



September 1, 2017

The Honorable Melvin L. Watt  
Director  
Federal Housing Finance Agency  
400 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20219

**Re: Request for Information on Improving Language Access in Mortgage Lending and Servicing**

Dear Director Watt:

Quicken Loans Inc. (“Quicken Loans”) is pleased to submit its comments on the Federal Housing Finance Agency’s (“FHFA”) Request for Information (“RFI”) on Improving Language Access in Mortgage Lending and Servicing.

Detroit-based Quicken Loans Inc. is the nation’s second largest retail home mortgage lender. The company closed more than \$300 billion of mortgage volume across all 50 states between 2013 and 2016. Quicken Loans moved its headquarters to downtown Detroit in 2010, and now more than 17,000 team members from Quicken Loans and its Family of Companies work in the city’s urban core. The company generates loan production from web centers located in Detroit, Cleveland and Scottsdale, Arizona. The company also operates a centralized loan processing facility in Detroit, as well as its San Diego-based One Reverse Mortgage unit. Quicken Loans ranked “Highest in Customer Satisfaction for Primary Mortgage Origination” in the United States by J.D. Power for the past seven consecutive years, 2010 – 2017, and highest in customer satisfaction among all mortgage servicers the past four years, 2014 – 2017.

Quicken Loans was ranked #10 on FORTUNE magazine’s annual “100 Best Companies to Work For” list in 2017, and has been among the top-30 companies for the past 14 consecutive years. The company has been recognized as one of Computerworld magazine’s ‘100 Best Places to Work in IT’ the past 13 years, ranking #1 for eight of the past twelve years including 2017. The company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Rock Holdings, Inc., the parent company of several FinTech and related businesses. Quicken Loans is also the flagship business of Dan Gilbert’s Family of Companies comprising nearly 100 affiliated businesses spanning multiple industries.

### **General Comments**

We again thank FHFA for the opportunity to comment on the RFI regarding language access in mortgage lending and servicing. It’s no secret that borrowers with a limited proficiency of English are becoming a key demographic in mortgage lending and servicing, and this trend will only continue throughout the coming years. Savvy lenders and servicers will find ways to serve

these borrowers and will help revolutionize the mortgage experience for those once kept on the sidelines. Moreover, it is important for these borrowers to have access to high-value resources and other information, ideally in their native language, that can assist them in understanding the largest financial obligation of their lives as well as ways to get back on track if they run into financial hardship. The work FHFA has begun in dealing with these issues is important. However, we feel the need to raise serious concerns with the path that is currently being paved and many of the unintentional consequences we anticipate as a result of including a preferred language option on the Universal Residential Loan Application ("URLA").

As others have already noted during the first round of comments during the initial RFI period, we believe there are many unforeseen legal and compliance consequences attached to including a preferred language option on the URLA. The re-opened comment period for the RFI now includes a consumer testing briefing conducted by the Kleimann Communication Group in July of 2016<sup>1</sup> that only substantiates many of the outstanding issues for lenders and consumers. As the survey showed, consumers have a muddled view of what the preferred language option actually means. At best, consumers have a certain expectation when the preferred language option is given, especially at the start of the URLA. At worst, consumers feel uncomfortable giving the information for fear of discrimination and may not move forward with the lending process. Mortgage bankers are also placed in the uncomfortable position of explaining that the preferred language option is for research purposes only and that additional resources will likely be unavailable. This confusion isn't good for anyone.

Some lenders may have a patchwork of resources to serve consumers in different languages. However, no lender will ever be positioned to provide all mortgage documents, legal translations, and servicing options in every language that a consumer could select if given the choice. While the preferred language option seemingly gives consumers options, instead it will set unfair expectations in the mortgage origination transaction and subsequent servicing conversations. This is not the best way forward.

We believe there is value in a collaborative effort that identifies resources and other information for borrowers with a limited English proficiency and includes an active dialogue amongst regulators, Congress, lenders, consumers, advocacy organizations, investors, and other stakeholders. FHFA may be well-positioned to lead this collaborative effort but it will take significant time and effort from all interested parties in order to be impactful. We believe merely adding a checkbox to the URLA serves no useful purpose and instead will cause actual harm to consumers who do not understand the research nature of the question and forgo other resources believing instead the lender will provide language assistance.

FHFA has dedicated serious time to implementing the new URLA. We believe the addition of a preferred language option stalls this important work. Numerous programming changes have

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<sup>1</sup> Kleimann Communication Group, "URLA Round 7 Consumer Testing Briefing," July 21-22, 2016. Available at: [https://www.fhfa.gov/PolicyProgramsResearch/Policy/Documents/Round-7-SanFran\\_7-29-16.pdf](https://www.fhfa.gov/PolicyProgramsResearch/Policy/Documents/Round-7-SanFran_7-29-16.pdf).

already been made to comply with the new URLA and additional changes will only complicate and extend the timeline for compliance efforts.

We strongly urge FHFA to halt consideration of a preferred language option on the URLA.

**Conclusion**

We thank the FHFA for the opportunity to comment on this RFI. We look forward to a continued dialogue with the FHFA on these and other issues affecting limited English proficiency borrowers.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Pete Carroll at (313) 782-7803 or at [PeteCarroll@quickenloans.com](mailto:PeteCarroll@quickenloans.com).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W Emerson', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

William Emerson  
Vice Chairman  
Rock Holdings Inc.