



WASHINGTON COUNTY OREGON

July 15, 2025

The Honorable Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Andrea Salinas
403 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Washington County Congressional Delegation,

The Washington County Board of Commissioners appreciates your continued support for the funding and availability of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) programs.

As you are aware, these programs have delivered essential federal support for local housing, infrastructure, and economic development initiatives for 51 years. CDBG allows us to work with our partners to address urgent needs, modernize infrastructure, enhance public facilities, create jobs, and revitalize neighborhoods. Similarly, the HOME program has enabled communities to construct and rehabilitate more than 1.33 million affordable housing units and provide direct rental assistance to over 400,000 families since its inception in 1992.

Both CDBG and HOME dollars have been vital to the growth and development of Washington County. As you know, CDBG funds homeless services, onsite resident services to help individuals and families remain stable in their housing, critical home repair and accessibility improvements for low-income and elderly homeowners, public facilities projects like the siding and window replacement project recently completed at the Sherwood Senior Center, and infrastructure projects like increasing pedestrian safety in low-income areas of Cornelius through sidewalk construction. Each of these projects layers benefits not just to those the families and individuals, but to the economic foundation of our cities and county. When people of all income levels can safely get from the permanent home and into job centers or service centers safely, we can see benefits to the businesses that need workforce or customers.

The HOME Investments Partnership Program has been a tool for decades in being the “first in” funds for regulated affordable housing development. Providing this local support at the early stage of a project has helped developers compete for and leverage significant state and other local investment in affordable housing in Washington County. This has supported the production of over 1,800 units of regulated affordable housing in the County.

Right now, Washington County, with the Cities of Beaverton and Hillsboro, is finalizing our next Consolidated Plan for 2025-2029. As we look forward to the work that we need to accomplish, we are aware that there are proposals to eliminate CDBG and HOME funding.

Board of County Commissioners

155 North First Avenue, Suite 300, MS 22, Hillsboro, OR 97124-3072

phone: (503) 846-8681 • fax: (503) 846-4545



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In the last five years, we have used the CDBG and HOME dollars to serve thousands of people and households through prioritized investments. As you work with your colleagues to pass the federal budget, we want to provide you with a snapshot of how the CDBG and HOME dollars have worked for actual people in Washington County. The following chart shows how, over the last five years, the small CDBG and HOME dollars we received has impacted people and families across the county.

Priority Needs		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Homelessness Activities including Public Facilities, overnight shelter, homeless prevention, rapid rehousing, and other public services	Persons Assisted	1,084	1,634	1,431	1,772	925	6,846
Neighborhood and Community Development (including public infrastructure and facilities)	Persons Assisted	0	1681	0	28096	1925	31,702
Economic Development	Persons Assisted	22	11	9	21	25	88
Public Services	Persons Assisted	3,109	1,181	1,403	1,422	815	7,930
Housing (including new construction of rental housing, housing rehabilitation, and homebuyer programs)	Households Assisted	224	305	262	209	27	1,027

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From rural counties to major cities, eliminating these programs would leave communities in Oregon, and across the country, without the tools they rely on to address urgent local challenges, including housing affordability and economic recovery. Proposals to eliminate CDBG and HOME would be devastating. Gutting these programs would not only deepen the housing crisis but also severely limit local governments' ability to serve vulnerable residents and maintain strong, resilient communities.

We respectfully urge you continue opposing any budget proposals that threaten the future of CDBG and HOME and instead champion robust, sustained funding for these programs that directly strengthen our communities. Please let us know if there is further information that will help you in your advocacy on behalf of these funds.

Thank you for your continued leadership and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kathryn Harrington', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Kathryn Harrington
Chair, on behalf of the Washington County Board of County Commissioners



July 15, 2023

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development & Related
Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kristen Gillibrand
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development & Related
Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jim Clyburn
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Hyde-Smith, Ranking Member Gillibrand, Chair Womack, and Ranking Member Clyburn,

Housing instability impacts us all – from the people struggling to make ends meet, to their housing providers that rely on their rental income, to our teachers who can't help children to thrive without stability, and many more people. In our humble community of Washington County, Oregon, over 3,200 households are supported by federal rental assistance. But their stability, and the stability of our community, is at risk.

We understand a proposal is before you to combine several rental assistance programs into a “State Rental Assistance Program” block grant and significantly reduce the total amount allocated to this new block grant. We strongly recommend that you reject both the structural recommendations, including block granting, to these housing programs and the proposed reductions in funding.

Rental assistance helps millions of people afford safe, stable housing and has broader benefits for communities as well. Federal rental assistance contributes over \$50 billion annually to local economies around the country, lowering rent burdens for families, providing a steady stream of income to property owners, and enabling tenants to spend more to buy food and other necessities

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from local businesses. In our community, over \$55 million of federal funds support housing stability and bolster our local economy. We urge your subcommittee to fully fund the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and the Project-Based Rental Assistance program in the FY 2026 appropriations bill. We recommend that Congress take the following actions:

- Fully fund the Housing Choice Voucher program (including renewals of special purpose vouchers). The Housing Choice Voucher program serves as the cornerstone of federal rental housing assistance. The program serves 2.3 million families and over 5 million people – nearly 3,100 households in Washington County. Vouchers play a pivotal role in keeping more households from becoming homeless, creating opportunities for people to get back into housing quickly, reducing housing instability and overcrowding, and improving children’s well-being and health outcomes for adults. In addition, when vouchers enable the families of young children to move to lower- poverty neighborhoods, those children are more likely to attend college and earn substantially more as adults.
- Fully fund the Housing Choice Voucher program Administrative Fee Account. The administrative fee account enables public housing agencies, including the Housing Authority of Washington County, to provide effective assistance to families and ensures that federal funds are used efficiently. It covers operating cost for activities like applicant intake, income determinations, unit inspections, and disbursing funds to landlords. This account also funds other eligible activities like the costs of security deposits, landlord incentive payments, landlord retention payments, utility deposit payments, application fees, and hold fees. Without these funds, families would not be able to access housing vouchers.
- Fully fund Emergency Housing Voucher households. The Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program serves approximately 59,000 families across the country, ending homelessness or housing instability one household at a time. In our community, we used our Coordinated Entry System to identify those in need, including people actively experiencing homelessness and those fleeing domestic violence or sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. Through no fault of any individual participant, the program’s initial funding allocation is nearing its end. Absent additional funding, these particularly vulnerable families may slip into homelessness as they lose rental assistance. We anticipate nearly 80 families in our community losing housing in 2026 without Congressional action. Nearly half of the people served in our community by EHV’s are children under the age of 18, and EHV households are far more likely to have a member with a disability.
- Fully fund Project-Based Rental Assistance. The Project-Based Rental Assistance program serves over 1.3 million families. This program serves seniors, families with

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children, and people with disabilities. It is crucial that the federal investment in these housing assets remains strong. In our community, over 200 households rely on this assistance.

In addition to these vital programs Washington County also serves as a Continuum of Care. Our local voters have supported historic homelessness response investments through the Metro Supportive Housing Services Measure. Even still, federal resources are necessary to address the homelessness in the rural areas of our community. We urge your support of \$4.92 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants programs, which play a critical role in efforts to prevent and end homelessness.

It is imperative that Congress reaffirm its commitment to both families in these programs and housing providers who participate in these programs in the FY 2026 appropriations bill. We appreciate your attention to and considering of the needs of our local community.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Harrington

Chair, on behalf of the Washington County Board of Commissioners

CC: Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Jeff Merkley
Representative Suzanne Bonamici
Representative Andrea Salinas

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