

March 19, 2020

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

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
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 Price, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, Chairwoman Collins, and Ranking Member Reed:

The National AIDS Housing Coalition and the 77 undersigned partners write to ask for immediate funding and program changes to ensure supportive housing services for people living with HIV/AIDS in light of the growing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic by bolstering the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program.

As recently presented by the CDC's John T. Brooks, COVID-19 poses an additional threat to people living with HIV who are over 50 years old (an estimated 50% of people living with HIV) as well as those who have decreased CD4 cell counts. People living with HIV additionally have higher rates of cardiovascular and lung disease that could put them at higher risk of complications from COVID-19. Further, Housing and Urban Development's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing estimates that up to 21,400 people assisted by the HOPWA program are not virally suppressed, and therefore, immunocompromised and at high risk.

As the COVID-19 epidemic is worsening and people are losing their jobs, we expect that the need for housing rental assistance to drastically increase. Further, we know that viruses spread quickly among the homeless community and we fear that those living with HIV who are homeless will face dire realities if they are unable to access shelter. HOPWA grantees from Alabama and Maine are already estimating a need for 30% to 50% more funding for their permanent housing placement (PHP) programs. Housing organizations insist that we must extend the time limit on short-term rent and utility (STRMU) assistance.

HOPWA is uniquely positioned to provide supportive services to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). If we invest more into HOPWA, community-based organizations can ensure PLWHA can get assistance with transportation, nutritional services, mental health services, and more. We underscore the need for these services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, we advocate for **a one-time additional \$100 million for the HOPWA program** to remain available until expended for HOPWA formula and competitive grantees in order to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among those who are unstably housed and who are potentially severely immunocompromised from HIV/AIDS. The increase in funds will support infection control measures (supplies, cleaning staff costs, etc.), hotel costs associated with quarantining those who contract COVID-19, private transportation costs (in lieu of public transit), and other costs associated with increased need for supportive services. This funding request will work in tandem with the following waiver requests.

**We ask for the time limit for short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance (STRMU) to be expanded from 21 weeks to 24 months** and allow short-term rent and utility assistance to support people who are not currently housed, in conjunction with permanent housing placement assistance [(42 USC 12907(b)(3)(B))].

In order to support entire households, we ask that **HOPWA funds can be used for quarantine and other infection control services for household members who are not living with HIV/AIDS** in order to protect the family member who is living with HIV/AIDS [(42 USC 12908(a)].

The administrative burden during this time will be immense so **we ask for an allowance up to 6 percent of a grantee allocation for grantee administrative purposes and up to 10 percent of project sponsor sub-allocations** administrative purposes in carrying out the specific activities of the award [(42 USC 12905(g)].

Finally, during this unprecedented time and the need for immediate quarantines, **we ask for the creation of a new provision that will allow HOPWA funding to be utilized for hotel/motel related costs for short term or emergency quarantine placement.**

Please contact Lauren Banks Killelea, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy at the National AIDS Housing Coalition, at [LaurenK@nationalaidshousing.org](mailto:LaurenK@nationalaidshousing.org) if you have any questions. Thank you for considering this urgent request.

Sincerely,

National AIDS Housing Coalition  
A.H. of Monroe County Inc  
AIDS Alabama  
AIDS Alabama South, LLC  
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
AIDS Services of Dallas  
AIDS United  
American Academy of HIV Medicine  
APLA Health  
Bill's Kitchen, Inc.  
CAEAR Coalition  
CARES of NY  
Carolinas CARE Partnership  
CasaYSalud  
Cascade AIDS Project  
Center for Housing and Health  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
Cero VIH PR  
Chattanooga CARES, dba Cempa Community Care  
Chicago House and Social Service Agency  
City of Jackson  
Clare Housing  
Coai, Inc.  
Collaborative Solutions  
Community Action Inc. of Central Texas  
Community Education Group  
CORA- Colorado Organizations and Individuals Responding to HIV/AIDS  
CrescentCare  
Desert AIDS Project  
Equality California  
Five Horizons Health Services  
Frannie Peabody Center

Gay Men's Health Crisis, Inc  
Georgia Equality  
Health Services Center, Inc.  
HealthHIV  
HIV Medicine Association  
Housing Works, Inc.  
Hudson County Housing Resource Center  
Human Rights Campaign  
Hyacinth AIDS Foundation  
JustUs Health  
Kingsport Housing & Redevelopment Authority  
Latino Commission on AIDS  
Latinos Salud  
Legacy Community Health  
Lets Celebrate Inc.  
Los Angeles LGBT Center  
Maui A.I.D.S Foundation  
NASTAD  
National Association for County Community and Economic Development  
National Coalition for the Homeless  
National Working Positive Coalition  
North Carolina AIDS Action Network  
Pacientes de SIDA pro Politica Sana  
Partners in Nutrition Indiana  
People Empowering People (PEP) Africa  
PFLAG National  
Positive Women's Network-USA  
Positively Living  
Prevention Access Campaign  
San Francisco AIDS Foundation  
SAVE, Inc.  
Selma AIR  
SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change  
Sierra Foothills AIDS Foundation  
Silver State Equality-Nevada  
Tennessee AIDS Advocacy Network  
The AIDS Institute  
The Professional Association of Social Workers in HIV/AIDS  
Thrive Alabama  
Treatment Action Group  
True Colors United  
University of Massachusetts, Lowell  
Us Helping Us, People Into Living, Inc.  
Viral Hepatitis Coalition  
Vivent Health