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RECESSION CONTINUES TO PUSH RENTAL HOUSING FURTHER “OUT OF REACH” FOR LOW INCOME ALABAMIANS

Alabama’s high cost of housing highlighted in 2011 housing affordability report

Birmingham, AL – According to a national report released yesterday 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 \$12.77. 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 46% since 2000.

The report, *Out of Reach 2011*, 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.

“As expected the *Out of Reach* data demonstrates that it is increasingly difficult for low income families to find safe, decent affordable homes in Alabama,” said Marcie Porter, LIHCA Board President. “Affordable housing is the most important factor in stabilizing the lives of low income families and children. We must take all necessary steps to provide that stability to low income families through access to safe and affordable homes.”

Working at the minimum wage, a family must have 1.8 wage earners working full-time – or one full-time earner working 70 hours per week at minimum wage – to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment. The typical renter in Alabama earns \$10.52, which is \$2.25 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/oor/oor2011/>.

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 affects 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.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to succeed in life; in Alabama, this begins with a place to call home.

For more information on LIHCA, visit www.lihca.org.

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