



Illinois State Association of Counties

April 13, 2020

The Honorable Richard Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your support of previous legislation intended to provide financial assistance to local governments on the frontlines of the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) understands Congress is presently working on additional legislation to aid the emergency response. I would like to communicate what Illinois' 102 counties need from this legislation.

ISACo strongly urges Congress to allocate resources directly to counties as most states mandate the implementation of public health and emergency response responsibilities to county governments. Given the reality of the unprecedented resources counties need for the COVID-19 response, ISACo respectfully requests that you modify the use of the traditional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula in the Interim Emergency COVID-19 Relief Act.

The CDBG formula was not designed to allocate funds in a public health emergency. While ISACo agrees that the HUD CDBG framework is among one of the best, most efficient ways to award federal aid directly and as a pass-through to local governments, the traditional formula is based on low-to-moderate housing and community development conditions. Under the context of the COVID-19 public health and overall economic crisis, ISACo strongly urges you to develop a more balanced allocation method that takes into consideration both the skyrocketing costs and declining revenues for America's county governments.

ISACo understands and support the important roles and pressures facing both cities and counties. Our ultimate goal is to establish a fair and equitable formula that would create a "win-win" situation for all local governments. Unfortunately, the CDBG formula creates immense disparities and fails to take into consideration both the overall population served and the frontline responsibilities of counties.

Finally, as counties expend more resources responding to this public health crisis, ISACo believes more financial assistance will be required to protect residents and continue administering public services. Expanding the overall amount of relief to local governments to \$250 billion, as proposed now in the

House and Senate, would help to ease the disparity between counties and cities and provide counties with the resources necessary to fight against COVID-19 into the summer and beyond.

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Thank you for your consideration in this matter and for your previous support of local governments in Illinois.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe McCoy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J" and "M".

Joe McCoy
Executive Director