



## Affordable Senior Housing: 4<sup>th</sup> Relief and Infrastructure Package

### \$3.2 billion package

- There are several thousand federally-assisted, affordable senior housing communities for older adults with low incomes in the United States. Residents in these communities have more chronic conditions than their peers without housing assistance. Meanwhile, there are 5 million older adult households who spend more than half of their incomes for housing, forcing them to choose between housing, food, and healthcare, who are need housing assistance.
- These communities are independent living environments where residents are very successfully encouraged to age in community. Residents of federally-assisted senior communities have networks of resident-coordinated and building-coordinated service providers coming and going from their buildings 24 hours a day to achieve the goals of aging in community.

#### Housing as an Infrastructure Investment

**\$1B for New Section 202 Homes.** A \$1 billion infrastructure investment would result in short and long term jobs, as well as 3,800 affordable senior homes with Servicer Coordinators in the affordable community. When only Section 202 dollars are used to build and operate these homes, their building can be rapid rather than bogged down in the multiple processes and timelines when other resources must be used.

#### COVID-19 Response

**\$295M for staffing support in HUD-assisted senior housing communities.** This would provide such affordable senior housing communities needed resources to hire replacement staff as regular and full time staff may not able to work.

**\$150M for HUD-assisted senior housing communities to secure supplies / disinfection / preparedness / personal protective equipment.** Without proper supplies, senior affordable housing communities have no way to safely enter resident apartments for needed health and safety repairs, to safely interact with residents to continue community operations, or to screen service providers and other visitors to these independent living apartment buildings.

**\$1.4B for federally-assisted housing supports.** These resources are needed to make up for decreased rents from HUD- and USDA-assisted older adult residents, to cover the costs of necessary vacancies, for COVID-19 costs, and for emergency housing assistance to ensure housing affordability older adult residents of Low Income Housing Tax Credit housing, etc.

**\$300M for Service Coordinators.** Of this amount, **\$20M** is needed for existing, budget-based Service Coordinators and **\$10M** is needed for existing, grant-funded Service Coordinators to address immediate COVID-19-related costs. Statutory language is also needed to ensure speedy access to these resources and that the eligible uses for Service Coordinator funds are expanded to include flexibility for COVID-19-related costs that support residents' health and wellness needs. The remaining **\$270M** investment is needed to enable communities without a Service Coordinator grant to employ one. Fewer than half of HUD-assisted senior housing communities have the resources they need to employ a service coordinator.

**\$50M for WiFi for federally-assisted senior housing.** There is a need to install WiFi in federally-assisted housing communities, and to help residents access internet in their units. Most federally-assisted senior housing communities do not have building-wide WiFi, which would allow for telehealth services in common spaces, in individual apartments, help overcome language barrier, and to help residents from outside the building. WiFi would also help Service Coordinators assist and engage residents, and help combat social isolation.

**\$5M to support mandatory meal programs in HUD-assisted senior housing communities.** Provide \$5 million in financial relief to HUD senior housing communities with mandatory meal programs which have become much more expensive, complicated, and difficult to administer during the pandemic.

#### **Statutory Relief**

**Income Recertification and Verification.** Adjust statutory language regarding income recertifications in HUD-assisted housing for flexibility around the requirement for annual recertifications and verification, while preserving the current ability to conduct interim recertifications if a tenant reports an income change.

**Minimum Rent.** We also recommend that the statutory requirement for a minimum rent in federally-assisted housing be suspended.

**Low Income Housing Tax Credits.** A number of programmatic deadlines required under the Internal Revenue Code for Low Income Housing Tax Credit communities could be difficult or impossible to meet as development slows due to COVID-19. To provide immediate assistance to LIHTC properties, we support immediate statutory actions in the form of one-year extensions for three key deadlines: 10 percent test deadlines, placed in service deadlines, and rehabilitation expenditure deadlines.

*April 2, 2020*