

April 15, 2016

Chairman Susan Collins
Subcommittee on THUD Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Jack Reed
Subcommittee on THUD Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

The undersigned civil rights and fair housing organizations urge you to support the President's 2017 budget request for \$15 million for a new Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration. These funds will enable low income families in some of our most concentrated metropolitan areas to have more meaningful access to safer, low poverty neighborhoods and higher performing schools for their children. The funding request is modest, but it would represent another small step toward the inclusive and integrated society envisioned in the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

Under the proposed demonstration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) would select up to 10 regional housing mobility programs through a competitive process. Public housing agencies (PHAs), together with local partners, would have to submit a Regional Housing Mobility Plan to HUD, describing the comprehensive approach they would use to enable families to make a successful transition to opportunity areas. At least \$12 million would be available over a three-year period to the selected regional initiatives to meet program costs, which may include counseling and continued support for families, outreach to landlords, security deposits, coordination of inter-jurisdiction moves, and other administrative functions. PHAs would have to commit a specified number of existing housing vouchers to the demonstration. The remaining funds are for evaluation, which HUD must publish within five years of initial implementation.

A growing number of agencies are interested in developing or strengthening regional collaborations to support housing mobility but are stymied by the lack of funding to support the related administrative costs. This demonstration would address some of the needed flexibility.

We urge you to include \$15 million for the Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration in the FY 2017 appropriations bill for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development.

Sincerely,

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Poverty & Race Research Action Council
Washington, DC

Joseph Rich
Thomas Silverstein
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Washington, DC

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National Fair Housing Alliance
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Cc: Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, HUD