Ending Housing Poverty and Homelessness Once and for All

New York Association on Independent Living
2017 Statewide Conference
Troy, New York

James Saucedo, NLIHC Housing Advocacy Organizer
Who is NLIHC?
Looking Back on 1974

- Nixon Administration issues moratorium on all federal housing programs
- Cushing Dolbeare forms Ad Hoc Low Income Housing Coalition in response
- That group would evolve to become the National Low Income Housing Coalition
“...what we need is not so much a national housing policy as a national commitment to solving our housing problems; and to a strong federal government role in addressing those problems.”
The National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated solely to achieving socially just public policy that ensures people with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes.

Our goals are to preserve existing federally assisted homes and housing resources, expand the supply of low income housing, and establish housing stability as the primary purpose of federal low income housing policy.
Key Terminology
Key Terminology

- Affordable: Housing costs that do not exceed 30% of household income
- Cost burden: Housing costs that exceed 30% of household income, i.e. “not affordable”
- Severe cost burden: Housing costs that exceed 50% of household income
Key Terminology

- **Area Median Income (AMI):** calculated by HUD for each geography; used to determine income eligibility for programs.
- **Fair Market Rent (FMR):** calculated by HUD for each geography; estimate for rental cost of a modest apartment, adjusted for the number of bedrooms; used to determine payment standards for voucher programs.
Key Terminology

- **Middle Income (MI):** 81% or more of AMI
- **Low Income (LI):** 51%-80% of AMI
- **Very Low Income (VLI):** 31%-50% of AMI
- **Extremely Low Income (ELI):** Below 30% of AMI
- **Deeply Low Income (DLI):** Below 15% of AMI
Key Terminology

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• Deeply Low Income (DLI): Below 15% of AMI
NLIHC Research
The Gap and Out of Reach

Findings from *The Gap* 2017

Nationwide:

- 7.4 million rental units
- 11.4 million ELI households
- 4.0 million rental unit deficit

35 rental units per 100 ELI households
Findings from *The Gap* 2017

**Figure 2. Affordable and Available Rental Homes per 100 Renter Households, 2015**

- At Extremely Low Income: 35
- At 50% AMI: 55
- At 80% AMI: 93
- At 100% AMI: 101

AMI = Area Median Income
Source: NLIHC tabulations of 2015 ACS PUMS data.
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http://NLIHC.org/Research/Gap-Report
Findings from *The Gap* 2017

**FIGURE 5: UNITS AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE PER 100 ELI RENTER HOUSEHOLDS BY STATE**

Source: NLIHC tabulations of 2015 ACS PUMS data. ©2017, National Low Income Housing Coalition
The 2017 figures should not be compared to previous years, because of a change in the definition of extremely low income.

http://NLIHC.org/Research/Gap-Report
Findings from *The Gap* 2017

New York:

334,591 rental units
- 964,743 ELI households
- 630,152 rental unit deficit

35 rental units per 100 ELI households

http://NLIHC.org/Research/Gap-Report
Findings from *The Gap 2017*

**FIGURE 3: RENTER HOUSEHOLDS WITH COST BURDEN BY INCOME GROUP, 2015**

Source: NLIHC tabulations of 2015 ACS PUMS data.
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http://NLIHC.org/Research/Gap-Report
Findings from *The Gap 2017*

ELI households:

- Nationwide, **86.9%** are cost burdened and **71.2%** are severely cost burdened
- In New York, **86%** are cost burdened and **72%** are severely cost burdened
Findings from *Out of Reach* 2017

Nationwide:

• The 1-bd housing wage is $17.14 per hour
• The 2-bd housing wage is $21.21 per hour
• A minimum wage worker needs to work **94.5 hours per week** to afford 1-bd home
• A minimum wage worker needs to work **117 hours per week** to afford 2-bd home
Findings from *Out of Reach* 2017

**2017 TWO-BEDROOM RENTAL HOME HOUSING WAGE**

Represents the hourly wage that a household must earn (working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year) in order to afford the Fair Market Rent for a TWO-BEDROOM RENTAL HOME, without paying more than 30% of their income.

![Map showing the Two-Bedroom Housing Wage across the United States](http://NLIHC.org/OOR)

©2017 National Low Income Housing Coalition

[www.NLIHC.org/OOR](http://www.NLIHC.org/OOR)
Findings from *Out of Reach* 2017

**2017 HOURS AT MINIMUM WAGE NEEDED TO AFFORD RENT**

In no state can a minimum wage worker afford a **ONE-BEDROOM** rental home at Fair Market Rent, working a standard 40-hour work week, without paying more than 35% of their income.

![Map of 2017 hours at minimum wage needed to afford rent](http://NLIHC.org/OOR)
Findings from Out of Reach 2017

New York:
- The 1-bd housing wage is $23.90 per hour
- The 2-bd housing wage is $28.08 per hour
- A minimum wage worker needs to work 99 hours per week to afford 1-bd home
- A minimum wage worker needs to work 116 hours per week to afford 2-bd home
Other NLIHC Publications

- **A Place to Call Home**: profiles of subsidized housing residents and providers from all federal housing programs
- **The Long Wait for a Home**: examining the state of the nation’s Public Housing Agency waiting lists
- **The Alignment Project**: case studies on how to better use existing federal housing resources to address the housing needs of households with the lowest incomes
- **Housing the Lowest Income People**: a study of the first round of state allocation plans for the national Housing Trust Fund
- **A Rare Occurrence: The Geography and Race of Mortgages Over $500,000**
NLIHC Advocates’ Guide

• 350+ page guide to every federal housing and community development program and resource
  • History and background of all federal housing programs
  • Levels of funding
  • How the programs work
  • Projections for the future
  • What advocates should know and do
Policy Priorities
Policy Priorities

• **Federal Budget**: preventing any cuts and advocating for highest possible funding for all federal housing programs

• **National Housing Trust Fund**: protecting, expanding, and monitoring implementation

• **United for Homes**: rebalance federal housing investments toward those with the greatest needs through mortgage interest deduction (MID) reform
Policy Priorities

- **National Housing Trust Fund**
  - Result of successful 16-year campaign led by NLIHC and endorsed by more than 3,000 national, statewide, and local organizations
  - Signed into law by President Bush as part of Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA) of 2008
  - Administered as a block grant to the states – states received first allocations in 2016
  - Currently funded through small assessment on new business from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac
Policy Priorities

• National Housing Trust Fund
  • First-in-a-generation new federal program dedicated to expanding the supply of housing for ELI households
  • Funds may be used to build, preserve, rehab, or operate housing units
  • At least 75% of funding must benefit ELI households, and at least 80% must be used for rental housing
  • *NLIHC supports expansion through GSE reform, infrastructure package, or direct allocation*
Policy Priorities

• United for Homes
  • Campaign to end America’s housing shortage and expand fairness in the federal tax code by modifying the mortgage interest deduction (MID)
    • Lower the cap on the amount of a mortgage eligible for a deduction from $1 million to $500,000
    • Convert from a deduction to a non-refundable 15% tax credit
    • Keep the federal revenue generated in housing and redirect it toward programs for those with the greatest need
  • Our proposal would generate $241 billion in deficit-neutral, federal revenue over 10 years
Policy Priorities

Projected Mortgage Interest Deduction (MID) Tax Expenditure and HUD Budget (2015-2021)

Note: Not in constant dollars.
Sources: MID projections from Table 14-2B of OMB's Analytical Perspectives (2015). HUD budget authority and budget outlay data from OMB FY17 historical tables 5.2 and 4.1, respectively.

http://UnitedForHomes.org
Policy Priorities

Total Expenditure on Mortgage Interest Tax Break

- Current Law
- United for Homes Proposal

Income Group
- $0-$20K
- $20K-$50K
- $50K-$75K
- $75K-$100K
- $100K-$125K
- $125K-$150K
- $150K-$175K
- $175K-$200K
- $200K-$500K
- $500K+

Billions

Source: Tax Policy Center, 2016

http://UnitedForHomes.org
Policy Priorities

Average Benefit of Mortgage Interest Deduction: Housing Assistance for the More Affluent

Source: NLHJC tabulations of Tax Policy Center (2016) and 2015 ACS 5 Year Estimates.

http://UnitedForHomes.org
Policy Priorities

Just 6.0% of Mortgages in the United States From 2013 to 2015 Were Over $500,000

Source: NLIHC analysis of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data.

http://UnitedForHomes.org
Policy Priorities

• **United for Homes**
  • Currently endorsed by 2,344 national, statewide, and local organizations and elected officials in all 435 Congressional Districts
  • Join us! Endorse the campaign and find more resources online at [http://UnitedForHomes.org](http://UnitedForHomes.org)
  • Ask your U.S. Representative to co-sponsor H.R.948, the Common Sense Housing Investment Act of 2017, introduced by Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN)
Policy Priorities

• **Low Income Housing Tax Credit:** improve the tax credit by targeting it more toward households who need assistance most

• **Fair Housing:** defend against attempts to weaken fair housing law and ensure equitable access to affordable housing for all

• **Other Housing Solutions:** including implementation of VAWA housing protections, HUD’s Section 3 rule, and housing protections in criminal justice reform

• **Other Anti-Poverty Solutions:** thinking beyond housing to ally behind other approaches to ending social and economic inequities
Questions?
What can we do? Advocate!
Pop Quiz!
Pop Quiz!

True or False: “advocacy” and “lobbying” mean essentially the same thing.
Pop Quiz!

True or False: “advocacy” and “lobbying” mean essentially the same thing.

**FALSE:** Advocacy can includes three main types of activities, one of which might include lobbying. By the IRS’s definition, lobbying means talking about legislation. If you aren’t talking about legislation, you aren’t lobbying.
Pop Quiz!

True or False: As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, I cannot participate in advocacy.
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**FALSE:** 501(c)3 organizations may legally participate in an unlimited amount of advocacy activities, without jeopardizing their nonprofit status.
Pop Quiz!

True or False: As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, I cannot participate in advocacy.

**FALSE:** Employees of 501(c)3 organizations **may** participate in an unlimited amount of advocacy activities in their capacities as individual constituents, community leaders, and residents of the communities where they live and work.
Pop Quiz!

True or False: As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, I cannot participate in lobbying.
Pop Quiz!

True or False: As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, I cannot participate in lobbying.

**FALSE:** 501(c)3 organizations may legally participate in lobbying activities, up to generous limits established by the Internal Revenue Code, without jeopardizing their nonprofit status.
Pop Quiz!

True or False: As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, I cannot participate in lobbying.

**FALSE:** Employees of 501(c)3 organizations may participate in lobbying activities in their capacities as individual constituents, community leaders, and residents of the communities where they live and work.
What is Advocacy?
What is advocacy?

• Advocacy
  • Advocacy is any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others. It includes public education, regulatory work, litigation, and work before administrative bodies, lobbying, voter registration, voter education, and more. **While all lobbying is advocacy, not all advocacy is lobbying.**

https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/afj-on-advocacy/glossary
What is advocacy?

Three most common forms of advocacy

- Relationship Building
- Education
- Lobbying
What is advocacy?

Three most common forms of advocacy

Relationship building

- Good advocacy relies on positive relationships
  - Think within and beyond your current network
  - Think of natural allies in your work
  - Think of elected and appointed officials at all levels of government—and their staffs!
What is advocacy?

Three most common forms of advocacy

- What do you know about problems facing your communities?
- What do you know about solutions to these problems?
- Think big picture!
  - Draw connections between the problems you identify and public policy at all levels of government

Education
What is advocacy?

*Three most common forms of advocacy*

- How can you educate communities you belong to?
- How can you educate elected and appointed officials?
What is advocacy?

Three most common forms of advocacy

- Lobbying

In general, lobbying is an attempt to influence specific legislation by communicating views to legislators or asking people to contact their legislators.

https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/afj-on-advocacy/glossary
What is advocacy?

Three most common forms of advocacy

- Direct Lobbying
- Grassroots Lobbying
- Lobbying

https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/afj-on-advocacy/glossary
What is advocacy?

Three most common forms of advocacy

Direct Lobbying

• When an organization communicates with a legislator or legislative staff member about a specific piece of legislation and reflects a view on that legislation; also includes general public communication expressing a view about a ballot initiative, referendum, bond measure, or similar procedure.

https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/afj-on-advocacy/glossary
What is advocacy?

Three most common forms of advocacy

- A communication with the general public that reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call to action that encourages people to contact their legislative representatives or staff in order to influence that legislation.
What is advocacy?

• Remember
  • *While all lobbying is advocacy, not all advocacy is lobbying*
  • *If you are not talking about specific legislation, you are not lobbying.*
Who can advocate?
Who can lobby?
Who can advocate?

- All of us can advocate!
  - There is no legal limit on the amount of non-lobbying advocacy activities for 501(c)3 organizations
  - Key activities may include relationship building and public education
  - Consult your board and organizational policies for further clarification
Who can lobby?

• All of us can lobby...within limits!
  • 501(c)3 organizations are legally allowed to lobby—within generous limits outlined in Internal Revenue Code
    • Most of us follow the Insubstantial Part Test
      • Lobbying must be limited to an insubstantial part of an organization’s overall activity. Under this test, there are no clear definitions regarding what an “insubstantial part” is or how to measure activities
      • Most lawyers agree 5% of an organization’s overall staff time can be considered “insubstantial part” of overall activities. This must include paid staff and volunteer time.
    • A more precise, but also more complicated measure is the 501(h) Expenditure Test.

https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/afj-on-advocacy/glossary
Who can lobby?

Insubstantial Part Test (example 1):

10 full-time staff
40 hours per week
X 50 weeks per year
20,000 hours per year
Who can lobby?

Insubstantial Part Test (example 1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 full-time staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 hours per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X 50 weeks per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 hours per year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20,000 hours per year

X 5% limit

1,000 hours per year
Who can lobby?

Insubstantial Part Test (example 1a):

20,000 hours per year
X 5% limit
1,000 hours per year

1,000 hours per year
10 staff members
2 hours per week
50 weeks per year
Who can lobby?

Insubstantial Part Test (example 1b):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
20,000 \text{ hours per year} \\
\times \quad 5\% \text{ limit} \\
\hline
1,000 \text{ hours per year}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
1,000 \text{ hours per year} \\
2 \text{ staff members} \\
10 \text{ hours per week} \\
50 \text{ weeks per year}
\end{array}
\]
Who can lobby?

Insubstantial Part Test (example 1c):

20,000 hours per year
\[ \times \quad 5\% \text{ limit} \]

1,000 hours per year

1,000 hours per year

1 staff member
20 hours per week
50 weeks per year
Why should I advocate?
Why should I advocate?

- You are a community leader and an expert
- It doesn’t need to be your full-time responsibility
- Elected officials are waiting to hear from you
- Your voice will carry
- *It works!*
How can I advocate?
How can I advocate?

Three most common forms of advocacy

- Relationship Building
- Education
- Lobbying
How can I advocate?

*Three most common forms of advocacy*

**Relationship building**

- Know your network
  - Expand your reach at every opportunity
- Meet with fellow community stakeholders
- Learn who your allies are or who might be future allies
- Join, enhance and create coalitions of likeminded organizations and advocates
How can I advocate?

Three most common forms of advocacy

Relationship building

- Know your elected officials
  - Where are their local offices and when do they plan to host public events?
  - What leadership positions, committee assignments, and caucus memberships do they hold?
- What issues are of concern to them as elected officials?
- How are they voting and what are they speaking on?
How can I advocate?

*Three most common forms of advocacy*

**Education**

- Share information
  - Community needs assessments, position statements, research
- Email blasts, blog posts, op-eds or letters to the editors
- Public information sessions, town halls, teach-ins
How can I advocate?

Three most common forms of advocacy

- Direct Lobbying
- Grassroots Lobbying

https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/afj-on-advocacy/glossary
How can I advocate?

Three most common forms of advocacy

Direct Lobbying

- Direct communication with legislators and their staffs about specific legislation
  - Phone calls, emails, sign-on letters to legislative offices
  - In-person meetings with elected officials or their staff
  - Attending town halls, public meeting, other public event hosted by your elected officials
How can I advocate?

**Three most common forms of advocacy**

- **Grassroots**
  - Communication about specific legislation that includes a call to action on that legislation
    - Email blasts, conference calls, phone calls, blog posts, op-eds and letters to the editor
    - In-person meetings or events within and beyond your network to address legislation
    - Addressing legislation with coalitions you belong to

- **Lobbying**
Three most common forms of advocacy

Grassroots
Lobbying

Call to Action messages and email blasts should include:
- Background information
- Bigger picture for why this particular legislation matters
- Specific action steps—both for the recipient and the target elected official
- Contact information for the appropriate elected official
Questions?
Thank you!
Support NLIHC through membership

It’s never been easy.
Our commitment is unwavering.
Join us and amplify the voices of the poorest families in need.

OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR STRENGTH.

JOIN TODAY
WWW.NLIHC.ORG/MEMBERSHIP
Thank you!

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

-Margaret Mead

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