



March 30, 2020

The Honorable Jared Polis
200 East Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis,

On behalf of the organizations below, thank you for your thoughtful leadership in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in Colorado. As organizations that support families in need of affordable homeownership, we appreciate the steps that you have taken in Executive Order D 2020 012 to ensure vulnerable Coloradans maintain their homes. Now more than ever, a home is an important sanctuary for families across our state to feel safe, healthy and secure.

We want to bring to your attention an issue that has yet to be addressed – guaranteeing emergency mortgage assistance for households making up to 80% of the area median income (AMI). The current Executive Order defines low-income households as under 50% of the AMI. HUD’s definition of low-income household is 80% AMI. We are asking that the current Executive Order be amended to align with the HUD definition and ensure Colorado’s vital workforce that are experiencing loss of income due to COVID-19 can maintain their homes.

Colorado needs to make certain that the current state Disaster Emergency Fund serves households earning up to 80% AMI to preserve current homeownership for our vital workforce, while also making sure future funding decisions from state sources and federal disaster funding that Colorado is now eligible for through the Major Disaster Declaration are available to provide for future housing needs. As a result of this pandemic, we fully anticipate the current affordable housing crisis to grow and put an even greater strain on the limited resources currently available to support affordable homeownership. If we are not prepared, the current health crisis will trigger a general housing crisis simply because homeowners will not be able to pay their mortgages. By including 80% AMI and under, you will help those who are most at risk.

Further, non-profit lenders like Habitat for Humanity serve a critical component of the affordable housing spectrum. Habitat for Humanity serves our Colorado workforce including teachers and school employees, city and county employees, restaurant and hospitality workers, janitorial staff, human services workers, bank tellers, retail managers, dental hygienists and those self-employed. As an organization, Habitat is committed to providing stabilization for homeowners through mortgage forbearance. However, this loss of revenue will have a substantial and immediate impact on non-profit lenders as it will hurt our ability to provide affordable housing. Habitat for Humanity homes are sold with affordable mortgages so that low-income families who may not otherwise be able to afford their own home are able to become homeowners. Those affordable mortgages include no profit for Habitat and a manageable monthly payment for families. Mortgage payments are then invested into the building of homes for other families. Collectively across the state Habitat for Humanity organizations have served over 3,000 families and receive over \$900,000 in mortgage payments each month. Any assistance you provide for families at 80% AMI or under will help ensure that non-profit lenders, like Habitat for Humanity, can continue our model of lending and provide Colorado’s workforce with secure, affordable housing.

Thank you again for your leadership during this unprecedented time.

Thank you,

Habitat for Humanity of Colorado
Colorado Association of Home Builders
HomesFund

Housing Colorado
Elevation Land Trust
Neighborhood Development Collaborative

Colorado Association of Realtors
Chaffee Housing Trust