

March 10, 2016

Secretary Julián Castro
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW, Room 10276
Washington, DC 20410-0500

Dear Secretary Castro,

We are writing to urge HUD to address its responsibility to protect HUD assisted residents of Flint, Michigan from further environmental harm, including direct support for families who express an interest in moving to safer communities. This type of assistance should be a priority for all families living in HUD assisted housing in Flint, but especially for families with Housing Choice Vouchers who should have a right to move if they are victims of lead-tainted water.

Our review of HUD data indicates that over 1000 children are living in Flint families supported with Housing Choice Vouchers. For those HCV families who choose to move to a different community, HUD should assist in providing mobility counselling and housing search assistance, approving higher exception rents and assistance in recruiting new landlords into the voucher program. For those families who wish to stay in Flint, HUD should consider significant housing related interventions to ensure that families and children remain safe in HUD assisted housing.

We note that our colleagues in the Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership brought this issue to HUD's attention on February 1, and offered to assist HUD in designing mobility services for Flint residents (as referenced in a recent article in the Washington Post). We hope that HUD is now taking steps to address this urgent matter.

We should note that we do not currently have any clients or advocacy partners in Flint – we are sending this letter based on our prior civil rights work in other jurisdictions, and on the media reports of families in Flint who have expressed a desire to move. However, if it would be helpful to HUD or its local partners, we would happy to meet with appropriate HUD staff to discuss further.

Sincerely

Philip Tegeler
Megan Haberle
Poverty & Race Research Action Council
Washington, DC

Joseph Rich
Thomas Silverstein
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Washington, DC