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*The Greater New Haven Community Loan Fund is a program of the Interfaith Cooperative Ministries*

*On Behalf of New Haven Weatherization Consortium*

May 6, 2009

Ms. Carlene Taylor  
Program Manager  
Weatherization Assistance Program  
Community, Energy and Refugee Services  
Department of Social Services  
25 Sigourney Street  
Hartford, Connecticut, 06106

Re: ARRA Weatherization Assistance Program Augmentation

Dear Ms. Taylor

The undersigned write in response to the Department of Social Services' Notice of Public Hearing and request for written comments on the Department's proposed Connecticut State Plan & Application for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Weatherization Assistance Program.

We represent the Greater New Haven United Way, Empower New Haven and several organizations active in housing rehabilitation and renovation, weatherization, foreclosure mitigation, and affordable housing development in Greater New Haven. We understand that because of outstanding issues with the Community Action Agency of New Haven, the contract for delivery of weatherization services funded by the ARRA may be awarded to agencies whose current service areas do not include Greater New Haven. We urge you to consider a proposal to deliver WAP services from a consortium of New Haven area-based agencies who are experienced in housing renovation, weatherization, and the management of similar federally funded programs.

There are several advantages DSS could anticipate from awarding the ARRA WAP contract for Greater New Haven to such a consortium:

- The participating organizations are active in rental housing placement, homeownership counseling, affordable housing development, emergency housing, lead and asbestos abatement, and other weatherization and housing upgrade programs, they are well positioned to identify eligible households and units for weatherization under the DOE guidelines. This will be particularly true for multi-family housing where WAP subgrantees have often had difficulty qualifying eligible households.
- The organizations have demonstrated effective project management skills and established relationships with the window, HVAC, insulation, and other contractors whose services are required to implement weatherization services.
- The organizations have strong financial controls, reporting capability, and experience in managing federal contracts responsibly and consistently.

- The organizations and their contractors have established relationships with Gateway Community College, the area's VocTech high schools, and the City's Construction Workforce Initiative for whose workforce development capabilities will be used to train qualified auditors, inspectors, and contractor technicians.
- Most importantly, these organizations are best positioned to leverage the ARRA weatherization dollars with other community development and affordable housing programs to assure the highest program impacts. We are particularly interested in directing weatherization efforts to neighborhoods and housing units where high energy costs jeopardize tenant occupancy and threaten foreclosure in 1-4 family buildings, which represent 65% of housing stock in our area and an even greater percentage of low income housing stock.

Fundamentally, we believe that low income weatherization services should be integrated with related renovation and rehabilitation services in our metropolitan area. The participating organizations would include:

- Greater New Haven Community Loan Fund
- Empower New Haven
- United Way of Greater New Haven
- Livable Cities Initiative, City of New Haven

We anticipate working closely with the United Illuminating Company, our area's utility as well as with CAANH and other CAAs' weatherization program staff to leverage existing program capabilities, manage program resources, and maximize WAP's impact.

We write at this late date because we have only just learned about the absence of a New Haven Area-based subgrantee to administer the ARRA WAP. We request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss how we might assemble a proposal that DSS would find attractive in meeting DSS and ARRA's goals for maximum employment impact, energy savings, households served, and program accountability.

Sincerely,

Althea Richardson  
President and CEO

Jennifer Heath  
V.P. Community Leadership

Carla Weil  
Executive Director

