

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6075

January 30, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write with questions about how your administration's bungled and chaotic effort to shut down federal funding affects the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) ability to serve American families and lower housing costs.

The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) January 27, 2025 memo directing a "Temporary Pause of Agency Grant, Loan, and Other Financial Assistance Programs" immediately threw the nation and our housing system into chaos.¹ Over the course of a few hours, this cruel, dangerous, and potentially illegal memo set off panic for American families, veterans, seniors, and communities who rely on critical resources and services provided through HUD.² After a court paused its enforcement, OMB rescinded the memo³—only to have the White House Press Secretary claim within minutes that "President's EO's on federal funding remain in full force and effect, and will be rigorously implemented"⁴—further extending the chaos and confusion. Congress and the public need answers on how your Administration's reckless actions have and will affect Americans that rely on HUD programs, grants, and loans to buy or rent a home.

We are in the middle of a housing crisis. We have a shortage of approximately 5 million housing units nationwide,⁵ and nearly 43 million households pay more for their rent or mortgage than they can afford.⁶ Another 770,000 people experience homelessness on a given night,⁷ and across the

¹ New York Times, "Read the Memo Pausing Federal Grants and Loans," January 27, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/01/27/us/omb-memo.html>.

² NBC News, "Trump's funding freeze creates widespread confusion," Shannon Pettypiece, Julie Tsirkin, Garret Haake and Berkeley Lovelace Jr., January 28, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/federal-funding-freeze-widespread-confusion-rcna189581>.

³ CNBC, "White House says Trump funding freeze remains in effect despite rescinding OMB memo," Dan Mangan and Kevin Breuninger, January 29, 2025, <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/01/29/white-house-rescinds-federal-funds-freeze-memo.html>.

⁴ Tweet by Karoline Leavitt, January 29, 2025, <https://x.com/PressSec/status/1884672871944901034>.

⁵ Brookings Institution, "Make it count: Measuring our housing supply shortage," Elena Patel, Aastha Rajan, and Natalie Tomeh, November 26, 2024, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/make-it-count-measuring-our-housing-supply-shortage/>.

⁶ Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, "Housing Cost Burdens Climb to Record Levels (Again) In 2023," Peyton Whitney, Alexander Hermann, and Whitney Airgood-Obrycki, December 3, 2024, <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/housing-cost-burdens-climb-record-levels-again-2023>.

country, communities are struggling to build new housing that families can afford close to good jobs and schools.

HUD is the federal agency on the front lines of addressing this crisis. Through its grants for housing construction and preservation, housing assistance, affordable mortgage credit, and assistance for people who are experiencing homelessness, HUD is helping local governments, nonprofits, and families tackle these challenges. Communities and families rely on HUD to keep its word and to keep its doors open so that they can pay rent today and build the housing we need for tomorrow.

But on Monday night, in the middle of this housing crisis, your administration pulled the rug out from under families, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and communities by shutting off access to HUD funding and programs.⁸ Beginning on Tuesday morning, hours before OMB said that funding would be paused, communities, public housing authorities, and nonprofits could no longer access any of the HUD funds they were owed.⁹ HUD later put out sporadic, program-by-program communications saying that certain loans and funds would still be available—for now.¹⁰ But other programs, including those serving vulnerable people and communities who do not have direct lines to your administration, remained in limbo.

The Trump Administration’s implementation and rapid rescission of this memo has not just been disorganized—it has been gross mismanagement of the federal government that the administration has been entrusted to run for the American people. It thwarts laws passed by Congress providing funding to critical programs that support housing for people experiencing homelessness and fleeing domestic violence, housing assistance for seniors and persons with disabilities, preservation and new construction of affordable housing, and enforcement of our civil rights laws.¹¹ Due to the haphazard nature and rollout of the memo, state and local employees, nonprofits, and countless others have wasted time and resources trying to understand if they would have the funds they were promised to break ground on new affordable housing or finish making a home safe from lead paint for a family with children.

Despite the OMB’s rescission of the memo, serious questions remain. After OMB issued its rescission, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt stated: “This is NOT a rescission of the federal funding freeze.”¹² The White House has given little indication as to how this “federal funding freeze” will affect HUD programs and whether HUD grantees will have access to vital funds that were paused this week. Even Republican Senators have been left wondering whether

⁷ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “HUD Releases January 2024 Point-In-Time Count Report,” press release, December 27, 2024, https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_24_327.

⁸ New York Times, “Read the Memo Pausing Federal Grants and Loans,” January 27, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/01/27/us/omb-memo.html>.

⁹ See e.g., Bangor Daily News, “Maine housing authorities can’t access funds after Donald Trump freezes grants,” Zara Norman, January 28, 2025, <https://www.newsbreak.com/bangor-daily-news-1696700/3781060438819-maine-housing-authorities-can-t-access-funds-after-trump-s-federal-grants-freeze>; National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, “OMB Pauses Federal Financial Assistance,” January 29, 2025, <https://www.nahro.org/news/omb-pauses-federal-financial-assistance/>.

¹⁰ Email from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to Public Housing Agency Directors. On file with the Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren.

¹¹ ABC News, “Federal judge signals he will block Trump administration from freezing despite OMB rescission,” Katherine Faulders, Peter Charalambous, Alexander Mallin, and Benjamin Siegel, January 29, 2025, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-administration-rescinds-funding-freeze-directive-memo-shows/story?id=118229342>; CNN, “Judge temporarily blocks part of Trump administration’s plans to freeze federal aid,” Jennifer Hansler, Andy Rose, Tami Luhby, and Devan Cole, January 28, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/01/27/politics/white-house-pauses-federal-grants-loan-disbursement/index.html>.

¹² Tweet by Karoline Leavitt, January 29, 2025, <https://x.com/PressSec/status/1884672871944901034>.

your administration’s funding freeze remains in effect and how these executive orders will affect American families.¹³

Accordingly, we request that your administration answer the following questions no later than 5:00 PM on February 2, 2025 because of the urgent nature of this matter.

1. Will you commit to immediately making all HUD funds available to the communities, nonprofits, and families to whom they were promised and act to clarify that HUD and OMB will continue to make all funds available without delay, instead of withholding funds that Congress has provided?
2. How, if at all, does the Trump Administration’s “federal funding freeze” affect HUD programs now that the OMB has rescinded its January 27, 2025 memo?
3. Does the White House intend to reissue another version of OMB’s January 27, 2025 memo? If so, how will this memo affect HUD programs?
4. Please provide a complete list of all HUD programs, if any, that are frozen as of 12:00 PM on January 30, 2025. If any programs are frozen, what are the criteria for ending this freeze, and when do you intend to do so?
5. The OMB rescission memo M-25-14 states that agencies should direct any questions about the implementation of President Trump’s Executive Orders to agency general counsels. What direction or guidance, if any, has the White House or OMB provided to HUD’s Office of General Counsel?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking,
Housing, and Urban Affairs



Tina Smith
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Housing,
Transportation, and
Community Development

cc: Mr. Matthew Ammon, Acting Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development

¹³ Tweet by Igor Bobic, January 29, 2025, <https://x.com/igorbobic/status/1884681018486984886>; Semafor, “Senate Republican chair criticizes Trump freeze on federal grants, loans,” Burgess Everett, January 28, 2025, <https://www.semafor.com/article/01/28/2025/senate-republican-chair-criticizes-trump-freeze-on-federal-grants-loans>.