



## Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding

*Working to ensure maximum federal resources for housing and community development*

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November 30, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

To Chair Shelby, Ranking Member Leahy, Chair Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF), we write to urge Congress to include in the appropriations package for fiscal year (FY) 2021 the highest allocation of discretionary funds possible for affordable housing and community development programs to maintain the level of services provided and adequately respond to the coronavirus pandemic. We also request that Congress maintain the exemption for Veteran Affairs (VA) healthcare funding from the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019*, which is necessary to ensure these vital programs receive adequate resources.

CHCDF is an education, strategy, and action coalition dedicated to ensuring the highest allocation of resources possible to support accessible, affordable housing and community development for lower-income families and communities. The coalition is comprised of more than 70 national organizations, with members representing a full continuum of national housing and community development organizations including faith-based, private sector, public sector, and advocacy groups.

We are grateful for the increased funding for affordable housing and community development programs included in both the House and Senate spending bills for FY21, particularly in light of the budgetary caps imposed by the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019*. These necessary increases were made possible thanks in large part to your committees' decision to exempt \$12.5 billion in VA healthcare funding from the caps. As you know, rescinding this crucial exemption would result in a \$7 billion cut to domestic spending programs at a time when states, communities, and individuals are struggling to make ends meet.

The coronavirus pandemic has placed unprecedented financial strain on state and local governments, which are in desperate need of additional funding to respond to the pandemic. As coronavirus infections, hospitalizations and fatalities continue to rise across the country and more states enter lockdown, the need for increased federal funding – particularly for affordable housing and community development programs – only grows more urgent.

Affordable, accessible housing has proven vital to controlling the spread of coronavirus and mitigating its impact on people most vulnerable to infection and fatality, including people experiencing homelessness, low-income renters and homeowners, seniors, and people with disabilities. In issuing its moratorium on evictions for nonpayment of rent, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognized housing's central role in stopping the spread of coronavirus, noting stable housing "can be an effective

public health measure utilized to prevent the spread of communicable diseases” by facilitating self-isolation and “[allowing] State and local authorities to more easily implement stay-at-home and social distancing directives.”<sup>1</sup> Ensuring federally assisted and community development programs are adequately funded in the coming fiscal year is both a moral imperative and a public health necessity.

It is crucial to provide ample funds to ensure people who are most affected by this crisis have both the short- and long-term support needed to remain stably housed throughout the duration of the pandemic and beyond. Increased funding is necessary to ensure communities can prevent homelessness and respond to the needs of unhoused people, including locating sites for non-congregate housing, like vacant hotel and motel rooms. Owners and operators of federally assisted housing, Public Housing Authorities, and tribal housing authorities need additional funding to maintain pre-pandemic levels of assistance, keep residents safe and healthy, and expand the availability of Service Coordinators in properties financed by the Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program. Struggling homeowners also need assistance making mortgage and utility payments, and distressed tenants and homeowners need to be able to utilize housing counseling and fair housing programs to work with their landlord or lender to fully understand their rights and remedy discrimination.

As the nation continues to grapple with the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, the necessity of affordable, accessible housing and community development programs has never been more apparent. We urge Members of Congress to reject the request to cut billions of dollars in discretionary spending for FY21, and instead continue working together to ensure affordable housing and community development programs receive the highest allocation of discretionary funds possible in the coming fiscal year.

Sincerely,

American Association of Service Coordinators  
Center for Disability Rights  
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force  
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities  
Council of State Community Development Agencies  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Funders Together to End Homelessness  
Grounded Solutions Network  
Habitat for Humanity International  
Housing Assistance Council (HAC)  
LeadingAge  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)  
National Affordable Housing Management Association  
National AIDS Housing Coalition  
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations (NACEDA)  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Association for County Community and Economic Development  
National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020. “Temporary Halt in Residential Evictions to Prevent the Further Spread of COVID-19.” Federal Register. See: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/09/04/2020-19654/temporary-halt-in-residential-evictions-to-prevent-the-further-spread-of-covid-19>

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials  
National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies  
National Center for Housing and Child Welfare  
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans  
National Council of State Housing Agencies  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Homelessness Law Center  
National Housing Law Project  
National Housing and Rehabilitation Association  
National Housing Resource Center  
National Housing Trust  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National NeighborWorks® Association  
National Partnership for Women and Families  
National Women's Law Center  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
PolicyLink  
Public Housing Authorities Directors Association  
Union for Reform Judaism