

October 21, 2021

The Honorable Maxine Waters
Chairwoman
House Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2129 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: House Financial Services Committee Hearing, A Strong Foundation: How Housing is the Key to Building Back a Better America

Dear Chairwoman Waters:

On behalf of Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), a community development financial institutions (CDFI) membership organization, I am writing to thank you for including provisions to support CDFIs and the communities we serve in the Financial Services Committee's reconciliation bill and for holding today's hearing. We greatly value your focus on housing and ensuring that the Build Back Better Act will include valuable housing provisions like the Housing Investment Fund and the Community Restoration and Revitalization Fund.

I am pleased to see the Committee advance legislation that will help improve the physical and financial infrastructure in low-income and minority communities. OFN strongly supports the historic investments in affordable housing and community development initiatives. Specifically, we applaud lawmakers' actions to create and expand federal resources, including the authorization of \$9.4 billion for the Housing Investment Fund. Similar to the CDFI Fund's Capital Magnet Fund (CMF), the proposed Housing Investment Fund would provide flexible grant capital to increase the affordability, accessibility, and quality of housing nationwide. As you are aware, CMF awardees have created over 28,100 affordable housing units, including 4,500 homeownership units and the Housing Investment Fund would build and improve upon this work.

We also strongly support the proposed \$7.5 billion investment in a new Community Restoration and Revitalization Fund at the Department of Housing and Urban Development that would allow CDFIs to access funding for housing and community infrastructure, such as community facilities.

Additionally, we were pleased to see investments into several other housing programs, including:

- \$37 billion for the National Housing Trust Fund
- \$35 billion for the HOME program



- \$80 billion to preserve public housing
- \$8.5 billion in CDBG funding
- \$10 billion in first-time, first-generation homebuyer down payment assistance
- \$2 billion for the Indian Housing Block Grant Program
- \$6 billion for loans and grants to finance green preservation of HUD multifamily housing
- Increased funding for HUD's fair housing enforcement activities

Finally, we fully support the funding for several U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development programs, including \$5 billion for new construction and preservation of USDA Section 515 Rural Rental Housing and Section 514/516 Farm Labor Housing programs and \$100 million for the Section 504 Very Low-Income Housing Repair program.

Thank you again for prioritizing underserved communities in your legislation and for holding today's hearing to draw additional attention to these issues. We applaud your work to maintain these provisions throughout the negotiation process to a final reconciliation bill. Please reach out with any questions or if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Jennifer A. Vasiloff
Chief External Affairs Officer
Opportunity Finance Network