

September 21, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 2051

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of RESULTS, an anti-poverty grassroots advocacy organization representing constituents in all 50 states, we write to urge Congress to take the next step to quickly pass a recovery package while prioritizing policies focused on reducing poverty and historic inequities. This crisis has no modern comparison in how it is exacerbating inequities in our country and increasing extreme poverty around the world.

We applaud the bipartisan emergency relief measures enacted in 2020 and the Spring 2021 relief package, which provided much needed resources to slow the spread of COVID-19 and prevent the devastating secondary effects of the pandemic on communities living in poverty. This was a critical step in the right direction, but more resources and protections are needed to ensure individuals and families harmed by the pandemic are able to survive, thrive, and fully participate in the economic recovery.

As Congress looks to swiftly move another targeted COVID recovery bill, we urge you to continue to prioritize the programs that have the most impact on poverty. **Specifically, to impact those hardest hit at home and abroad, Congress must now:**

- 1) **Provide at least \$2 billion to scale-up global COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing capacity in this package, while working with existing resources and systems to increase vaccine supply for additional global needs.**
- 2) **Provide at least \$90 billion in rental assistance, with the highest possible funding for Housing Choice Vouchers (while targeting the lowest-income households).**
- 3) **Make the 2021 provisions to the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit permanent** – and it is critical that Congress restore eligibility for children using Immigrant Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) and **make CTC refundability permanent now** if extending the 2021 expansions.
- 4) **Maintain the House’s 2021 provisions to address hunger in the U.S.**

Additional justifications and details are provided below on these requests.

RESULTS creates the public and political will to end poverty by empowering individuals to exercise their personal and political power for change. We support an active volunteer network of more than 115 chapters with activists in all 50 states. Our grassroots advocates educate members of Congress, work with the media, and build awareness within their communities on housing programs and politics, basic nutrition, and health programs, along with budget and tax policies. Our grassroots network includes a specific focus on engaging young leaders and elevating the voices of low-income Americans and global advocates who have firsthand experience of poverty, and who also help to inform our advocacy.

This network of activists has been vocal for the past eighteen months; they cannot sit by as COVID rages and widen the racial gaps in wealth and health outcomes in their communities. To this end, they have published over 1,000 letters to the editor and op-eds in local and national press during this crisis, calling on Congress to take bold actions.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has caused near universal disruption, it is the communities facing poverty, already pushed to the margins, that face the greatest risks. According to World Bank estimates, up to [163 million](#) people will be driven into extreme poverty in 2021 due to COVID-19. We are also at risk of losing decades of progress on global health challenges due to lack of funding and service disruptions due to COVID-19.

In the U.S., [nearly 6 million renter households](#) are behind rent and are at risk of losing their homes without continued federal intervention to ease the economic shocks of the pandemic. A mass wave of evictions and homelessness would put lives at risk, strain our already overstretched public health and court systems, harm the educational progress of children, threaten food security, and generate unnecessary costs to taxpayers.

As such, Congress must take the following actions to ensure that marginalized communities and those who are currently living in poverty do not bear the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Provide no less than \$2 billion to scale-up global COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing capacity

- As a leader in global health and development, the United States must have a robust response to the global COVID-19 pandemic to save lives and protect hard-fought gains in public health in low-income countries. The development of safe, effective vaccines against a deadly pandemic disease less than a year after it emerged is an extraordinary achievement, made possible by public investment in science and

technology. But extreme inequity in access to COVID-19 vaccines persists. Across the continent of Africa, [less than 4 percent](#) of the population is fully vaccinated. Meanwhile, the U.S. and other countries are flush with vaccine supply—or about to be. The U.S. and other wealthy countries could continue their vaccination programs, including boosters for everyone, and still have a [1.2 billion dose surplus](#) at the end of the year. Meanwhile, the under-resourced COVAX had to slash its already moderate goals, reducing its 2021 [vaccine supply forecast](#) by 25 percent. It is unconscionable for rich countries to hoard the resources and vaccine manufacturing know-how that could end the misery of COVID-19. Increasing resources to build vaccine supply and support developing countries to increase domestic capacity for manufacturing is the right thing to do and a long-term smart investment.

Provide at least \$90 billion in rental assistance, with the highest possible funding for Housing Choice Vouchers (while focusing on the lowest-income households)

- Every year, millions of low-income Americans struggle to afford housing. Before the pandemic, an estimated [24 million low-income renters](#) paid over half of their income on housing, leaving them without the resources they need to put food on the table, purchase needed medications, or simply make ends meet; and due to chronic underinvestment, even those eligible for federal assistance endure [long wait times](#) and great harm due to prolonged housing instability since they cannot afford their housing long-term. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the U.S. economy only made things worse, placing millions of households at risk of housing instability and homelessness. Coupled with the devastating effects of explosive wildfires, floods, and other extreme weather events in different parts of the country have made the need for long-term affordable housing clearer than ever in both rural and urban communities. At least \$90 billion in rental assistance, with no less than \$75 billion in Housing Choice Vouchers is needed to help address the housing and homelessness crises and [lift millions of households out of poverty](#).

Make the 2021 provisions to the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit permanent.

- The temporary expansion of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) is already making an impact - Columbia University researchers estimate that after one payment in July, [3 million children were lifted above the poverty line](#). Before 2021, gaps in the CTC meant 27 million children – one-third of all children – were not eligible for the full amount of the credit, and some received no credit at all.

- In addition, the 2021 expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for workers not raising children will help 17 million low-wage workers make ends meet, including millions of young workers just entering the workforce.
- It is essential that Congress not let the new EITC and CTC provisions expire next year. They need to be made permanent in the recovery bill, especially full refundability of the CTC, so children in families with little or no income get the full value of the credit. In addition, we urge you to include restoration of eligibility for families who file taxes with an Immigrant Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).
- Congress can easily finance these investments by making the wealthy and corporations finally pay their taxes and giving the IRS the tools for strong enforcement.

Maintain the 2021 nutrition provisions that address child hunger

- The pandemic put a spotlight on systemic racism that, for far too long, have left children of color behind. Data demonstrate that children who live in poverty and in food-insecure households are more likely than their food-secure peers to have poor educational, health, and economic outcomes. Although COVID-19 relief measures have reduced food insecurity from its peak, the rate remains alarmingly high. To help end child hunger, we ask that the following provisions are maintained throughout the budget reconciliation bill.
 - Expand the number of schools that would be able to offer free meals to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision by increasing the multiplier (that determines the amount of federal reimbursement that a community eligibility school receives) from 1.6 to 2.5 and lowering the eligibility threshold to 25 percent.
 - Give states the option to implement the Community Eligibility Provision statewide.
 - Allow all states to conduct Medicaid direct certification.
 - Extend Summer EBT nationwide for students who receive free or reduced-price school meals to close the summer meal gap.
 - Provide \$500 million for school kitchen equipment grants.
 - Provide \$634 million for a Healthy School Meal Incentives demonstration project.

We know that, like us, you do not want to see enormous numbers of individuals and families facing poverty, poor health outcomes, and housing instability during the pandemic. RESULTS stands ready to work with you on enacting these proven solutions. If you have any questions or would like to further discuss these requests, please contact us at

mdodson@results.org or cnicovich@results.org. Thank you for taking the time to consider these urgent requests.

Sincerely,



Meredith Dodson

Director of U.S. Poverty Campaigns & Senior Advisor
RESULTS



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RESULTS

CC: Chairman Bernie Sanders, Chairman John Yarmuth, Chairman Sherrod Brown, Chairwoman Maxine Waters, Chairwoman Patty Murray, Chairman Frank Pallone, Chairman Ron Wyden, and Chairman Richard Neal