May 23, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressional Leaders:

We, the undersigned members of The U.S. Conference of Mayors, urge you to support the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program at $3.3 billion as you develop the FY2018 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriation bill. CDBG is one of the most effective federal programs for growing local economies and for providing a lifeline to families and communities with proven results.

Since FY 2005, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has collected accomplishment data for the CDBG program. The data highlights the program’s flexibility to design and implement strategies tailored to meet local needs and priorities. It has provided funds in every state, including housing investments, public infrastructure improvements, and economic development, while also providing public services, including services for seniors, youth, the disabled, and employment training.

Despite being a key tool for aiding our communities, the CDBG program, like many programs, has taken a share of deep cuts in recent years, falling substantially—by nearly $1.4 billion since FY2001. This program helps more than 1,200 cities, counties, states, and rural areas that meet the needs of low- and moderate-income people and communities, funding cuts have severely weakened the ability of grantees to revitalize their communities and respond to local need.
We share your commitment to the most effective use of taxpayer dollars, and believe that these grants have proven highly effective. Based on the data that grantees have reported to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development over the past nine years (FY2005 – FY2016), CDBG has:

- Helped over 1.3 million low- and moderate-income persons through single-family, owner-occupied rehabilitation, homeownership assistance, energy-efficient improvements, and lead-based abatement, among other activities;

- Created or retained 387,109 jobs for low- and moderate-income people through a variety of economic development activities;

- Benefited over 42 million low- and moderate-income persons through public improvements including senior centers, child care centers, and centers for people with disabilities;

- Benefited over 133 million low- and moderate-income persons through public services such as employment training, meals and other services to the elderly, services for abused and neglected children, assistance to local food banks, and other services;

- Helped Seniors Live Independently. CDBG funds are used to rehabilitate the homes of low- and moderate-income elderly persons to allow them to age in place, thereby, avoiding costly assisted living and nursing home care. CDBG provides resources to Meals on Wheels and other local food programs to ensure our low- and moderate-income seniors receive daily nourishment and contact. Further, CDBG funds are used to build community centers to allow seniors to receive health and recreational services to stay engaged and healthy;

- Strengthened Families and Communities through Homeownership. CDBG funds are used to assist credit worthy, working families with down payment and closing cost assistance to purchase a home. Homeownership stabilizes neighborhoods, allows families to build assets, and adds to the local tax base;

- Created Safer Communities. Local communities use CDBG to work with local police departments and neighborhood leaders to fight crime and make neighborhoods safer places to live and work by creating and expanding neighborhood watch groups, making safety improvements to homes and businesses, and encouraging local police sub-stations to move into high crime areas;

- Invested in Our Next Generation. Local communities use CDBG funds to provide afterschool programs to low-income children, summer jobs for low-income youth, and build recreation centers to provide a safe outlet for learning, sports and personal growth.
Additionally, every $1.00 of CDBG leverages an additional $3.65 in non-CDBG funding. CDBG makes its way into the local economy through an extensive network of local organizations and remains a lifeline for families and communities. It is one federal program that touches the lives of nearly every American in some fashion. Over 7,200 communities have access to the funds and rely on the program to enhance their life and community. Every State, Territory, and Congressional District receives or has access to CDBG funds. The pressing need in the current economy for these funds remains critical.

While we understand the difficult fiscal decisions you must make in Washington, we appreciate your consideration of this important request and strongly urge you to support at least $3.3 billion for the CDBG program in FY18 to help grow local economies.

Sincerely,

Mick Cornett
President, U.S. Conference of Mayors
Mayor of Oklahoma City

Mitchell Landrieu
Vice President, U.S. Conference of Mayors
Mayor of New Orleans

Stephen K. Benjamin
Second Vice President, U.S. Conference of Mayors
Mayor of Columbia (SC)

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director
U.S. Conference of Mayors
Additional mayors who have signed onto this letter:

Birmingham (AL) Mayor William A. Bell, Sr.
Decatur (AL) Mayor Tab Bowling
Florence (AL) Mayor Steve Holt
Gadsden (AL) Mayor Sherman Guyton
Montgomery (AL) Mayor Todd Strange
Prattville (AL) Mayor Bill Gillespie, Jr.
Tuscaloosa (AL) Mayor Walter Maddox
Anchorage (AK) Mayor Ethan Berkowitz
Casa Grande (AZ) Mayor Craig H. McFarland
Chandler (AZ) Mayor Jay Tibshraeny
El Mirage (AZ) Mayor Lana Mook
Glendale (AZ) Mayor Jerry Weiers
Goodyear (AZ) Mayor Georgia Lord
Lake Havasu City (AZ) Mayor Mark S. Nexsen
Mesa (AZ) Mayor John Giles
Phoenix (AZ) Mayor Greg Stanton
Tempe (AZ) Mayor Mark W. Mitchell
Tucson (AZ) Mayor Jonathan Rothschild
Conway (AR) Mayor Bart Castleberry
Fayetteville (AR) Mayor Lionel Jordan
Fort Smith (AR) Mayor Sandy Sanders
Jonesboro (AR) Mayor Harold Perrin
Little Rock (AR) Mayor Mark Stodola
North Little Rock (AR) Mayor Joe A. Smith
Pine Bluff (AR) Mayor Shirley Washington
Texarkana (AR) Mayor Ruth Penney Bell
West Memphis (AR) Mayor William H. Johnson
Alameda (CA) Mayor Trish Herrera Spencer
Baldwin Park (CA) Mayor Manuel Lozano
Calexico (CA) Mayor Armando Real
Cerritos (CA) Mayor Grace Hu
Citrus Heights (CA) Mayor Jeff Slowey
Campbell (CA) Mayor Elizabeth ‘Liz’ Gibbons, AIA
Cathedral City (CA) Mayor Stanley E. Henry
Claremont (CA) Mayor Larry Schroeder
Colton (CA) Mayor Richard Delarosa
Costa Mesa (CA) Mayor Katrina Foley
Cupertino (CA) Mayor Savita Vaidhyanathan
Downey (CA) Mayor Fernando Vasquez
Dublin (CA) Mayor David Haubert
Encinitas (CA) Mayor Catherine Blakespear
Fontana (CA) Mayor Acquanetta Warren
Fremont (CA) Mayor Lily Mei
Fresno (CA) Mayor Lee Brand
Goleta (CA) Mayor Paula Perotte
Hemet (CA) Mayor Linda Krupa
Indio (CA) Mayor Elaine Holmes
La Verne (CA) Mayor Donald Kendrick
Laguna Niguel (CA) Mayor Jerry Slusiewicz
Lodi (CA) Mayor Doug Kuehne
Long Beach (CA) Mayor Robert Garcia
Los Angeles (CA) Mayor Eric Garcetti
Menifee (CA) Mayor Neil R. Winter
Milpitas (CA) Mayor Rich Tran
Monrovia (CA) Mayor Tom Adams
Napa (CA) Mayor Jill Techel
Newark (CA) Mayor Alan Nagy
Oceanside (CA) Mayor Jim Wood
Oakland (CA) Mayor Libby Schaaf
Oakley (CA) Mayor Sue Higgins
Paramount (CA) Mayor Peggy Lemons
Rancho Cordova (CA) Mayor Donald Terry
Redondo Beach (CA) Mayor William C. Brand
Richmond (CA) Mayor Tom Butt
Salinas (CA) Mayor Joseph Gunter
San Bernardino (CA) Mayor R. Carey Davis
San Bruno (CA) Mayor Jim Ruane
San Francisco (CA) Mayor Edwin Lee
San Gabriel (CA) Mayor Juli Costanzo
San Jose (CA) Mayor Sam Liccardo
San Leandro (CA) Mayor Pauline Russo Cutter
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Santa Cruz (CA) Mayor Cynthia Chase
Santa Monica (CA) Mayor Ted Winterer
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West Hollywood (CA) Mayor John Heilman
West Sacramento (CA) Mayor Christopher Cabaldon
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Denver (CO) Mayor Michael B. Hancock
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Hallandale Beach (FL) Mayor Joy F. Cooper
Hollywood (FL) Mayor Josh Levy
Kissimmee (FL) Mayor Jose Alvarez
Lauderhill (FL) Mayor Richard J. Kaplan
Miramar (FL) Mayor Wayne M. Messam
Orlando (FL) Mayor Buddy Dyer
Palm Bay (FL) Mayor William Capote
Pembroke Pines (FL) Mayor Frank C. Ortis
Pensacola (FL) Mayor Ashton Hayward
Pinellas Park (FL) Mayor Sandra Bradbury
Plantation (FL) Mayor Diane Veltri Bendekovic
Pompano Beach (FL) Mayor Lamar Fisher
Port St. Lucie (FL) Mayor Gregory J. Oravec
St. Petersburg (FL) Mayor Rick Kriseman
Sunrise (FL) Mayor Mike Ryan
Tampa (FL) Mayor Bob Buckhorn
West Palm Beach (FL) Mayor Jeri Muoio
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Macon-Bibb (GA) Mayor Robert Reichert
Rome (GA) Mayor Jamie Doss
Sandy Springs (GA) Mayor Russell K. Paul
Lihue, Kauai (HI) Mayor Bernard P. Carvalho
Wailuku (HI) Mayor Alan M. Arakawa
Boise (ID) Mayor David Bieter
Lewiston (ID) Mayor James Kleeburg
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Dolton (IL) Mayor Riley H. Rogers
Elgin (IL) Mayor David Kaptain
Gurnee (IL) Mayor Kristina Kovarik
Hoffman Estates (IL) Mayor Bill McLeod
Normal (IL) Mayor Chris Koos
Oak Lawn (IL) Mayor Dr. Sandra Bury
Rockford (IL) Mayor Thomas P. McNamara
Urbana (IL) Mayor Diane Wolfe Marlin
Village of Hanover Park (IL) Mayor Rodney Craig
Carmel (IN) Mayor James Brainard
Fort Wayne (IN) Mayor Thomas Henry
Gary (IN) Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson
Indianapolis (IN) Mayor Joe Hogsett
Muncie (IN) Mayor Dennis Tyler
South Bend (IN) Mayor Pete Buttigieg
Council Bluffs (IA) Mayor Matt Walsh
Des Moines (IA) Mayor Frank Cownie
Dubuque (IA) Mayor Roy D. Buol
Iowa City (IA) Mayor Jim Throgmorton
Lawrence (KS) Mayor Leslie Soden
Topeka (KS) Mayor Larry Wolgast
Ashland (KY) Mayor Stephen E. Gilmore
Louisville (KY) Mayor Greg Fischer
Baton Rouge (LA) Mayor Sharon Weston Broome
Bossier City (LA) Mayor Lorenz Walker
Lafayette (LA) Mayor Joel Robideaux
Monroe (LA) Mayor Jamie Mayo
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Bangor (ME) Mayor Joseph M. Baldacci
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Boston (MA) Mayor Martin J. Walsh
Everett (MA) Mayor Carlo DeMaria
Fitchburg (MA) Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale
Medford (MA) Mayor Stephanie M. Burke
New Bedford (MA) Mayor Jon Mitchell
Newton (MA) Mayor Setti Warren
Springfield (MA) Mayor Domenic J. Sarno
Westfield (MA) Mayor Brian P. Sullivan
Brownstown Township (MI) Mayor Andrew Linko
Burton (MI) Mayor Paula Zelenko
Gibraltar (MI) Mayor James F. Gorris
Grand Rapids (MI) Mayor Rosalynn Bliss
Kalamazoo (MI) Mayor Bobby J. Hopewell
Lansing (MI) Mayor Virgil Bernero
Muskegon (MI) Mayor Stephen J. Gawron
Pontiac (MI) Mayor Dr. Deirdre Waterman
Rochester Hills (MI) Mayor Bryan K. Barnett
Saginaw (MI) Mayor Dennis D. Browning
Southfield (MI) Mayor Kenson Siver
Westland (MI) Mayor William R. Wild
Brooklyn Center (MN) Mayor Tim Wilson
Burnsville (MN) Mayor Elizabeth B. Kautz
Duluth (MN) Mayor Emily Larson
Eden Prairie (MN) Mayor Nancy Tyra-Lukens
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Jackson (MS) Mayor Tony T. Yarber
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St. Louis (MO) Mayor Lyda Krewson
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Lincoln (NE) Mayor Chris Beutler
City of North Las Vegas (NV) Mayor John J. Lee
Henderson (NV) Mayor Andy Hafen
Las Vegas (NV) Mayor Carolyn G. Goodman
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Dover (NH) Mayor Karen Weston
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Elizabeth (NJ) Mayor J. Christian Bollwage
Fort Lee (NJ) Mayor Mark J. Sokolich
Kearny (NJ) Mayor Alberto G. Santos
Montclair (NJ) Mayor Robert D. Jackson
North Brunswick (NJ) Mayor Francis M. Womack
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Rochester (NY) Mayor Lovely Warren
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Gresham (OR) Mayor Shane Bemis
Salem (OR) Mayor Chuck Bennett
Springfield (OR) Mayor Christine L. Lundberg
Tigard (OR) Mayor John L. Cook
Allentown (PA) Mayor Ed Pawlowski
Bensalem Township (PA) Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo
Bethlehem (PA) Mayor Robert J. Donchez
Chester (PA) Mayor Thaddeus Kirkland
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McAllen (TX) Mayor Jim Darling
Mission (TX) Mayor Norberto "Beto" Salinas
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Plano (TX) Mayor Harry LaRosiliere
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San Marcos (TX) Mayor John Thomaides
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Tooele (UT) Mayor Patrick Dunlavy
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Blacksburg (VA) Mayor Ron Rordam
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Waukesha (WI) Mayor Shawn N. Reilly
Wauwatosa (WI) Mayor Kathy Ehley
West Allis (WI) Mayor Dan Devine
Wisconsin Rapids (WI) Mayor Zachary J. Vruwink
Casper (WY) Mayor Kenyne Humphrey
Green River (WY) Mayor Pete Rust
Gillette (WY) Mayor Louise Carter-King