



The Honorable Sherrod Brown
Chair
Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

January 26, 2021

Dear Chair Brown:

LeadingAge fully supports the nomination of Congresswoman Marcia Fudge as Secretary of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and encourages the Committee to support her nomination.

LeadingAge represents more than 5,000 nonprofit aging services providers and other mission-minded organizations that touch millions of lives every day. Alongside our members and 38 state partners, we use applied research, advocacy, education, and community-building to make America a better place to grow old. Our membership encompasses the entire continuum of aging, including affordable senior housing providers. We bring together the most inventive minds to lead and innovate solutions that support older adults wherever they call home.

More than 1.9 million older adults rely on HUD's programs for affordable, accessible, and quality housing. Meanwhile, there are millions of older adults who are eligible for housing help but cannot access it because the programs are too small.

We support the nomination of Congresswoman Fudge to be the next HUD Secretary to advocate for and carry out the robust housing platform outlined by President Joe Biden. This housing platform reflects solutions to older adults' need for affordable, accessible, and quality housing. We have confidence that Secretary-Nominee Fudge would work with Congress to take quick action on:

- **Beating COVID-19**, by protecting the more than 1.1 million older adults living in HUD- subsidized housing, with funding for PPE, cleaning and disinfecting, increased staffing costs, and to make up for diminished access to meals, food, and other services. Beating COVID-19 also means service coordinators in more HUD-subsidized communities, and building-wide internet in resident apartments and common areas. For senior buildings, the emphasis has to be on protecting residents and staff from the deadly virus, not just on loss of tenant rent revenue.
- **Making vaccinations accessible to all older residents in HUD-subsidized housing**, not just those who live in Section 202 communities.
- **Investing in Affordable Housing**. LeadingAge supports President Biden's pledge to invest \$640 billion over 10 years in programs like the Section 202 program, an Affordable Housing Fund, vouchers for all eligible households (which, to reap the benefits to older adults of place-based

services, can be project-based), and expansion of the low income housing tax credit program, among others, and for a comprehensive approach to ending homelessness.

- **Funding service coordinators in all HUD-subsidized senior housing communities.** Service coordinators are the crucial link between residents and the services and supports they need to remain independent.
- **Getting broadband to every HUD-assisted household in America.** LeadingAge looks to the next HUD Secretary to ensure that every HUD-assisted household, including every older adult household, has access to affordable broadband.
- **Taking strong steps to promote racial equity by addressing stark economic disparities.** In addition, LeadingAge supports reinstating the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule, rigorous enforcement of the Fair Housing Act and the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, reinstatement of the federal risk-sharing program, the elimination of local and state housing regulations that perpetuate discrimination, such as exclusionary zoning, and the creation of policies that support equity, such as source of income laws.
- **Advancing LGBTQ+ equality for older adults,** by rescinding proposals that would allow federally-funded homeless shelters to turn away transgender people and by passage of the Equality Act.
- **Promoting housing as a fundamental element of home- and community-based services,** as outlined in President Biden's bold [campaign pledge to expand access to a broad array of long-term services](#). Home- and community-based services are not an option if the recipient does not have an affordable, accessible, and quality home in the community.
- **Act swiftly to fully integrate HUD and HHS/CMS housing and services,** as directed by Congress in the fiscal year 2020 HUD appropriations bill. Perhaps the results of this HUD/CMS collaboration will dovetail with the findings of HUD's Integrated Wellness in Supportive Housing demonstration, which was just extended by Congress in the fiscal year 2021 HUD appropriations bill.

An adequate supply of homes affordable to all households, including older adult households, is critical to meeting each of the above goals. LeadingAge is ready to support Congresswoman Fudge's most foundational task: to increase the supply of affordable housing.

LeadingAge urges the swift approval of Congresswoman Fudge to be HUD Secretary.

Please reach out to LeadingAge vice president for housing policy, Linda Couch, lcouch@leadingage.org, with any questions.

Sincerely,

Katie Smith Sloan
President and CEO