



May 21, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chair Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We write on behalf of Catholic organizations that provide support to the poor and vulnerable, assist migrants and refugees, and protect the unborn. Today we address the moral and human dimensions of the FY2027 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Our nation is faced with an affordable housing crisis that sees no sign of improvement. More families and individuals than ever before are cost-burdened, spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing, while cost burdens amongst homeowners are also growing.¹ Only one out of every four income-eligible households receive housing assistance.² This leaves less room in family budgets for other necessities like food, healthcare, childcare, and transportation.

This crisis is further punctuated by the alarming rise in homelessness. More and more people are experiencing homelessness, and recent data show the highest recorded levels of homelessness for both individuals and also families with children.³ The supply of affordable housing fails to meet the need, especially among people with very low and extremely low incomes. Wages have failed to keep up with rising housing costs and inflation further exacerbates these problems. People with low incomes, including those receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), those living at or around the poverty line, and those earning minimum wage or close to it, simply cannot afford decent housing, especially if they have a family.

¹ Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, [The State of the Nation's Housing](#), 2025.

² Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, [The State of the Nation's Housing](#), 2025.

³ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, [Annual Homeless Assessment Report](#), 2024.

The Catholic Church, through all its ministries, is one of the largest private providers of housing services for poor and vulnerable people in the country. We serve as many as we can; however, we lack the resources to assist all our brothers and sisters in need. In 2024, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul USA provided over \$78 million in rental assistance to prevent evictions, assist people in securing permanent housing through the Motel to Home program, and house thousands of men, women, and children in shelters and transitional housing. Last year, the Catholic Charities network helped over 196,000 people access stable and affordable housing and provided homeless-related services to over 719,000 individuals. Despite these efforts, Catholic Charities agencies have over 73,000 households across the country on waiting lists for housing.

Considering such widespread, unmet need, it is clear that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) needs more resources. As the Catholic bishops of the United States taught in their 1988 pastoral statement *Homelessness and Housing: A Human Tragedy, a Moral Challenge*:

“Churches, community groups, the private sector, and state and local governments must all do more to meet our common responsibilities for housing. We must recognize the homeless person as part of the human family, as part of us. However, there is no substitute for an involved, competent, and committed federal government providing resources, leadership, and direction for a broad and flexible attack on homelessness and poor housing.”⁴

Current federal investments in housing programs do not meet the great need we see in our country. Ultimately, **we urge you to provide the highest level of funding possible** for housing and community development programs serving families and individuals who are poor and vulnerable. These programs help people build better lives, and any **cuts to funding or substantive programmatic changes that undermine the effectiveness of affordable housing programs should be opposed**. Further, considering current economic conditions, **flat funding for housing and community development programs is effectively a cut to these vital services**.

Please provide robust funding for the following programs:

Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Project-Based Section 8 Rental Assistance, and the Public Housing Capital Fund and Operating Fund: These tenant- and project-based rental assistance programs provide a lifeline for low-income families in need of affordable housing. However, with the supply of affordable rental homes decreasing and demand for rental assistance continuing to rise, funding for these programs fails to keep pace with the need. Flat funding for these programs is not sufficient to maintain housing and renew contracts for the households currently served. In addition, we remain concerned by the depletion of funds for the Emergency Housing Voucher Program and ask that continued assistance be given to the households who rely on these vital funds.

Housing for the Elderly (Section 202) Program: Since its inception, “Section 202” programs have partnered with non-profit organizations, including faith-based organizations, to expand housing for low-income elderly families. Over this time, nearly 400,000 households have been served, but many more seniors are in need of this affordable, service-connected housing. Construction of new units has not kept pace with the rapid aging of our nation’s population and the number of older adults experiencing homelessness is rising. New “Section 202” housing construction is essential.

⁴ Catholic Bishops of the United States, [Homelessness and Housing: A Human Tragedy, A Moral Challenge](#), 1988.

HOME Investment Partnership Program: The need for affordable housing is at an all-time high, and the HOME Investment Partnership Program is vital to mitigating the problem. This program tangibly changes the lives of the poor by building, buying, and rehabilitating affordable housing in blighted communities. Revitalizing buildings in poor communities serves as a catalyst for reducing crime and improving other social outcomes for poor citizens. HOME provides critical gap financing, allowing LIHTC projects to serve very low-income and special populations such as ‘chronically homeless persons,’ who are typically served by Catholic Charities. Increasing the HOME program will augment the recently passed LIHTC enhancements, ensuring more housing options for very low-income households.

Homeless Assistance Grants: The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program and Emergency Solutions Grants continue to make important contributions to reducing homelessness, particularly chronic homelessness. The CoC provides the necessary funds for permanent housing, transitional housing, homelessness prevention, operation costs, resources for coordinated entry that connect people to housing, and the homeless management information system. Nationwide, 81 Catholic Charities agencies were engaged in CoC efforts last year, and over 179,000 people were assisted with emergency housing, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, or other forms of related housing assistance. These programs are effective but need to be scaled up to meet the growing need.

Housing Counseling Assistance: As both the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, income loss, rising medical costs, and unexpected expenses can suddenly jeopardize a family’s or individual’s housing. Housing counseling helps renters seeking more affordable and stable housing choices, supports those facing the risk of homelessness, advocates for homeowners facing foreclosure and default, and educates homebuyers to be aware of abusive lending practices so they have the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions. Increased support for counseling assistance can protect against future abuses in the housing market while helping families and individuals achieve the goal of homeownership. Catholic Charities assisted over 5,000 clients with one-on-one housing counseling last year and another 2,500 clients through workshops.

Community Development Block Grant Program: For many years, communities struggling to lift themselves out of poverty have turned to the CDBG for support in housing and economic development projects, including housing rehabilitation, blight removal, and infrastructure improvements. Economic development activities have created or supported over 650,000 jobs since 2005. Protecting these programs is vital for development in low-income communities and allows state and local governments the flexibility to continue identifying the areas and projects that are best suited to produce results.

In addition to the above programs, increased support for the **Section 4 Capacity Building for Community Development Block Grant, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities (Section 811), Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (HUD-VASH), and Tribal housing programs** is necessary in order to continue to serve poor and vulnerable families across our country.

It is also important that the appropriations process address the issue of racial justice and equal opportunity in housing. Legislators should work to **guarantee equal housing opportunities for all** by opposing unjust housing discrimination.

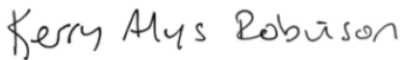
Finally, **the freedom of faith-based shelters and other organizations must be protected** to enable these groups to continue to serve people in need without forcing them to violate their beliefs or compromise the safety of their clients.

Thank you for your consideration and for your support of those in need of affordable and stable housing. Robust investments in federal housing programs equip families and communities with the resources they need to thrive. We look forward to working with you as the appropriations process advances.

Sincerely,



Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre
Archbishop of Louisville
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development



Kerry Alys Robinson
President & CEO
Catholic Charities USA



John Berry
President
National Council of the United States Society of St. Vincent de Paul