

IMMEDIATE

Protect critical programs in FY18 budget: HOME, CDBG, Section 4, and homelessness and rental assistance

The President's proposed FY18 budget severely cut or eliminated funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), Community Development Block Grants Program (CDBG), the Section 4 Capacity Building for Affordable Housing and Community Development Program (Section 4), and many homelessness and rental assistance programs. These cuts were proposed even though CDBG provides flexible funding for services and community improvements that would not occur otherwise. Similarly, HOME is the only federal block grant that provides flexible funding to produce affordable housing for low-income families. For every federal dollar spent, CDBG leverages \$3.65; HOME leverages \$4.87; and Section 4 leverages over \$20. (For more information on all on housing and community development programs in FY18 budget, see www.enterprisecommunity.com/blog.)

Fortunately, the House and Senate passed appropriations bills that significantly restored funding to these critical programs. However, a different obstacle has emerged – budget spending limits, or more precisely, “the budget cap.” Appropriations are annual decisions about *how* the federal government spends some of its money. Budget resolutions, or agreements, on the other hand, set the *total amount* of money to be spent. The Senate appropriations bill passed with a \$518.5 billion budget cap, but the House appropriations bill passed with only a \$511 billion budget cap. Congress must reach a budget agreement between these two as passed appropriations bills. Without a budget agreement, the budget cap will default to \$516 billion, as set by the Budget Control Act of 2011.

WHAT CAN YOUR ORGANIZATION DO?

1) Contact your member of the Ohio Congressional Delegation and urge them to reach a budget agreement to raise the cap and fund these critical programs at Senate appropriations bill levels.

2) Build relationships with key members of the Ohio Congressional Delegation:

Rep. Joyce (Appropriations, THUD Subcommittee), Sen. Brown (Banking, Ranking Member), Rep. Kaptur (Appropriations), Rep. Ryan (Appropriations), Rep. Johnson (Budget), Rep. Stivers (Financial Services), Rep. Renacci (Ways and Means)

IMMEDIATE

Expand and strengthen the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (Housing Credit) is our nation's primary tool to develop affordable housing. It is also the most successful tool for encouraging private investment in affordable rental housing – representing a model public-private partnership. Since 1986, the Housing Credit has provided affordable homes to roughly 6.7 million low-income families, supporting 3.25 million jobs and generating \$310 billion in local income.

Despite this success, Housing Credit resources fall far short of the demand. In Ohio, the State Housing Credit allocating agency receives applications requesting more than three times their available authority. With more Housing Credit resources, we could make a meaningful step towards addressing our nation's vast and growing affordable housing crisis. Therefore, we are working to advance the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act (S. 548) which expands and strengthens

the Housing Credit. There are currently 20 Senators – including Senator Portman - signed on as co-sponsors. We are concurrently working to advance H.R. 1661, the House companion legislation sponsored by Representative Tiberi. H.R. 1661 is nearly identical to S. 548, but does not include an expansion in Housing Credit allocation.

While the Housing Credit has strong bipartisan support, it is critical to continually reinforce with Congress its importance as *all tax expenditures* may be at risk during any potential tax reform effort. Furthermore, even if there are no proposed changes to the Housing Credit as a part of tax reform, other changes to the corporate tax code could still negatively impact Housing Credit affordable housing production. And recently, the House took a significant step to advance potential tax reform. They introduced a FY18 budget resolution with provisions to allow Congress to pass any tax reform legislation through a budget reconciliation process, which essentially “fast-tracks” the process by requiring only a simple majority in the Senate to proceed.

WHAT CAN YOUR ORGANIZATION DO?

- 1) Join the ACTION Campaign, a national coalition of over 2,000 organizations, and echo their call to support the Housing Credit:** <http://rentalhousingaction.org/>
 - 2) Contact your member of the Ohio Congressional Delegation and urge them to support S. 548 and H.R. 1661, and to support the Housing Credit in any tax reform effort.**
 - 3) Build relationships with key members of the Ohio Congressional Delegation:**
Rep. Tiberi (Ways and Means), Rep. Beatty (Financial Services), Sen. Portman (Finance)
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ONGOING

Story Banking

Why does affordable housing matter to you and/or your clients? How has Section 4, CDBG, and/or HOME made a significant impact on your work? What positive change can you see in your community because of the Housing Credit?

Sharing personal stories is one of the most powerful advocacy tools. Personal stories breathe life into a complex issue in ways that other methods—like sharing statistics—cannot. Stories depoliticize affordable housing. It's not about a candidate or a party, it's about providing families the foundation for opportunity.

In conjunction with our partners, we are looking to collect stories now and into the future that ground housing and community development programs in real life. This could be as simple as collecting a storyteller's name, contact information, how s/he is connected to the story, and a brief description of their story. The most convincing stories are often from people with direct experience but, with that said, secondhand stories can offer credibility and perspective. This is why we are also collecting stories from you – the organizations on the ground, the caretakers, the service providers.

This is an ongoing advocacy opportunity. We will follow up with storytellers and continue reaching out to potential storytellers, so please spread the word!

WHAT CAN YOUR ORGANIZATION DO?

- 1) Tell us your stories:** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NPFWHJP>

QUESTIONS?

Contact Emily Lundgard, State and Local Policy Director
elundgard@enterprisecommunity.org
(216) 631-0280 x4120