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The Weekly Wrap: The Era of Funding Cuts and Lawsuits

Zero-fare buses, ADA compliance in Baltimore, and more.



DEONNA ANDERSON APRIL 11, 2025



(Photo by Getty Images / Unsplash+)

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Welcome back to The Weekly Wrap, our Friday roundup of stories that explain the problems oppressing people in cities and elevate the solutions that bring us closer to economic, environmental and social justice.

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Another Funding Cut, Another Lawsuit: Library Edition

The American Library Association and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the largest union representing museum and library workers, is suing to challenge the Trump administration's gutting of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), [School Library Journal reports](#). The agency, which awards grant funding to museums and libraries across the U.S, [placed its entire staff on administrative leave](#) at the end of March. It also fired its board and started notifying grantees that they'd no longer be receiving funding, [according to the New York Times](#).

Baltimore Must Improve Its Sidewalks To Comply With ADA Requirements

Baltimore has been ordered to spend between \$44 million and \$50 million to make sidewalks, curb ramps and other public rights of way accessible for people with disabilities, [Smart Cities Dive reports](#). In addition to these actions, the city must make a number of other changes, such as identifying obstructions along its pedestrian walkways and developing a plan to address them, keeping pedestrian walkways clear of vegetation and overgrowth, and inspecting and documenting accessibility of its pedestrian walkways every 10 years. Baltimore must make these improvements by July 2028, the outlet reports.

The partial consent decree is the result of a 2021 class action lawsuit. In recent years, other cities — Boston, Philadelphia, New York City and Los Angeles — have been ordered to comply with similar decrees.

Scientists Are Racing To Understand What Drives Fires in Suburbs and Cities

While millions of Americans believe they're safe from wildfires in their cities, new research shows they're not, [the Guardian reports](#). The recent fires in Los Angeles County (and previous ones in other cities) prove this point.

Now, scientists, first responders, members of the insurance industry and others are working to better understand the risk and respond to it. The outlet reports they've "learned that flames enter and move through structures differently from when they burn through backcountry, complicating

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Zero-Fare Bus Funding at a Crossroads

Two cities are currently grappling with whether or not to extend their zero-fare bus service. The practice has [become popular among transit agencies](#) in recent years.

Now in Richmond, Virginia, the Greater Richmond Transit Company may be ending its fare-free transit program because money from a one-time grant to support the program is on its way to expiring this summer, [according to the Virginia Mercury](#). The outlet notes that some residents have called the program a “lifesaver” because they wouldn’t have been able to ride the bus if they had to pay the fare themselves.

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, Mayor Chelle Parker has walked back her decision to cut funding for the local transit agency’s [subsidized fare programs](#), aimed at low-income residents and city employees, [the Inquirer reports](#). And on Thursday, the agency’s interim general manager [announced a budget for fiscal year 2026](#) that would raise transit fares by more than 20% and cut service by 45%, if implemented.

Nevada Policymakers Are Trying To Tackle the Housing Crisis

The housing crisis is impacting the entire U.S. In Nevada, where nearly half of renters are considered cost burdened, the legislature is responding by bringing new bills from last session back to the floor for consideration, [the Nevada Independent reports](#).

The outlet reports six ways that legislation could help: capping rents for certain groups of renters, tightening renter protections that would improve the safety of their homes, building more units, opening up more federal land to build on, and incentivizing developers to build more projects.

MORE NEWS

- Blockbuster deal will wipe out \$30 billion in medical debt. Even backers say it’s not enough. [KFF Health News](#)
- Denver tenants awarded \$13.5M in class action lawsuit. [Smart Cities Dive](#)
- Los Angeles County has declared April 10th as the day to honor labor activist Delores Huerta. [NBC LA](#)
- Op-ed: Atlanta’s housing approach offers a model for other cities. [Governing](#)
- MTA, federal government agree to keep congestion pricing tolls through late October [ABC 7 New York](#)
- As HUD threatens to pull funding from sanctuary cities, San Francisco braces for a surge in homelessness. [San Francisco Public Press](#)

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- The National Low Income Housing Coalition is recruiting for its Our Homes, Our Votes Tenant Fellowship, which aims to increase voter turnout among low-income renters and elevate housing as an election issue. [Apply by April 18](#).
- Fulbright New Zealand's Ian Axford Fellowships in Public Policy program is accepting applications to help increase mutual understanding between America and New Zealand. [Apply by April 22](#).
- Lincoln Institute of Land Policy is recruiting for its Vibrant Communities Fellows Program, which is focusing on land and water planning. [Apply by April 27](#).
- The National Community Reinvestment Coalition is accepting applications for its Fellowship for Equitable Development. [Apply by April 30](#).
- Check out Next City's [jobs board](#) for new opportunities.

EVENTS

- [April 15 at 4 p.m. Eastern](#): The Othering & Belonging Institute is hosting a workshop about advancing a just transition of local economies that prioritizes workers, communities, and climate wellbeing
- [April 22 at 1 p.m. Eastern](#): UC Berkeley's Terner Center is hosting a webinar on how permanent supportive housing providers can use California's CalAIM (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal) funding to expand their services.
- [April 24 at 12 p.m. Eastern](#): Jamii Linguists and Resonance Network are hosting a workshop about resilience in movement work.

This article is part of The Weekly Wrap, a newsletter rounding up stories that explain the problems oppressing people in cities and elevate the solutions bringing us closer to economic, environmental and social justice. [Click here to subscribe to The Weekly Wrap newsletter](#).

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Deonna Anderson is Next City's editorial director and serves on the board of Bay Nature Magazine. An award-winning journalist, she has served as a senior editor at GreenBiz and worked with YES! Magazine, KLCC (an NPR affiliate station in Eugene, Oregon), The Lily, Atmos and other media outlets.



Deonna is an alumna of the University of California, Davis and the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY. Deonna was also Next City's 2017-2018 Equitable Cities Reporting Fellow. She lives on the unceded land of the Ohlone people, now known as the Bay Area. Follow her on [Threads](#) or [Instagram](#).

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