

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

[Docket No. FR-5396-N-03]

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for HUD's Fiscal Year 2010 Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program

AGENCY: Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, Office of the Deputy Secretary, HUD.

ACTION: Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

SUMMARY: The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-117, approved December 16, 2009) (Appropriations Act), provided a total of \$150,000,000 to HUD for a Sustainable Communities Initiative to improve regional planning efforts that integrate housing and transportation decisions, and increase the capacity to improve land use and zoning. Of that total, \$100,000,000 is available for the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program, \$40,000,000 is available for the Challenge Planning Grant Program, and \$10,000,000 is available for a joint HUD and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) research and evaluation effort. The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program will support metropolitan and multijurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of: (1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; (2) social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; (3) energy use and climate change; and (4) public health and environmental impact. Today's notice announces the availability of approximately \$100 million for Sustainable Community Regional Planning Grants. Of this amount, \$2 million will be reserved for capacity support grants distributed separately, and not less than \$25 million shall be awarded to regions with populations

of less than 500,000. Comments received as a result of the Advance Notice and Request for Public Comment on this Notice of Funding Availability, published in the Federal Register on February 10, 2010 (75 FR 6689), have been reviewed by HUD and input has been incorporated into this Notice to the maximum extent practicable. HUD thanks the public for its comments and input.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Specific questions regarding the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program requirements should be directed to:

sustainablecommunities@hud.gov or may be submitted through the www.hud.gov/sustainability website. Written questions may also be submitted to the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street, SW, Room 10180, Washington, DC 20410.

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

A. Federal Agency Name: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities.

B. Funding Opportunity Title: Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program.

C. Announcement Type: This announces the availability of Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Funds.

D. Funding Opportunity Number: The funding opportunity number is FR-5396-N-03. The OMB Approval Number is 2501-0024.

E. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number for the Sustainable Communities Program is 14.703.

F. Dates: The application deadline is 11:59:59 pm Eastern Time on August 23, 2010.

G. Additional Overview Information:

1. Purpose of the Program. The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program (Program) will support metropolitan and multijurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of: (1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; (2) social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; (3) energy use and climate change; and (4) public health and environmental impact. The Program will place a priority on investing in partnerships, including nontraditional partnerships (e.g., arts and culture, recreation, etc.) that translate the Livability Principles (See Section I. B.) into strategies that direct long-term development and reinvestment, demonstrate a commitment to addressing issues of regional significance, utilize data to set and monitor progress toward performance goals, and engage stakeholders and citizens in meaningful decision-making roles. Funding from this Program will support the development and implementation of Regional Plans for Sustainable Development (RPSD) that:

- a. Identify affordable housing, transportation investment, water infrastructure, economic development, land use planning, environmental conservation, energy system, open space, and other infrastructure priorities for the region;
- b. Clearly define a single, integrated plan for regional development that addresses potential population growth or decline over a minimum 20-year time frame, sets appropriate 3 to 5 year benchmark performance targets, and delineates strategies to meet established performance goals;
- c. Establish performance goals and measures that are, at a minimum, consistent with the Sustainability Partnership's Livability Principles;
- d. Utilize geo-coded data sets and other metrics in developing, implementing, monitoring, and assessing the performance goals of various reinvestment scenarios;

- e. Provide detailed plans, policies, and implementation strategies to be implemented by **all participating jurisdictions** over time to meet planning goals;
- f. Prioritize projects that facilitate the implementation of the regional plan and identify responsible implementing entities (public, nonprofit, or private) and funding sources;
- g. Show how the proposed plan will establish consistency with HUD, DOT, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) programs, and policies, such as Consolidated Plans, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, Long Range Transportation Plans, and Asset Management Plans, including strategies to modify existing plans, where appropriate; and
- h. Engage residents and stakeholders substantively and meaningfully in the development of the shared vision and its implementation early and throughout the process, including communities traditionally marginalized from such processes, while accommodating limited English speakers, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

2. HUD's General Section. Applicants for funding should carefully review the requirements described in this NOFA and HUD's General Section. Unless otherwise stated in this NOFA, the requirements of the General Section apply.

3. Available Funds. Approximately \$98 million, from which not less than \$25 million of the funding shall be awarded to regions with a population of less than 500,000.

4. Funding Categories. HUD recognizes that regions are at different stages of readiness and capacity to engage in efforts to plan for a **sustainable and inclusive future**. Some are initiating efforts to form multijurisdictional and multi-sector coalitions to envision a sustainable future for their regions; others have adopted broad goals for sustainability and for addressing metropolitan growth based on long-term trends, but have not yet put in place the specific strategies that ensure follow through and implementation of that vision; and a few regions have the vision and many of

the implementation mechanisms in place, but are challenged to demonstrate real progress on the ground, given the current national economic situation. Given this broad spectrum of capacity and needs, HUD will support activities in two distinct categories. Please see Section II.B. for a description of the two funding categories.

Applicants must select only one category when applying. Please see Section VIII.A. for guidance in selecting the appropriate funding category. If HUD receives separate funding requests for each of the two funding categories from the same applicant, both requests will be ineligible for funding consideration. Please see Section III.F., Threshold Requirements.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION: This notice announces HUD's intention to offer funding through a competition made available as a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) under its Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program.

A. Program Description. A top priority of the Administration is to build economically competitive, healthy, environmentally sustainable, and opportunity-rich communities. In the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-117), Congress provided a total of \$150,000,000 to HUD for a Sustainable Communities Initiative to improve regional planning efforts that integrate housing and transportation decisions, and increase state, regional, and local capacity to incorporate livability, sustainability, and social equity values into land use plans and zoning. Of that total, \$100,000,000 is available for the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program, of which approximately \$98,000,000 will be used for competitive grants to support preparation of Regional Plans for Sustainable Development, with \$2,000,000 reserved for capacity support grants to be distributed through a future NOFA.

B. The Sustainable Communities Partnership. The Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program is being initiated in close coordination with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), co-leaders with HUD in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities (The Partnership) was conceived to advance development patterns and infrastructure investment programs that achieve improved economic prosperity and healthy, environmentally sustainable, and opportunity-rich communities. Recognizing the fundamental role that public investment plays in achieving these outcomes, the Administration charged three agencies whose programs most directly impact the physical form of communities—HUD, DOT, and EPA—to lead the way in reshaping the role of the Federal Government in helping communities obtain the capacity to embrace a more sustainable future. As a result, HUD, DOT, and EPA formed the Partnership.

In this interagency partnership, each agency will incorporate the Livability Principles into their policies and funding programs, to the degree possible. In addition, each agency has clear and defined roles: HUD will take the lead in funding, evaluating, and supporting integrated regional planning for sustainable development, and will invest in sustainable housing and community development efforts. DOT will focus on building the capacity of transportation agencies to integrate their planning and investments into broader plans and actions that promote sustainable development, and investing in transportation infrastructure that directly supports sustainable development and livable communities. EPA will provide technical assistance to communities and state governments to help them implement sustainable community strategies, and develop environmental sustainability metrics and practices. The three agencies have made a

commitment to coordinate activities, integrate funding requirements, and adopt a common set of performance metrics for use by grantees.

For this program, staff representatives from DOT and EPA have joined with HUD in the preparation of the Advance Notice for Public Comment and preparation of this NOFA. Staff from all three agencies will participate in the review of applications and the selection of grantees.

C. Program Goals. The goals of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program are the following:

1. Foster the development of sustainable communities throughout the United States that are consistent with **the following Livability Principles** (see June 16, 2009, United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Greener Communities, Greater Opportunities: New Ideas for Sustainable Development and Economic Growth):

- a. **Provide More Transportation Choices.** Develop safe, reliable, and affordable transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce energy consumption and dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
- b. **Promote equitable, affordable housing.** Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- c. **Enhance Economic Competitiveness.** Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
- d. **Support Existing Communities.** Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase

community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.

e. *Coordinate Policies and Leverage Investment.* Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.

f. *Value Communities and Neighborhoods.* Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in *healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods*—rural, urban, or suburban.

2. Support metropolitan areas and multijurisdictional partnerships that commit to adopt integrated plans, strategies, and management tools to become more sustainable.

3. Facilitate strong alliances of residents and regional interest groups that are able to maintain a long-term vision for a region over time and simultaneously support progress through incremental sustainable development practices.

4. Build greater transparency and accountability into planning and implementation efforts.

5. *Expedite implementation of the Livability Principles through changes in local zoning and land use laws and regulations that remove barriers to sustainable development for housing, economic development, transportation, and related water, sewer, and other environmental quality issues.*

6. Align local, state, and tribal capital improvement programs with the Livability Principles.

7. Assist all regions to move toward sustainability and livability, and, for the regions that have shown a long-term commitment to sustainability and livability, prepare them for implementation and to demonstrate on-the-ground results.