

March 4th, 2019

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban Development
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban Development
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Díaz -Balart, Ranking Member Price, Chairwoman Collins, and Ranking Member Reed:

We, the undersigned ___ national, state, and local organizations, write to express our fervent support for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program in the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill. **We urge you to appropriate at least \$406 million for HOPWA in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.** We thank you for the FY19 allocation of \$393 million which keeps all HOPWA grantees held harmless. The need for housing continues to rise as there is a nationwide shortage of affordable homes. According to the CDC, in 2017 there were 38,700 new HIV infections and 17,800 AIDS diagnoses. In the United States, about 1.1 million people are living with HIV. Inadequately funding the HOPWA program would result in homelessness among extremely low-income people living with HIV/AIDS, thereby destabilizing vulnerable individuals who have obtained stable housing. HUD's current estimate is that over 1,700 households would lose their homes if the program was flat-funded at last year's allocation of \$393 million.

For 25 years, HOPWA has provided a national safety net for very low-income people living with HIV/AIDS. The program provides competitive and formula grants to all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Through these grants, cities and states design and deliver community-based, cost-effective housing and supportive services to people living with HIV/AIDS. HOPWA is critical because housing remains the greatest unmet need for people living with HIV/AIDS. Stable housing, like the housing provided by HOPWA grantees, leads to better health outcomes for those living with HIV. For people living with HIV, a better health outcome means viral suppression. An individual who is virally suppressed cannot transmit the HIV virus to another person, thereby ensuring the health of their entire community. Further, HOPWA leverages income from local communities. According to HUD, the HOPWA program leveraged \$908,008,706 from state and local jurisdictions in the last program year.

We know that HIV does not affect all Americans equally, making the need for HOPWA in certain communities all the more important. Ninety-three percent of HOPWA funds serve extremely-low to very-low-income households. During the last program year 10% of HOPWA beneficiaries were veterans and another 48% were considered chronically homeless.

As you are well aware, Congress passed legislation in 2015 that included an update to the HOPWA formula. The change to the HOPWA formula ensures funds go to communities that need it the most and where HIV is most prevalent. However, with the new formula, many jurisdictions are poised to lose significant resources, further exacerbating a cut to HOPWA appropriations.

Therefore, we urge you to fund HOPWA at \$406 million for FY20.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Lauren Banks Killelea, Director of Public Policy, at the National AIDS Housing Coalition (LaurenK@nationalaidshousing.org).

Thank you,