



National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

Letters from the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition to Members of Congress (June 30, 2021)

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The National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition is a broad, voluntary coalition working to improve housing conditions nationwide through education and outreach to key national stakeholders and federal public decision makers. The coalition promotes policies for safe and healthy housing in the United States with special emphasis on those who are disproportionately impacted. Learn more about the coalition at <http://bit.ly/NSHHC>.



National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

June 30, 2021

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

On behalf of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition, we would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the wonderful support lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes received in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill. We would also like to acknowledge the President's budget request and its support for these programs at CDC, specifically its funding increase to the Lead Poisoning Prevention 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 the Center for Environmental Health at CDC. We know the CDC effectively responds to a wide variety of crises, as we are seeing now; however, lead is its own tragic decades-long crisis. In response to this, we recommend increased funding for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program from \$39 million to \$100 million, increased funding for the National Environmental Health Tracking Network from \$34 million to \$40 million, and increased funding for the National Asthma Control Program from \$30 million to \$35 million. All of these programs work to protect children and others from housing-related health hazards.

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.

While the percentage of children tested with high blood lead has decreased over 90% in the past 20 years, 270,000 children still have blood lead levels above the CDC reference value. The

CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program currently provides grants to 53 states, cities, and counties. It conducts needed surveillance of children exposed to lead, provides national data on childhood lead poisoning, ensures that children receive necessary case management, and enables local jurisdictions to act before children are exposed to lead instead of reacting only after they have been harmed. Screening and surveillance data currently provide the foundation for targeting community prevention activities to areas where the risk is highest, and increasing funding for this program to \$100 million will allow this program to offer increased surveillance grants to all 50 states and additional local programs.

CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program supports environmental public health tracking and data networks in 25 states and one city. This program has 20 datasets, 107 indicators, and 419 health measures ranging from asthma to drinking water quality to carbon monoxide exposure, which are used by state and local health officials to prevent sickness and death. Increased funding for this program from \$34 to \$40 million would fund at least three additional states and should be viewed as a down payment on funding all 50 states and DC.

CDC's National Asthma Control Program funds states, localities, and other organizations to improve asthma surveillance, awareness, and education. The program currently supports asthma control programs in 25 states and jurisdictions. Asthma death rates have decreased by 27%, and costs due to asthma illness and death have decreased by \$23.1 billion. Increased funding to this program of \$35 million will allow the CDC to continue this important work and allow additional funding for state grants. The NSHHC will be asking for a more significant increase in FY23 to better address the extremely high cost of asthma (estimated at \$81.9 billion) in the U.S.

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 goal. 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.

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

Sincerely,

Gillian Mittelstaedt
Co-Chair
National Safe and Healthy Housing
Coalition
Issaquah, WA

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

Organizational Signatures

National Organizations

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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
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National Housing Trust
National NeighborWorks Association
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Holistic Health Educators, PMA
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Lincoln Westmoreland Housing
Metropolitan Tenants Organization
Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition
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Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
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Tribal Healthy Homes Network
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The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
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Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
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The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
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Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

On behalf of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition, we would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the wonderful support lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes received in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill. We would also like to acknowledge the President's budget request and its support for these programs at CDC, specifically its funding increase to the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, which is a step in the right direction towards the needed funding for these programs.

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National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Chair
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
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Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

June 30, 2021

Dear Chair Pingree and Ranking Member Joyce:

On behalf of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition, we would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the support lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes received in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill. In particular, we applaud the increased funding for the radon program and the lead categorical grant program. We would also like to acknowledge the president's budget request and its support for these programs at EPA, 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 these programs and increase funding to a total of \$110 million. This includes \$67 million for EPA's Categorical Grants for lead and radon, \$16 million for the Lead Risk Reduction Program, \$4 million for the Indoor Air: Radon Program, \$15 million for the Reduce Risk from Indoor Air Program, and \$8 million for the Children and Other Sensitive Populations program.

EPA's Lead Categorical Grant and Lead Risk Reduction Programs are key to the nation's childhood lead poisoning prevention efforts. Through funding for states and EPA regional offices, these programs support science-based standards used to define what lead hazards are in order to protect pregnant women and vulnerable children; they require lead-safe work practices during renovation, repair, and painting work; and they ensure that consumers seeking lead inspection, abatement, and risk assessment services can find qualified, trained individuals to perform the work properly. Communities will require more resources to address the needs of lead-poisoned children. We urge Congress to increase funding of these programs to \$50 million and \$16 million, respectively.

EPA's Radon Categorical Grant, Indoor Air: Radon, and Reduce Risk from Indoor Air programs work to protect residents from health risks associated with indoor air including asthma triggers located in the home; mold, which is a particular concern in the aftermath of flooding; and radon. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. As awareness of radon as a public health issue has increased, the demand for radon mitigation services is also expected to increase. We urge Congress to increase the funding of these programs at \$17 million, \$4 million, and \$15 million, respectively.

EPA's Children and Other Sensitive Populations: Agency Coordination ensures that agency programs protect children's environmental health, including work on developing regulations, improving science policy, implementing programs at the community level, and measuring progress on children's health. The incidence of asthma and several other chronic diseases is increasing nationwide. Therefore, more resources are needed to address the needs of these sensitive populations. We urge Congress to increase funding of this program to \$8 million.

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 goal. These vital programs must be funded in order to support healthy housing for all.

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Columbia, MD

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The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chair
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

June 30, 2021

Dear Chair Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski:

On behalf of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition, we would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the support lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes received in the Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bill. In particular, we applaud the increased funding for the radon program and the lead categorical grant program. We would also like to acknowledge the president's budget request and its support for these programs at EPA, 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 these programs and increase funding to a total of \$110 million. This includes \$67 million for EPA's Categorical Grants for lead and radon, \$16 million for the Lead Risk Reduction Program, \$4 million for the Indoor Air Radon Program, \$15 million for the Reduce Risk from Indoor Air Program, and \$8 million for the Children and Other Sensitive Populations program.

EPA's Lead Categorical Grant and Lead Risk Reduction Programs are key to the nation's childhood lead poisoning prevention efforts. Through funding for states and EPA regional offices, these programs support science-based standards used to define what lead hazards are in order to protect pregnant women and vulnerable children; they require lead-safe work practices during renovation, repair, and painting work; and they ensure that consumers seeking lead inspection, abatement, and risk assessment services can find qualified, trained individuals to perform the work properly. Communities will require more resources to address the needs of lead-poisoned children. We urge Congress to increase funding of these programs to \$50 million and \$16 million, respectively.

EPA's Radon Categorical Grant, Indoor Air: Radon, and Reduce Risk from Indoor Air programs work to protect residents from health risks associated with indoor air including asthma triggers located in the home; mold, which is a particular concern in the aftermath of flooding; and radon. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. As awareness of radon as a public health issue has increased, the demand for radon mitigation services is also expected to increase. We urge Congress to increase the funding of these programs at \$17 million, \$4 million, and \$15 million, respectively.

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The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
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Dear Chair Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

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
Co-Chair
National Safe and Healthy Housing
Coalition
Issaquah, WA

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

Individual Signatures
Organization May Be Listed for Identification Purposes Only

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Program Leader - Outcome Broker
Cornell Cooperative Ext. Oneida Co.
& Lead-Free Mohawk Valley
Utica, NY

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City of Toledo, Department of
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UMass Lowell & Asthma Coalition
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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
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
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).

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