

June 6, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking member
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Clarence E. Anthony

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

As a resource and advocate for America's 19,000 cities, towns and villages, the National League of Cities (NLC) is grateful for your leadership in keeping the federal government open and operating through the new fiscal year. As your committees consider FY2025 appropriations legislation, we urge you to move forward with clean spending bills that do not claw back or repurpose Congressionally approved federal funding from prior years that are anticipated or in use by local governments, including programs authorized under the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act; or include policy riders that would negatively impact local government operations or services.

Given the patchwork of tax and expenditure limitations already imposed on local governments, any significant shift in federal funding for programs that cities, towns and villages use would be immediately consequential. If substantial unanticipated reductions in federal-local aid are enacted after municipal budgets are finalized, it would strain available locally-derived revenue and result in reductions in capacities and basic services of cities and towns in every state.

We urge the committee to consider the importance of the following programs to local governments and the residents they serve:

- **Direct funding to local governments to address urgent housing, homelessness, and community development needs, including the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership, Homeless Assistance Grants, and Lead Hazard Reduction and Healthy Homes grant programs.** Local leaders consistently report that more help is needed to address outsized needs related to housing and homelessness, including infrastructure improvements necessary to increase housing supply for households at multiple income levels. Recent spending data proves local governments are utilizing all available funding sources to that end. According to the U.S. Treasury Department, by the end of March 2023, over 750 state, local, and Tribal governments had committed [\\$17 billion of Treasury administered grant funds to meet housing needs](#),

including preventing evictions and foreclosures, helping individuals experiencing homelessness become stably housed, and expanding the supply of affordable homes to address the root cause of housing instability. Consistent funding for annual appropriations programs supporting housing is necessary to maintain efforts to address outsized local needs related to housing and homelessness as remaining emergency funds administered by Treasury are spent down.

- **Water infrastructure financing programs** to support local drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, such as the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), as well as **water infrastructure grant programs** that support small, disadvantaged and environmental justice communities, promote resilience and sustainability within the water sector, and advance technology innovation within water systems. Many of these grant programs were authorized under the 2022 infrastructure law but have not been appropriated. It is critical that Congress provide additional direct funding to local governments to help communities meet new and forthcoming regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act. However, any funding for Congressional Directed Spending for water infrastructure projects should be in addition to the baseline funding for the State Revolving Fund programs, as opposed to siphoning away funding from the topline amount.
- **Disaster response and recovery funding and climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience programs** to support communities on the frontlines of preparing for and responding to extreme weather events, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and advancing clean energy. These programs include Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities (BRIC), Flood Mitigation Assistance, Hazard Mitigation Assistance, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, Brownfields, and more across all federal agencies. Given the ongoing and costly impacts of climate change on communities, Congress should not reverse or reassign funding for these programs enacted in FY2024 or through other laws.
- **Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs for local governments.** EDA provides grants to meet the full range of communities' and regions' economic development needs including market analysis-driven planning, capacity building to support local entrepreneurship, and technical assistance related to local employer and worker needs. EDA grants prioritize job creation, mitigating economic distress in rural and underserved areas, and disaster relief. These highly sought grants have never been sufficiently funded, leaving economic conditions to decline for scores of communities that submit high-quality and worthwhile proposals.

The Recompete Pilot Program has recently proven to be the most applied for national program in EDA's history—with 565 applications from 49 states and four territories. The demand for this program shows the tremendous need from communities across the country for an investment in multi-year economic development strategies for persistently distressed communities. Congress appropriated \$200 million for the pilot program in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023. We ask that you, again, provide this level of funding for FY 2025, given the demonstrated community need and demand for the program.

- **Workforce development programs** to ensure that workers in our nation's cities, towns, and villages have the skills and workforce support necessary to meet the needs of local employers today and in the long term. Increasing funding for workforce development programs at least 10% above FY24 levels, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA),

apprenticeship, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, would ensure that workers in our nation's cities, towns, and villages have the skills and workforce supports necessary for successful outcomes. Without an at-scale investment in workers, local economic conditions will be impacted by the loss of opportunity and productivity associated with today's labor shortages.

- **Grants aimed at public safety and violence prevention**, including the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program, COPS Hiring Grants, initiatives authorized by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Second Chance Act, and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act play a pivotal role in bolstering local reentry initiatives, revamping behavioral health responses, overhauling the juvenile justice system, combatting the increase in hate crimes, fostering public safety through greater community trust in law enforcement, safeguarding the rights of all individuals, promoting innovation and technology, and expediting the progress of criminal justice reforms.

More recently, humanitarian services carried out by cities and towns related to immigration have increased fiscal pressures on local governments. Additional funding for FEMA's Shelter and Services Program would help cities, towns and villages provide basic humanitarian support to noncitizen migrants living locally. Investing in this program is warranted as demand on local infrastructure and resources intensifies – and underscored by the urgent need for effective shelter, services, and support for these new populations - that local communities have the resources to navigate a complex array of solutions and strategies to meet the diverse needs of arrivals, all while ensuring the resilience and well-being of their communities.

- **Direct and Flexible funding to meet the nation's transportation and infrastructure needs, including Transit Formula Grants, Capital Investment Grants, and the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program** are necessary to continue meeting immediate needs and to support long-range economic growth and revitalization where most needed. Other local government priorities include the Congestion Relief Program and the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program, which address and lessen the costs of addressing economic and environmental declines; the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program and funding for micromobility systems to address the harm of outdated infrastructure no longer consistent with today's community and economic needs; the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program and Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants Program both increase connectivity and decrease long-term transportation costs for rural communities; and the Emergency Relief Program to help restore and repair roads and bridges in response to the increasing frequency of natural disasters, as well as other catastrophic failures.
- **Preservation of the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program at the full funding levels authorized by Congress through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.** Cyberattacks are a major and growing threat to the daily functioning of local governments, economies, and critical infrastructure. While much work has been done by state and local governments to implement stronger cybersecurity protocols and address vulnerabilities, localities as a group continue to be under-resourced for this national security priority and sustained federal funding is critical to ensure continued momentum.
- **Continuation of the Affordable Connectivity Program.** When funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program was allowed to lapse in May 2024, more than 23 million participating households were left without a federally-protected, affordable option for home broadband

service. The Affordable Connectivity Program is a key element not only of ensuring full access to civil society for millions of households, but also for making existing federal broadband infrastructure investments sustainable. Without funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program, the already-appropriated dollars for the Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program, which requires grantees to offer an affordable service option, will not be fully leveraged by the broadband providers and communities best positioned to use them to bring disconnected neighborhoods online.

Thank you for considering our recommendations for FY2025 federal appropriations. We look forward to working with you to pass these essential appropriations bills and keep the federal government open and operational. If NLC can be of assistance, please contact Irma Esparza Diggs, NLC Senior Executive and Director of Federal Advocacy, at 202-626-3176 or diggs@nlc.org.

Sincerely,



Clarence E. Anthony
CEO & Executive Director
National League of Cities