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Recession Continues to Push Rental Housing Further “Out of Reach” for Low Income Americans

Virginia’s high cost of housing highlighted in 2010 housing affordability report

Washington, DC – 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 Virginia is \$19.63. 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. Virginia’s Housing Wage has increased 54% since 2000, the 10th largest increase among the states.

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 Virginia Housing Coalition. The report provides the Housing Wage and other data for every state, metropolitan area, combined non metropolitan area, and county in the country.

“Again the *Out of Reach* data demonstrates that it is becoming more difficult for low income families to find decent homes they can afford in Virginia,” said Orlando Artze, President of the Virginia Housing Coalition. “The recession has only made a bad situation worse. 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 2.7 wage earners working full-time – or one full-time earner working 108 hours per week at Virginia’s minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour – to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

The typical renter in Virginia earns \$15.22 per hour, which is \$4.41 less than the hourly wage needed to afford a modest unit.

In the Northern Virginia area, including Arlington and Alexandria, the numbers are even worse. The Housing Wage in that part of the state is a whopping \$28.73 while the typical renter in the area earns only \$20.54 per hour.

An estimated 46% of renters in Virginia do not earn enough to afford a two-bedroom unit at the Fair Market Rent.

This year, Virginia is the twelfth most expensive state in the nation for renters. The National Housing Wage is \$18.44 in 2010.

The Virginia Housing Coalition (www.vahousingcoalition.org) supports organizations and individuals working to provide affordable housing options in Virginia by influencing and developing

public policy, recognizing exemplary achievement, and providing education, training and services that will make its members more effective in attaining their goals.

For additional information, visit <http://www.nlihc.org/oor2010/>

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