

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Financial Services
2129 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

December 18, 2019

The Honorable Dr. Benjamin S. Carson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20410-0001

Dear Secretary Carson:

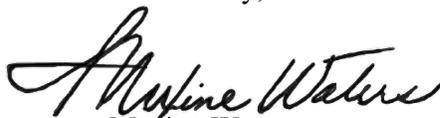
It has come to my attention that the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) has delayed the release of the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for fiscal year 2019 (FY19) Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP). The failure to timely release the NOFA is part of an ongoing trend of delays in recent years. I write to request the immediate release of the FHIP NOFA for FY 2019.

Last year, our nation experienced an 8 percent uptick in reported complaints of housing discrimination, increasing from 28,843 in 2017 to 31,202 in 2018—the highest annual number ever recorded by the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA).¹ Private, nonprofit fair housing organizations were responsible for 75 percent of housing discrimination complaint intake in the nation during 2018 alone. Yet, HUD has delayed the sole public funding stream for many of the organizations responsible for this work. These funding delays will debilitate nearly one-third of all full-service fair housing organizations, which rely on 3-year grant funding from HUD's FHIP Private Enforcement Initiative that is set to end this year.

NFHA estimates that the NOFA delay will result in at least a 6-month funding gap for PEI organizations, forcing them to lay off essential staff, reduce service area footprints, and halt services entirely for victims of housing discrimination. Gaps in essential funding not only deplete fair housing organizations' reserves, creating uncertainty and staff turnover, but similar delays in the FY18 FHIP NOFA forced some fair housing organizations to take out lines of credit, on which they incur interest, to ensure their ability to offer quality counseling, investigation, and enforcement of complaints of housing discrimination.² In other words, HUD's failure to timely release these funds will undermine fair housing enforcement in this country in very tangible ways.

Each year, HUD has the responsibility of releasing 23 annual NOFAs. Of those 23 FY19 NOFAs, the FHIP NOFA is the only one that has not been released. This is a needless and unacceptable blow to fair housing enforcement in this country and I urge you to release the FY19 FHIP NOFA immediately. Additionally, please respond to this letter with a specific explanation as to HUD's failure to release this final FY19 FHIP NOFA in a timely manner, as well as HUD's plan for avoiding such delays in the future. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Alia Fierro with my staff at (202) 225-4247.

Sincerely,



Maxine Waters
Chairwoman

¹ National Fair Housing Alliance, "[Fair Housing Trends Report](#)," 2019.

² U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, "[Stakeholder Perspectives: Fair Housing](#)," 2019.