



November 30, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
House of Representatives
H-232, the Capitol
Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
House of Representatives
H-222, the Capitol
Washington DC, 20515

Re: Ensure Access to CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund/Rental Assistance Funding,
Extend the Deadline

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

America’s renters and housing providers need immediate support to stabilize the sector and avert an impending housing crisis. We continue to urge the passage of additional COVID-19 relief that includes rental assistance, which ensures residents have a place to call home and owners can maintain the ability to operate their properties. While the housing sector ultimately needs dedicated assistance, Congress can immediately aid renters through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act-created Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). The CRF provided \$150 billion for states to use for a variety of needs and provided jurisdictions flexibility to use a portion of allocated funds to set up rental assistance programs for affected Americans. The authorization to commit those funds is set to expire on December 31, 2020. We urge Congress to extend the current-year end deadline for state and local governments to use CRF funding through the first quarter of 2021 and support bipartisan legislative efforts to do so.

The current Centers for Disease Control (CDC) eviction moratorium was issued without rental assistance, which sets up an untenable situation for all parties involved. The CDC eviction moratorium, coupled with the inability of Congress and the Administration to act on a robust emergency rental assistance plan, imperils rental housing providers and the housing they provide. The financial support provided by the CARES Act has helped renters to weather the crisis. Absent further COVID-19 relief, it is imperative that states be allowed continued access to the CRF funds beyond December 31, 2020.

Furthermore, we urge state and local policymakers to utilize unobligated CRF funding for rental and housing assistance efforts and to look to successful models, like the [Mississippi Rental Assistance Grant Program](#) (MRAP). Legislation approved by the state utilizes \$20 million in federal CARES Act funds to provide grants to property owners to help them recover rental

income lost due to the pandemic and attendant eviction moratoria imposed by federal and state governments. Importantly, unlike other state programs, rather than placing the burden on the resident to seek assistance, MRAP allows the owner to apply for the grant. It's important that rental assistance programs be easily executable and expeditiously administered to those in need. Some less successful programs have been overly targeted or burdensome for participants.

While a dedicated, COVID-19 rental assistance program is essential, state and local efforts using the flexibility provided by the CARES Act to provide some relief is absolutely critical at this time. In fact, while some segments of the rental housing market are holding steady, there is significant signs of stress across the country with a significant population of our nation's renters in deep financial distress as a result of the pandemic. According to Moody's Analytics, there will be a \$70-75 billion backlog in rent owed by January. For those that are still able to pay their rent, one-quarter of all renters (those in all types of housing) reported in the most recent [Household Pulse Survey](#) they had borrowed money from friends or family to meet their spending needs (all spending, not just rent) in the past seven days; 31 percent had used money from their savings or selling assets; and 34 percent had used credit cards. Ultimately, without an alignment of rental assistance to the current CDC eviction moratorium, the mandate for solving the COVID-19 housing crisis falls squarely on the shoulders of rental housing providers. Many of these firms are small, family-owned businesses that will face an unrecoverable financial burden that could lead to the greatest rental housing crisis of our lifetime.

The undersigned national associations represent for-profit and non-profit owners, developers, managers, housing cooperatives, lenders and housing agencies involved in providing affordable rental and cooperative housing to millions of American families. In addition to reaching consensus on another COVID-19 relief package to support economic and housing stability, we strongly urge Congress to extend the current year-end deadline for states to use CRF allocations, through the first quarter of 2021.

Sincerely,

CCIM Institute
Council for Affordable and Rural Housing
Institute of Real Estate Management
Manufactured Housing Institute
Mortgage Bankers Association
National Affordable Housing Management
Association

National Apartment Association
National Association of Home Builders
National Association of Housing
Cooperatives
National Association of REALTORS
National Leased Housing Association
National Multifamily Housing Council

cc: Council of State Governments
National Association of Counties
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Governor's Association
National League of Cities
State Government Affairs Council
The Honorable Alex Azar, Secretary of Health and Human Services
The Honorable Ben Carson, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
United State Conference of Mayors
United States Congress
White House Coronavirus Task Force