



101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite 600 West, Washington, DC 20001

March 30, 2009

Arizona State University  
California State University –  
*13 Member Schools*  
City University of New York –  
City College  
Florida International University  
Georgia State University  
Indiana University-Purdue  
University Indianapolis  
Morgan State University  
North Carolina State University  
Ohio State University  
Portland State University  
Temple University  
Tennessee State University  
University of Akron  
University of Central Florida  
University of Cincinnati  
University of Colorado – Denver  
University of Houston  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
University of Louisville  
University of Memphis  
University of Minnesota  
University of Missouri –  
Kansas City  
University of New Mexico  
University of New Orleans  
Virginia Commonwealth  
University  
Wichita State University

The Honorable John Olver  
Chairman  
Subcommittee Trans., HUD  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Rep.  
2358-A RHOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Latham  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee Trans., HUD  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Rep.  
2358-A RHOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Latham:

On behalf of the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU), we urge you to fund the Community Outreach Partnerships Centers (COPC) program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development for fiscal year 2010. Specifically, funding for this program should be set at no less than its fiscal year 2005 level of \$6.5 million.

USU is a network of public urban research universities that represents every region of our country. University presidents created USU to leverage the intellectual capital and economic power of urban universities, thereby improving urban life and America's competitiveness in the global economy. To this end, USU is focused on three major issues -- creating a competitive workforce, building strong communities, and improving the health of a diverse population.

As anchors for our nation's cities and greater metro areas, public urban research universities are uniquely positioned with a broad range of skills and resources – intellectual, human, technological, and social – to collaborate with our communities in addressing various urban challenges. USU institutions are making significant investments in community engagement. Our campuses are actively involved in initiatives and projects to improve neighborhoods, increase housing choice and homeownership, foster economic opportunity, and promote commercial development and retail activity in their communities.

The federal government recognized the important role universities can play within their communities by establishing the COPC program in 1992. Since its conception, more than 180 colleges and universities (over three-fourths of which are public institutions) received COPC grants. It is the only federal program that has developed a formal and systemic way for institutions of higher education to expand new and existing partnerships to address

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community needs. COPC grants are highly sought after by colleges and universities. There are typically eight times as many applicants as available awards. The program also produces successful outcomes, as it leverages federal dollars on a \$1 to \$4 ratio.

Many of our USU campuses have been recipients of a COPC grant. Although we recognize the tight fiscal climate surrounding the allocation of federal funds, USU strongly encourages you to fund the important COPC program. Through these and similar endeavors to tie public urban research universities with their communities, we will continue to bolster our nation's economic competitiveness and make our cities a better place to live. USU looks forward to continuing to work with you and your colleagues as you finalize an appropriations bill for fiscal year 2010.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy L. Zimpher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "N" and "Z".

Nancy L. Zimpher  
Chair, Coalition of Urban Serving Universities  
President, University of Cincinnati