

SUSAN M. COLLINS
MAINE

413 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904
(202) 224-2523
(202) 224-2693 (FAX)

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

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September 29, 2017

The Honorable Ben Carson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Carson:

I write in support of the application submitted by the City of Lewiston, Maine, in partnership with Community Concepts, Inc., to the Department's Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Program. Their proposal aims to improve the city's current stock of affordable housing units located in its downtown district, which would help revive the neighborhood.

The City of Lewiston's downtown affordable housing stock was largely built in the beginning of the 20th century, and much of it has significantly deteriorated and is in need of repairs or replacement. Lewiston is Maine's second largest city and a major hub for refugee resettlement. Forty-eight percent of residents in its downtown district, however, live below the poverty line and the childhood lead poisoning rate is three times that of the entire state.

If funded, the city and its community partners could prepare to acquire houses in the downtown district and to renovate and replace units as part of larger endeavors to transform the neighborhood and boost the local economy. This project would help Lewiston ensure the health and safety of residents living in public housing, while also contributing to meaningful economic revitalization efforts in the city's downtown area.

Thank you for your time and effort on behalf of the City of Lewiston. I request HUD's careful consideration of this application, subject to all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please notify Katie Seelen on my staff at (202) 224-2523 should you have any questions and when a final decision has been made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator