

April X, 2018

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As you begin consideration of the Fiscal Year 2019 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD), and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we strongly encourage the Subcommittee to continue the Federal government's commitment to community development programs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and support no less than \$3.5 billion in formula funds for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

The CDBG program is one of the Federal government's most effective means to revitalize low and moderate-income communities across the country. CDBG funding supports homeownership, housing rehabilitation, public improvements and economic development projects while encouraging additional local investment. Every \$1.00 of CDBG leverages another \$4.09 in non-CDBG funding. CDBG makes its way into local economies through an extensive network of local organizations and remains a necessary resource for families and communities.

Over 1,200 state and local governments receive annual CDBG funding. Every State, Territory, and Congressional District receives or has access to CDBG funds. The importance of this funding to meet the unique needs of local communities is widely recognized and we find it troubling that the President has once again proposed eliminating CDBG altogether. Doing so would shift an insurmountable cost to local communities.

Since 1974, the CDBG program has invested more than \$153 billion in communities nationwide. According to data reported to HUD by grantees, from FY 2005-2017, CDBG has helped more than 1.435 million households rehabilitate their homes, provided down payment and closing cost assistance to qualified homebuyers, and assisted homeowners with lead-based paint abatement. In addition, since 2005, the program has assisted in the creation and retention of more than 401,992 jobs in low-income and moderate-income communities. CDBG has provided critical public services benefitting over 139 million people.

CDBG Helps Seniors Live Independently. CDBG funds are used to rehabilitate the homes of low and moderate-income elderly persons to allow them to age in place, thereby avoiding costly assisted living and nursing home care. CDBG provides resources to Meals on Wheels and other local food programs to ensure our low-income seniors receive daily nourishment and contact. Further, CDBG funds are used to build senior centers to allow seniors to receive health and recreational services to stay engaged and healthy.

CDBG Strengthens Families through Homeownership. CDBG funds are used to assist creditworthy, working families with down payment and closing cost assistance to purchase a home. Homeownership stabilizes neighborhoods, allows families to build assets, and adds to the local tax base.

CDBG Creates Safer Communities. Local communities use CDBG to work with local police departments and neighborhood leaders to fight crime and make neighborhoods safer places to live and work by creating and expanding neighborhood watch groups, making safety improvements to homes and businesses, and encouraging local police sub-stations to move into high crime areas.

CDBG Invests in Our Next Generation. Local communities use CDBG funds to provide afterschool programs to low-income children, summer jobs for low-income youth, and build recreation centers to provide a safe outlet for learning, sports and personal growth.

We understand that the subcommittee must make difficult decisions, however, we urge you to provide no less than \$3.5 billion for the CDBG program in the FY19 THUD Appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your continued support of community development and revitalization.

Sincerely,