



June 21, 2022

The Honorable David Price  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development & Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
2358-A Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development & Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
1036 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

As you prepare for markup of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for FY 2023, AARP, on behalf of our nearly 38 million members and all older Americans nationwide, would like to thank you for the Committee's support of senior housing and transportation programs that are critical to the well-being of millions of older Americans. We truly value your support, and we specifically urge that you consider the following investments for the coming fiscal year.

#### Housing for the Elderly

AARP appreciates the Committee's continued support for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program. AARP agrees that we can and must do more than just support current Section 202 residents and facilities. Section 202 is currently the only federal program that expressly addresses the need for affordable elderly housing that helps residents avoid unnecessarily institutionalization. Section 202 residents receive community-based services and supports to enable them to live with independence and dignity. With current resources, Section 202 serves less than one in three seniors that qualify for the housing. AARP urges full funding for contract renewals for Section 202 and an additional \$600 million for capital advances and operating subsidies that will produce approximately 6,200 new Section 202 homes to help address existing and increasing need.

Service Coordinators, present in about half of Section 202 properties, assess residents' needs and connect them to a broad array of vital services, such as housekeeping, health, and transportation. This is especially critical for the nearly 40 percent of residents who are frail or near-frail. Research has shown that the use of Service Coordinators has resulted in lower hospital use, increased primary care, and fewer nursing home transfers. Accordingly, AARP urges \$125 million for the renewal of existing Service Coordinator grants and \$100 million to provide 400 new, three-year Service Coordinator grants.

## Rental Assistance

AARP strongly supports the Administration's request of \$32.13 billion for the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program to renew all existing voucher contracts and expand housing vouchers to an additional 200,000 households. Vouchers currently benefit 680,000 seniors nationwide, more than any other rental assistance program. AARP further supports the Administration's request to fully fund Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) and Project Rental Assistance Contract (PRAC) renewals.

The number of older renters is growing while the shortage of affordable rental housing is becoming more acute. The number of renters age 65 and older is projected to steadily increase over the next two decades from 7.4 million in 2020 to nearly 13 million by 2040. Simultaneously, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the number of older adult renter households (age 62 or older) in the U.S. experiencing "worst-case housing needs" (meaning that a renter household with income below 50 percent of area median either is paying more than half of their income for rent, living in severely inadequate housing, or both) steadily increased to 2.2 million in 2019 – an increase of 16 percent from 2017 to 2019.

## Public Housing Preservation

Public housing is an essential source of affordable housing and funding is needed for repair and rehabilitation of seriously neglected public housing properties. Nearly half of all public housing units are over 50 years old, and many contain lead paint, mold, and other health hazards. Thirty-six percent of public housing household heads are elderly. AARP urges the highest possible funding level for both the Public Housing Capital Fund and for the Public Housing Operating Fund.

## Federal Transit Administration

Transportation is essential to enabling older adults to live independently in their own homes and to stay connected to the community. Appropriators should ensure that the FY 2023 Department of Transportation appropriations bill includes at least \$7.5 million from the general fund for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Technical Assistance and Standards Development Program. This level is essential to enable the FTA to provide technical assistance, education and support to the aging, disability, and transit communities necessary to increase the availability and accessibility of transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities.

AARP appreciates the opportunity to comment on these programs of immense importance to older Americans. Should you have any questions regarding these requests, please do not hesitate to contact me or Timothy Gearan of our Government Affairs staff at 202-434-3803.

Sincerely,



Bill Sweeney  
Senior Vice President  
Government Affairs