

April 29, 2021

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Price
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee
on Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee
on Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Schatz, Ranking Member Collins, Chairman Price, and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

We are grateful for your continued support of HUD's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program in the fiscal year 2021 THUD spending bill. We are writing to encourage you to build upon the bipartisan success of this work as you consider funding levels for HUD's programs in fiscal year 2022.

The undersigned organizations strongly support a request to provide \$150 million for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program in the Fiscal Year 2022 Transportation-HUD Appropriations bill. The funding will allow this asset-building program to serve more households, both within already-established Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) FSS Programs and in FSS programs in properties that receive Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA).

As you know, FSS is the federal government's largest asset building program for families with low incomes. FSS provides people living in federally subsidized housing with the opportunity to build savings by capturing increased family rent payments due to increased earnings. Families in the program also have the opportunity to access services such as financial coaching or case management. FSS enables families to leverage their housing assistance as a platform for economic mobility and to achieve their financial goals.

There is great demand to scale up the FSS program so it can reach additional families. As reported by HUD in its FY 2021 Congressional Justifications, over 70,000 households participate in the program. This is a fraction of the more than 2.2 million households across the country that stand to benefit from the FSS program. The number of eligible households will only increase should Congress endorse the Biden administration's request to fund housing vouchers for 200,000 additional families.

This increase to \$150 million in FY22 would enable an additional 45,000 households or more to participate in this program, based on past estimates made by HUD. This would include families served by private owners with Project-Based Rental Assistance contracts, for whom Congress recently granted eligibility.

Significantly expanding access to the FSS program would not only help to provide families with low incomes the support they will need to recover from the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to build the financial security necessary to weather uncertain times that may come in the future. According to HUD, graduates that build savings in the program have average savings of \$6,700.

Finally, we would also encourage Congress to act to foster the expansion of high-performing FSS programs by striking language in prior appropriations legislation that prevented HUD from considering performance in determining renewal funding awards or expansion of existing programs. These performance measures were developed consistent with Congress' direction in the 2018 amendments and have been appropriately reviewed by the public. Allowing HUD to consider performance measures when determining funding awards will ensure that the funding Congress appropriates can be used to support families to increase their earnings, build savings, achieve their goals, and make progress on the pathway to financial security.

Thank you for your continued support of the FSS program and for your efforts in recent years to expand its scope and impact to benefit more families than ever before. Please contact Jimmy Stuart at jstuart@compassworkingcapital.org or 857-317-3283 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

American Association of Service Coordinators
Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership
Beacon Communities
Boston Housing Authority
The Caleb Group
Caribou Housing Authority
The Community Builders
Community Health Councils
Compass Working Capital
Flint Housing Commission
Florida Housing Coalition
Hallkeen Management
Hot Springs Housing Authority
Housing Assistance Council
Housing Authority City of Fort Myers
Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo
Housing Authority of Thurston County
Housing Partnership Network
Lake County Housing Authority
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Low Income Investment Fund
Mass. Assoc. of Community Development Corporations
Mercy Housing, Inc
National Affordable Housing Management Association
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials

National Housing & Rehabilitation Association
National Housing Conference
National Housing Trust
National Leased Housing Association
National NeighborWorks Association
Perth Amboy Housing Authority
Piedmont Housing Alliance
Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH)
Ripley County Public Housing Agency
Rockville Housing Enterprises
Salem Housing Authority
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
Western Carolina Community Action
Wingate Management Company
WinnCompanies
Anita Farris, Family Self-Sufficiency Specialist
Christine M Welton
Howard Randolph, Family Self-Sufficiency
Joni Boissonneault
Joshua McKie
Loren Francis
Natalie Smith-Wells, Housing Authority of the City of Daytona Beach
Reid Cramer, Fellow, New America
Telesha Mervin, Director, City of Cambridge
Dorothy M Maddox
Marie Joseph