

June 13, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairwoman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: FY 2024 Programmatic Appropriations Request for CDFI Fund Programs

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Vice Chair Collins:

On behalf of Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), a network of over 390 community development financial institutions (CDFI), I am writing to request your continued support for at least \$341 million for the CDFI Fund program in the fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations process, as well as a continuation of the CDFI Bond Guarantee Program with \$500 million in guarantee authority.

Economic opportunity is one cornerstone of a free and just nation, and it often starts with access to capital through a loan. Yet, millions of Americans cannot access traditional, fair financing because of discrimination or a lack of collateral. CDFIs are private sector financial institutions that invest, lend, and deliver responsible, affordable financial products and services to disinvested communities across the country. For more than 40 years, CDFIs have provided access to capital where it is needed most: CDFI customers are 83 percent low-income, 61 percent people of color, 47 percent women and 28 percent rural. Nationwide, there are more than 1,300 CDFIs certified by the US Treasury Department's CDFI Fund.

Despite the recently enacted caps on spending, now is not the time to cut appropriations to the CDFI Fund. Communities are still recovering from the impact of the pandemic and need more investment, not less. Additionally, as interest rates continue to rise and regional banks pull back from offering credit, CDFIs are the ones to step in. The institutional-level capital from the CDFI Fund is essential to ensure CDFIs can meet the demand and keep capital affordable for the borrower. This investment will grow the economy by helping existing small businesses, provide start-up financing to entrepreneurs, and keep the capital flowing for housing development.

The CDFI Fund's grant programs provide equity capital that is critical to the continued growth of the CDFI industry. I urge you to provide an appropriation of at least \$341 million for the CDFI Fund.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Dafina Williams  
Executive Vice President, External Affairs  
Opportunity Finance Network