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Clarence E. Anthony

April 8, 2020

Dear President Trump,

On behalf of the National League of Cities (NLC), and the 19,000 cities, towns, and villages we represent, we write to urgently request your support for additional funding for local governments. Municipalities from across the country are concerned about receiving the fiscal relief needed given their falling revenues and the unbudgeted spending necessary to enact extraordinary measures to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

NLC requests that the administration asks Congress to provide relief to residents in cities, towns, and villages that have fewer than 500,000 people. In addition, we ask the administration to ensure that Congress not set a minimum population requirement that could limit which cities, towns, and villages receive funding.

Section 601 of the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136) provided a \$150 billion fund for states, tribal governments, and units of local government, which is commonly read to mean cities or counties with a population in excess of 500,000 people. The 36 cities in the United States with a population of more than 500,000 residents represents only 14 percent of the country's total population, and represents .18 percent of all the municipalities. Approximately, 283 million people live outside of these 36 cities that will receive direct funding from the CARES Act.

As the White House works with Congress on the next funding bill, which we hope will include funding for state and local governments, it is important that Congress does not impose a population threshold. We hear that Congress might be considering imposing a threshold that cities, towns, and villages have a population of at least 50,000 in order to qualify for the next round of funding. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) threshold of 50,000 people is a threshold intended to send funds into denser, urban neighborhoods. It makes no sense to use that threshold for local budget relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-related economic decline is not an urban problem. It's every city and town's problem, including rural communities.

If a threshold is set whereby a city, town, or village will need a population of 50,000 or more to qualify, then only 780 municipalities will qualify. Moreover, nearly 200 million Americans live in cities, towns, and villages with fewer than 50,000 people, leaving the municipalities that these people live in without direct federal aid.

We need to do better, and we must do better. We cannot leave hundreds of millions of Americans in a position where their community cannot access direct aid.

NLC is the voice of America's 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 200 million people, and is a resource and advocate for the nation's cities and their leaders. We are ready to assist your efforts in any capacity. If NLC can be of further help to you in this crisis, please contact Irma Esparza Diggs, NLC Senior Executive and Director of Federal Advocacy, at 202-626-3176 or [diggs@nlc.org](mailto:diggs@nlc.org).

Sincerely,



Clarence E. Anthony  
CEO and Executive Director  
National League of Cities



Joe Buscaino  
President, National League of Cities  
President Pro Tempore, Los Angeles City Council