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Submitted via www.regulations.gov
Office of General Counsel, Rules Docket Clerk
Department of Housing and Urban Development
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Washington, DC 20410-0500



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Re: HUD Docket No. FR-6124-P-01, RIN 2501-AD89 Comments in Response to Proposed Rulemaking:
Housing and Community Development Act of 1980: Verification of Eligible Status

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of PATH (People Assisting the Homeless) in response to the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) proposed rule to express our strong opposition to the changes regarding "verification of eligible status," published in the Federal Register on May 10, 2019 (RIN 2501-AD89; HUD Docket No. FR-6124-P-01). We are strongly opposed to the changes and ask for the proposed rule to be withdrawn completely, and that HUD's long-standing regulations remain in effect.

PATH is committed to ending homelessness for individuals, families, and communities. As the largest housing and homeless services organization in the state of California, we work in more than 140 cities throughout the state and our teams served 10 percent of California's homeless population last year.

With nearly 130,000 people experiencing homelessness in California, we face a humanitarian crisis that would be worsened by HUD's proposed rule. The rule would displace thousands of families throughout the country and disproportionately impact millions of Californians. HUD's own analysis shows that in order to comply with the new rule, mixed households have limited options, including 1) forgo the subsidy or 2) ask the ineligible family member(s) to leave. In both instances, homelessness may result due to the 1) increased cost burden and financial hardship and 2) sudden removal of support networks and resources.

Furthermore, approximately 70 percent of mixed status households currently receiving HUD assistance are composed of eligible children and at least one ineligible parent. Therefore, many families would choose to lose assistance in order to avoid separating their families. Under that anticipated impact, as many as 108,000 individuals in mixed status families would be evicted from public housing, Section 8, and other programs due to the proposed rule – including 55,000 children who would be pushed out of housing stability. The evictions and the removal of housing assistance will cause increased instances of homelessness and housing insecurity.

The new rule would also disproportionately impact the 1.9 million older adults who use federal housing assistance programs. Seniors with fixed incomes are especially at risk of serious harm if they live in mixed status families and lose rental assistance due to the rule because they have limited resources to spend on other basic needs, including food, medicine, transportation, and clothing. The proposed rule would make it impossible for many intergenerational families to live together and share resources that allow them to succeed. We have seen an increasing number of seniors falling into homelessness in each of the communities we serve, and the proposed rule would exacerbate that problem.

While we understand that HUD claims the proposed rule will address the subsidized housing waitlist crisis, this rule would actually reduce the number of families that receive federally subsidized assistance. Non-qualified family members living in mixed households are not receiving benefits for which they are not qualified because assistance is pro-rated based on the number of qualified individuals living in a household. Under the new rule,

subsidies would need to increase by an estimated \$193 to \$227 million annually to serve the same number of households. According to HUD's analysis, in response to higher costs, HUD would have to reduce the quantity and quality of assisted housing under the proposed rule.

Therefore, evicting thousands of families under the new rule will not result in more affordable housing for our most vulnerable neighbors. If more affordable housing truly is the goal, the administration could positively impact communities by increasing funding and resources for housing programs, instead. We are strongly opposed to HUD's proposed changes to Section 214 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980 and ask for the proposed rule to be withdrawn completely.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Hark Dietz
Deputy Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director, PATH