



July 7, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Chairwoman Collins, Ranking Member Mikulski and Ranking Member Reed:

As members of the Coalition of HUD Housing Counseling Intermediaries, we write to seek your support for much needed funding for housing counseling aimed at preventing foreclosures. The Senate's FY 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies appropriations bill eliminated funding for National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling (NFMC), abandoning a critical lifeline for millions of homeowners who are still in financial distress: facing foreclosure, burdened by negative equity and struggling to recover from the housing crisis. We urge you to reverse this decision.

The members of the Coalition of HUD Housing Counseling Intermediaries are the nation's largest providers of foreclosure avoidance assistance to American homeowners. Our organizations manage the technical assistance, training and quality control of approximately 70% of the industry's counseling and we are deeply concerned about the negative impact that the elimination of funding will have on our capacity to deliver foreclosure avoidance and recovery service to those most affected by the Great Recession.

NFMC funding makes it possible for the nation's HUD-approved nonprofit housing counseling and State Housing Finance agencies to offer free, convenient and confidential assistance to homeowners across the country. Well-trained, certified housing counselors help people avoid foreclosure – through a refinance, modification or alternative – and assist those with existing modifications to manage the interest rate increases that are looming in 2016.

Since its inception, NFMC funding has provided assistance to nearly two million homeowners. Elimination of the program will leave an estimated 250,000 American families without an important source of support over the next year. Housing counseling agencies cannot continue to provide services on the scale that our communities need without NFMC. As the crisis has endured – longer than we had expected – mortgage foreclosure challenges have grown more

complex, requiring greater investment in time and effort to provide the help that is needed. Even as the crisis eases, thousands of consumers are still calling our organizations every day for assistance to resolve their housing difficulties.

NFMC has helped ease the housing crisis for millions of American families but millions more still face significant challenges:

- Roughly two million homeowners are seriously delinquent and face foreclosure.
- More than seven million Americans have lost homes to foreclosure and are struggling to recover.
- Almost eight million homes remain underwater.
- A recent survey by the MacArthur Foundation noted that three in five Americans believe we are either “still in the middle” (41%) or “the worst is yet to come” (20%).
- Lower income and minority communities bore the brunt of the crisis and are being left behind in the recovery.

Billions of dollars have been leveraged to restore the housing finance industry but millions of Americans throughout the country still struggle. Without the guiding light of NFMC, the futures of these American families will be dimmer. We ask the Senate to continue funding NFMC so that we can continue to help American families find a pathway to recovery.

On behalf of the undersigned Coalition of Housing Counseling Intermediaries, we appreciate Congress’s past support of housing counseling and ask for your continued commitment to helping hard-working families find sustainable housing solutions. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Gene Spencer at the Homeownership Preservation Foundation at 202-480-2776 or gspencer@995hope.org. Thank you for consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Catholic Charities, USA - Alexandria, VA

Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, Inc. - Boston, MA

ClearPoint Financial Solutions, Inc. - Atlanta, GA

Navicore Solutions, Manalapan, NJ

GreenPath, Inc. - Farmington Hills, MI

HomeFree-USA - Riverdale, MD

Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey - Trenton, NJ

Housing Action Illinois

Homeownership Preservation Foundation - Minneapolis, MN

Coalition of HUD Counseling Intermediaries

July 7, 2015

Page 3 of 3

Hope Enterprise Corporation - Jackson, MS

Housing Opportunities Collaborative - San Diego, CA

Housing Partnership Network - Boston, MA

Minnesota Homeownership Center - Saint Paul, MN

Mississippi Homebuyer Education Center Initiative - Jackson, MS

Mon Valley Initiative - Homestead, PA

Money Management International, Inc. - Sugar Land, TX

National Association of Real Estate Brokers Investment Division, Inc. - Emeryville, CA

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development - Washington, DC

National Community Reinvestment Coalition, Inc. - Washington, DC

National Council of La Raza - Washington, DC

National Council on Aging - Washington, DC

National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions New York, NY

National Foundation for Credit Counseling, Inc. - Washington, DC

National Urban League - New York, NY

Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America - Jamaica Plain, MA

New York Mortgage Coalition - New York, NY

Nueva Esperanza, Inc.- Philadelphia, PA

Rural Community Assistance Corporation - West Sacramento, CA

Springboard Nonprofit Consumer Credit Management, Inc. - Riverside, CA

United Way of Central Alabama

cc: Members of the United States Senate