

PORTLAND MAINE

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Nicholas M. Mavodones, Jr.
Mayor

September 14, 2011

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
461 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

With FY12 appropriations underway and intent in Congress to decrease funding for federal programs, we write to ask for your support of the \$3.3 billion formula funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. CDBG is a vital resource to the City of Portland and provides funding for projects and services that directly impact the lives of our most vulnerable citizens.

In FY 2010-2011, CDBG funds provided:

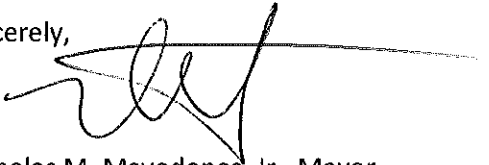
- More than 280,000 meals and 184,000 emergency grocery meals to families and individuals in need;
- Safe refuge for more than 1400 men, women, families and teens at one of the CDBG supported homeless shelters;
- Healthcare for seven hundred people at the city's Healthcare for the Homeless;
- Assistance to nearly 500 families and individuals who were in need of emergency aid for housing, diapers and formula, prescription drugs and fuel;
- Funding for an alternative educational program serving more than seventy at-risk youth, resulting in 50 diverted from detention, 55 participating in community service, 32 obtaining their GED or diploma, and 32 placed in employment, post-secondary educational apprenticeships, occupational skills training, or the military;
- Childcare for more than fifty families; and
- Assistance to three small local businesses located in our eligible neighborhoods, creating 16.5 full time equivalent jobs.

Last year deep cuts to the CDBG program resulted in a reduction of local funding from \$2.2 million to \$1.9 million. As a long time advocate of CDBG, you already know how important this program is locally and how dramatically a loss of \$300,000 impacts local initiatives. CDBG provides critical flexibility to fund valuable projects, fills gaps where needed, and during these unprecedented economic times, gives the city the ability to assist and support those most suffering from the recession.

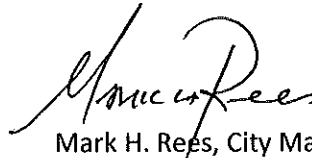
For the past four years, as the economy has worsened, the City of Portland has had to make impossible decisions during our annual budget process. We have cut programs, lost valuable employees and sought ways to increase revenues through changes to fees and property taxes. We understand the pressures you are under to reduce government spending, but the country's most vulnerable populations, the unemployed, the homeless, the family facing foreclosure or eviction should not be the target for savings. Since this recession began, the City Council pledged that we would maintain the city's safety net and we are proud to say that up to this point we have. But, we cannot do this alone. CDBG funds provide the backbone for our efforts. They are interwoven in our safety net. They spur economic development, create jobs and have helped those desperately trying to get back on their feet build their skills and find employment. As the demand increases for this shrinking pot, we cannot afford to lose more.

We hope we can count on your continued support of this program and the \$3.3 billion formula funding for CDBG. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would also add that we would welcome the opportunity to show you and your staff the impacts CDBG has had on our community.

Sincerely,



Nicholas M. Mavodones, Jr., Mayor



Mark H. Rees, City Manager