Infrastructure Grant program will encourage urban infill by funding infrastructure that supports new housing. Of the 9,900 new homes anticipated, 4,800 will be affordable to households with low incomes.

- A Pennsylvania report recommends creation of a statewide Housing Trust Fund and notes that, for every dollar invested, the state's coffers would reap \$1.62 to \$2.26 for from sales of supplies used in construction. The study notes that the biggest and quickest return on taxpayer investment comes from the rehab of existing properties because each dollar invested yields 20 full-time jobs for a year.

- A Massachusetts survey revealed that 67% of respondents support developing affordable homes in their neighborhood, and 63% disagree that affordable homes would lead to more crime. A full 87.5% support policies to protect renters facing foreclosure, and 72% support increasing state financial support on rental assistance for those at risk of homelessness.

SIRR is a resource to help housing advocates stay current on other states' findings as well as the research questions and methodologies being pursued at the state and local levels across the country. Access SIRR at: <http://www.nlihc.org/template/page.cfm?id=139>

NLIHC NEWS

NLIHC Welcomes New Members

Welcome to these new members who joined in July 2009:

Rochelle Ames, Cheyenne, WY

James Bell, Bayonne, NJ

Linda Bronsdon, Hughesville, MD

Merlie Crowley, Des Moines, IA

Ingrid Ellen, New York, NY

Deborah Franze, Akron, OH

Richard Genz, Asheville, NC

Kelly Anne Johnstone, Forest Hills, NY

Mary Mathews, Omaha, NE

Jaclyn Moynahan, Brooklyn, NY

Denise Murphy, Baltimore, MD

Marcia Mulloy, Juneau, AK

Tonia Peppers, Columbia, SC

Michael Seltz, Alexandria, VA

Alvin Smuzynski, Fairfax Station, VA

G. Stanley Steele, Deaton, MD
Richard Williams, Montpelier, VT
Martha Wright, Portsmouth, OH

NLIHC Seeks Katrina Housing Fellow

The National Low Income Housing Coalition is seeking applicants for a DC- based, 16-month fellowship as a policy advocate to work on the federal response to the housing needs of low income people affected by the Gulf Coast hurricanes. Applicants are limited to residents of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, or Texas who have worked on solving housing problems of low income people that are related to the 2005 hurricanes. Other qualifications include well-developed written and oral communication skills, understanding of the FEMA and HUD disaster housing programs used in the Gulf Coast recovery, and a demonstrated commitment to social justice. Applicants must be able to move to the DC metro area for the fellowship period and be committed to returning to the Gulf Coast at the conclusion of the fellowship. Occasional travel to the Gulf Coast will be part of job duties. Compensation includes salary, health insurance, and paid vacation and sick leave. NLIHC is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer.

Please send cover letter and resume by August 5, 2009 to President, National Low Income Housing Coalition, 727 15th Street, NW, 6th floor, Washington, DC 20005, fax 202-393-1973. Fellowship begins September 1, 2009.

NLIHC Seeks Interns

Resumes are being accepted for the following positions for Fall 2009 interns:

Legislative Intern. Works with the legislative team. Interns will track new legislation, attend and summarize Congressional hearings for weekly newsletter, participate in visits to Congressional offices and develop materials for use in lobbying the House and Senate to accomplish NLIHC's mission. The legislative intern will also update the Congressional database.

Research Intern. Works with the research team. Interns assist in ongoing quantitative and qualitative research projects, write weekly articles on current research for NLIHC newsletter, attend briefings, and help staff respond to research inquiries.

Communications Intern. Works with the communications team. Intern assists in the planning of NLIHC's annual media awards, the preparation and distribution of press materials, and on website and social media networking projects. Also responsible for daily maintenance of the media database and the tracking of press hits.

Outreach Intern. Works with the outreach team. Interns help coordinate the grassroots organizing efforts for the National Housing Trust Fund Campaign and other legislative campaigns. Assists with membership recruitment/retention efforts.

Katrina Monitoring Intern. Works with Katrina Monitoring Project team. Intern conducts research and analysis on issues pertaining to housing needs of low income people displaced by the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes. Assists in communication with Gulf Coast housing and homeless advocates.

All interns will contribute articles to our weekly newsletter, Memo to Members, and other duties as assigned.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition is the foremost national advocacy organization for low income housing. Interns are highly valued and fully integrated into the staff work of the Coalition. We seek students passionate about social justice issues, with excellent writing and interpersonal skills. Internships are unpaid. In your cover letter, please specify which position/s you would prefer and that you are interested in a Fall 2009 internship.

Interested students should send a resume and cover letter to:

Internship Coordinator

National Low Income Housing Coalition

727 15th Street NW, 6th Floor

Washington DC 20005

or via email to linda@nlihc.org, via fax at 202/393-1973.

Please call 202-662-1530 x 228 with any questions.

Special Deal for NLIHC Members and Partners on 2009 Advocates' Guides

NLIHC's 2009 Advocates' Guide to Housing & Community Development Policy, which provides comprehensive and up-to-date descriptions of more than 60 federal housing and housing-related programs, from the Community Development Block Grant program to Housing Choice Vouchers to Public Housing to the Weatherization Assistance Program, is now available for bulk purchases.

A must-have for anyone who advocates on housing issues, implements federal housing dollars, or is affected by these programs on the ground, the Advocates' Guide is a valuable resource for:

- Staff
- Board members

- Interns
- Conference attendees
- TA recipients
- Resident leaders
- Funders
- Local government officials
- Members of the media
- Students
- Other partners

A single copy of the Guide is \$25 for NLIHC members and \$40 for nonmembers. While supplies last, NLIHC is offering special bulk rates to partners: \$15 for the first 10 copies purchased and \$10 for each additional copy.

To order, contact Khara Norris at 202-662-1530 x242 or knorris@nlihc.org with the number of copies you'd like.

Connect to NLIHC on Facebook

Keep in touch with NLIHC by becoming our fan on Facebook! You'll find updates, photos, and announcements on our page, as well as a way to connect to us and other fans. Find our page by going to www.nlihc.org and clicking on the 'Find us on Facebook' link, or searching for National Low Income Housing Coalition within Facebook.

FACT OF THE WEEK

Home Prices Continue to Fall Relative to Rents in Bubble Markets

Home-Price-to-Annual-Rent Ratios, and Current Bubble Status for Selected Markets Considered Bubbles in April 2008

Metropolitan Statistical Area	April 2008	April 2009	% Change in ratio
Five Cities that are No Longer Bubble Markets*			
-Stockton, CA	24.7	14.2	42.5%
-Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	18.9	12.0	36.5%
-Modesto, CA	22.7	15.0	33.9%
-Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	18.9	12.5	33.9%
Five Cities that Remain Bubble Markets*			
-Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	24.0	18.1	24.6%
-Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	26.3	20.0	24.0%
-Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	28.1	21.5	23.5%
-San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	24.5	19.3	21.2%

*Bubble markets are defined as those having a price-to-annual-rent ratio that exceeds 18.

Source: Pelletiere, D., H.J. Rho & D. Baker. (2009). *Hitting Bottom? An Updated Analysis of Rents and the Price of Housing in 100 Metropolitan Areas*. Washington D.C.: Center for Economic and Policy Research (Table 1)

NLIHC STAFF

Angela Chen Administrative Assistant, x224
Rebecca Coleman Legislative Intern
Linda Couch Deputy Director, x228
Sheila Crowley President, x224
Megan DeCrappeo Research Analyst, x245
Danna Fischer Legislative Director / Counsel, x243
Ed Gramlich Outreach Director, x314
Elisha Harig-Blaine Outreach Associate, x316
Jake Kirsch Outreach Associate, x 244
Hilary Lovelace Outreach Intern
Greg Mandel Katrina Monitoring Project Intern
Taylor Materio Communications Associate, x223
Khara Norris, Development Associate, x242
Danilo Pelletiere Research Director, x237
Natalee Phillips Research Intern
Melissa Quirk Policy Analyst, x230
Kim Schaffer Director of Communications & Development, x222
La'Teashia Sykes Outreach Associate, x247
Lisa Ward Communications Intern
David Yi Research Intern

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, or by fax, mail, or e-mail. Just e-mail us at membership@nlihc.org or call 202-662-1530 to request membership materials to distribute at meetings and conferences.