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WASHINGTON'S 9TH DISTRICT

Expanding Service Coordinators Act Rep. Adam Smith (WA-09)

Background: Housing service coordinators are staff embedded in multifamily housing and public housing that provide a wide range of services including case management; the arrangement of transportation and appointments for health and personal care services; the facilitation of health and wellness programming; and the continuous assessment of resident needs. Service coordinators help promote housing stability among a population that often faces housing insecurity and helps seniors and residents with high needs avoid institutionalized care.

Unfortunately, service coordinator programs are underfunded and underutilized. The two primary programs that fund service coordinators for residents of federally assisted housing are the Multifamily Housing Service Coordinator Program and the Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency Service Coordinator Program.

The Multifamily Housing Service Coordinator Program embeds staff in federally assisted housing to coordinate a wide field of services for seniors and people with disabilities like meal services, medication management, and transportation to appointments. Service coordinators create critical networks for residents to receive social services that can help them age in place.

The Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency program utilizes service coordinators to help families by arranging for meals, transportation, housekeeping, health and nutrition programs, case management, job training, and assistance with personal care. This program helps families in public housing navigate social services to access better job and educational opportunities.

The **Expanding Service Coordinators Act** would make critical investments and reforms to expand the service coordinator programs to serve more people in federally assisted housing. Specifically, the bill would:

- Authorize an additional \$100 million each year for five years to the Multi-Family Housing Service Coordinator program.
- Authorize a total \$45 million each year for five years for the Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency service coordinator program.
- Create a federal match for new affordable housing projects that would cover 75% of the costs for a service coordinator program if one is included as part of that housing project.
- Establish a training set aside to improve capacity and retention of service coordinators.
- Extend qualification for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program to service coordinators.

Service coordinators are an underfunded resource in federally assisted housing. They help individuals navigate the complicated web of social services that can make the difference between a resident sinking or thriving. It is more important now than ever to invest in this critical workforce.