



NARC

Building Regional Communities

National Association of Regional Councils

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HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a notice on the FY2010 appropriated \$100 million regional integrated planning grants. This signifies the next step in the federal interagency partnership between HUD, U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and NARC encourages members to use this information as a guide to pursuing the HUD funding and any related opportunities. Please contact Shannon Menard at shannon@NARC.org with questions or suggestions.

IMMEDIATE ACTION

Public Comment Period: HUD is requesting comments on how these competitive funds can support cooperative regional planning efforts that integrate housing, transportation, environmental impact and economic development. HUD is seeking input on how the funding program should be structured in order to have the most meaningful impact on regional planning for sustainable development, including what funding categories and activities are most appropriate to support, which entities should be eligible grantees, and how best to evaluate regional needs for a meaningful impact.

Comments must be submitted by March 12, 2010 electronically at sustainablecommunities@hud.gov or http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/program_offices/sustainable_housing_communities/grant_program.

PROGRAM FUNDING

The goal of the program is to support multi-jurisdictional regional efforts that integrate housing, economic development, transportation, water infrastructure and environmental planning, and assist regional entities and consortia of local governments with integrated decision-making. Three funding categories are being considered to support:

1. Creation of Regional Plans for Sustainable Development that address housing, economic development, transportation, and environmental quality in an integrated fashion where such plans do not currently exist.
 - Funds would support:
 - stakeholder-driven visioning and scenario planning exercises that address housing, education and job centers;
 - identify appropriate transportation and water infrastructure;
 - consider risks from disasters and climate change;
 - identification of locally-appropriate performance metrics; and
 - data analysis, urban design and outreach efforts to achieve broad consensus.
 - HUD seeks comments on the following questions:
 - What specific types of eligible activities would support this effort and which parties should be part of the regional planning process?
 - What elements should be part of the plan?
 - How can citizens best participate to ensure broad regional consensus?
 - Should Regional Plans for Sustainable Development be expected to harmonize and be consistent with HUD, DOT, and EPA-required plans and, if so, how? Should Regional Plans for Sustainable Development show a linkage to local formula-based programs supported by HUD, DOT, and EPA; and, if so, to what extent should such linkage be required?
2. Preparation of more detailed execution plans and programs to implement existing regional sustainable development plans (that address housing, economic development, transportation, and environmental quality in an integrated fashion).
 - Funds would support:
 - preparation and adoption of detailed plans and programs to implement an adopted integrated regional sustainable vision.
 - HUD seeks comments on the following questions:
 - What specific types of activities should be eligible for funding in this category?
 - What criteria should be used to evaluate whether a previously adopted regional vision is consistent with the Livability Principles?
 - Should the amount of local and contributed resources to support, expand and enhance the development of implementation strategies be rewarded in application scoring or are there other means to leverage other funds and resources?



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PROGRAM FUNDING cont.

3. Implementation of regional sustainable development plans and strategies in place and need support for a catalytic project or program that demonstrates commitment to and implementation of the broader plan.
 - HUD is considering:
 - Evaluating applicants that have an adopted Regional Sustainable Development Plan and appropriate implementation programs in place could be pre-certified as having met HUD, DOT, and EPA's criteria for sustainability and livability factors in other discretionary federal funding programs.
 - Providing a limited number of grants to complete a financing package for projects that would accelerate the implementation of a Regional Sustainable Development Plan.
 - Funds would support:
 - pre-development costs, capital costs for a regionally significant development or infrastructure investment, or land acquisition investments.
 - Applicants that have an adopted regional vision that is consistent with the Livability Principles, metrics to measure performance, and have commitments from participating partners.
 - HUD seeks comments on the following questions:
 - Would "pre-certification" be an added value and, if so, what programs should this approach apply to? What criteria should be considered for meeting the "pre-certification" status?
 - Is the direct support of implementation activities appropriate within this Program given the limited amount of resources and the expected modest size of grants?
 - What criteria should be used to judge that an applicant successfully demonstrates that it has an adopted regional vision and that the project for funding under this category is truly catalytic?
 - What criteria should be considered for a project to be catalytic?
 - What types of activities might be included, the timeframe by what time the project should be completed, and how much leveraging should be considered appropriate for demonstrating that the proposed investment will serve as the region's commitment to a sustainable future?

NEXT STEPS

A series of Notices of Available Funds (NOFA) will follow the close of this comment period.

NOFA #1: For the \$100 million regional planning grants, HUD is considering eligible funding and requirements as follows:

1. **Small metropolitan or rural areas** with a population of not more than 499,999. Funds may not exceed \$2 million/organization – at least \$25 million of total funding must be allocated to this category of recipients.
2. **Large metropolitan areas** with a population of 500,000. Funds may not exceed \$5 million/organization.
3. **20 percent local match/in-kind contributions**
4. **Eligible entity** as a multi-jurisdictional and multi-sector partnership consisting of a consortium of units of general local government and all government, civic, philanthropic and business entities with a responsibility for implementing a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

HUD seeks input on the following eligibility questions:

- Should certain entities be required partners in multi-jurisdictional regions such as a metropolitan planning organization (as defined in 23 CFR 450.104), or a rural planning organization or network of rural planning organizations in a rural area?
- What definitions should HUD use to define a rural multi-jurisdictional region eligible for funding?
- What units of government should be allowed to serve as a lead agency for funding purposes?
- What should demonstrate commitment on the part of each member organization, and whether there should be a minimum number of member organizations?

NOFA # 2: HUD will set aside approximately \$2 million for implementation technical assistance services.

NOFA # 3: \$40 million for a Community Planning Challenge (CPC) Grants Program.



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GENERAL INFORMATION

Program details and funding will be administered by HUD's new **Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC)**. Overseen by HUD Deputy Secretary Ron Sims and under the management of Director Shelley Poticha, the Office will work to help build stronger, more sustainable communities by connecting housing to jobs, fostering local innovation and building a clean energy economy. Along with the Office is a new website – www.hud.gov/sustainability.

HUD defines a **Regional Plan for Sustainable Development** as one that:

- Identifies housing, transportation, economic development, land use, environmental, energy, green space and water infrastructure priorities and goals in a region;
- establishes locally-appropriate performance goals and measures the future outcomes of baseline and alternative growth and reinvestment scenarios against those goals, and includes standardized metrics developed by the Partnership;
- Provides strategies for meeting those priorities and goals;
- Prioritizes projects that facilitate the implementation of the regional plan; and identifies responsible implementing entities (public or private) and funding sources; and
- Engages residents and stakeholders substantively in the development of the shared vision and its implementation plan early and throughout the process.

Sustainable Communities Partnership Livability Principles:

1. Provide more transportation choices.
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing.
3. Enhance economic competitiveness.
4. Support existing communities.
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment.
6. Value communities and neighborhoods.

TIMELINE – Regional Planning Grants

February 16 – March 1, 2010—Regional Listening Sessions (info at www.hud.gov/sustainability)

Week of March 1, 2010—Webcast Briefings by partner agencies

March 12, 2010—Comments on Regional Planning Grants Program due to HUD

Week of April 12, 2010—NOFA published

Approx. June 5, 2010—Applications due to HUD

Approx. August 2, 2010—Announcement of Awardees



NARC General Talking Points/Public Comment Ideas

- Existing public regional planning organizations of all sizes and make ups that are composed of and governed by multiple local governments – including metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), councils of government (COGs), economic development districts (EDDs), rural planning organizations (RPOs) – should be the primary eligible funding recipients and critical partners in successfully executing HUD’s Sustainable Communities Planning Grant program.
- Grants should be distributed to a diverse group of regional planning organizations governed by local elected officials that represent large and small, urban, rural areas, and respect the differing capabilities, geographies, demographics, and cultures.
- Multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations are uniquely qualified to leverage federal assistance programs across issue and geographic areas, and deliver assistance to local governments efficiently and effectively by weaving together localities and neighborhoods in a common mission that improves connectivity and commerce, transportation choice, housing and job opportunities, and long-term environmental health and well being.
- Tight State and local budgets are necessitating integrated regional approaches to pool together resources, data and public-private partners in developing and implementing comprehensive solutions.
- Flexible funding should flow directly to consortia of local governments and regional planning organizations to spur shared solutions to shared problems.
- The institution of competitive, integrated regional planning grants will showcase the capacity, innovation and benefits of comprehensive regional planning and implementation, by generating “living laboratories” where future federal policy and funding can be streamlined.
- Competitive grants should be flexible and multi-year, and emphasis should be placed on existing regional planning organizations that are at varying points within comprehensive planning development and implementation processes.
- Grants and planning activities should promote the desires of the local governments and community stakeholders, and provide choice in achieving common goals.
- This Grant program should be a first step in patching together multiple federal agency planning requirements through incentives that promote holistic approaches.
- Credit, certification and funding should be given for previously developed and implemented plans to further activities.
- Federal grant program requirements should not encroach on local land use decisions, but should remain the responsibility of local governments. Resources should be geared towards regional planning organizations in order to assist local communities through improved local decision making with land use modeling tools and recommendations for regional forecasting, land use assessments and scenarios.
- Multi-state and multi-regional regional planning efforts should be encouraged through the linking of multiple regional planning organizations across a single geographic area.
- The HUD Grant program should encourage and incentivize local planning and procurement to be consistent with the regional plan.
- Federal efforts should be undertaken to streamline and improve regional data and research to assist regional planning organizations and their local governments in producing, updating and implementing comprehensive regional plans.
- The HUD Grant program should create a common set of performance goals/metrics.
- This Grant program should be flexible with the local match requirements, with a multitude of In-kind services allowable as part of local match contribution.
- Grant program funding should provide local governments and regional planning organization opportunities for training, support, peer-to-peer exchange, technical assistance, capacity building and analysis.