



Housing Assistance Council

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www.ruralhome.org

July 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy and Minority Leader Schumer:

We hope this letter finds you and your families and staff well and healthy during these difficult times in our nation's history. The 101 undersigned affordable housing and community development organizations and partners write to urge you to address the pressing housing needs of our nation's rural communities in the next coronavirus relief package. Housing assistance for small towns and rural regions was left out of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and resources are needed as the health and housing impacts of this pandemic further strain rural response efforts. Congress must be deliberate in providing housing resources to rural places to avoid evictions; homelessness; and to ensure stable, accessible housing during this crisis.

Housing is foundational for health. Yet even before the pandemic, rural America was facing an affordable housing crisis. Rural housing units lack adequate plumbing and kitchen facilities at a rate almost double the national average. Many homes in persistently poor rural areas suffer from overcrowding. Affordability challenges also deeply impact rural residents, with average incomes well below the national median and nearly half of rural renters being categorized as cost burdened (paying 30 percent or more of their income in rent).¹ Furthermore, rural economies often rely on industries that have been heavily impacted by coronavirus-related job losses, like tourism, food service, and hospitality; and are home to workplaces that have seen devastating coronavirus outbreaks, such as meatpacking plants and prisons.

Despite these difficult conditions, no supplemental funding specifically for rural housing needs was included in the CARES Act. And more broadly, relief targeted at rural and persistently poor places was also not directly addressed. These communities already struggle with a lack of natural access to capital, a dearth of philanthropic and government investment, and declining local capacity to provide assistance. As the pandemic continues, many of the safety nets included in

¹ Based on data accessed at: <http://www.ruraldataportal.org/>

the CARES Act that have helped renters and homeowners stay in their homes – such as expanded unemployment insurance benefits, eviction bans, and mortgage forbearance – are also set to expire in the coming weeks and months. It is time for Congress to come together and pass a new round of coronavirus relief to address rural housing needs.

We urge you to consider the unique recovery needs of rural places and include targeted resources for rural housing in the next comprehensive coronavirus relief package. We stand ready to work with you during these unprecedented times to achieve these objectives. Thank you for your time and leadership.

Sincerely,

Housing Assistance Council (HAC)

Accipiter Enterprises, Educational Birds of Prey

Affordable Homes of South Texas, Inc.

Alchemy Community Transformations

American Association of Service Coordinators

Ayuda, Inc.

BDT Housing Services Enterprise

Blackbelt & Central Alabama Housing

Bogalusa Rebirth

California Housing Partnership

CASA of Oregon

cdcb | come dream. come build.

Center for Community Progress

Center for Disability Rights

Center for Disaster Philanthropy

Center for Rural Strategies

Chicanos Por La Causa

Clearwater Area Community Foundation

Coastal Enterprises, Inc.

Communities Unlimited, Inc.

Community Concepts, Inc.

Corporation for Supportive Housing

Council for Affordable and Rural Housing

Council of State Community Development Agencies

Crawford-Sebastian Community Development Council, Inc.
Enterprise Community Partners
Fahe
Frontier Housing, Inc.
Glenn County Community Action
Grace Place, A Community Table
Graham Revitalization Economic Action Team (GREAT)
Habitat for Humanity International
Highlands Housing Corporation
Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky
Hope Enterprise Corporation
Housing Development Alliance, Inc.
Housing Tools
Kentucky Habitat for Humanity, Inc.
LeadingAge
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)
Macedonia Community Foundation, Inc.
Maine Affordable Housing Coalition
Mason County Climate Justice
Minnesota Housing Partnership
Music Beyond
National Affordable Housing Management Association
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations
National American Indian Housing Council
National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Council of State Housing Agencies
National Disability Rights Network
National Housing & Rehabilitation Association

National Housing Law Project
National Leased Housing Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National NeighborWorks Association
National Rural Housing Coalition
NCALL
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
New England Housing Network
Northern Homes Community Development Corporation
Northwest Regional Housing Authority
Ohio Domestic Violence Network
Ohio University
Opportunity Finance Network
Oweesta
Partners for Rural Transformation
Placer Independent Resource Services
Public Housing Authorities Directors Association
Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP)
Rebuilding Together Twin Cities
Red Oak Management
RESULTS
REVVED UP
Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)
Rural Organizing Project
Self-Help Enterprises
Seventh District Pavilion, Inc.
ShyLayMy
Siskiyou County Health and Human Services Agency
South Carolina Office of Rural Health
Southwestern Regional Housing and CDC
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future (SAHF)
StraightUp Solar
Teton County Joint Housing Authority

The Genesis Fund

The Public Policy Network

The University of Chicago

Tim Thigpen, Realtor

Todd County Council On Aging

Tri-County Housing, Inc. dba Total Concept

Turtle Mountain Housing Authority

Twin Pines Housing Trust

Virginia Organizing

White Mountain Apache Housing Authority

Woodlands Development Group