

March 28, 2017

RE: Prioritization of Funding for CDBG and Appalachian Regional Commission



YWCA Warren
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For more than one hundred years, YWCA Warren has been working to empower the women and children of Trumbull County, Ohio. Our association serves the most vulnerable populations: low- and no-income women and children, many of whom are people of color. We believe that in order to thrive, we must invest in our community's women, and YWCA Warren has for decades been a grateful recipient of public federal dollars that have been put to work in our mission to eliminate racism and empower women.

Full and robust funding for programs that directly impact and improve the lives of economically disadvantaged women and children is a top priority for YWCA Warren. As such, we write with great concern regarding cuts to Community Development Block Grant funds and the Appalachian Regional Commission in the FY 2018 budget.

In 2016, we celebrated the opening of our Technology Empowerment Lab, which was made possible in part through a generous grant by the Appalachian Regional Commission. This lab, which comes equipped with state of the art computers, printers, and conference calling technology, is helping the economically disadvantaged women and girls we serve by offering them the chance to learn valuable computer skills. Many of them have been out of the workforce and lack the computer skills necessary to compete in today's job market. Use of the lab allows them to update resumes, apply for jobs, and learn skills that are universally needed in the workforce today.

YWCA Warren has also been the recipient of Community Development Block Grant funds, which we have used to develop our permanent supportive housing in collaboration with other area agencies. Through the use of CDBG funds, we were able to transform a wing of our building to accommodate 12 women and their children who have been homeless or chronically at-risk of homelessness, and who have a documented disability, including being victims of domestic violence. Since opening our permanent supportive housing program in 2014, we have helped dozens of women successfully regain their financial stability, find gainful employment, enroll their children in school, access medical and mental health services, and in several cases, move on to renting their own homes.

The need for these funds is great, and meeting the needs of our community remains an immense challenge. For example, the waitlist for our permanent supportive housing continues to grow—at any given time we have between 75 and one-hundred women and their children actively awaiting housing, who are homeless or near-homeless while they wait.

It is our hope that future budget proposals will fully fund programs like the Community Development Block Grants and the Appalachian Regional Commission. These programs allow organizations like YWCA Warren to be good stewards of public funds as we utilize them to best meet the unique needs of the communities we serve.

Thank you for your leadership and critical support of these programs.



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Sincerely,

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