

## **Support Section 8 Housing**

### *Help Families Rent Modest Housing at an Affordable Cost*

**Deadline: April 10, 2013**

**Members who signed the letter last year:** Earl Blumenauer, Madeleine Bordallo, Robert Brady, Corrine Brown, Lois Capps, Russ Carnahan, Judy Chu, David Cicilline, William Lacy Clay, Steve Cohen, Elijah Cummings, Danny K. Davis, Susan Davis, Diana DeGette, Rosa L. DeLauro, John Dingell, Bob Filner, Raul Grijalva, Luis V. Gutierrez, Alcee Hastings, Maurice Hinchey, Mazie Hirono, Rush Holt, Dennis Kucinich, Barbara Lee, John Lewis, Stephen Lynch, Carolyn Maloney, Jerry McNerney, Brad Miller, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Bill Pascrell Jr., Gary Peters, Pedro R. Pierluisi, Mike Quigley, Silvestre Reyes, Gregorio Sablan, Jan Schakowsky, Albio Sires, Adam Smith, Fortney “Pete” Stark, Betty Sutton, Ed Towns, Chris Van Hollen, Peter Welch, Lynn Woolsey

April 4, 2013

Dear Colleague,

Please join me in sending a letter requesting that the FY14 Transportation-HUD bill properly fund the federal government’s three largest low-income rental assistance programs – the public housing, Tenant-Based Section 8, and Project-Based Section 8 Rental Assistance programs.

As you know, the Section 8 housing program provides critical assistance to 4.4 million low-income families, helping them to rent modest housing at an affordable cost. Assisted households have incomes of just \$10,400, on average, well below the federal poverty line, and nearly all of them include people who are elderly, have disabilities, or are children.

Due to funding limitations, only about one in four eligible low-income families receive federal rental assistance, and there are long waiting lists for assistance in nearly every community. At a time when our economy fights to rebound and families continue to face difficult times and tough choices, we must continue our commitment to these rental assistance programs.

If you have any questions, or you would like to sign on to the letter, please contact John Doty in my office at [John.Doty@mail.house.gov](mailto:John.Doty@mail.house.gov) or at ext. 5-5635.

Sincerely,

/s

Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

April 10, 2013

The Honorable Tom Latham  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation and  
Housing and Urban Development  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ed Pastor  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation and  
Housing and Urban Development  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member:

We respectfully request that the committee fully fund HUD's three largest rental assistance programs — the public housing, Tenant-Based Section 8, and Project-Based Section 8 Rental Assistance programs— in the FY 2014 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Act.

These programs help 4.4 million low-income households to rent modest homes at an affordable cost. Assisted households have incomes of just \$10,400, on average, well below the federal poverty line. Nearly all of them include people who are elderly, have disabilities, or are children. Due to funding limitations, only about one in four eligible low-income families receives federal rental assistance and there are long waiting lists for assistance in nearly every community.

Protecting the rental assistance, which these vulnerable families depend on to maintain stable housing and avoid homelessness, should be a top priority at a time when the number of very-low-income families with “worst-case” housing needs has risen by 43 percent since 2007, according to HUD. Meeting this important goal, however, will require funding increases above the levels that Congress provided in FY 2013:

- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers): The final FY 2013 funding law provided \$18.9 billion for Section 8 vouchers, including \$17.2 billion for voucher renewals and \$1.37 billion for housing agency administrative costs. However, sequestration reduced total funding for vouchers by \$938 million. As a result, HUD estimates that agencies will receive 6 percent less than they need to renew all vouchers currently used by low-income families – a shortfall that could cause more than 100,000 fewer families to be assisted this year – and more than 30 percent less than necessary to administer the program. *We strongly urge the Committee to provide sufficient funding in FY 2014 to restore the number of families served to the pre-sequestration level.*

- Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA): The FY 2013 funding law froze funding for Section 8 PBRA at \$9.3 billion and sequestration will further reduce this amount by \$470 million. This is \$1 billion *below* the amount that HUD estimates is needed to provide full renewal funding for all contracts in FY 2013. To manage with less-than-sufficient funds, HUD will “short fund” renewals – that is, to provide less than 12 months of funding for each Section 8 contract at renewal. Nevertheless, this policy makes it more difficult and expensive for owners to raise the capital required to maintain properties in good condition. This could discourage owners from renewing their contracts at expiration, thereby accelerating the loss of affordable units. *Therefore, we request a funding level that will be sufficient to fully renew all Section 8 PBRA contracts for their 12 month terms in FY 2014.*
- Public Housing: For FY 2013, housing agencies will receive just 83 percent of the funds required to operate public housing, according to the HUD cost formula, and less than half of the capital funding required to meet new repair needs that will accrue this year. As a result, public housing’s backlog of needed repairs and renovations – which a HUD-sponsored study estimates to be \$26 billion – will continue to grow. As agencies make up for shortfalls by delaying or foregoing maintenance and repairs, more families will live in deteriorating living conditions and the loss of affordable units due to disrepair will continue. *We request sufficient funding for the Capital Fund to enable agencies to begin to address the backlog of capital repairs and for the Operating Fund to meet 100 percent of agencies’ estimated operating costs in FY 2014.*

We appreciate the bipartisan efforts of the Committee on Appropriations to prioritize the renewal of rental assistance during recent budget cycles, particularly in light of the difficult decisions that were required. Moreover, we acknowledge that your decisions will be no easier this year. But we know you will agree that America’s most vulnerable families should not be forced to bear a disproportionate share of the burden of putting our nation’s financial house in order.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,