

March 6, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128 Capitol Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128 Capitol Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chair
Senate Appropriations Transportation-Housing
and Urban Development Subcommittee
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Transportation-Housing
and Urban Development Subcommittee
186 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House Appropriations Transportation-Housing
and Urban Development Subcommittee
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Transportation-Housing
and Urban Development Subcommittee
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Vice Chairwoman Collins, Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Schatz, Ranking Member Hyde-Smith, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member Quigley:

The Council of State Community Development Agencies (COSCDA) welcomes your leadership on the House and Senate Appropriations committees for the 118th Congress. On behalf of our board of directors and members, we offer our assistance to advance community development and housing nationwide. Our association recently released its [fiscal year \(FY\) 2024 advocacy priorities](#) detailing annual funding, regulatory, and legislative requests. As the committees engage on housing and related issues, we provide the following recommendations specific to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs (a summary is available [here](#); detailed recommendations begin on page 1 of COSCDA's FY24 advocacy priorities [here](#)).

COSCDA's recommendations include -

Enhance resources to address priority needs in community development

HUD's Community Planning and Development (CPD) programs remain vital to local activities across housing, community development, homelessness, and disaster recovery. Annual funding facilitates key community-led actions across local priorities including community infrastructure and facilities; housing construction and rehabilitation; homelessness outreach and supportive services; and long-term recovery and resiliency. Continued investment means communities can access and direct federal resources responsive to specific local needs.

While Congress has long supported annual spending for these effective programs, funding has diminished over many years. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, with grants directed to 1,239 state and localities in FY2023,¹ received \$3.3 billion over the last two appropriations cycles. The amount is well-below the program's annual funding levels from twenty years ago (\$4.34B in FY03)² and last authorization level (\$4.168B in FY94)³. Likewise, the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program has consistently received less than past appropriations (\$1.85B in FY03) and most-recent authorization level (\$2.173B in FY94). Further, demonstrated needs exist across homelessness and Congress has responded accordingly through recent increases to Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG). However, a vital piece of state and local homeless response – the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program – has continued to receive level funding of \$290 million annually.

Significant challenges continue to impede community growth and well-being, especially for low-income households. Affordable housing is unavailable across the country. Substantial gaps also exist in local infrastructure and public services including assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness. COSCDA encourages Congress to better assist state and local activities on these issues through increased annual funding to CPD programs.

Improve HUD capacity and IT development

HUD oversight and technical assistance proves essential to program accountability and response. The department's capacity has experienced major setbacks due to a considerable loss of staff over several years. HUD's Office of Inspector General (OIG) highlights staff deficiencies in its latest management report for FY2023 pointing to the agency's 30% decline in personnel from the prior decade.⁴ In HUD's interface with grantees, states confirm that lacking staff at the field level has inhibited response and critical functions.

Further, areas of improvement are needed for the agency's grant reporting systems. HUD uses separate platforms to collect information on CPD grant activities: Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS), Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting System (DRGR), and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). While some updates have assisted system performance, program elements prove inefficient and incompatible with state and local software.

¹ U.S. Housing and Urban Development. Community Planning and Development Formula Program Allocations for FY2023. February 27, 2023. https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/budget/fy23.

² Congressional Research Service. Community Development Block Grants: Funding and Allocation Processes. March 24, 2021. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46733>.

³ P.L. 102-550. Housing and Community Development Act of 1992. <https://www.congress.gov/102/statute/STATUTE-106/STATUTE-106-Pg3672.pdf>.

⁴ HUD Office of Inspector General. Top Management Challenges Facing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in FY2023. November 8, 2022. <https://www.hudoig.gov/sites/default/files/2022-11/Top%20Management%20Challenges%20FY%202023.pdf>.

COSCONDA urges Congress to renew resources for HUD CPD staff and IT development. Due to increased administrative requirements and performance measures, enhanced support and work efficiency are needed to accommodate grant activities. Additional HUD personnel and IT upgrades can greatly improve program management and outcomes.

We welcome further engagement on the highlighted programs and issues to advance community development. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dianne E. Taylor
Executive Director

Cc:

The Honorable Charles Schumer	The Honorable Mark Amodei
The Honorable Mitch McConnell	The Honorable Stephanie Bice
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy	The Honorable Sanford Bishop
The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries	The Honorable Ken Calvert
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin	The Honorable Jerry Carl
The Honorable John Boozman	The Honorable John Carter
The Honorable Katie Britt	The Honorable Matt Cartwright
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito	The Honorable Ed Case
The Honorable Chris Coons	The Honorable Juan Ciscomani
The Honorable Dick Durbin	The Honorable Ben Cline
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein	The Honorable Michael Cloud
The Honorable Deb Fischer	The Honorable Andrew Clyde
The Honorable Lindsey Graham	The Honorable Henry Cuellar
The Honorable Bill Hagerty	The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
The Honorable Martin Heinrich	The Honorable Jake Ellzey
The Honorable John Hoeven	The Honorable Adriano Espaillat
The Honorable John Kennedy	The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
The Honorable Joe Manchin	The Honorable Lois Frankel
The Honorable Jeff Merkley	The Honorable Scott Franklin
The Honorable Jerry Moran	The Honorable Mike Garcia
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski	The Honorable Tony Gonzales
The Honorable Chris Murphy	The Honorable Michael Guest
The Honorable Gary Peters	The Honorable Josh Harder
The Honorable Jack Reed	The Honorable Andy Harris
The Honorable Marco Rubio	The Honorable Ashley Hinson
The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen	The Honorable Steny Hoyer
The Honorable Jon Tester	The Honorable Dave Joyce
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen	The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
The Honorable Robert Aderholt	The Honorable Derek Kilmer
The Honorable Pete Aguilar	The Honorable Jake LaTurner

The Honorable Barbara Lee
The Honorable Susie Lee
The Honorable Julia Letlow
The Honorable Betty McCollum
The Honorable Grace Meng
The Honorable John Moolenaar
The Honorable Joe Morelle
The Honorable Dan Newhouse
The Honorable Chellie Pingree
The Honorable Mark Pocan
The Honorable Guy Reschenthaler
The Honorable Hal Rogers
The Honorable Dutch Ruppersberger
The Honorable John Rutherford
The Honorable Mike Simpson
The Honorable Chris Stewart
The Honorable Norma Torres
The Honorable David Trone
The Honorable Lauren Underwood
The Honorable David Valadao
The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
The Honorable Bonnie Watson Coleman
The Honorable Jennifer Wexton
The Honorable Steve Womack
The Honorable Ryan Zinke