

Fall 2020

results

# U.S. Poverty Policy Request

## Congress Must Pass Rental Assistance

Millions of low-income working families are struggling to pay rent as layoffs skyrocket due to the COVID-19 recession. Even before, Americans were already struggling to afford housing, especially renters of color. Some startling facts that were true *before* the COVID pandemic:

- According to Harvard researchers, since 1960 renters' median earnings have gone up 5 percent while rents are up 61 percent.
- A worker making the prevailing minimum wage cannot afford a two-bedroom apartment in any U.S. state (<https://reports.nlihc.org/oor>)
- Only one in four eligible low-income households receives federal housing assistance.

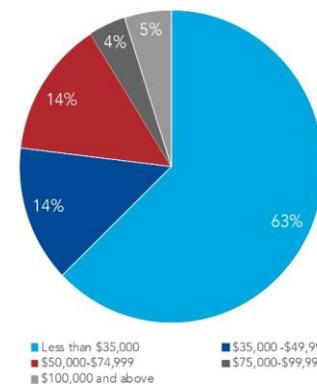
### Housing Policy Request

Pass a strong COVID relief bill that includes \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance

While the September 4 national eviction moratorium issued by the CDC does help, it alone only postpones the underlying problem. The core issue is the ability to pay rent. When millions have lost jobs or have seen their pay cut, homelessness becomes a real threat. Conservative economist Mark Zandi estimates that renters already owe \$25 billion in back rent, which could grow to \$69.8 billion by the end of the year (<http://bitly.ws/9KrM>). This not only puts a tremendous burden on tenants; landlords cannot meet their own financial obligations when no rent is coming in. Nearly one-half of landlords in the U.S. are individual owners, so-called “mom and pop” landlords.

The National Low-Income Housing Coalition estimates \$99.5 billion is needed to keep housing affordable for low-income renters, including those newly unemployed in the pandemic. **We urge Congress to pass a strong COVID relief bill and include \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance to help renters and landlords weather this crisis.** This will secure the health and well-being of families and communities by helping millions of low-income renters stay in their homes over the next year and preventing a dramatic increase in homelessness. We look forward to working with you to address immediate housing needs and work towards bold policy solutions for our underlying housing crisis.

### Household Income of Renters Behind on Rent Who Say Eviction Somewhat or Very Likely



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Housing Pulse Survey, Phase 2, August 19-31. Renters behind on rent asked likelihood of eviction in next two months.