

National Foreclosure Prevention and Neighborhood Stabilization Task Force

21 May 2010

Mercedes M. Márquez
Assistant Secretary
Community Planning and Development
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th St., SW
Washington DC 20410

Dear Assistant Secretary Márquez:

We, the members of the National Foreclosure Prevention and Neighborhood Stabilization Task Force, are writing to express our appreciation for recent policy changes and clarifications that your office issued on the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP).

Convened in November 2007, the National Foreclosure Prevention and Neighborhood Stabilization Task Force is a cross-industry group of local and national organizations working to address the impacts of the foreclosure crisis on communities. Our mission is to bring together advocates, practitioners, and other experts from across the country around foreclosure prevention and neighborhood stabilization efforts to exchange critical information and to help craft policy, legislative, and programmatic initiatives that primarily support low and moderate-income individuals and families. The Neighborhood Stabilization Program is a vital tool in the effort of our members to stabilize communities. We appreciate the hard work of your office to respond to questions and provide clarification and changes where possible.

In particular we wish to recognize the lengths you and your team have gone to in order to make changes and improve the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. For over a year, NSP grantees have been struggling with definitions of “abandoned” and “foreclosed,” that, while well intentioned, were overly restrictive. When approached by this Task Force and several other local and national groups with this challenge, you and your staff acted to develop definitions that stay within the spirit of the law, but permit better program implementation on the ground.

In addition, the members of this Task Force greatly appreciate recent efforts to provide guidance and clear communication. Support such as the HUD Policy Guidance, the hudnshelp.info Resource Exchange, and NSP Listserves are important and useful tools. Also, we value the transparency afforded by the central list of grantee contacts and links to their performance reports, and by the Snapshot Reports showing progress toward meeting NSP commitments, especially the requirement that 25% of funds are used to house individuals or families with incomes at or less than 50% of median income. The Task Force looks forward to the development of additional tools that permit faster and clearer communication of NSP policy and program guidance.

We recognize that it is difficult to institute change in a large government agency, and change can be slow. However, we want to compliment you and your staff, specifically Yolanda Chavez and CPD staff, on your willingness to work with us and NSP grantees to find viable solutions.

We thank you again and we hope that you will continue to work with us to ensure that the Neighborhood Stabilization Program has the best possible impact in communities across America. We are also happy to extend an open invitation to you and your team to join any of our

future Task Force discussions on the Neighborhood Stabilization Program and other relevant matters affecting our communities.

Sincerely,

The undersigned organizations and localities of the National Foreclosure Prevention and Neighborhood Stabilization Task Force:

Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc.
Center for Community Progress
Center for New York City Neighborhoods
City of Chicago
Detroit Office of Foreclosure Prevention and Response
Ecore Strategies
Enterprise Community Partners
Greater Rochester Housing Partnership
Habitat for Humanity International
JMB Preservation Advisors
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Massachusetts Housing Partnership
National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders
National Community Land Trust Network
National Community Stabilization Trust
National Council of State Housing Agencies
National Housing Conference
National Housing Institute
National Low Income Housing Coalition
Neighborhood Housing Services of New Orleans, Inc.
NeighborWorks America
New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity
Riverside Advisors, LLC
Smart Growth America
St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center, Inc.
The Cleveland Housing Network
The Community Builders, Inc.
The Housing Partnership Network
The Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development, Inc.

Cc: Yolanda Chavez