

Support Affordable Senior Housing through HUD Funding and Investment in Infrastructure

Invest in Affordable Senior Housing Through HUD Funding

COVID-19 has made clear the linchpin role the federal government plays in affordable senior housing development and has highlighted the critical connection between housing and healthcare. Across federal programs, more than 2.5 million older adults receive some form of housing assistance. The majority of these older adults live in subsidized apartment communities where residents each rely on their own set of services and supports that allow them to age in community.

In New York, seniors are facing waitlists of up to 10 years to get into an affordable housing unit. When affordable senior housing is unavailable, too often the result is homelessness and further deterioration of health that not only harms the individual but also drives up state and federal health care costs due to what otherwise would have been preventable hospital and nursing home care.

Congress must recognize the proven role affordable housing plays in improving older adults' health and lowering the nation's health care costs and provide an investment to significantly expand the supply of new affordable housing and preserve existing affordable housing.

We ask that Congress:

- **Invest \$600M for approximately 6,700 new Section 202 Housing for the Elderly homes** to address the significant, nationwide need to expand the supply of affordable senior housing.
- **Invest \$100 million for 400 new three-year Service Coordinator grants** – currently only 45% of 202 communities have a service coordinator.
- **Invest \$100 million for the installation and service fees for building-wide internet** in 3,300 senior housing communities.
- **Provide full renewal funding for rental assistance contract renewals** (Project-Based Rental Assistance and Project Rental Assistance Contracts) and Service Coordinator grant renewals.

Build a Better Affordable Senior Housing Infrastructure

Aging services are an essential part of the nation's health infrastructure. There are 52 million people over 65 now, a population expected to double by 2040. Meanwhile, research shows that half of us will need formal long-term care and services as we age, in addition to the care we receive from our families and friends. It is essential that we build a strong foundation to ensure those services are available to our rapidly aging population.

We ask that any infrastructure bill:

- **Expand the supply of senior affordable housing** by investing \$2.5 billion in HUD's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program. A \$2.5 billion investment for capital advances and project rental assistance contracts will provide homes approximately 54,000 affordable senior homes through HUD's Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program. Today, 2.6 million older adult renter households spend more than half of their incomes on housing, too often forcing them to choose between rent, food, and medicine. This \$2.5 billion proposal is consistent with the 116th Congress's S. 2951, H.R. 5187, and H.R. 2, the House-passed Moving Forward Act.

- **Provide internet access in affordable housing** to ensure the more than 2.2 million older adults in federally-subsidized affordable housing buildings have basic internet access. This can be achieved by updating HUD, Treasury, and USDA utility allowance definitions to include broadband as a subsidized utility and updating the subsidized housing infrastructure by retrofitting units with the necessary wiring for high-quality broadband. We urge any package to include the Broadband Justice Act, H.R. 1904, which authorizes \$5 billion for broadband as a utility and such sums as may be necessary for wiring and installation for all HUD, USDA, and Housing Credit homes.
- **Establish a capital pool for age-friendly retrofits** to meet building design needs in the HUD-subsidized housing stock. LeadingAge NY supports a \$1 billion pool of capital funds, administered by HUD under a new Age-Friendly Retrofit Program, to help current and future older adult households live in independent housing for as long as they choose to do so.

Questions

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