

March 12, 2021

SUBMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20571

Dear Secretary Yellen:

Thank you for all you are doing to rebuild our economy in the wake of COVID-19 and the subsequent economic crisis. I am writing in regards to the recently enacted Federal relief legislation and the need to ensure swift payment of relief dollars to local governments, especially non-entitlement communities. As you know, our local governments are on the front lines of battling the pandemic, vaccinating at-risk populations and helping spur our economic recovery. I ask that you prioritize and promulgate any necessary guidance to get resources out to these communities as quickly as possible, and to ensure that there is maximum flexibility in that guidance so State governments are emboldened to distribute the resources immediately.

Illinois local officials continue to carry the weight of this pandemic and the many burdens it has placed on workers, families and small businesses. While mayors across my State have taken necessary but challenging steps to slow the spread of COVID-19, it has not come without severe costs. According to a recent letter on behalf of the 1,298 cities, villages and towns throughout Illinois, over one million local government jobs have already been lost during COVID-19, while other essential services have been cut at a time when they remain desperately needed. These constraints are only set to worsen, with tax revenues also drastically decreasing for localities.

Under the recent legislation Congress passed and President Biden signed into law, these communities will finally get the assistance their Federal government should have provided from the beginning. Importantly, however, despite improvements from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act to provide direct funding to more municipalities, over 1,260 communities in Illinois are still considered non-entitlement areas, and will thus have to wait for funding to be distributed through the State government.

It is crucial that these localities have access to Federal relief as soon as possible. They need the ability to keep essential workers on the front lines of our battle against this pandemic, and to maintain the services their constituents need more than ever. That is why I respectfully request that you prioritize immediate Federal guidance related to these relief resources and ensure maximum flexibility so that States are emboldened to quickly deploy the resources to local governments without impediment.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may provide any additional assistance in finalizing the guidance related to these issues. I am grateful for your efforts on this, as well as many other issues related to our ongoing economic relief efforts.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator