

November 23, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

RE: NEHA support for funding the Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control & Health Housing at \$400 million

Dear Chairpersons DeLauro and Murray and Ranking Members Cole and Blunt;

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) represents approximately 7,000 governmental, private, academic, and uniformed services sector environmental health professionals in the U.S., its territories, and internationally. NEHA is the profession's strongest advocate for excellence in the practice of environmental health as it delivers on its mission to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental health workforce.

NEHA expresses support for increased funding for the **Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Lead Hazard Control & Health Housing (OLHCHH) at least \$400 million.**

As Congress enters the final stages of the FY 2023 appropriations process, we urge you to provide at least \$400 million to OLHCHH to ensure adequate funding for all of its programs. Although we believe that our original request of \$415 million for OLHCHH in FY 2023 remains necessary to fully support all of the activities OLHCHH is required to pursue, the amount of \$400 million that was appropriated by the committee in June 2022 is the bare minimum that OLHCHH should receive to accomplish its responsibilities.

We also believe that it is critical for Congress to quickly finalize the FY 2023 appropriations process to avoid lengthy continuing resolutions that bring uncertainty and create difficulties for the agency and its grantees to protect the public's health.

Federal Agencies, Environmental Health	FY 2022 Enacted	FY 2023 President's Budget
HUD Office of Lead Hazard Control & Healthy Housing	\$415,000,000	\$400,000,000
Lead Hazard Control & Demonstration Projects	\$315,000,000	\$305,000,000
Healthy Housing Programs	\$90,000,000	\$85,000,000
Technical Studies	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
Total	\$415,000,000	\$400,000,000

This funding will help ensure that HUD's OLHCHH can work to strengthen and expand its programs including:

- *Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes* – Increases of recent years have allowed this office to provide new grants to state and local programs. This increase would build on that success. Providing increased and robust funding for the Healthy Homes Program is especially important; these funds help to reduce deferrals from weatherization and other programs, reach further into rural populations, and serve healthy homes issues separate from lead. In recent years, new healthy homes production and aging in place grants have seen high demand, demonstrating the need for increased funding.
- HUD should revisit the criteria they use for rating Technical Studies grant applications, to give higher weight to applicants who demonstrate early and robust engagement with a vulnerable population (where it aligns with the research topic) and include requirements for communicating findings to the community beyond peer-reviewed publication. The majority of recipients of the HUD Technical Studies grants are universities or large state or county health departments. These organizations are already well funded and have significant capacity for research. While funding these organizations can produce new technical insights for addressing housing-based hazards, funding larger institutions repeatedly serves to reinforce the gap in research capacity between these institutions and the vulnerable populations that are often their subject of interest. In some cases, Technical Studies grantees do engage stakeholders meaningfully from vulnerable communities and bring them into the research process; however, these populations and communities tend to be brought in after the research questions have been established and the research design and methodology has been selected. This pattern does not build empowered communities or community capacity. Further, when vulnerable communities are left out of the early phases of research, or are involved only tangentially, opportunities are missed to learn about potential barriers and facilitators to implementation of the research findings.

We thank you for considering our recommendation and look forward to working with you as Congress finalizes the FY 2023 Appropriations.

Please contact Doug Farquhar at dfarquhar@neha.org or 303-802-2133 with any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D. Gary Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "D. Gary" and the last name "Brown" clearly legible.

D. Gary Brown, DrPH, CIH, RS, DAAS
NEHA President
president@neha.org

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David T. Dyjack". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "David" and the last name "Dyjack" being the most prominent parts.

David T. Dyjack, DrPH, CIH
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
Denver, CO
ddyjack@NEHA.org

Cc:
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Charles Schumer
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
The Honorable Mitch McConnell