Organizers and advocates around the country secured historic investments in the American Rescue Plan Act, which President Biden signed into law yesterday.

These investments by Congress are the result of strategic investments by philanthropy in advocacy, policy, and organizing at the national and local level. It is imperative that funders not lose focus on pursuing liberation through justice-centered approaches. We must continue to boldly and fearlessly move power to people and decolonize our grantmaking and relationships. Philanthropy must continue to resource organizations, communities, and movements that push for anti-racist policies and reimagine systems rooted in racial justice.

The American Rescue Plan is wide-reaching and will support millions of people in the United States. The bill provides cash assistance, additional unemployment benefits, and expands the child tax credit in hopes of alleviating poverty, if temporarily. The Plan invests in public health and Medicaid, education, commerce and transportation, as well as in a variety of programs for low-income households, including:

- **Targeted Housing Choice Vouchers:** $5 billion was provided for tenant-based rental assistance for households who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness; fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual assault, or human trafficking; and those who have recently experienced homelessness and need support to regain housing stability.

- **Native American and Hawaiian Communities:** $750 million was provided for Native American Housing Block Grants and Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grants (totaling $455 million), Indian Community Development Block Grants ($280 million), and technical assistance ($10 million), in addition to $5 million for administrative costs.

- **Homeless Services funding through the HOME Program:** $5 billion was allocated to fund supportive services, developing non-congregate shelter units and affordable permanent housing, all specifically targeted to individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

- **Services and Supports for Children and Youth:** $800 million was allocated to the Department of Education to provide wrap-around services and assistance to children and youth experiencing homelessness.

- **Rental Assistance:** $21.55 billion was allocated for rental assistance prioritized for households with income totalling less than 50% of the Area Median Income, and those who have lost employment and have been unemployed for 90 days or more.

  - There are set-asides for “high need” communities based on income levels, housing quality, and housing costs ($2.5 billion); Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa ($305 million total).

  - Separately, $100 million was allocated for rental assistance for households living in USDA-financed properties in rural communities.
The American Rescue Plan Act also includes funding for fair housing organizations' operations, foreclosure prevention through the Homeowner Assistance Fund, housing counseling services, rural homeownership assistance, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and home and community-based services among other critical supports for low-income households. You can find more detail about the bill by viewing our partner's resources: National Low Income Housing Coalition fact sheet on housing and homelessness assistance included in the bill and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities’ analysis on the bill's housing assistance that will prevent evictions and help people experiencing homelessness.

Eviction Moratorium Still in Effect

The CDC’s national eviction moratorium is set to expire at the end of March, but advocates are hopeful that President Biden will extend and strengthen the ban on evictions. Interpretation, implementation, and enforcement of the eviction ban does vary greatly community-to-community, exacerbating inequity nationwide.

Late last month, a federal judge in Texas ruled the moratorium unconstitutional under the guise of interstate commerce, but the moratorium is still in effect until the end of the month unless and until the judge issues an injunction or it is extended by the Administration. We encourage you to amplify the message that the moratorium is still in effect within your communities and networks.

Welcoming Secretary Fudge

We’re excited to welcome Secretary Marcia Fudge into her new role at the helm of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Secretary Fudge, who was elected to represent Ohio’s 11th Congressional District for 8 terms from 2008-2021, has served as chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus as well as two House subcommittees. We’re looking forward to working with Secretary Fudge to advance the Administration’s racial equity priorities in pursuit of housing justice.

As always, we are here to answer your questions or provide insights on public policy developments and opportunities. Please reach out to me at any time.

Amanda Andere
CEO
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