AN UNWAVERING PATH FORWARD TO HOUSING JUSTICE
NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION

National Low Income Housing Coalition

Making Our Voices Heard: Tips and Tools for Affordable Housing Advocacy

Tia Turner, MA (*she/her*)

Housing Advocacy Organizer

tturner@nlihc.org

About me

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NLIHC's Mission

The National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated to achieving racially and socially equitable public policy that ensures **people with the lowest incomes** have quality homes that are affordable and accessible in communities of their choice.

NLIHC members

- Tenant leaders, resident associations
- Homeless service agencies
- Public Housing Authorities
- Legal aid groups
- Researchers
- Government agencies
- Housing developers
- Property mangers
- **Students - suggested rate of $5/ year!**

Injustice in housing

- Native land theft and colonization
- Enslavement of African Americans
- Jim Crow era laws of segregation
- Local zoning codes
- Federal Housing Administration loans, redlining
- Segregation of public housing
- Urban renewal
- 1968 Fair Housing Act enforcement
- Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

Racial disparities

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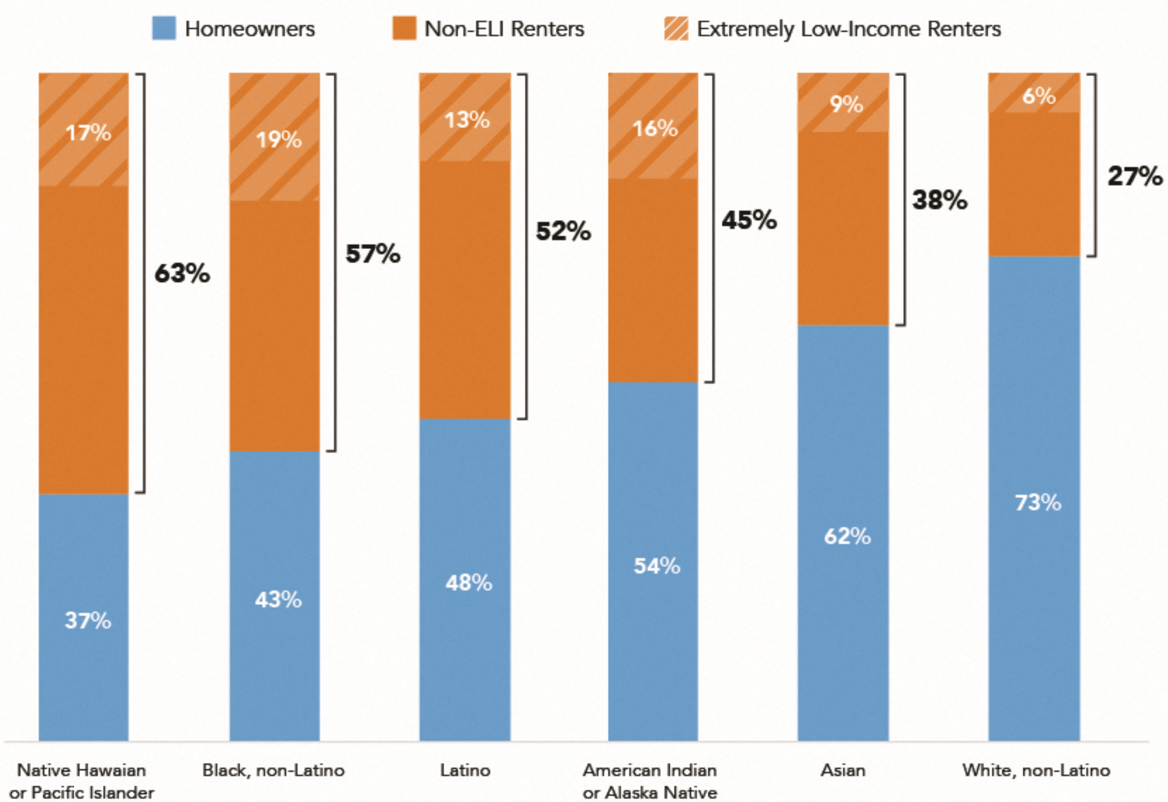
BLACK HOUSEHOLDS ARE THREE TIMES AND LATINO HOUSEHOLDS ARE TWO TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN WHITE HOUSEHOLDS TO BE RENTERS WITH EXTREMELY LOW INCOMES

SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS BY TENURE



Racial disparities

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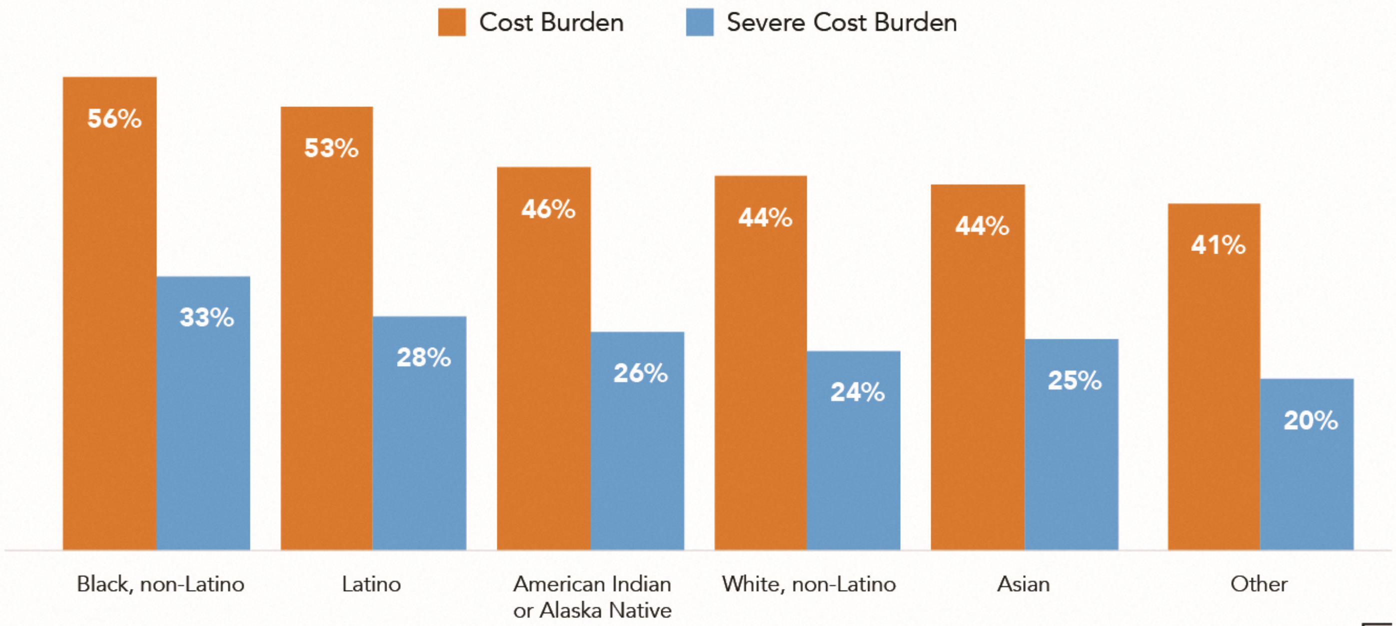
BLACK AND LATINO RENTERS EXPERIENCE HIGHER RATES OF HOUSING COST BURDEN THAN WHITE RENTERS

SHARE OF RENTERS WITH COST BURDEN, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



SOURCE: 2022 ACS PUMS.

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The Gap

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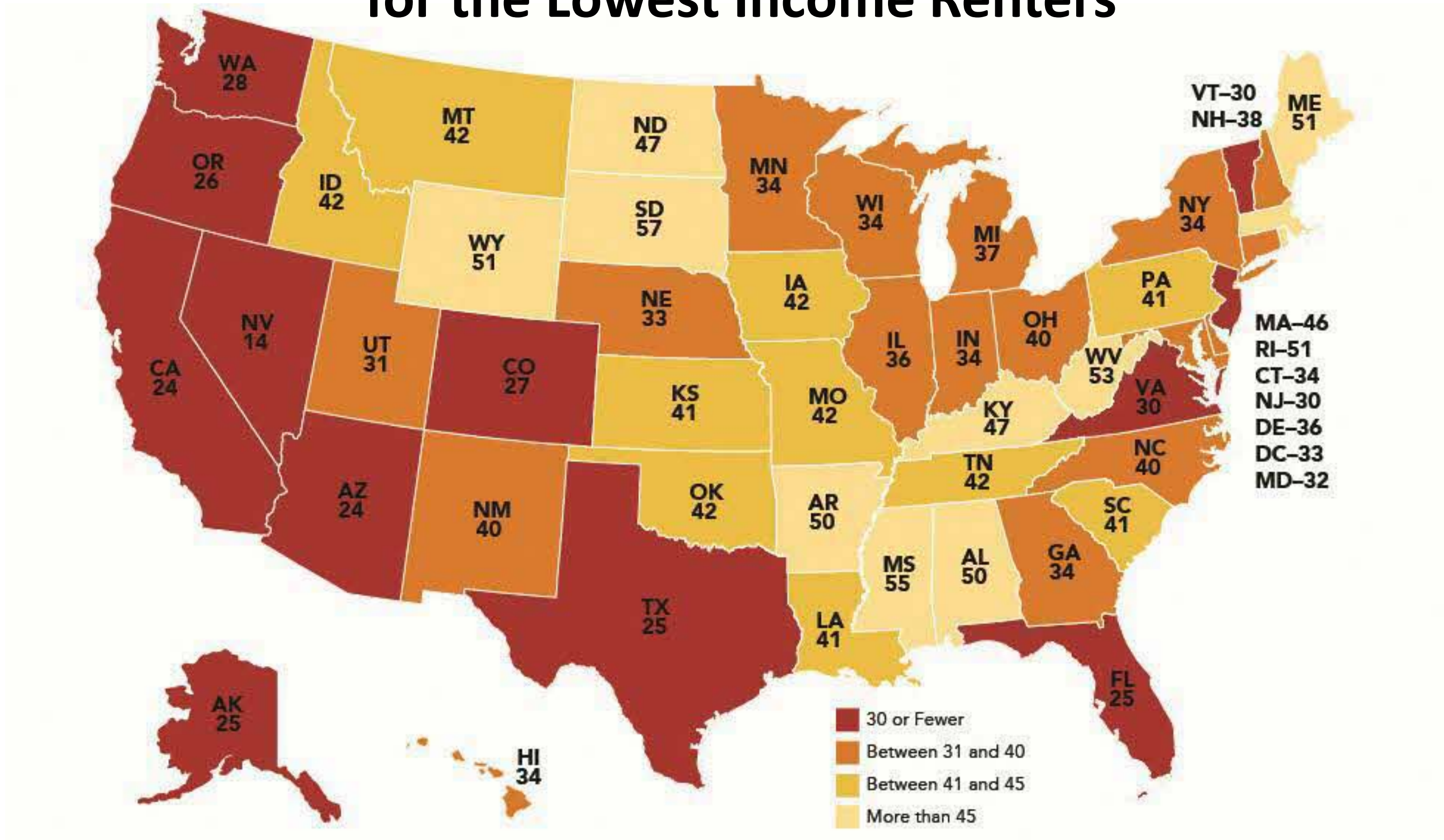
No State Has an Adequate Supply of Affordable Rental Housing for the Lowest Income Renters



Policy Solutions

1. Bridge the gap between incomes and housing costs
2. Expand and preserve the supply of deeply affordable rental homes
3. Provide emergency rental assistance to stabilize families in crisis
4. Strengthen and enforce renter protections

NLIHC Priorities

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- Highest funding possible in FY25 budget
- Bipartisan Eviction Crisis Act
- Bipartisan Family Stability and Opportunities Vouchers Act
- Fair Housing Improvement Act
- Oppose criminalization of homelessness

What does advocacy mean to you?

What is your level of experience with advocacy?

1 = none at all
5 = I'm an expert!

NLIHC’s Advocacy Approach

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NLIHC’s Advocacy Style

- Nonpartisan, evidence-based, and people-centered advocacy.
- Collaboration with federal, state and tribal, and local partners .
- Emphasis on data-driven policy recommendations.

Building an Effective Advocacy Strategy

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Components of a Successful Advocacy Strategy

- **Identifying Issues:** Understanding the local affordable housing landscape.
- **Setting Goals:** Defining clear, achievable advocacy goals.
- **Building Coalitions:** Engaging stakeholders and forming partnerships.
- **Messaging:** Crafting compelling narratives and messages.
- **Action Plan:** Outlining specific steps and tactics (e.g., lobbying, grassroots mobilization).

Engaging with Policymakers

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Tips for Effective Engagement

- Research your policymakers and their positions on housing.
- Tailor your message to align with their priorities.
- Establish ongoing relationships, not just one-time contacts.
- Utilize multiple channels: letters, meetings, social media, public testimony.

Engaging with Communities

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Grassroots Mobilization

- Organizing community meetings and town halls.
- Using social media for wider engagement.
- Building a base of support through volunteer recruitment and coalition building.

Challenges and Opportunities

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Overcoming Advocacy Challenges

- Common obstacles in affordable housing advocacy (e.g., political opposition, public apathy).
- Strategies for overcoming these challenges.
- Identifying opportunities for advocacy in the current political landscape.

Audience Questions

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- Were there any major housing policy victories in your community within the past few years?
- Was there a significant advocacy effort to make this possible? If so, what did it entail?

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Advocacy is Essential—For Everyone!

Myths and Misconceptions

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- 1) Our tax status doesn’t allow us to engage in advocacy
- 2) Our elected official has already made up their mind and it won’t make a difference
- 3) We don’t have the resources or expertise

Advocacy vs. Lobbying

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Advocacy

- Public education and organizing in support of your mission
- Includes informing public officials about an issue or problem without specific legislation

Lobbying

- Communicating with decision makers
- Communicating about existing or potential legislation
- ***Asking the decision-maker to vote a specific way on legislation***

Resources

- www.bolderadvocacy.org

Does Advocacy Work?

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Legislative Action Center

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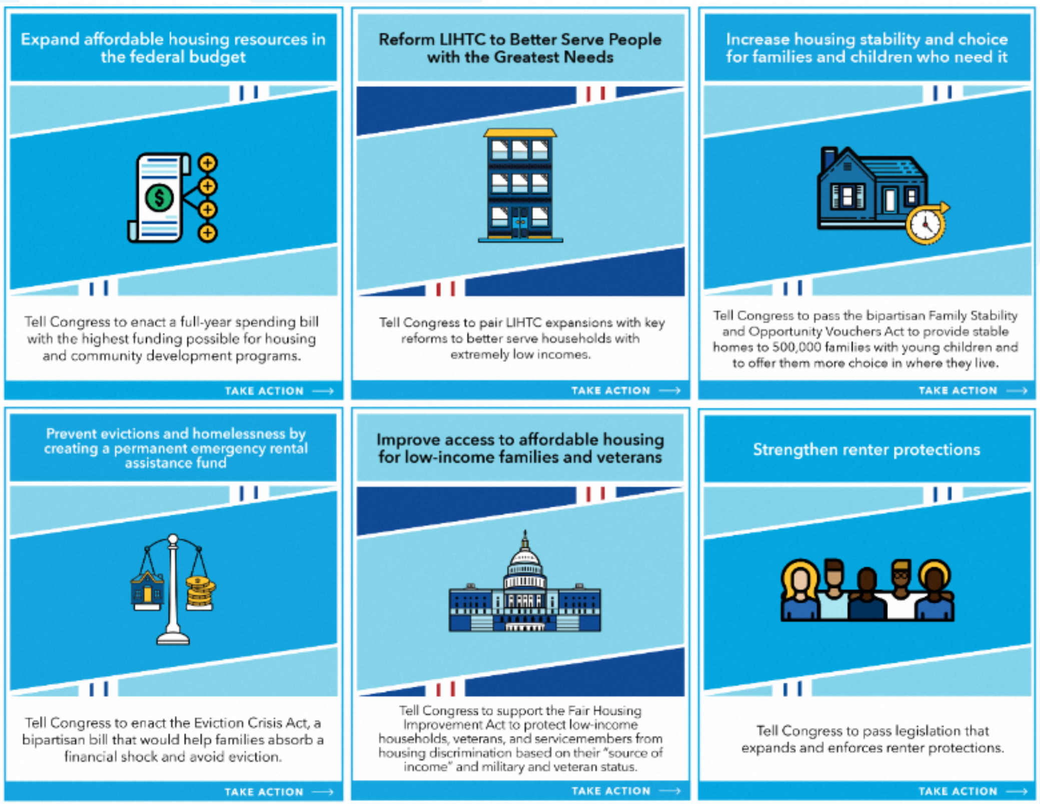
Visit nlihc.org/take-action!



ORGANIZATIONAL SIGN-ON LETTERS

Eviction Crisis Act

Fair Housing Improvement Act

Federal Budget

HoUSed Campaign

www.nlihc.org

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Advocacy Activities (and How to Do Them Effectively!)

Hill Meetings

- Before the meeting
  - Schedule two weeks in advance
  - Research the office
  - Determine speaking roles (if multiple groups)
- During the meeting
  - Introduction, stories and data, connection to the member's priority issues, clear ask
- After the meeting
  - Leave behind materials
  - Thank you and follow-up email
  - Post on social media

Social Media Advocacy: Maximizing Your Impact

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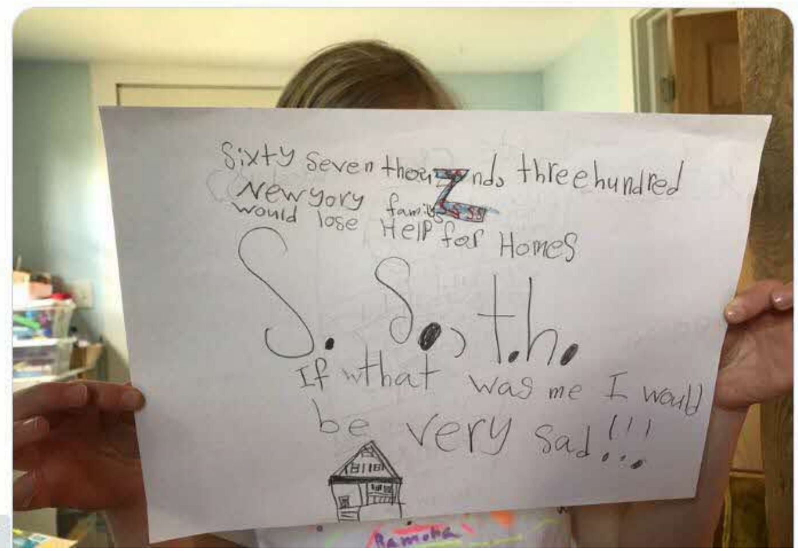
- 78% of congressional offices say social media has an influence when they are undecided, IF…
  - 1) Member of Congress is tagged;
  - 2) Multiple **constituents** post;
  - 3) They are affiliated with a group, and
  - 4) Posts are in close time proximity to each other
- Make clear that you are a constituent, tag your member, and tag @NLIHC!

Lindsay Duvall @LindsayJDuvall · May 8

@SenGillibrand @SenSchumer @PatRyanUC
Please make sure 67,300+ New York families don't lose access to rental assistance! NO CUTS to housing because, #CutsHurt families and communities.
#SpringintoAction @NLIHC



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NLIHC

www.nlihc.org

Other Activities

- Emails
- Phone calls, including coordinated call-in days
- Media advocacy (op-eds, letters to the editor, etc.)
- Legislator town halls
- Site visits

Engaging People with Lived Experience

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DO…	DON'T…
• Treat people as authentic partners with decision-making and agenda-setting power • Compensate for their time and labor	• Tokenize • Exploit trauma • Approach engagement as "filling a slot" or "checking off a box"

Storytelling

Storytelling Tips
(adapted from Housing Narrative Lab)

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- Effective emotional appeals: pride, hope, love, and awe
  - Avoid anger, fear, and sadness!
- Building blocks
  - 1) Choose your focus
  - 2) Choose your value
  - 3) Describe what you had to overcome.
  - 4) Show the climax—what choice did you make in the face of challenge?
  - 5) Describe the resolution.
  - 6) Call to action
- Story of self, story of us, story of action

Storytelling Example

- Think about how the story fits into this sequence:
  - 1) Choose your focus
  - 2) Choose your value
  - 3) Describe what you had to overcome.
  - 4) Show the climax—what choice did you make in the face of challenge?
  - 5) Describe the resolution.
  - 6) Call to action

Storytelling Breakouts

- ~7 mins for independent work
- ~4 mins to share with a partner
- One or two volunteers will share their stories with the room and win a prize!

NLIHC Resources & Opportunities

Stay in the Loop on Federal Policy!

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- Weekly *Memo to Members & Partners*: https://nlihc.org/explore-issues/publications-research/memo-to-members
- Webinars and working group calls: https://nlihc.org/working-groupcalls
    - Mondays (biweekly): HoUSed National Call
    - Mondays (monthly): Homelessness & Housing First
    - Mondays (biweekly): Tenant Talk Live
    - Wednesdays (weekly): Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition
- Forum and Hill Day in mid-March!

Our Homes, Our Votes

50 EST. 1974 ANNIVERSARY
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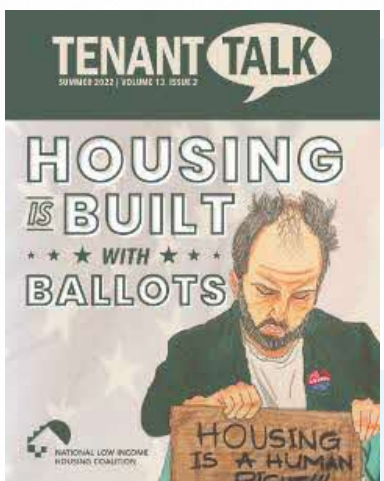
Webinars & Newsletter

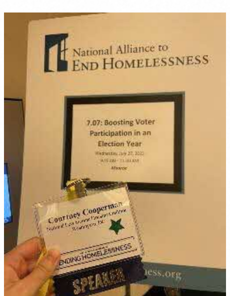
Civic Holidays

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

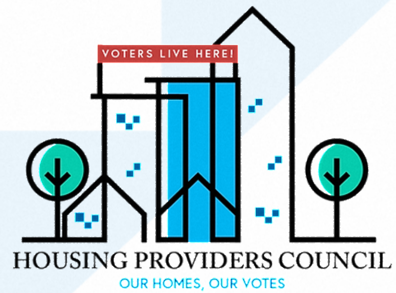
Tenant Engagement



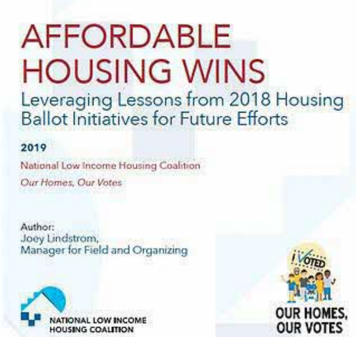
Workshops & Presentations



Housing Providers Council



Ballot Measures



Affiliates

Ourhomes-ourvotes.org

NLIHC advocacy tools

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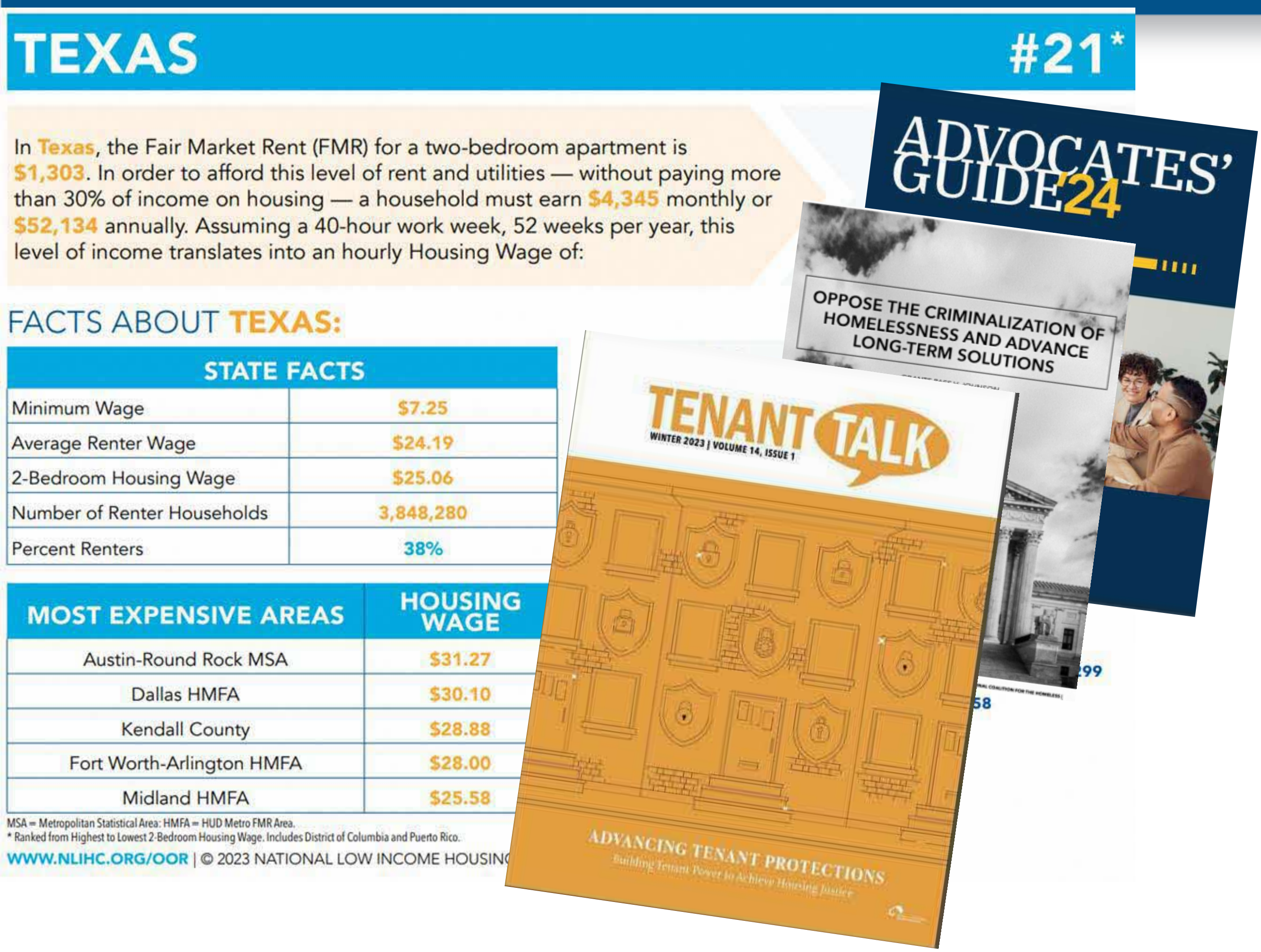

nlihc.org/take-action

NLIHC Membership

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- Individuals and organizations
- Annual dues at suggested amounts
- Discounted tickets to Forum, discounted publications
- Premier support from field organizers
- Invitation to quarterly Policy Advisory Committee meetings
- Participate in strong network, support strategic advocacy for priorities, and publicly identify with affordable housing movement at the national level

Visit nlihc.org/membership to join!

Reflections, discussion

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- What resonated with you from this presentation?
- What do you want to learn more about?
- What are you inspired to do next?

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Thank you!

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