

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 7, 2020

The Honorable Benjamin Carson
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Carson,

We write requesting that you modify income verification requirements for food banks receiving Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) support. Granting this flexibility will enable these CDBG recipients to continue providing critical services to those most impacted by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Under current requirements, CDBG recipients must verify clients' income by having each client complete and sign a form. While this system works under normal circumstances, the food banks serving our districts are concerned that the repetitive handoff of paperwork may increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission for their clients and volunteers.

Food banks are on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis, providing nutritious foods to those in need. Over the past month, food banks have been managing increased demand due to the economic ramifications of the outbreak. At the same time, they have had to change the format of operations in order to comply with social distancing guidelines. During this time of uncertainty, it is essential that food banks be enabled and encouraged to continue their work. They can only accomplish this if they are able to take necessary precautions to keep their clients, volunteers, and staff healthy.

We ask that you waive or modify income verification requirements for food banks receiving CDBG support. The CARES Act granted you the authority to waive these requirements for CDBG funds made available under the Act. Other federal agencies have taken steps to ensure the smooth operation of food banks. Last month, the United States Department of Agriculture modified similar income verification requirements that applied to food banks as a condition of their participation in the Emergency Food Assistance Program. We hope your agency will follow suit so that food banks can continue their work serving our community.

Thank you for your consideration. Please provide updates to our staff within five days.

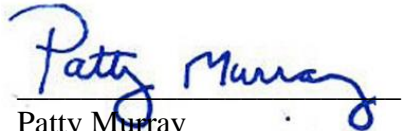
Sincerely,



Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



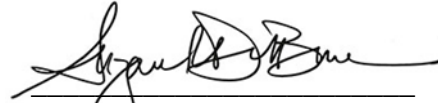
Patty Murray
United States Senator



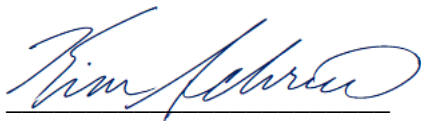
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



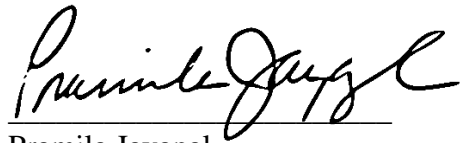
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress