



National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development and Related
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Washington, DC 20510

June 30, 2021

Dear Chair Schatz and Ranking Member Collins:

On behalf of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition, we would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the wonderful support for lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes received in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill. In particular, we applaud the increase from \$290 million to \$360 million for the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the funding that encourages coordination with the Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). We would also like to acknowledge the president's budget request and its support for these programs at HUD, specifically its funding increase to the Healthy Homes Program, which is a step in the right direction towards the needed funding for these programs.

The devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have further demonstrated the connection between housing quality and health outcomes, how these impacts disproportionately affect specific populations including communities of color and low-income communities, and the necessity of investing in addressing healthy housing hazards and poor housing quality. As the country invests in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, significant funding is needed to increase housing affordability and stability, fix substandard housing, and provide innovative, flexible, and equitable services to those impacted by healthy housing hazards.

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2022 funding bill, we urge you to continue to support the vital work of this office and increase funding to a total of \$606 million, including \$500 million for HUD's Lead Paint Program, \$100 million for the Healthy Homes Program, and \$6 million for the Lead Technical Studies Program.

Across the country, millions of families are living in unhealthy housing conditions, struggling with issues like broken heating and plumbing systems, damaged or leaking roofs, mold, exposed wiring, and toxic chemicals. Overall, 40% of U.S. homes have at least one significant health or safety risk that places American families at risk.

HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes has directly addressed lead and other housing-related health hazards over the last three decades through programs that treat individual units for lead hazards, improve lead safety with enforcement actions and upgrade substandard housing with healthy homes improvements. Despite progress, over three million homes with young children still have significant lead paint hazards. The nation must make even stronger investments to prevent more families from suffering needlessly. This increase will enable further progress and will also provide increased and robust funding for the Healthy Homes Program. We also recommend that the income eligibility criteria for HUD's Lead Paint Program be streamlined and made consistent with Medicare, weatherization, HOME, and other allied health and housing programs to reduce grantee administrative burdens. We also suggest that HUD reform their criteria for rating Technical Studies grant applications to conform them with the office's other programs, and to give higher weight to applicants who demonstrate early and robust engagement with a vulnerable population (where it aligns with the research topic).

The monetary benefits far outweigh the costs. A recent study shows that removing lead paint hazards from older housing provides at least \$1.39 return for every \$1 invested. By providing the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes with \$606 million in FY22, we can ensure that this critical initiative will continue protecting families from these preventable health hazards and yield at least \$842 million in future years.

The National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition is a broad coalition of over 400 organizations working to improve housing conditions nationwide. The coalition promotes policies for safe and healthy housing in the United States, with special emphasis on those who are disproportionately impacted. Congress should protect the most vulnerable citizens, children, and the elderly; this funding will help to accomplish that aim. These vital programs must be funded in order to support healthy housing for all.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and for your continued support of lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes. The nation's children will benefit enormously from your leadership.

Please contact Sarah Goodwin at sarah@nshhcoalition.org if we can provide further information.

Sincerely,

Gillian Mittelstaedt
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National Safe and Healthy Housing
Coalition
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Amanda Reddy
Co-Chair
National Safe and Healthy Housing
Coalition
Columbia, MD

Organizational Signatures

National Organizations

Allergy & Asthma Network
American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology
Association of Asthma Educators
Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Enterprise Community Partners
Families USA
First Focus Campaign for Children
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Health Resources in Action
Lead and Environmental Hazard Association
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association of School Nurses
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Environmental Health Association
National Housing Trust
National NeighborWorks Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
ReFrame Foundation

State and Local Organizations

Boston Public Health Commission
EnviroPlan LLC
Holistic Health Educators, PMA
KeyUrban
Lincoln Westmoreland Housing
Metropolitan Tenants Organization
Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition
QA Lead Environmental Inc
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
Reinvestment Partners
Tohn Environmental Strategies LLC
Tribal Healthy Homes Network
Yachad

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Organization May Be Listed for Identification Purposes Only

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