

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 14, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-233, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

As Congress moves toward consideration of a new round of economic relief and stimulus for the country in the wake of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it will be necessary to ensure communities have the resources they need not only to mitigate economic impacts, but to build the infrastructure needed to detect and treat those infected with coronavirus, and to ensure necessary services are available to the most vulnerable. With this in mind, we ask that you provide an additional increase to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

During this crisis, CDBG funds provide a lifeline for states and communities throughout the country in a number of different ways. In addition to providing grants and loans to impacted businesses and job training programs, they can also be used to protect the health of communities.¹ CDBG funds are used to construct facilities for testing, diagnosing, and treatment for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. Grants and loans may also be used to expand businesses and hire people for the manufacturing of medical supplies and train those employees for these jobs.

In addition to supporting distressed communities in rebuilding and supporting health care infrastructure, CDBG also provides crucial funding to programs like Meals on Wheels, which helps to ensure that senior citizens have access to hot meals when they are unable to obtain them on their own. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis is placing a significant burden on the program. Ordinarily, Meals on Wheels provides meals to more than 2 million people each year. However, social distancing guidelines are having the dual effect of increasing the amount of older Americans forced to stay at home, while also straining the ability of the program to use volunteers it relies on as many fear getting sick.² An additional increase in funding for CDBG can help programs like Meals on Wheels to adapt to these challenges, and continue providing meals to the elderly.

We thank you for your attention to this matter, and for your continued support of states, cities, and towns impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

¹ <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Quick-Guide-CDBG-Infectious-Disease-Response.pdf>

² <https://www.aarp.org/home-family/friends-family/info-2020/meals-on-wheels.html>

Sincerely,



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Members of Congress Also Supporting:

Cindy Axne
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Ami Bera, M.D.
Earl Blumenauer
Lisa Blunt Rochester
Brendan F. Boyle
Anthony G. Brown
Julia Brownley
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