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## **RECESSION CONTINUES TO PUSH RENTAL HOUSING FURTHER “OUT OF REACH” FOR LOW INCOME AMERICANS**

### ***Alabama’s high cost of housing highlighted in 2010 housing affordability report***

Birmingham, AL – According to a national report released today that provides data on the cost of rental housing for every county, metropolitan area and state in the nation, the Housing Wage for Alabama is \$12.59. The Housing Wage is the hourly wage a family must earn – working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year – to be able to afford rent and utilities in the private housing market. Alabama’s Housing Wage has increased 43% since 2000.

The report, *Out of Reach 2010*, was jointly released by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), a Washington, DC-based housing policy organization, and the Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama (LIHCA). The report provides the Housing Wage and other data for every state including Alabama.

“Again the *Out of Reach* data demonstrates that it is becoming more difficult for low income families to find safe, decent affordable homes in Alabama,” said Marcie Porter, LIHCA Board President. “The recession has only made it more challenging for these individuals who are already struggling to remain stably housed. We must act now to ensure that low income families have access to the safe and affordable housing they so desperately need.”

Working at the minimum wage, a family must have 1.7 wage earners working full-time – or one full-time earner working 69 hours per week at minimum wage – to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment. The typical renter in Alabama earns \$10.68, which is \$1.91 less than the hourly wage needed to afford a modest unit. A housing unit is considered affordable if it costs no more than 30% of a family’s income. For additional information on *Out of Reach*, visit <http://www.nlihc.org/oor2010/>

Alabama is in need of a statewide policy addressing the lack of affordable housing for its residents. Currently, each city, county or region must address their local housing issues independently, resulting in the lack of a statewide strategy to end Alabama’s statewide affordable housing crisis. In order for Alabama to start addressing this crisis that is affecting hard-working families and individuals in our state, LIHCA and its partners are calling for a statewide strategy that promotes the development and preservation of affordable housing units.

LIHCA is a statewide partnership dedicated to ending the affordable housing crisis in Alabama. LIHCA was formed in 2007 with an array of statewide partners united as one voice to raise awareness of the affordable housing crisis in Alabama. Through education and advocacy, LIHCA promotes solutions to expand housing options to Alabamians with the greatest financial need.

For more information on LIHCA, visit [www.lihca.org](http://www.lihca.org).

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