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October 18, 2022

Federal Housing Finance Agency
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

Subject: Federal Home Loan Bank System at 100: Focusing on the Future

Dear Federal Housing Finance Agency,

Since 1934, Columbia Bank has been a member of the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York. The Federal Home Loan Bank of New York has been an instrumental partner to Columbia Bank through its commitment to advance access to housing and local community development by supporting members, such as Columbia Bank, through its various member products.

The Federal Home Loan Bank of New York has proven to be a stable, reliable, and efficient source of liquidity for its members, especially community banks, credit unions, insurance companies and Community Development Financial Institutions. Through its commitment to these financial institutions, the Federal Housing Finance Agency mandates have been effectuated with an emphasis on serving the needs of small businesses and families within their communities. The Federal Home Loan Bank of New York helps Columbia Bank achieve its community banking mission by providing a stable source of funding to support housing finance and community investment in all economic cycles. Historically, the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York has supported upwards of 40% of Columbia Bank's funding needs, which in turn have been utilized to support lending activities directly to local communities. Further, the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York facilitates and supports all facets of Columbia Bank's liquidity management as the primary custodial safekeeping agent for its investment portfolio.

Columbia Bank participates in the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York's Community Lending Program to secure funding that is utilized to lend in both urban and rural areas and to projects and developments that specifically serve the Federal Housing Finance Agency's affordable housing mandate. Since 2013, Columbia Bank has provided over \$625 million in lending directly to properties that serve the affordable housing needs of the local community, in addition to the serving needs of the New Jersey's urban and rural areas. The Federal Home Loan Bank of New York's Community Lending Program has enabled Columbia Bank to serve its communities by providing access to funding that is utilized to support Columbia Bank's balance sheet with cost effective structures that are deployed into communities and properties that specifically provide affordable access to housing.

The Affordable Housing Program is another program Columbia Bank has participated in for 29 years. This program supports the creation and preservation of housing for lower income families. Through this program, Columbia Bank has received 50 grant awards for a total subsidy amount of \$16,072,991. The Affordable Housing Program changes lives by reducing





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homelessness, while providing second opportunities. An example of this was the gap funds awarded to Strengthen Our Sisters located in Passaic County, NJ. Through this program, Strengthen Our Sisters was able to provide shelter to more than 170 battered women and their dependent children and enable them to transition from a life of homelessness, domestic violence and poverty to one of stability and self-sufficiency.

In addition, Columbia Bank participates in the Homebuyers Dream Program which provides grants to low-and-moderate income first-time homebuyers towards their down payment and closing costs. Since 2020, Columbia Bank has successfully funded 51 grants in the amount of \$552,500 to low-moderate income first-time home buyers. Still in 2022, there are six grants to be closed and an additional 14 grants estimated to be granted for the program's second round. This program increases homeownership opportunities, counsels buyers on homeownership, and provides for housing affordability and access.

The Federal Home Loan Bank of New York has been a source of financial stability for members in extreme economic conditions. For example, in 2020, a nationwide emergency was declared due to the onset of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). This pandemic caused the State of New Jersey to shut down, as it was designated as a disaster area. To help alleviate the challenges small businesses encountered due to this pandemic, the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York relaunched the Small Business Recovery Grant Program. Columbia Bank was able to provide \$135,000 to 15 local nonprofit organizations, primarily serving low-and-moderate income families and communities. We also provided \$165,000 to 22 small businesses primarily owned by women and minorities. To provide you a glimpse of the impact this program made, here is a quote from one of our customers, a minority and women-owned local restaurant located in Union County, NJ: "We at Burjara, LLC would like to thank you for considering us and awarding us the Federal Home Loan Bank Small Business Recovery Grant. We are extremely grateful for the consideration and would like you to know that the funds will be used for continued operations such as food purchases, leasehold improvements, etc. so that this woman owned minority business can continue to thrive in these uncertain times."

The Federal Home Loan Bank of New York is critical to the success of community banks by developing and fostering programs that directly impact access to housing and local community development, while maintaining a safe and sound operation, within the district it serves. These programs also positively impact the lives of members in our communities by helping close funding gaps for affordable housing developments, increasing homeownership for low-and-moderate income families, awarding small businesses grants to alleviate the stresses of revenue loss, and so much more. As a member bank, Columbia Bank can advocate and attest to the Federal Home Loan Bank System bringing stability and equality to the financial markets.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Kemty
President and Chief Executive Officer

Member
FDIC

