

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Ben Carson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Carson,

I write with regard to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) allocations of Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) funding to support homeless individuals and those who are at risk of becoming homeless. As moratoriums on initiating eviction and foreclosure proceedings are lifted in New Hampshire and around the country, it is critical that funding authorized by Congress be immediately disbursed to assist households suffering from lost income or increased expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The effects of COVID-19 are broad and have taken a severe toll on the economy, leaving a record number of Americans unemployed and uncertain about their financial futures. At-risk individuals are being put in even more dire circumstances as moratoriums placed on evictions across the country expire. Further, the rapid spread of the coronavirus has left homeless individuals in a uniquely vulnerable position of getting sick, creating additional public health challenges for state and local officials working to control the spread of this disease.

As you know, Congress has allocated supplemental appropriations of \$4 billion for the ESG program through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, funding which will be crucial in providing assistance to homeless and at-risk individuals and families by giving states the resources to make available emergency shelters, hotel and motel vouchers as well as essential services to individuals experiencing homelessness. The timely disbursement of these funds is paramount to assisting states and local governments in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, due to a lack of guidance from this administration about permissible uses for COVID-19 ESG funds and the process for current ESG grantees to amend their plans in light of the current public health crisis, many of these funds have not yet been deployed to assist the vulnerable populations they are intended to support.

That is why I write today, as New Hampshire's moratorium on evictions expires, to urge HUD to issue guidance as quickly as possible on the new permissible uses for ESG funds so that grantees can promptly develop plans to put these grants to use once they are released by HUD. Additionally, I encourage HUD to prioritize approval of any supplemental amendment requests once they have been received from New Hampshire and New Hampshire grantees.

The resources supported by ESG funds are critical to preventing at-risk families and individuals from becoming homeless and mitigating the spread of COVID-19 among those already facing

homelessness. Issuing guidance for the use of ESG funding and prioritizing amendment requests will greatly accelerate the rate at which New Hampshire can put these important resources to work for the Granite Staters who desperately need them.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Cc: Lori Shibinette, Commissioner, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
Melissa Hatfield, Bureau Chief, New Hampshire Bureau of Housing Supports
Mayor Joyce Craig, City of Manchester