



February 9, 2022

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

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

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

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

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

We, the undersigned 39 national, state, and local organizations, write to express our strong support for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program and urge you to support the House of Representatives' proposal of \$1.85 billion for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. For three decades, HOME has been one of the most effective and flexible tools states and localities have had to meet their affordable housing needs, including production and preservation of rental homes, single-family home construction, homeowner rehabilitation, and tenant-based rental assistance. But never have those needs been greater than they are today because of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the nation's housing market.

Across the nation, rents have risen by 14 percent on average in 2021. According to Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, since the start of the pandemic, the number of renter households has climbed by more than 870,000 and vacancy rates dropped by 2.3 percent to just 4.6 percent nationwide—the lowest rate since at least the early 2000s. Home prices have been increasing at astounding rates as well, with Zillow data showing that as of September 2021, prices had jumped by nearly 19 percent over the previous 12 months, making homeownership even farther from reach for low-income families and putting more pressure on the rental market.

The National Association of Home Builders reports that building material prices increased 15.9 percent in 2021. This steep increase, combined with labor shortages and snarled supply chains, means that affordable housing projects that were financially feasible now face financing gaps. These market forces have meant that rental housing developments in the pipeline are stalled as sudden rapid increases in costs create financing gaps that developers are struggling to overcome; starter homes that low-income working families can afford are less economically feasible to produce; and renters need more help paying their rent as the cost to rent their homes balloons.

HOME is the only federal program that provides the resources and flexibility to meet both the supply and demand challenges of the affordable housing crisis. It has been one of the most effective tools to help states and communities address their most pressing housing challenges for three decades. HOME is the most important federal financing source for soft funding in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit developments. It is an essential financing source for single-family

starter homes. And, since the beginning of the pandemic, HOME tenant-based rental assistance has been a crucial source of support as many unemployed and underemployed persons struggle to stay in their homes.

We need HOME more than ever now. As you finalize the FY 2022 appropriations bills, we strongly urge you to devote the maximum amount possible to the HOME program, as included in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development spending bill passed by the House of Representatives providing \$1.85 billion for HOME.

Sincerely,

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Citizens' Housing and Planning Association

Corporation for Supportive Housing

Council for Affordable and Rural Housing

Council of Large Public Housing Authorities

Council of State Community Development Agencies

Enterprise Community Partners

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Grounded Solutions Network

Habitat for Humanity International

Homeownership Alliance

Housing Assistance Council

Housing Partnership Network

Local Initiative Support Corporation

Low Income Investment Fund

Mercy Housing, Inc.

National Affordable Housing Management Association

National Alliance of Community and Economic Development Associations

National Association for County Community and Economic Development

National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders

National Association of Counties

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials

National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies

National Association of Regional Councils  
National Community Development Association  
National Community Stabilization Trust  
National Council of State Housing Agencies  
National Housing Conference  
National Housing Trust  
National Leased Housing Association  
National Multifamily Housing Council  
National NeighborWorks Association  
National Rural Housing Coalition  
New England Housing Network  
Rebuilding Together  
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future  
The Community Builders  
U.S. Conference of Mayors  
Vermont Housing & Conservation Board