

May 6, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

We, the 115 undersigned organizations, write to urge you to address in the next coronavirus relief package the urgent health and housing needs of America's lowest-income renter households – 8 million of which were struggling to pay rent and make ends meet before the current coronavirus pandemic and who now are facing increased risks of evictions and homelessness. To avert a surge in evictions and homelessness, we urge you to include in any comprehensive coronavirus relief package the *Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act* proposed by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Congressman Denny Heck (D-WA), and Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) to provide \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance to help keep America's low-income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, low-wage workers, and others stably housed during this crisis.

The “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)” included \$12 billion in housing and homelessness resources and other critical protections for low-income renters. This bill was an important first step, but far more resources are needed to protect those individuals living on the brink. While the CARES Act's stimulus checks and expanded unemployment benefits will certainly help, they only last a short duration, many people with the greatest needs are facing challenges in accessing these resources, and even those who were successful in receiving these benefits will still be severely rent-burdened and at risk of homelessness unless Congress provides targeted emergency rental assistance. Research from the National Low Income Housing Coalition [estimates](#) that at least \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance is needed.

Even before the pandemic, people of color were significantly more likely than white people to experience evictions and homelessness, the result of centuries of institutional racism and economic inequity. People of color will also likely experience greater burdens in the aftermath of the acute crisis. In addition to facing higher mortality rates in their communities, the economic impact of COVID-19 will likely increase rates of job insecurity, food insecurity, housing instability and homelessness.

Emergency rental assistance provides direct support to people who have lost jobs to help them shelter in place and avoid housing instability during and after the pandemic. Temporary moratoria on evictions offer temporary protections for some renters, but rent arrears will accumulate. People who have lost income as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak will struggle to cover large sums of back-rent once it comes due. Without emergency rental assistance, these households will face the destabilizing impacts of evictions and, in worst cases, homelessness, with enormous negative consequences for individuals, their communities, and our economy. Emergency rental assistance is

also necessary to ensure the continued viability of our country's essential affordable housing infrastructure.

If enacted, the *Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act* would provide states, localities, territories, and tribes with flexible resources to provide direct support to households in need with short- and medium-term rental assistance or to cover up to 6 months of back rent and late fees. The funds may also be used to stabilize households by helping to address the cost of security deposits and utility deposits and payments, among other expenses. These funds are designed to reach people in need quickly and directly; half of the funds must be allocated to states and local governments within 7 days. The Emergency Solutions Grants program utilized in this legislative proposal was modelled by Congress on the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) program created and used successfully in the aftermath the 2008 financial crisis.

We urge you to include in any comprehensive coronavirus relief package the *Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act* to prevent evictions and homelessness and promote housing stability among those individuals with the greatest needs during and after this crisis.

Sincerely,

Acacia Network, Inc.
African American Health Alliance
American Association of Service Coordinators
American Civil Liberties Union
American Kidney Fund
American Public Health Association
BRIDGE Housing
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families & Communities
Center for Community Progress
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Public Representation
Center for Responsible Lending
Children's Defense Fund
Church World Service
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Coalition on Human Needs
Community Change
Community Economics
Community Housing Partners
Community Preservation Corporation
Community Solutions
Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd - U.S. Provinces
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force
Consumer Federation of America
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities
Council of State Community Development Agencies

EAH Housing
Enterprise Community Partners
Equitable Housing Institute
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Family Promise
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Funders Together to End Homelessness
Grounded Solutions Network
Health Justice Innovations LLC
Heartland Alliance
Housing Assistance Council
Housing Development Corporation MidAtlantic
Housing Partnership Network
IDP Properties
Islamic Center of North America Council for Social Justice
LeadingAge
Legal Action Center
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Low Income Investment Fund
NAACP
National Action Network
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance for Safe Housing
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations
National Alliance of HUD Tenants
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders
National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders
National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies
National Association of Real Estate Brokers
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Housing & Child Welfare
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Coalition of Latinxs with Disabilities
National Community Development Association
National Community Reinvestment Coalition
National Community Stabilization Trust
National Council of Churches
National Council of State Housing Agencies
National Disability Rights Network
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Housing Conference

National Housing Law Project
National Housing Resource Center
National Housing Trust
National Innovation Service
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National League of Cities
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Manufactured Home Owners Association
National NeighborWorks Association
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
NewWest Community Capital
Oxfam America
Partnering for Change
PolicyLink
Poligon Education Fund
Poverty & Race Research Action Council
Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc.
Prosperity Now
RESULTS
Seedco
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc.
The Arc of the United States
The NHP Foundation
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Treatment Communities of America
UnidosUS
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
UNITE HERE
Up for Growth Action
Volunteers of America
World Institute on Disability
Youth Collaboratory