

# Support Housing Funding for Vulnerable Populations

**From: The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver**

**Sent By: [Jennifer.Shapiro@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Shapiro@mail.house.gov)**

**Date: 3/24/2017**

## Support Housing for Vulnerable Populations in FY2018 THUD

**Deadline: March 31, 2017 COB**

Dear Colleague,

We invite you to join us in sending the attached letter to Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Díaz-Balart, and Ranking Member Price, urging them to support the funding levels outlined below for key housing programs that support our most vulnerable populations.

The President's budget proposal would cut HUD by \$6.2 billion (13 percent) compared to the expected FY 2017 level. Major federal rental assistance programs (public housing and Section 8 Tenant- and Project-Based Rental Assistance) are cut by at least \$1.6 billion compared to FY 2017. According to analyses from both the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the National Low Income Housing Coalition, at least 200,000 households, including families, seniors, children, and people with disabilities, would be put at risk of evictions and homelessness.

With an aging population, and many communities still struggling to recover from the housing crisis, these federal rental assistance programs should be a top priority in the FY 2018 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Specifically, this letter requests the following funding provisions:

- **Fully fund the Public Housing Operating Fund at 100 percent proration**, in order to address the estimated annual operating costs.
- **Appropriate at least \$5 billion for the Public Housing Capital Fund**, which would cover the estimated annual maintenance needs of the public housing stock plus additional funding to address a portion of the backlog of capital repairs.
- **Fully fund the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program** to fund all authorized vouchers as well as robustly fund Administrative Fees.
- **Fully fund Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance** to cover all existing contracts.
- **Fully fund Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly** and provide an additional \$25 million in the program account to create new units of deeply affordable housing for the elderly.
- **Fully fund Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities** and provide an additional \$25 million in the program account to create new units of deeply affordable housing for persons with disabilities.

Please join us in supporting these funding requests. If you wish to sign this letter, please have your staff contact Alía Fierro with Ranking Member Waters at ([Alia.Fierro@mail.house.gov](mailto:Alia.Fierro@mail.house.gov)) or Jennifer Shapiro with Congressman Cleaver's office at ([Jennifer.Shapiro@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Shapiro@mail.house.gov)).

Sincerely,

Maxine Waters

Emanuel Cleaver

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

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Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Díaz-Balart, and Ranking Member Price:

Federal housing assistance is essential for providing safe, decent, and affordable housing for our nation's most vulnerable populations, including seniors, families with children, and persons with disabilities. With 7.4 million extremely low-income Americans currently without access to affordable housing, it should be a top priority to provide robust funding for our nation's rental assistance programs in the fiscal year 2018 (FY18) appropriations bill. As you consider the FY18 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) appropriations bill, we urge you to stand behind our most vulnerable populations in advocating for funding that is necessary for public housing, the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) programs, and the Section 202 and Section 811 programs.

Since the 1930s, public housing has served an indispensable role on the continuum of affordable housing, providing housing for 1.1 million families, including seniors, veterans, persons with disabilities, and families with children. It serves a population of "hard to house" people who face challenges that often make it impossible for them to rent a unit in the private market. It is well documented that investing in public housing not only provides necessary improvements for public housing residents, but also results in substantial economic benefits to the surrounding community. For example, an infusion of \$4 billion targeted for the rehabilitation of public housing under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) not only helped remediate increasingly deteriorating housing conditions for public housing residents, but also generated thousands of jobs and created an additional \$2.12 of economic activity for every \$1.00 spent by the federal government.<sup>[1]</sup> Further, there were 26 jobs created for every \$1 million invested in public housing.<sup>[2]</sup> These statistics show that investing in public housing is a smart investment and should be considered an important part of our nation's infrastructure.

Similar to the public housing program, the Section 8 HCV and PBRA programs provide much needed housing assistance to a total of 3.6 million low-income households, over half of whom are elderly or persons with disabilities. These important programs sharply reduce homelessness and other hardships, lift people out of poverty, and are closely linked to educational, developmental, and health benefits that can improve children's long-term outcomes and reduce costs in other public programs.

**For these reasons, we request that you:**

- **Fully fund the Public Housing Operating Fund at 100 percent proration**, in order to address the estimated annual operating costs;
- **Appropriate at least \$5 billion for the Public Housing Capital Fund**, which would cover the estimated annual maintenance needs of the public housing stock plus additional funding to address a portion of the backlog of capital repairs;
- **Fully fund the HCV program** to fund all authorized vouchers as well as robustly fund Administrative Fees; and

- **Fully fund PBRA** to cover all existing contracts.

Finally, the Section 202 and 811 programs are the only programs that exclusively provide housing assistance for seniors and persons with disabilities. The nation's existing housing stock is unprepared to meet the escalating need for affordability, accessibility, social connectivity, and supportive services that these populations require. Today, 28 percent of renters and 11 percent of owners aged 50 and older pay more than 50 percent of their income for housing, including 36 percent of renters and 14 percent of owners aged 80 and older. Older adults with such severe housing cost burdens spend significantly less on healthcare and food than their peers without housing cost burdens. Further, there have been no new Section 202 or 811 units developed in several years, despite the overwhelming needs for deeply affordable housing for these populations. **Therefore, we request that you fully fund both Section 202 and for Section 811 to ensure all contracts are renewed as well as provide an additional \$25 million in each program account to create new units of deeply affordable housing for the elderly and persons with disabilities.**

Finally, we want to highlight our grave concerns with the Administration's proposed cut of at least \$1.6 billion for HUD's rental assistance programs, which, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the National Low Income Housing Coalition, would put at least 200,000 households at risk of evictions and homelessness. These proposed cuts would have a devastating impact on HUD's ability to serve our nation's most vulnerable households, and they run contrary to the statutory mission of HUD. According to research from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, federal rental assistance programs kept 4.1 million people out of poverty, including 1.4 million children, in 2014. We urge you to categorically reject these draconian cuts.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

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**Maxine Waters**

Ranking Member

House Financial Services Committee

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**Emanuel Cleaver, II**

Ranking Member

House Financial Services Committee

Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance

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[1] Econsult Corporation (2011, March). Public Housing Stimulus Funding: A Report on the Economic Impact of Recovery Act Capital Improvements.

[2] *Id.*