

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the XXXX undersigned organizations, stand in support of vital federal programs that provide housing assistance and community development resources to aid low income Americans. These programs strengthen our country and economy by ensuring our most vulnerable families have a place to call home and by creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. With more families, seniors, and people with disabilities struggling to make ends meet, and our nation's affordable housing infrastructure deteriorating, federal investments are ever more critical to sustain our communities and ensure families thrive. We represent national, state, and local housing and community development, faith-based, disability, and civil rights organizations, as well as officials in municipal, tribal and state governments.

We are thankful that Congress has significantly increased investments in affordable housing and community development programs in fiscal year (FY) 2018, and urge lawmakers to work together to ensure this trend continues by providing these programs with the highest funding levels possible in FY 2019.

Today, one in four renters in America is spending more than half of their income on rent, and homelessness rates are rising in many communities across the country as growing numbers of people are unable to afford a place to call home. Housing costs are rising faster than wages, and are well beyond what is considered affordable to fixed income households. Our nation's affordable housing stock is deteriorating, and the supply of affordable and accessible homes and rental assistance has not kept pace with demand.

Access to affordable homes has broad, positive impacts on families, seniors, people with disabilities, as well as the economy. Increasing and preserving access to affordable housing helps families climb the economic ladder, allows seniors to age in place, leads to greater community development, and bolsters economic productivity. Additionally, investments in community development are vital for rural, urban and suburban areas to revitalize distressed neighborhoods, provide critical public services, and address urgent community needs, including disaster relief and addiction services.

State and local governments and the communities they serve rely on the resources provided by HUD and USDA to meet their most basic housing and community development needs. Providing additional federal resources through proven and effective HUD and USDA programs will ensure America's families and neighborhoods thrive and will allow for the needs of some of our most vulnerable residents to be met.

We thank you for the significant funding increase for affordable housing and community development programs that help families and communities thrive with safe, stable, and affordable homes. We urge you to ensure these programs once again receive the highest amount of funding possible.

Sincerely,