

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

November 8, 2023

The Honorable Marcia L. Fudge  
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20410

The Honorable Denis McDonough  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Fudge and Secretary McDonough:

We write to express our support for the Aurora Housing Authority's request to receive a regulatory waiver to be considered a VASH Designated Service Provider (DSP).

We understand the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are working diligently to address the issue of veteran homelessness. Despite these crucial efforts, thousands of HUD-VA Supported Housing Program (HUD-VASH) vouchers still go unused each year.

Well documented VA workforce challenges contribute to the underutilization of these vouchers. More support is needed to locate veterans in the community experiencing homelessness, properly screen for eligibility, and maintain adequate staffing levels.

In 2020, Congress directed HUD and the VA to issue guidance on how PHAs can become designated entities to screen and make referrals to HUD-VASH, bolstering this pipeline of support. As you finalize this guidance, service providers such as the Aurora Housing Authority remain unable to screen and refer veterans to the HUD-VASH program. The Aurora Housing Authority has 137 HUD-VASH vouchers in its Housing Assistance Payment annual budget authority — 45 of which are currently un-leased. Meanwhile, there are an estimated 40-50 veterans in Aurora who are experiencing homelessness. In addition, the organization maintains a staff of seven people with a master's in social work, five of whom provide intensive case management for the homeless.

Given the chronic underutilization of HUD-VASH vouchers in Aurora and the Aurora Housing Authority's unique capabilities to address these needs, we believe the organization is qualified to be designated as a DSP while you work to finalize guidance in response to the 2020 congressional directive. As such, we respectfully encourage you to give the Aurora Housing Authority's request for a regulatory waiver your full and fair review.

Thank you for your consideration. We would appreciate if you could notify our offices of any developments.

Sincerely,



Jason Crow  
Member of Congress



John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator