



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

May 6, 2022

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 2022 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 toward 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 continues to invest in COVID-19 recovery, significant funding is still 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 2023 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 continue to see. However, lead is its own tragic decade's long crisis. In response to this, we recommend increased funding for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program from \$41 million to \$100 million, increased funding for the National Environmental Health Tracking Network from \$34 million to \$54 million, and increased funding for the National Asthma Control Program from \$30.5 million to \$40 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, 500,000 children still have blood lead levels above the CDC reference value. The CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program currently provides grants to 61 states, cities, territories, 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 take action 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 expand support for primary prevention activities. This is especially important after the reduction of the blood lead reference value from 5 to 3.5 µg/dL, doubling the number of children needing these services, and after screening rates dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 and 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 \$54 million would fund 15 additional states. These 15 additional states have already been identified by CDC as ready to enroll in this program as soon as funding is available and should be viewed as a down payment on funding all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

CDC's National Asthma Control Program funds states, territories, 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 of this program to \$40 million will allow the CDC to continue this important work and allow additional funding for state grants. The current funding level for this program represents an average of just \$1.17 invested in asthma prevention for each of the 26.5 million Americans living with asthma. In contrast, between 2012 and 2018, an average of \$3.5 billion per year was paid by Medicaid just for asthma inhalers. Statewide asthma coalitions, funded by NACP, are one of the most direct and measurable ways that human, financial, and organizational resources are leveraged. To fund all 50 states and at least two territories, and to invest in the equity and efficacy that coalitions are shown to generate, the NACP appropriation should be \$65 million. The NSHHC proposes increasing funding to this level by at least FY27, if not sooner.

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. 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
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Coalition
Issaquah, WA

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

Organizational Signatures

National Organizations

Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Clean Water Action
Earthjustice
Ecology Center
Elevate
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Lead and Environmental Hazards Association
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium

Regional, State, and Local Organizations

Alameda County Healthy Homes Department
California Safe Schools
Children First
EnviroPlan, LLC
Healthy Housing Omaha
Learning Disabilities Association of Arkansas
Learning Disabilities Association of Connecticut
Learning Disabilities Association of Delaware
Learning Disabilities Association of Georgia
Learning Disabilities Association of Illinois
Learning Disabilities Association of Indiana
Learning Disabilities Association of Iowa
Learning Disabilities Association of Maine
Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota
Learning Disabilities Association of New Jersey
Learning Disabilities Association of New York State
Learning Disabilities Association of Ohio
Learning Disabilities Association of South Carolina
Learning Disabilities Association of Texas

Learning Disabilities Association of Utah
Learning Disabilities Association of Virginia
Learning Disabilities Association of Wisconsin
Learning Disabilities Association of Alabama
Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan
Lincoln Westmoreland Housing, Inc.
Metropolitan Tenants Organization
Ohio Lead-Free Kids Coalition
Partnership for Air Matters
Rebuilding Together Sacramento
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
Revitalize Community Development Corporation
Sullivan County, NH, Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes Program
Women for a Healthy Environment

Individual Signatures – Organization May Be Listed for Identification Purposes Only

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