



**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

Public and Indian Housing

FY24 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants NOFO

FR-6800-N-38

06/10/2024

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**Funding Opportunity Title:**

FY24 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants NOFO

**Funding Opportunity Number:**

FR-6800-N-38

**Assistance Listing Number:**

14.892

**Due Date for Applications:**

06/10/2024

## OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issues this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to invite applications from eligible applicants for the program and purpose described within this NOFO. You, as a prospective applicant, should carefully read all instructions in all sections to avoid sending an incomplete or ineligible application. HUD funding is highly competitive. Failure to respond accurately to any submission requirement could result in an incomplete, ineligible, or noncompetitive proposal.

In accordance with [Title 24 part 4, subpart B](#) of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), during the selection process (which includes HUD's NOFO development and publication, and concludes with the announcement of the selection of recipients of assistance), HUD is prohibited from disclosing covered selection information. Examples of impermissible disclosures include: 1) information regarding any applicant's relative standing; 2) the amount of assistance requested by any applicant; and 3) any information contained in the application. Prior to the application deadline, HUD may not disclose the identity of any applicant or the number of applicants who have applied for assistance.

For further information regarding this NOFO, direct questions regarding the specific requirements of this NOFO to the agency contact identified in section VII.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement.** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. §§ 3501- 3520) (PRA), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the information collection requirements in this NOFO. HUD may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless the collection displays a valid OMB control number. This NOFO identifies the applicable OMB control number, unless the collection of information is excluded from these requirements under [5 CFR Part 1320](#).

**OMB Control Number(s):**

2577-0269

## I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### A. Program Description

#### 1. Purpose

The Choice Neighborhoods program focuses on the redevelopment of severely distressed public housing and/or HUD-assisted housing through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation. Local leaders, residents, and other stakeholders, such as public housing agencies, cities, Tribal entities, schools, police, business owners, nonprofits, and private

developers, come together to create and implement a comprehensive neighborhood plan for redeveloping severely distressed HUD housing and revitalizing the surrounding neighborhood. Choice Neighborhoods funds are used to leverage significant public and private dollars to support locally driven strategies that address struggling neighborhoods. To this end, the Choice Neighborhoods program is focused on three core goals:

1. **Housing:** Replace severely distressed public and HUD-assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is responsive to the needs of residents and appropriate for the surrounding neighborhood;
2. **People:** Improve outcomes of households living in the target housing related to income and employment, health, and education; and
3. **Neighborhood:** Create the conditions necessary to attract long-term public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods which will promote economic development and result in increased/improved amenities, services, and job opportunities for residents.

HUD offers two types of grants under the Choice Neighborhoods program: Planning Grants and Implementation Grants. This funding opportunity is for Planning Grants. Successful applicants will use their grant funds to develop a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy, or “Transformation Plan.” Implementation Grants provide funding to assist in implementing these Transformation Plans, which will serve as the guiding document for the future revitalization of the target public and/or HUD-assisted housing units, the transformation of the surrounding neighborhood and the deployment strategies which create positive outcomes for families.

Experience shows that to successfully develop and implement a Transformation Plan, broad civic engagement is needed to gather and leverage the financial and human capital resources needed to support the sustainability of the plan. These efforts should build community support for and involvement in the development and implementation of the plan. Additionally, past revitalization efforts have demonstrated that even modest physical improvements and investment actions can help communities build momentum for change and transition from planning to implementation of that plan. These actions improve neighborhood confidence, sustain the community’s energy, attract further engagement, and help convince skeptical stakeholders that positive change is possible. Thus, successful applicants should also undertake such “doing while planning” projects during the grant period.

## **2. HUD and Program-Specific Goals and Objectives**

HUD’s Strategic Plan sets the direction and focus of our programs and staff to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality, affordable homes for all. This NOFO supports [HUD’s Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years \(FY\) 2022-2026](#) to accomplish HUD’s mission and vision. Each of the five goals in the [Strategic Plan](#) include what HUD hopes to accomplish, the strategies to accomplish those objectives, and the indicators of success.

HUD will pursue two overarching priorities focused on increasing equity and improving customer experience across all HUD programs. Five strategic goals and several objectives undergird the Plan; however the following goals are applicable to this NOFO.

You are expected to align your application to the applicable strategic goals and objectives below. Use the information in this section to describe in your application the specific goals, objectives, and measures that your project is expected to help accomplish. If your project is selected for funding, you are also expected to establish a plan to track progress related to those goals,

objectives, and measures. HUD will monitor compliance with the goals, objectives, and measures in your project.

### **Applicable Goals and Objectives from HUD's Strategic Plan**

#### **Strategic Goal 1: Support Underserved Communities**

Fortify support for underserved communities and support equitable community development for all people.

##### **1C: Invest in the Success of Communities**

Promote equitable community development that generates wealth-building for underserved communities, particularly for communities of color.

#### **Strategic Goal 2: Ensure Access to and Increase the Production of Affordable Housing**

Ensure housing demand is matched by adequate production of new homes and equitable access to housing opportunities for all people.

##### **2A: Increase the Supply of Housing**

Enhance HUD's programs that increase the production and supply of housing across the country.

#### **Strategic Goal 4: Advance Sustainable Communities**

Advance sustainable communities by strengthening climate resilience and energy efficiency, promoting environmental justice, and recognizing housing's role as essential to health.

##### **4A: Guide Investment in Climate Resilience**

Invest in climate resilience, energy efficiency, and renewable energy across HUD programs.

##### **4B: Strengthen Environmental Justice**

Reduce exposure to health risks, environmental hazards, and substandard housing, especially for low-income households and communities of color.

Each Choice Neighborhoods grantee must develop a Transformation Plan that addresses the Housing, People, and Neighborhood objectives. Grantees are expected to develop performance metrics based on these objectives:

**Housing Objectives:** Housing transformed with the assistance of Choice Neighborhoods should be:

1. **Financially Viable.** The housing project is fully financed and will generate sufficient rental income over the long term to be operated and well maintained in accordance with high industry standards.
2. **Mixed-Income.** Housing affordable to families and individuals with a broad range of incomes including low-income, moderate-income, and market rate or unrestricted.
3. **Energy Efficient, Climate Resilient, and Sustainable.** Housing achieves certification by one of the recognized green rating programs and is built to be resilient to local disaster risk and other climate impacts.
4. **Accessible, Healthy, and Free from Discrimination.** Housing is well-designed, meets federal accessibility requirements and embraces concepts of visitability and universal design, has healthy indoor air quality, has affordable broadband Internet access, and is free from discrimination.

**People Objectives:** Residents who live in the target and replacement housing before and after redevelopment benefit from:

1. **Effective Education.** Residents have access to high-quality early learning programs and services so children enter kindergarten ready to learn and quality schools and/or educational supports that ultimately prepare students to graduate from high school college- and/or career-ready.
2. **Income and Employment Opportunities.** The income of residents, particularly wage income for non-elderly/non-disabled adult residents, increases over time.
3. **Quality Health Care.** Residents have increased access to health services and have improved physical and mental health over time.
4. **Housing Location, Quality, and Affordability.** Residents of the target housing who, by their own choice, do not return to the development have housing and neighborhood opportunities as good as or better than the opportunities available to those who occupy the redeveloped site.

**Neighborhood Objectives:** Through investments catalyzed by Choice Neighborhoods, the neighborhood enjoys improved:

1. **Housing Quality and Variety.** The neighboring housing has a lower vacancy/abandonment rate, is high quality and well-maintained, and has an appropriate mix of rental and homeownership units to meet resident needs. The neighborhood better supports families with a broad range of incomes.
2. **Economic Opportunity.** The neighborhood attracts and maintains a diverse mix of businesses and employers to create meaningful jobs and economic opportunities for residents, respond to local needs, and address long-term disinvestment.
3. **Community Assets and Amenities.** The neighborhood includes community amenities found in higher opportunity areas, such as grocery stores and fresh food options, retail goods and services, financial institutions, medical and health facilities, parks and greenspace, public transit, high-quality early learning programs, and high performing public schools.
4. **Community Confidence.** The neighborhood image reflects a healthy, livable, and equitable community that honors its history and embraces a positive outlook for the future. There is an enhanced sense of place and a visibly improved built environment. Long term-residents choose to stay and have the supports to do so, and new residents likewise choose to live in the revitalized neighborhood.
5. **Safety.** Residents feel safer in their homes and spending time in the revitalized community and the neighborhood has lower crime rates than prior to redevelopment.

### 3. Changes from Previous NOFO

Highlights of significant changes:

- The ‘Relation to prior HOPE VI Revitalization Grants’ requirement is revised to clarify the exclusion only applies to units at the public housing project that was the target of the HOPE VI grant.
- This NOFO includes a new rating factor in the Preference Points section for Rural Partners Network Community Networks.
- ‘Experience Promoting Racial Equity’ is now an unscored narrative rather than a rating factor.

- In the Need rating factors, the Part I Violent Crime rating factor has been removed. (Note: applicants are still expected to provide data on crime rates in the neighborhood profile as part of the Executive Summary)
- In alignment with Executive Order 14112, Reforming Federal Funding and Support for Tribal Nations to Better Embrace Our Trust Responsibilities and Promote the Next Era of Tribal Self-Determination, this NOFO supports requiring Agencies provide Tribal Nations with the flexibility to address the specific needs of their communities by making it easier to access Federal funding to which they are eligible for.
- HUD may set aside one grant for the highest scoring application that targets Indian housing if it would not otherwise score high enough to receive funding.

#### 4. Definitions

##### a. Standard Definitions

**Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH)** means taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination to overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunities, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws. The duty to affirmatively further fair housing extends to all program participant's activities and programs relating to housing and urban development.

**Assistance Listing number** refers to the unique number assigned to each Federal assistance program publicly available in the Assistance Listing, which is managed and administered by the General Services Administration. The Assistance Listing number was formerly known as the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number.

**Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)** is a person authorized to legally bind your organization and submit applications via Grants.gov. The AOR is authorized by the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC) in the System for Award Management (see E-Biz POC definition). An AOR may include an Expanded AOR and/or a Standard AOR.

*Expanded Authorized Organization Representative* is a user in Grants.gov who is authorized by the E-Biz POC to perform the functions of a Standard AOR, initiate and submit applications on behalf of your organization, and is allowed to modify organization-level settings and certifications in Grants.gov.

*Standard Authorized Organization Representative* is a user in Grants.gov who is authorized by the E-Biz POC to initiate and submit applications in Grants.gov. A Grants.gov user with the Standard AOR role can only submit applications when they are a Participant for that workspace.



**Consolidated Plan** is the document submitted to HUD that serves as the comprehensive housing affordability strategy, community development plan, and submission for funding under any of the Community Planning and Development formula grant programs (e.g., CDBG, ESG, HOME, and HOPWA). This Plan is prepared in accordance with the process described in [24 CFR part 91](#). This plan is completed by engaging in a participatory process to assess affordable housing and community development needs and market conditions, and to make data-driven, place-based investment decisions with funding from formula grant programs. (See [24 CFR part 91](#) for HUD's requirements regarding the Consolidated Plan and related Action Plan).

**Contract** means, for the purpose of Federal financial assistance, a legal instrument by which a recipient or subrecipient purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a Federal award. For additional information on contractor and subrecipient determinations, see [2 CFR 200.331](#).

**Contractor** means an entity that receives a contract as defined above and in [2 CFR 200.1](#).

**Cooperative agreement** has the same meaning defined at [2 CFR 200.1](#).

**Deficiency**, with respect to the making of an application for funding, is information missing or omitted within a submitted application. Examples of deficiencies include missing documents, missing or incomplete information on a form, or some other type of unsatisfied information requirement. Depending on specific criteria, a deficiency may be either Curable or Non-Curable.

*A **Curable Deficiency*** is missing or incomplete application information that may be corrected by the applicant with timely action. To be curable, the deficiency must:

- Not be a threshold requirement, except for documentation of applicant eligibility;
- Not influence how an applicant is ranked or scored versus other applicants; and
- Be remedied within the time frame specified in the notice of deficiency.

*A **Non-Curable Deficiency*** is missing or incomplete application information that cannot be corrected by an applicant after the submission deadline. A non-curable deficiency is a deficiency that is a threshold requirement, or a deficiency that, if corrected, would change an applicant's score or rank versus other applicants. If an application includes a non-curable deficiency, the application may receive an ineligible determination, or the non-curable deficiency may otherwise adversely affect the application's score and final funding determination.

**E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC)** is an individual associated with the applicant organization who is responsible for the administration and management of award activities for the applicant organization. The E-Biz POC is likely to be an organization's chief financial officer or authorizing official. The E-Biz POC authorizes representatives of their organization to apply on behalf of the organization (see Authorized Organization Representative definition). There can only be one E-Biz POC per unique entity identifier (see definition of Unique Entity Identifier below).

**Eligibility requirements** are mandatory requirements for an application to be eligible for funding.

**Environmental Justice** means investing in environmental improvements, remedying past environmental inequities, and otherwise developing, implementing, and enforcing environmental

laws and policies in a manner that advances equity and provides meaningful involvement for people and communities that have been environmentally underserved or overburdened, such as Black and Brown communities, indigenous groups, and individuals with disabilities. This definition does not alter the requirements under HUD's regulations at [24 CFR 58.5\(j\)](#) and [24 CFR 50.4\(l\)](#) implementing [Executive Order 12898](#). E.O. 12898 requires a consideration of how Federally assisted projects may have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and/or low-income populations. For additional information on environmental review compliance, refer to:

[https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/environment\\_energy/regulations](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/environment_energy/regulations).

**Equity** has the meaning given to that term in Section 2(a) of Executive Order [13985](#) and means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

**Federal award**, has the meaning, depending on the context, in either paragraphs (1) or (2) of this definition:

(1)

(a) The Federal financial assistance that a recipient receives directly from a Federal awarding agency or indirectly from a pass-through entity, as described in [2 CFR 200.101](#); or

(b) The cost-reimbursement contract under the Federal Acquisition Regulations that a non-Federal entity receives directly from a Federal awarding agency or indirectly from a pass-through entity, as described in [2 CFR 200.101](#).

(2) The instrument setting forth the terms and conditions. The instrument is the grant agreement, cooperative agreement, other agreement for assistance covered in paragraph (2) of the definitions of Federal financial assistance in [2 CFR 200.1](#), and this NOFO, or the cost-reimbursement contract awarded under the Federal Acquisition Regulations.

(3) Federal award does not include other contracts that a Federal agency uses to buy goods or services from a contractor or a contract to operate Federal Government owned, contractor operated facilities (GOCOs).

(4) See also definitions of Federal financial assistance, grant agreement, and cooperative agreement in [2 CFR 200.1](#).

**Federal Financial Assistance** has the same meaning defined at [2 CFR 200.1](#).

**Grants.gov** is the website serving as the Federal government's central portal for searching and applying for Federal financial assistance throughout the Federal government. Registration on Grants.gov is required for submission of applications to prospective agencies unless otherwise specified in this NOFO.

**Green and Resilient Building Standard** means an industry-recognized standard incorporating both:

- (1) Certification under (i) Enterprise Green Communities, (ii) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) (New Construction, Homes, Midrise, Existing Buildings Operations and Maintenance, or Neighborhood Development), (iii) International Code Council (ICC)-700 National Green Building Standard Green+ Resilience; or the (iv) Living Building Challenge, or (v) a regional standard such as Earth Advantage New Homes; or (vi) any other equivalent comprehensive green building program acceptable to HUD; and
- (2) Minimum energy efficiency requirements, such as those defined in (i) ENERGY STAR (Certified Homes or Multifamily High-Rise), (ii) DOE Zero Energy Ready Home; (iii) Passive House Institute Passive Building or EnerPHit certification from the Passive House Institute US (PHIUS), International Passive House Association; or (iv) any other equivalent energy efficiency standard acceptable to HUD.

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)** are any historically Black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation. A list of accredited HBCUs can be found at the U.S. Department of Education's website.

**Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)** are

- (1) a part B institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1061(2));
- (2) a Hispanic-serving institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1101a(5));
- (3) a Tribal College or University (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)(3));
- (4) an Alaska Native-serving institution or a Native Hawaiian-serving institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1059d(b));
- (5) a Predominantly Black Institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1059e(b)(6));
- (6) an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1059g(b)(2)); or
- (7) a Native American-serving nontribal institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1059f(b)(2)).

**Non-Federal Entity (NFE)** means a state, local government, Indian tribe, Institution of Higher Education (IHE), or non-profit organization that carries out a Federal award as a recipient or subrecipient.

**Primary Point of Contact (PPOC)** is the person who may be contacted with questions about the application submitted by the AOR. The PPOC is listed in item 8F on the SF-424.

**Promise Zones (PZs)** are high poverty areas in select urban, rural and tribal communities designated from 2014-2016 where the Federal government partners with local leaders to increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, reduce violent crime, enhance public health and address other priorities identified by the community. See Promise Zones.

**Racial Equity** is the elimination of racial disparities and is achieved when race can no longer predict opportunities, distribution of resources, or outcomes – particularly for Black and Brown persons.

**Recipient** means an entity, usually but not limited to non-Federal entities, that receives a Federal award directly from HUD. The term recipient does not include subrecipients or individuals that are beneficiaries of the award.

**Resilience** is a community’s ability to minimize damage and recover quickly from natural disasters, extreme weather events, and other changing climate conditions.

**Rural Partners Network (RPN)** is an all-of-government program that helps rural communities find resources and funding to create jobs, build infrastructure, and support long-term economic stability on their own terms. The RPN is central to President Biden’s commitment to ensuring that rural Americans have the opportunity to succeed – and that they can find that opportunity in rural America. Through the Rural Partners Network, the Administration is marshaling the combined resources of the federal agencies and other providers to partner directly with rural people and places and unlock the full potential of rural America.

**Rural Partners Network (RPN) Community Networks (CN)** are designated rural places by the Federal government. When being considered for an RPN CN, rural stakeholders were asked to define their geographic footprint, and their “community network” and select a “Host Entity.” The “Host Entity” leads the local collaborations and partnerships. These RPN CNs are a collaboration among local leaders, residents, civic and business organizations, nonprofits, service providers, development agencies, and others representing the diversity of the region’s population and perspectives. The RPN CN Host Entity and their stakeholders have defined their geographic footprint for their community network, which can be a single county – or can include multiple counties and towns in a geographically-distinct rural region. The official list of RPN CN is located on the Rural.gov website.

**Small business** is defined as a privately-owned corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship that has fewer employees and less annual revenue than regular-sized business. The definition of “small”—in terms of being able to apply for government support and qualify for preferential tax policy—varies by country and industry. The U.S. Small Business Administration defines a small business according to a set of standards based on specific industries. See [13 CFR part 121](#).

**Subaward** means an award provided by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a Federal program. A subaward may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the pass-through entity considers a contract.

**Subrecipient** means an entity, usually but not limited to non-Federal entities, that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a Federal award but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such award. A subrecipient may also be a recipient of other Federal awards directly from a Federal awarding agency.

**System for Award Management (SAM)** is the Federal Repository into which an entity must provide information required for the conduct of business as a recipient. Registration with SAM is

required for submission of applications via Grants.gov. You can access the website at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>. There is no cost to use SAM.

**Threshold Requirements** are eligibility requirements that must be met for an application to be reviewed, rated, and ranked. Threshold requirements are not curable, except for documentation of applicant eligibility, which are listed in Section III.D., Threshold Eligibility Requirements. Similarly, there are eligibility requirements under Section III.E., Statutory and Regulatory Requirements Affecting Eligibility.

**Underserved Communities** has the meaning given to that term in Section 2(b) of Executive Order [13985](#) and refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the definition of “equity” above.

**Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)** means the identifier assigned by SAM to uniquely identify entities. As of April 4, 2022, the Federal government has transitioned from the use of the DUNS Number to the use of UEI, as the primary means of entity identification for Federal awards government-wide.

#### b. Program Definitions.

For purposes of the Choice Neighborhoods program, the following definitions of key terms apply. As needed, other definitions relevant to specific thresholds and rating factors will be provided in those sections of the NOFO.

**Affordable Housing.** The term “affordable housing” means, in the context of a Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan, housing funded by a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grant for which the owner of the project/unit has recorded a HUD-approved affordability use restriction for occupancy by households earning up to 120 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) for no fewer than 20 years. Such housing is not considered replacement housing for the purposes of the one-for-one replacement requirement.

**Anchor Institution.** Anchor institutions are place-based entities with regional significance and are permanently-rooted economic or cultural drivers in specific locales that generate jobs, create local business opportunities, and contribute significantly to the development of human, social, and cultural capital. They include universities, hospitals, sports facilities, performing arts centers, and other major cultural facilities (such as museums and central libraries), and large corporations.

**Assisted Housing.** In this NOFO, the term “assisted housing” (used interchangeably with “HUD-Assisted Housing”) means housing assisted under a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract pursuant to section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (1937 Act) (42 U.S.C. 1437f and 42 U.S.C. 1437g) (excluding tenant-based vouchers and developments where fewer than 50 percent of the units in a housing development receive project-based voucher assistance), section 221(d)(3) or section 236 of the National Housing Act (12 U.S.C. 1715l and 12 U.S.C. 1715z-1), or the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA), 25 U.S.C. 4101, et seq. (Indian Housing). In the case of Indian Housing, this includes single family, duplex, and multifamily rental housing in which at least 50 percent of the units are assisted and located within the defined Target Housing neighborhood.

**Co-Applicant.** Co-Applicant means an entity with which the Lead Applicant chooses to apply for funding under this NOFO. A Co-Applicant must also be an Eligible Applicant. The Co-Applicant will also sign the Choice Neighborhoods Grant Agreement and be responsible for implementing the activities identified in the Transformation Plan, but will not directly receive access to funding through HUD’s Line of Credit Control System (LOCCS). A Co-Applicant is not required.

**Early Action Activity.** The term “Early Action Activity” refers to limited, physical neighborhood improvements undertaken during the planning process to support the planning process through engaging the community, building capacity, fostering social cohesion, or otherwise reinforcing the planning process. An Early Action Activity must also be responsive to the neighborhood's needs and must be used for physical community development or economic development projects that enhance and accelerate the transformation of the neighborhood. A grantee may use up to \$150,000 of grant funds for an Early Action Activity project. These funds must not be used for non-physical uses, such as supportive services, administrative costs, and marketing. These funds cannot be used for basic infrastructure or as a substitute for basic municipal services. Additionally, funds cannot be used for housing development activities (including the public or HUD-assisted housing targeted in this application), such as acquisition, relocation, demolition and remediation, rehabilitation, or construction. These funds should be used for innovative solutions to neighborhood challenges and must be used for projects that can be completed during the grant term. Uses of funds are limited to:

- a. Reclaiming and recycling vacant property into community gardens, pocket parks, or farmers markets;
- b. Beautification, placemaking, and community arts projects, such as creative signage to enhance neighborhood branding, murals and sculptures, specialty streetscaping, or garden tool loan programs;
- c. Owner-occupied home or business façade improvement programs;
- d. Fresh food initiatives, such as farmers markets and mobile fresh food vendors; and
- e. Gap financing for economic development projects that are ready to implement and have secured all the necessary funding except for a modest gap.

**Families, Family.** The term “families” has the meaning provided in section 3(b)(3)(B) of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437a). In the case of Tribal Entities, the term "family" has the meaning provided in section 4(6) of NAHASDA, 25 U.S.C. 4103(6).

**Lead Applicant.** Lead Applicant means the primary entity responsible for implementing the activities identified in the application. The Lead Applicant must meet the qualifications of an Eligible Applicant. The Lead Applicant will sign the Grant Agreement and is the sole entity that will have access to HUD’s Line of Credit Control System (LOCCS) to draw down Choice Neighborhoods funding.

**Local Government.** The term “local government” shall have the same meaning as “unit of general local government” in section 102(a)(1) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5302): The term “unit of general local government” means any city, county, town, township, parish, village, or other general purpose political subdivision of a State; Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa, or a general purpose

political subdivision thereof; a combination of such political subdivisions that, except as provided in section 5306(d)(4) of this title, is recognized by the Secretary; the District of Columbia.

**Neighborhood.** The neighborhood is the geographic area within which the activities of the Transformation Plan shall take place. HUD understands neighborhood boundaries are not fixed like municipal or county boundaries. The Department also recognizes neighborhoods do not necessarily follow statistical boundaries, such as census tracts. For Choice Neighborhoods, HUD will rely on applicants to identify generally accepted boundaries for the target neighborhood. In many communities, typical neighborhood boundaries are delineated by major streets or physical topography. The neighborhood must be larger than just the footprint of the distressed public or HUD-assisted housing targeted in the application and should incorporate nearby places where residents may shop, receive services, work, and interact. The neighborhood cannot encompass more than one municipal jurisdiction and is typically an area less than two miles wide.

**Neighborhood Assets.** Neighborhood assets include the following main categories:

- a. Developmental assets that allow residents to attain the skills needed to be successful in all aspects of daily life (e.g., educational institutions, early learning centers, and health resources);
- b. Commercial assets that are associated with production, employment, transactions, and sales (e.g., labor force and retail establishments);
- c. Recreational assets that create value in a neighborhood beyond work and education (e.g., parks, open space, community gardens, athletics and arts organizations);
- d. Physical assets that are associated with the built environment and physical infrastructure (e.g., housing, commercial buildings, streets, and sidewalks); and
- e. Social assets that establish well-functioning social interactions (e.g., public safety and community engagement).

**Nonprofit Organization.** Nonprofits eligible to be an applicant under this NOFO are entities classified as such in accordance with section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code or have been designated as such by their state government. A nonprofit organization can be organized for the following purposes: charitable, religious, educational, scientific, or other similar purposes in the public interest. To obtain tax-exempt status, qualified organizations must file an application with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and receive designation as such by the IRS. For more information, go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Entities in the process of applying for tax-exempt status, but have not yet received nonprofit designation from the IRS by the application deadline date, will not be considered an eligible applicant. All nonprofit applicants must submit either their IRS determination letter to prove their 501(c) status or the letter from the state government to prove their nonprofit status.

**Planning Coordinator.** A Planning Coordinator is a person or entity separate from the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant procured to help the grantee coordinate the planning process. The Planning Coordinator should have significant experience in leading comprehensive neighborhood planning processes that lead to implementation activities and improved outcomes as well as building the capacity of local entities. Examples of Planning Coordinators include but are not limited to community-based organizations, redevelopment authorities, and private or non-profit planning firms. The Planning Coordinator is not only a local partner/stakeholder, but also a



single person/entity selected to assist the grantee in carrying out the grant activities and in increasing grantee capacity to carry out the grant activities. Having a Planning Coordinator is optional.

**Public Housing Agency.** The term “public housing agency” has the meaning provided in section 3(b)(6) of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437a).

**Public Housing.** The term “public housing” refers to housing that receives funding under an Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) and in accordance with section 9 of the 1937 Act. A public housing project is a group of such housing units that has a single Project Number assigned by the Director of Public Housing of a HUD Field Office and has, or had (in the case of previously demolished units), housing units under an ACC and in accordance with section 9 of the 1937 Act. Applicants must be clear throughout their application as to the project they are targeting.

**Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD).** A HUD program that allows PHAs to convert public housing to project-based section 8 housing to facilitate additional debt and equity financing. More information about the RAD program can be found at [www.hud.gov/rad](http://www.hud.gov/rad).

**Replacement Housing.** Replacement housing is rental housing that will replace demolished, disposed of, or otherwise reduced public or assisted housing. It must be assisted with funding under section 8 or 9 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f and 42 U.S.C. 1437g). With regard to section 8 housing, project-based vouchers (section 8(o)(13) of the 1937 Act), and Project-Based Rental Assistance as provided in a RAD conversion are included in this definition, but tenant-based vouchers are excluded except as permitted by HUD. To satisfy the one-for-one replacement requirement through acquisition, the replacement unit must not have been receiving assistance prior to submitting the application under the sections listed above in this paragraph.

**Severely Distressed Housing.**

**a.** In accordance with section 24(j)(2) of the 1937 Act, the term means a public and/or assisted housing project (or building in a project) that:

(1) Requires major redesign, reconstruction, redevelopment, or partial or total demolition to correct serious deficiencies in the original design (including inappropriately high population density), deferred maintenance, physical deterioration or obsolescence of major systems, and other deficiencies in the physical plan of the project;

(2) Is a significant contributing factor to the physical decline of, and disinvestment by public and private entities in, the surrounding neighborhood;

(3) (a) is occupied predominantly by families who are very low-income families with children, have unemployed members, and are dependent on various forms of public assistance; (b) has high rates of vandalism and criminal activity (including drug-related criminal activity) in comparison to other housing in the area; or (c) is lacking in sufficient appropriate transportation, supportive services, economic opportunity, schools, civic and religious institutions, and public services, resulting in severe social distress in the project;

(4) Cannot be revitalized through assistance under other programs, such as the Capital Fund and Operating Fund programs for public housing under the 1937 Act, or the programs under sections 9 or 14 of the 1937 Act (as in effect before the effective date under section 503(a) of the



Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-276, approved October 21, 1998)), because of cost constraints and inadequacy of available amounts; and

(5) In the case of an individual building that currently forms a portion of the public and/or assisted housing project targeted by the application to this NOFO: (a) Is sufficiently separable from the remainder of the project of which the building is part, such that the revitalization of the building is feasible; or (b) Was part of the targeted public and/or assisted housing project that has been legally vacated or demolished, but for which HUD has not yet provided replacement housing assistance (other than tenant-based assistance). “Replacement housing assistance” is defined as funds that have been furnished by HUD to perform major rehabilitation on, or reconstruction of, the public and/or assisted housing units that have been legally vacated or demolished.

**b.** A severely distressed project that has been legally vacated or demolished (but for which HUD has not yet provided replacement housing assistance, other than tenant-based assistance) must have met the definition of physical distress not later than the day the demolition application approval letter was dated by HUD, or in the case of Indian Housing, not later than the day the tribal entity signed the written notification of demolition provided to HUD in accordance with 24 CFR 1000.134.

**Supportive Services.** The term “supportive services” includes all activities that promote upward mobility, self-sufficiency, or improved quality of life, including such activities as literacy training, activities that promote early learning and the continuum of educational supports, remedial and continuing education, job training, financial literacy instruction, day care, youth services, aging-in-place, public transportation, physical and mental health services, economic development activities, and other programs for which the community demonstrates need.

**Transformation Plan.** The Transformation Plan is a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy proposal which, when implemented, will achieve the three core goals of Choice Neighborhoods (Housing, People, Neighborhood).

**Tribal Entities.** This term means Indian tribes, as defined in section 4(13) of NAHASDA, and Tribally Designated Housing Entities, as defined in section 4(22) of NAHASDA.

## **B. Authority**

The funding authority for Choice Neighborhoods grants under this NOFO is provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118-42, approved March 9, 2024) (FY 2024 Appropriations). The program authority for the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is section 24 of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437v), as applied by the FY 2024 Appropriations.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funds**

Funding of approximately **\$10,000,000** is available through this NOFO.

Additional funds may become available for award under this NOFO consistent with VI.A.2.e., Adjustments to Funding. Use of these funds is subject to statutory constraints. All awards are subject to the funding restrictions contained in this NOFO.

## **B. Number of Awards**

HUD expects to make approximately 20 awards from the funds available under this NOFO.

HUD may set aside one grant award for the highest scoring application that targets Indian housing.

## **C. Minimum/Maximum Award Information**

Estimated Total Funding:

\$10,000,000

Minimum Award Amount:

\$1

Per Project Period

Maximum Award Amount:

\$500,000

Per Project Period

## **D. Period of Performance**

Estimated Project Start Date:

09/16/2024

Estimated Project End Date:

03/16/2027

Length of Project Periods:

Other

Length of Periods Explanation of Other:

The grant term is 30 months from the Grant Award date.

## **E. Type of Funding Instrument**

Funding Instrument Type:

G (Grant)

## **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

01 (County governments)

02 (City or township governments)

07 (Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized))

08 (Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities)

12 (Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education)

25 (Others (see text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility" for clarification))

### **Additional Information on Eligibility**

Eligible applicants are Public Housing Agencies (PHAs), local governments, Tribal Entities, and nonprofits. Refer to the Program Definitions in Section I.A.4.b for how these terms are defined in the Choice Neighborhoods program.

**Key Eligibility Criteria.** There are three key eligibility criteria for Choice Neighborhoods funding: the applicant must be an eligible entity, the application must target an eligible housing project, and the target housing must be located in an eligible neighborhood. Together, all three elements constitute the "Eligible Applicant" threshold requirement.

**1. Applicant Entity.** PHAs, local governments, Tribal Entities, and nonprofits are eligible to apply. See Section I.A.4.b for Program Definitions of these terms. Additionally, the following criteria must be met, as relevant, in order to comply with this requirement:

a. **Troubled Status for PHAs.** This applies to PHA applicants. If a PHA was designated as troubled by HUD pursuant to section 6(j)(2) of the 1937 Act on the most recently released Operational Troubled List, HUD will use documents and information available to it to determine whether that PHA qualifies as an eligible applicant. PHAs designated as troubled are strongly encouraged to consider partnering with another entity (such as a local government or a nonprofit) to serve as the Lead Applicant for this Choice Neighborhoods grant. In accordance with section 24(j) of the 1937 Act, a troubled PHA may still be eligible to apply if it:

(1) Is designated as troubled principally for reasons that will not affect its capacity to carry out a revitalization program;

(2) Is making substantial progress toward eliminating the deficiencies of the agency that resulted in its troubled status;

(3) Does not have unresolved findings of noncompliance with fair housing or other civil rights requirements; or

(4) Is otherwise determined by HUD to be capable of carrying out a revitalization program.

b. **Certification for Multifamily Assisted Property Owners.** If the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant is the owner of the assisted housing property that is the target housing of the Choice Neighborhoods grant, the Applicant is required to submit the Previous Participation Certification form (HUD-2530). If the property owner listed has defaulted on a mortgage loan or has less than satisfactory review ratings (physical inspections, management and financial reviews), HUD will use documents and information available to it to determine whether the owner of the property qualifies as an eligible applicant. Approvals of entities that have defaulted or received unsatisfactory review ratings will be subjected to HUD's Previous Participation clearance review process. Applicants may still be eligible to apply for Choice Neighborhoods funding if HUD deems the applicant to be making substantial progress in addressing the deficiencies related to such default or review rating. Multifamily assisted property owners with defaults or less than satisfactory review ratings are strongly encouraged to consider partnering with another entity (such as a local

government or a nonprofit) to serve as the Lead Applicant for this Choice Neighborhoods grant. This requirement is not applicable to applications targeting public housing or Indian housing.

c. Nonprofit Applicant. For a nonprofit to demonstrate eligibility as a Lead or Co-Applicant, either an Internal Revenue Service determination letter indicating the organization's 501(c) status or the letter from the state government or Tribe designating the organization's nonprofit status must be submitted in the attachments.

d. Co-Applicants. To demonstrate a Co-Applicant partnership, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Letter of Agreement must be provided, signed by the executive of each entity. The MOU or Letter of Agreement must demonstrate a commitment to work collaboratively throughout the entirety of the grant to develop a Transformation Plan and identify which party is the Lead Applicant.

e. Applicants that are not the owner of the target housing project. If the owner of the target housing project is not the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant for this grant, a letter from the owner indicating its support for the applicant's organization to submit this grant application and work collaboratively throughout the entirety of the grant must be included in this application.

**2. Target Housing.** Each application must focus on the revitalization of at least one severely distressed public and/or assisted housing project. Eligible target housing meets the following criteria:

a. Is currently HUD "public housing" or "assisted housing" as defined in section I.A.4.b Program Definitions. Note that "assisted housing" includes Indian housing, as described in section I.A.4.b.

b. If the project's occupancy is designated housing for "elderly" or "disabled" residents, it cannot be the only target housing project identified in this grant application. At least one target housing project must be available for general occupancy by families. For public housing projects, HUD will verify if the property has such a designation in PIC. For assisted housing this is project-based section 8, HUD will verify if such a designation is listed in the HAP contract or other HUD records. For Indian housing, Tribal Entities may demonstrate to HUD that at least one target housing project is available for general occupancy by families by either providing HUD with a certification, or other documentation demonstrating that the target housing meets this requirement.

c. For public housing projects, the Actual Date of Full Availability (DOFA) date in PIC must be earlier than January 1, 1996.

d. Severely distressed: The definition of severely distressed housing from section 24(j)(2) of the 1937 Act is included in Section I.A.4.b Program Definitions. Applicants must provide the Certification of Severe Physical Distress form (HUD-53232) and include it in the attachments section of the application. The certification must be signed and dated by an engineer or architect licensed by a state licensing board and dated no more than 12 months prior to the application due date. The license does not need to have been issued in the same state as the severely distressed project. The engineer or architect must include his or her license number and state of registration on the certification. The engineer or architect cannot be an employee of the Lead Applicant, Co-Applicant (if any), Planning Coordinator (if any), the project's owner, the PHA (if applicable), or a unit of local

government in which the housing is located. If this application targets more than one public and/or assisted housing project, each project must meet this definition of severely distressed and be listed on the certification form.

**3. Target Neighborhood.** An eligible neighborhood for Choice Neighborhoods grant funds is a neighborhood with at least 15 percent of the residents estimated to be in poverty or have extremely low incomes based on the most recent data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. To meet this application requirement, the applicant must demonstrate compliance with the following criteria:

- a. The definition of “neighborhood” from Section I.A.4.b Program Definitions applies. Applicants should carefully consider the neighborhood boundary presented in this grant application. Discuss it with the local government, residents, and other local stakeholders to ensure the grant application truly reflects what is generally accepted as the boundary of the neighborhood. Note: HUD reserves the right to ask applicants to provide evidence that the target neighborhood boundary is generally accepted. Such evidence might include planning, community development or zoning maps that have been adopted by a public jurisdiction.
- b. For the purposes of establishing neighborhood eligibility and to assign points for certain rating factors, HUD has created a mapping tool that will overlay the locally defined neighborhood boundary with data associated with that area and estimate the rates of certain indicators in that neighborhood using a proportional allocation methodology. HUD will calculate the poverty rate, extremely low-income rate, and residential vacancy rate for the target area as well as other measures of distress. For example, if census tracts are the smallest statistical boundary for the available data and the locally defined neighborhood is partially within two different census tracts, the poverty rate will be calculated based on the portion of the neighborhood housing units located in each tract. In this example, 80 percent of the housing units in the locally defined neighborhood are in a tract with a poverty rate of 40 percent and 20 percent of the units are in a tract with a poverty rate of 10 percent. The “neighborhood poverty rate” would be calculated as:  $(80\% \times 40\%) + (20\% \times 10\%) = 34\%$ . The applicant must draw the boundary of the target neighborhood using the mapping tool posted on the FY 2024 NOFO and Funding Information page at [www.hud.gov/cn](http://www.hud.gov/cn) and provide the PDF report of the eligible neighborhood, as produced and emailed to the user by the mapping tool, in the attachments section of the application. HUD is aware of limited data availability in some parts of the country. If the mapping tool does not produce a report with data, the potential applicant should email [ChoiceNeighborhoods@hud.gov](mailto:ChoiceNeighborhoods@hud.gov). Unless requested by HUD in such cases, do not submit additional documentation. HUD will make the final determination on compliance with the threshold. Make sure that neighborhood boundary drawn via the CN Mapping Tool matches the neighborhood boundary depicted on the maps provided in Attachment 19.

#### Faith-based organizations

(1) Faith-based organizations may apply for this award on the same basis as any other organization, as set forth at [24 CFR part 5.109](#), and subject to the protections and requirements of 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb et seq., HUD will not, in the selection of recipients, discriminate against an organization based on the organization’s religious character, affiliation, or exercise.

(2) A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence and may continue to carry out its mission consistent with religious freedom and conscience protections in Federal law, including the Free Speech and Free Exercise Clauses of the Constitution, 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb et seq., 42 U.S.C. § 238n, 42 U.S.C. § 18113, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e-1(a) and 2000e-2, 42 U.S.C. § 12113(d), and the Weldon Amendment, among others. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws, particularly under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

(3) A faith-based organization may not use direct financial assistance from HUD to support or engage in any explicitly religious activities except where consistent with the Establishment Clause and any other applicable requirements. Such an organization also may not, in providing services funded by HUD, discriminate against a beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.

## **B. Ineligible Applicants**

1. Individuals.
2. Any entity that does not meet the eligibility criteria listed above.

## **C. Cost Sharing or Matching**

This Program requires cost sharing or matching as described below.

Section 24(c)(1)(A) of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. 1437v(c)(1)(A)) sets forth a requirement for matching funds for all grants made under section 24, which includes Choice Neighborhoods. Matching funds in the amount of at least five percent of the requested grant amount in cash or in-kind donations must be secured and used by the end of the grant term. HOPE VI program funding, including HOPE VI Revitalization, HOPE VI Demolition, HOPE VI Neighborhood Networks, HOPE VI Main Street grants, Choice Neighborhoods Implementation, or Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants, may NOT be considered match. Generally other federal sources are only allowed to be used as cost share or match if permitted by a program's authorizing statute. Grantees will be required to show evidence that matching resources were actually received and used for their intended purposes through quarterly reports as the project proceeds. Sources of matching funds may be substituted after grant award, as long as the dollar requirement is met. Grantees must pursue and enforce any commitment (including commitments for services) obtained from any public or private entity for any contribution or commitment to the project or surrounding area that was part of the match amount. For Indian housing, the Indian Housing Block Grant and the Indian Community Development Block Grant (formula or competitive funding) may be used as match.

## **D. Threshold Eligibility Requirements**

Applicants who fail to meet any of the following threshold eligibility requirements are deemed ineligible. Applications from ineligible applicants are not rated or ranked and will not receive HUD funding.

### **1. Resolution of Civil Rights Matters**

Outstanding civil rights matters must be resolved before the application submission deadline. Applicants with unresolved civil rights matters at the application deadline are deemed ineligible. Applications from ineligible applicants are not rated or ranked and will not receive HUD funding.

a. An applicant is ineligible for funding if the applicant has any of the charges, cause determinations, lawsuits, or letters of findings referenced in subparagraphs (1) – (5) that are not resolved to HUD’s satisfaction before or on the application deadline date for this NOFO.

- (1) Charges from HUD concerning a systemic violation of the Fair Housing Act or receipt of a cause determination from a substantially equivalent state or local fair housing agency concerning a systemic violation of a substantially equivalent state or local fair housing law proscribing discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), national origin, disability or familial status;
- (2) Status as a defendant in a Fair Housing Act lawsuit filed by the United States alleging a pattern or practice of discrimination or denial of rights to a group of persons raising an issue of general public importance under 42 U.S.C. § 3614(a);
- (3) Status as a defendant in any other lawsuit filed or joined by the Department of Justice, or in which the Department of Justice has intervened, or filed an amicus brief or statement of interest, alleging a pattern or practice or systemic violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Violence Against Women Act, or a claim under the False Claims Act related to fair housing, non-discrimination, or civil rights generally including an alleged failure to affirmatively further fair housing;
- (4) Receipt of a letter of findings identifying systemic non-compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974; Violence Against Women Act; or the Americans with Disabilities Act; or
- (5) Receipt of a cause determination from a substantially equivalent state or local fair housing agency concerning a systemic violation of provisions of a state or local law prohibiting discrimination in housing based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or lawful source of income.

b. HUD will determine if actions to resolve the charge, cause determination, lawsuit, or letter of findings taken before the application deadline date will resolve the matter. Examples of actions that may be sufficient to resolve the matter include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Current compliance with a voluntary compliance agreement signed by all the parties;
- (2) Current compliance with a HUD-approved conciliation agreement signed by all the parties;
- (3) Current compliance with a conciliation agreement signed by all the parties and approved by the state governmental or local administrative agency with jurisdiction over the matter;
- (4) Current compliance with a consent order or consent decree;
- (5) Current compliance with a final judicial ruling or administrative ruling or decision; or
- (6) Dismissal of charges.

## **2. Timely Submission of Applications**

Applications submitted after the deadline stated within this NOFO that do not meet the requirements of the grace period policy are marked late. Late applications are ineligible and are not considered for funding. See Section IV. D. Application Submission Dates and Times.

## **3. Number of Applications and Public and/or Assisted Housing Projects.**

(a) You may only submit one application per locality, defined as the area within the boundary of your local government, or in the case of an application from a Tribal Entity, one application per Tribe. There is no limit to the number of public and/or assisted housing projects per application, so long as all are within the boundary of the neighborhood.

(b) If HUD receives multiple electronic versions of an application, HUD will review the last version of the application received by Grants.gov that meets the timely receipt requirements. All other applications (i.e., prior versions) will not be considered eligible. If applicants find, after submitting an application, that they want to amend or adjust their application and it is prior to the deadline date, applicants **must resubmit the entire application** to ensure that HUD gets a complete application.

**4. Relation to Prior HOPE VI Revitalization Grants.** A public housing project that was the ‘target housing’ of a HOPE VI Revitalization grant cannot be the target housing project of a Choice Neighborhoods grant application. However, they may be located within the Transformation Plan neighborhood. If HOPE VI funding was used to renovate units in a different public housing project that was not the target housing of the HOPE VI grant, those units may be eligible as the target housing in a Choice Neighborhoods (if they otherwise meet this NOFO's eligibility requirements). Potential applicants may contact the Choice Neighborhoods office for clarification related to their specific circumstances in advance of submitting a grant application.

**5. Relation to Prior Choice Neighborhoods Grants.** Public and/or assisted housing projects and the neighborhoods in which they are located previously funded through a Choice Neighborhoods Planning or Implementation Grant may not be the target housing and neighborhood of a Choice Neighborhoods application under this NOFO. In addition, applicants may not apply for both a FY 2024 Planning Grant and FY 2023 or 2024 Implementation Grant for the same target housing and neighborhood.

**6. Relation to Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Applicants.** PHAs that have applied for RAD, received a Commitment to enter into a Housing Assistance Payments Contract (CHAP) (either a Portfolio award that covers the property proposed or a Multiphase award) covering the property proposed, and are planning on demolition and new construction or major rehabilitation or reconstruction may apply for a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant provided they have not yet received a RAD Conversion Commitment (RCC) at the time of the application deadline for this NOFO. In the case where there is a Multiphase award, only units at the target housing site that are not included in an RCC can still be eligible. The Office of Recapitalization will offer flexibility with regard to the RAD milestones so that PHAs and their partners may take advantage of the Planning Grant.



## E. Statutory and Regulatory Requirements Affecting Eligibility

### Eligibility Requirements for Applicants of HUD's Financial Assistance Programs

The following requirements affect applicant eligibility. Detailed information on each requirement is found in the "[Eligibility Requirements for Applicants of HUD's Competitive Programs](#)" document on HUD's Funding Opportunities page. Applicants who fail to meet any of these eligibility requirements are deemed ineligible to receive HUD funding.

1. Universal Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Requirements
2. Outstanding Delinquent Federal Debts
3. Debarments or Suspensions, or both
4. Mandatory Disclosure Requirement
5. Pre-selection Review of Performance
6. Sufficiency of Financial Management System
7. False Statements
8. Prohibition Against Lobbying Activities

In addition, each applicant under this NOFO must have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the Award Term in Appendix A of [2 CFR part 170](#) if the applicant receives an award, unless an exception applies as provided in [2 CFR 170.110](#).

## F. Program-Specific Requirements

**1. Choice Neighborhoods Program Activities.** The purpose of this grant is to assist in funding the development of a comprehensive neighborhood plan, or "Transformation Plan." In developing this "Transformation Plan" for the target neighborhood, each grantee must include the required activities specified below. In addition, the Transformation Plan must include objectives, strategies, and program activities under the three core goals of Housing, People, and Neighborhood. Program activities proposed by the applicant must be eligible activities, as described below.

### a. Required Activities.

(1) Ensure meaningful resident, community, and stakeholder participation throughout the development of the Transformation Plan. At a minimum, residents of the target housing should have representation on a steering committee and task forces. This also includes public hearings, meetings, websites, forums, charrettes, and other communication that will provide all aspects of the policy and development plans. Applicants must provide alternative options to neighborhood residents, local business owners and employees, and civic and community organization representatives in sufficient time for them to review, react, and make informed decisions on how proposed plans and policies will impact their daily lives. This involvement must be continuous from the beginning of the planning process through the entire grant term. Activities should prioritize ways to advance equity by engaging underserved populations and communities traditionally marginalized from planning processes, such as low-income individuals and families, limited English speakers, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. For assistance in ensuring meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency, grantees should consult HUD's Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient

Persons (HUD's LEP Guidance) published in the Federal Register on January 22, 2007 (72 Fed. Reg. 2732). Additional information is also available at [www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/promotingfh/lep-faq](http://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/promotingfh/lep-faq). Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, recipients of federal financial assistance must ensure effective communication for persons with disabilities (see 24 CFR 8.6). This includes employing accessible means of technology to ensure that persons with disabilities can access information on the planning process, plans, and other information. All meetings must be held in facilities that are physically accessible to individuals with disabilities, and auxiliary aids or services and reasonable accommodations must be provided to ensure equal participation by individuals with disabilities. Where physical accessibility is not achievable, recipients and subrecipients must give priority to alternative methods of resident involvement that are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities and must ensure effective communication during such meetings or during other methods of engaging the residents in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794) and HUD's implementing regulations at 24 CFR Part 8, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 12131-12134) and the implementing regulation at 28 CFR Part 35.

(2) Within the first 12 months of the Choice Neighborhoods grant, conduct a household-level asset and needs assessment of the target housing residents that assesses assets and needs related to the Housing, People, and Neighborhood goals to better design solutions for challenges facing them. Household-level needs assessments involve surveying and/or interviewing resident households to identify the current strengths and challenges in the areas of income and employment, health, and education, as well as resident satisfaction with existing services and preferences for new services. In addition, grantees must access, draw comparisons, and evaluate existing neighborhood and/or jurisdictional data from available sources (such as the census [including the American Community Survey (ACS)], police reports, healthcare agencies/providers, school performance reports, research surveys, etc.) to determine whether more comprehensive needs assessments are required at the neighborhood level.

(3) Devise a relocation strategy for target housing residents that need to be relocated during the rehabilitation or reconstruction of the public and/or assisted housing that complies with applicable statute and regulations, as well as policies to effectuate CN requirements such as the right to return preference for target housing residents to occupy the replacement housing.

(4) If not already completed, have a market assessment conducted of the target neighborhood by an independent, third party professional during the grant period. The conclusions drawn from this study must inform the development of the Transformation Plan.

(5) If not already identified, select the master developer/housing developer that will implement the housing component of the Transformation Plan before the end of the grant term.

(6) Complete a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment based on ASTM standards of the target redevelopment site(s) to determine the potential for and extent of any needed environmental remediation, in order for a grantee to determine a feasible timeline and budget for the realization of redevelopment efforts.

(7) Contact the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to determine the potential for negative effects of demolition on historic properties if the target housing contains buildings 45 years of age or older.

(8) Conduct comprehensive assessments to inform the preparation of the Transformation Plan. The assessments should include:

- Current patterns of disinvestment within the neighborhood, including vacant/abandoned homes and businesses, the quality of the existing housing stock, foreclosures, and current home values and rents. Discuss other subsidized housing (e.g., Housing Choice Vouchers, LIHTC units, PBRA, state or locally subsidized affordable units) in the neighborhood that are not part of the target public and/or assisted housing project(s), the current mix of incomes, and any long-term economic factors for continued disinvestment that may be expected to continue, absent a publicly funded intervention;
- The neighborhood's access to key assets, such as quality grocery stores, banks, health clinics and doctors' offices, schools, childcare facilities and early learning centers or programs, parks and recreational facilities, and public transit. Identify key neighborhood anchor institutions, such as major employers, universities, or hospitals that can reliably be expected to continue to provide significant economic activity;
- Relevant developmental and social assets in the target neighborhood as these assets relate to opportunities for resident education, employment, health, mobility and safety;
- Challenges and gaps in neighborhood services and assets; and
- Information from applicable fair housing planning (e.g. Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, Assessment of Fair Housing, or other fair housing planning document) conducted by the local jurisdiction or public housing agency consistent with its obligation to affirmatively further fair housing, such as patterns of racial, national origin, and other demographic segregation or other fair housing issues in the neighborhood.

(9) Undertake a comprehensive and integrated planning process that addresses the challenges and gaps in services and assets identified through the needs assessments and leads to a plan for implementation that has broad community support, in the areas of:

(a) Housing. Adopt effective strategies to achieve the Housing goal. Such activities include but are not limited to:

- studies of the different options for revitalization, including the feasibility, costs and neighborhood impact of such options and the need for affordable housing;
- site planning and conceptual architectural design work that meets all applicable federal accessibility requirements, including but not limited to those under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and HUD's implementing regulation at 24 CFR part 8, the Fair Housing Act and HUD's implementing regulation at 24 CFR part 100, and the Americans with Disabilities Act and the government-wide regulations at 28 CFR parts 35 and 36;
- designing a suitable replacement housing plan, in situations where partial or total demolition is considered;
- designing a relocation plan, including effective and meaningful strategies for housing mobility;
- conducting environmental or geotechnical studies of the target housing site; and
- developing a viable financing plan to implement the Housing component of the plan. The plan should consider a range of viable financing plans which are not dependent on a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant in particular.

(b) People. Adopt effective strategies to achieve the People goal. Such activities include but are not limited to:

- planning for supportive services for the target housing residents to improve outcomes in employment and income, health, education, and housing stability, including:
  - Case management and/or service coordination to improve target housing residents' access to high-quality services that meet their needs.
  - Strategies that will result in increased income and employment for target housing residents, especially employment in living wage jobs, such as creating/coordinating a career pathway pipeline available to adults, developing direct connections to employers with living wage positions and/or opportunities for career advancement, and implementing a retention strategy that supports residents in retaining new jobs for at least the first 90 days.
  - Strategies that will result in improved physical and mental health outcomes and regular health care access for target housing residents, such as offering services to: support and connect uninsured adults and children to health insurance; ensure adults and children have a place of healthcare where they regularly go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or need advice about their health; ensure adults and children receive ongoing care and appropriate treatment for chronic conditions as well as preventative healthcare; and, as applicable, connect children and adults to trauma-informed care and mental health services.
  - Strategies to ensure all children living in the target HUD-assisted housing will enter kindergarten ready to learn, such as offering services to: enroll, track and support the attendance of children from birth to kindergarten in high-quality, evidence-based early education programs, which may include center-based or formal home-based programs; support the attendance of families with children from birth through Kindergarten (especially children who are not yet enrolled in early education) in evidence-based programs for caregivers, such as home visiting or educational parent/play groups; and ensure all young children receive regular developmental screenings (e.g., Ages and Stages) and, if a delay is identified, are connected with appropriate early behavioral health services.
  - Strategies to ensure all school-aged children living in the target housing are proficient in core academic subjects, attending school consistently, and are graduating from high school college- and career-ready, such as offering services to: work one-on-one with school-aged children and their families to identify and support their individual education needs and goals; enroll, track and support the attendance of school-aged children in high-quality School-Based or Out-of-School Education programs; and provide individualized wrap-around services to school-aged children and their families as needed to support their educational outcomes and participation in high quality programming.

(c) Neighborhood. Adopt effective strategies to achieve the Neighborhood Goal and Objectives. Such activities include but are not limited to: planning for neighborhood-level improvements across the range of Neighborhood Objectives; aligning with existing planning processes and activities in the local jurisdiction and/or metropolitan area, county/parish, or Tribal community; planning for neighborhood economic development activities; and partnering with the necessary agencies and organizations and developing a viable financing plan to implement the Neighborhood component of the plan.

**b. Eligible Activities.** Funding under this NOFO may be used for the following activities.

Proposed activities must reflect local area conditions and the needs of the target neighborhood.

(1) Conduct technical planning studies concerning local development issues, priorities, or suggested appropriate approaches in the context of the local housing market relative to other alternatives. This could include new approaches to housing, economic development, or capital improvement programming. However, any such study should directly further the integration of strategies to develop a comprehensive neighborhood-level Transformation Plan.

(2) Work with public and private agencies, organizations (including philanthropic organizations) and individuals to: develop a Transformation Plan that includes a governance strategy that will provide long-term accountability and secure commitments for long-term collaboration to ensure it will be implemented successfully; gather and leverage resources needed to support the financial sustainability of the Transformation Plan; identify strategies for building upon and leveraging existing neighborhood efforts and anticipated Federal, state, regional and local investments; and strengthen management and decision-making capacities of participating organizations.

(3) Plan for the collection and strategic use of relevant data to track future community impacts once the Transformation Plan is implemented by employing statistical and qualitative analysis of specific metrics developed in partnership with the appropriate local, state, regional, and federal agencies/organizations. Such planning should focus on integrating data systems across agencies and/or negotiating data sharing agreements so that these data can be used for intervention targeting and improvement.

(4) Identify best practices based on the available evidence and promising approaches from other grantees and community development practitioners. Such activities may include conducting site visits to communities that have already developed mixed-income housing and implemented neighborhood improvement strategies, researching evidence-based practices, or participating in a community of practice, which is a group of grantees that agrees to interact regularly to solve a persistent problem or improve practice in an area that is important to them and the success of their project, enabling grantees to meet, discuss and collaborate with each other regarding grantee projects.

(5) Early Action Activity, as defined in Section I.A.4.b Program Definitions of this NOFO. Up to \$150,000 of grant funds may be used for an Early Action Activity project. These funds should be used for one project. The Grantee must submit a proposal to HUD describing the project within the first 12 months of the grant term for review and approval. An Early Action Activity project must be completed within the two-year grant term.

**c. Ineligible Activities.** Ineligible activities for all grantees include, but are not limited to:

(1) Supportive services;

(2) Incentives for recruitment into, participation in, or completion of any planning activities (e.g. gift cards provided to residents that complete a survey or needs assessment and meals provided at planning meetings); and

(3) Housing development, including acquisition, relocation, demolition and remediation, rehabilitation, or construction.

**2. Choice Neighborhoods Program Requirements.** For all successful applicants this section contains Choice Neighborhoods program requirements, administrative and national policy requirements, and other program priorities that Planning Grantees must comply with as they develop their Transformation Plan.

**a. Right to Return for Tenants.** Since a Planning Grant award does not provide funding for redevelopment of the target housing project, this grant does not trigger the right to return

requirement established in the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants NOFO. Nonetheless, an accepted Transformation Plan created through a Planning Grant shall demonstrate that each tenant who wishes to live in a replacement housing unit may return if the tenant was lease-compliant at the time of relocation and continued to remain lease-compliant during the relocation period. A returning tenant shall be provided the highest level preference for occupancy of replacement units (either on-site or off-site) before such units are made available to any other eligible households. Accordingly, the Housing plan must provide an adequate number of replacement housing units that can be occupied by households with incomes up to 80 percent AMI (e.g., units that are not limited by another funding source such as LIHTC equity that may have a lower income limit) and provides a sufficient number of bedrooms per unit and accessible units to ensure families are not displaced. If provided a tenant-based voucher under section 8(o) of the 1937 Act, as amended, the tenant will also have the option to retain that voucher assistance. This preference remains available through the initial lease-up of the new units.

**b. One-for-One Replacement of Public and/or Assisted Housing Units.** Since a Planning Grant award does not provide funding for redevelopment of the target housing project, this grant does not trigger the one-for-one replacement requirement established in the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants NOFO. Nonetheless, the Transformation Plan created through a Planning Grant should provide for the one-for-one replacement of all target housing units as described below:

(1) Public Housing Replacement Housing. For all public housing dwelling units still physically standing as of the application due date which will be demolished or disposed, the Transformation Plan must provide for the replacement of the same number of units. The number of bedrooms replaced may be greater or fewer than those still physically standing, so that the overall unit mix first meets the needs of the existing residents, then takes into account the needs of the residents on the waiting list and is aligned with the results of a recent housing market study.

(2) Assisted Housing Replacement Housing. For all assisted housing units subject to a contract with HUD as of the application due date which are to be demolished or disposed, the Transformation Plan must provide for one-for-one replacement in accordance with all HUD policies, procedures and requirements for project-based section 8 Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contracts. For all Indian housing units as of the application due date which are to be demolished or disposed, the Transformation Plan must provide one-for-one replacement of all units currently assisted under NAHASDA (including Formula Current Assisted Stock units) and accordingly, should ensure that at least the same total number of units will be made available to NAHASDA-eligible families.

(3) Location. Replacement housing units shall be developed:

(a) On-site (i.e., on the target housing site and/or in the target neighborhood being revitalized); and/or

(b) Off-site (i.e., outside of the target neighborhood but within the metropolitan area up to 25 miles from the target housing site). If a Transformation Plan proposes to develop replacement housing outside the target neighborhood, such housing must:

i. offer access to economic opportunities and public transportation and be accessible to social, recreational, educational, commercial, health facilities and services, and other municipal services and facilities that are comparable to those that will be provided in the target neighborhood;

ii. be located in a census tract with a poverty rate below 30 percent;

iii. NOT be located in an area of minority concentration. For purposes of this NOFO, an area of minority concentration is defined as one where either of the following statistical conditions exists: the census tract's percentage of persons of a particular racial or ethnic minority is at least 20 points higher than the minority's percentage in the housing market area as a whole or the census tract's total percentage of minority persons is at least 20 points higher than the total percentage of minority persons in the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as a whole. Readers should be aware that the Department is evaluating the definition of "area of minority concentration" to determine an updated definition which best effectuates the intent and purpose of the site and neighborhood standards regulations. Applicants and grantees should follow the guidance applicable to the specific funding opportunity; and

iv. meet the site and neighborhood standards listed in 24 CFR 905.602(d).

(4) Types of Units. Refer to the definition of Replacement Housing in Section I.A.4.b Program Definitions.

(5) Tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers as Replacement Housing. In housing markets where there is an adequate supply of affordable rental housing in areas of low poverty, tenant-based vouchers can be counted as replacement housing for up to one-third of the number of required replacement units. Please note this exception does not supersede an entity's obligation to comply with other one-for-one replacement requirements associated with other funding sources (e.g., the Rental Assistance Demonstration, section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act, etc.).

(a) To be eligible for this exception to the hard-unit one-for-one replacement criteria, the area of the Choice Neighborhoods development must meet both of the following conditions. HUD provides this data as part of the report generated from the Choice Neighborhoods mapping tool.

i. Be located in a county/parish with a currently and historically soft rental housing market for low-income renters.

ii. Be located in a Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) or non-CBSA County/Parish where vouchers currently in use are primarily in lower poverty neighborhoods.

(b) Planning Grantees that would qualify for this exception may devise a Transformation Plan under this grant in accordance with the exception. Please note that a subsequent application for a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant must comply with the requirements set forth in that NOFO.

**c. Relocation and Housing Mobility Counseling.** A key goal of the Choice Neighborhoods program is to support the successful relocation of households; the successful return of households who choose to occupy a replacement unit; and the stability of households who choose not to occupy a replacement unit. Since the Planning Grant does not provide funds for relocation and redevelopment, this grant neither triggers relocation requirements nor establishes a household's eligibility for relocation benefits. Nonetheless, the planning process must develop strategies for relocation and housing mobility counseling. The relocation strategy should offer robust housing mobility counseling beyond what is required by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (URA). If Tenant Protection Vouchers are awarded in the future for relocation, the PHA or other relocating entity has a responsibility to ensure that voucher holders have a real opportunity to use vouchers in high opportunity areas. Part of this housing mobility counseling must ensure that families who receive a tenant-based voucher are made aware of, have access to, and can locate high-quality rental housing in areas of integrated opportunity, such as those that include access to educational

opportunities, transportation, and lack of environmental health concerns. Elements of a robust strategy include recruiting landlords, encouraging landlords to adopt expedited lease-up processes, identifying available units, briefing residents about these neighborhoods and available units, providing transportation to visit units, providing assistance with completing leasing paperwork, providing information about fair housing protections, and providing information about the portability of vouchers. Further, strategies should (a) integrate comprehensive relocation and re-occupancy counseling and supports with the People components of the Transformation Plans, so that when implemented, residents of the target public and/or assisted housing receive the array of services they need to return to the revitalized housing or maintain stability in other housing of their choice; (b) provide for the regular communication and collaboration with property management to establish an early warning system to flag residents at risk of eviction and ensure that case management and any available property management supports will be offered to households at risk of eviction; (c) fully inform families of their relocation options, including the availability of tenant-based vouchers; and (d) assist families transitioning into new housing, neighborhoods, and (when applicable) schools to ensure their continued stability. For additional information, please refer to the "Choice Neighborhoods Relocation and Return Best Practices" guide ([https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/images/Choice\\_Relocation\\_and\\_Return\\_Best\\_Practices\\_7-1-19.pdf](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/images/Choice_Relocation_and_Return_Best_Practices_7-1-19.pdf)) for more information.

**d. Climate Resiliency.** Grantees should devise their Housing Plan in ways that mitigate the impacts of natural hazards. This means both reducing property and resident exposure to climate-related hazards and supporting community resiliency in the face of disaster. Ultimately, the goal of building climate resilience in the multifamily sector is to keep residents safe and healthy before, during, and after a disaster strikes and in the face of longer-term climate impacts like rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns. Grantees can identify their target housing site's climate risk using FEMA's National Risk Index (<https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/>). Grantees may also consider climate projection tools as applicable: [Climate Mapping for Resilience and Adaptation Portal](#), [Climate Explorer](#), [Flood Factor](#), [NOAA Sea Level Rise Viewer](#), [ClimateCheck](#), and Climate Central Coastal Risk Screening Tool. HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) has also developed a Community Resiliency Toolkit and a set of project implementation guides that provide suggestions for different mitigation techniques for six natural hazards. Please note that the toolkit is focused on techniques that are an eligible use of CPD grant funding and not all suggestions may be an eligible use of Choice Neighborhoods grant funding. Nevertheless, the overall structure and identification of resilient design components and actions are useful for CN grantees. These may be accessed at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/supporting-local-climate-action/>.

**e. Sustainable Development.** Transformation Plans must incorporate sustainable development practices. The plan must address key Livability Principles ([https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/economic\\_development/Six\\_Livability\\_Principles](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/economic_development/Six_Livability_Principles)) adopted by HUD and its federal partners, including but not limited to supporting compact development and proximity to and increased availability of transportation choices, amenities, services and employment opportunities. Grantees must include key stakeholders, agencies and experts in addressing these principles during the planning process, and identify how the plan applies the Livability Principles to its project, and how outcomes will be measured. In particular, grantees must consult with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that represents the target neighborhood (unless the area is not represented by an MPO). Information about MPOs is



available on the website of the Federal Transit Administration (<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/transportation-planning/metropolitan-planning-organization-mpo>). The plan should also maximize energy efficiency and water saving techniques and practices and improve the health of residents by adopting green building practices or standards to the extent feasible and affordable, including but not limited to incorporating renewable energy systems and proper ventilation.

**f. Energy Efficiency and Green Building Standards.** Recognizing the fundamental role that HUD's investments play in defining the physical form of communities and quality of life for residents, Planning Grant recipients must design their Transformation Plan to achieve certification by one of the recognized green rating programs for new construction or substantial rehabilitation (e.g. Enterprise Green Communities Initiative, the National Green Building Standards, or LEED New Construction) and become eligible to secure the LEED for Neighborhood Development designation from the United States Green Building Council of all or a portion of the neighborhood targeted in their Transformation Plan.

**g. Design.** HUD is seeking excellence in design. Grantees must carefully select architects and planners, and enlist local affiliates of national architectural and planning organizations such as the American Institute of Architects, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Planning Association, the Congress for the New Urbanism, and the department of architecture at a local college or university to assist in assessing qualifications of design professionals or in participating on a selection panel resulting in the procurement of excellent design services. The design team should be committed to a process in which all residents, including young people, individuals with disabilities, limited English proficient persons, seniors, the broader community, and other stakeholders participate in designing the new community. The proposed site plan, new or rehabilitated units, and other buildings must be designed to be compatible with and enrich the surrounding neighborhood. Local architecture and design elements and amenities should be incorporated into the new or rehabilitated homes so that the revitalized sites and structures will blend into and/or enhance the broader community. Site and building design must also incorporate federal accessibility standards. Housing, community facilities, and commercial space must be well integrated. Grantees must select members of their team who have the experience, training, and credentials to meet these requirements.

**h. Environmental Justice.** Executive Order 14008 (January 27, 2021) requires agencies such as HUD to make achieving environmental justice part of their missions by developing programs, policies, and activities to address the disproportionately high and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related and other cumulative impacts on disadvantaged communities, as well as the accompanying economic challenges of such impacts. With respect to Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plans, environmental justice means ensuring equal protection from environmental and health hazards and providing equal and meaningful opportunity to participate in the decision-making process to achieve a healthy environment. Strategies may include investing in the creation of green jobs to complement Section 3 efforts, deploying resources to improve equity in community planning and community engagement, and undertaking healthy housing initiatives. More information on environmental justice can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice> and <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/environmental-review/environmental-justice/>.

**i. Non-Fungibility for Moving To Work (MTW) PHAs.** Funds awarded under this NOFO are not fungible under MTW and must be accounted for separately, in accordance with the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Agreement, OMB Administrative Requirements and Cost

Principles set forth in 2 CFR part 200, and generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

**j. Fair Housing.** Grantees must consider civil rights issues at each stage of the planning and implementation processes to ensure consistency with fair housing and civil rights requirements, to prevent issues such as perpetuation of segregation and discrimination, and to meet grantees' obligation to affirmatively further fair housing. Particularly important for Choice Neighborhoods grantees is careful consideration of:

- The location of replacement housing outside of the targeted neighborhood, to ensure sites offer access to opportunities and that placement of housing in the area is not perpetuating economic, racial, disability, and environmental inequalities
- Resident relocation strategies, replacement housing plans (both hard units and vouchers), and housing mobility plans. At the planning stage, this includes designing relocation strategies and replacement housing plans that provide displaced residents with meaningful opportunity to return to the revitalized community and that otherwise provide for housing mobility. Particularly in situations that include partial or total demolition of the target housing, a suitable replacement housing plan must be aligned with fair housing and civil rights standards and provide for robust housing mobility counseling as described in Section F.2.c. Consideration should be given to the potential fair housing implications of offering tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers as replacement housing

Applicants and grantees can use tools such as the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool (AFFHT) and HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research data to guide and inform their planning process. As fair housing and civil rights requirements are ongoing obligations, grantees should assess their knowledge of such requirements, including relevant experience promoting desegregation and other forms of racial equity, and consider what additional capacity might be needed during the planning and implementation processes to yield positive fair housing results for both original and new residents. Grantees should consider consultation with local fair housing organizations, researchers, and others with relevant civil rights expertise.

### **Advancing Racial Equity**

In accordance with Executive Order [13985](#), Executive Order 14091, *Executive Order on Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through The Federal Government*, and Federal fair housing and civil rights laws, your application must address the following:

- You analyzed the racial composition of the persons or households who are expected to benefit, directly or indirectly, from your proposed award activities;
- You identified any potential barriers to persons or communities of color equitably benefiting from your proposed award activities;
- You detailed the steps you will take to prevent, reduce, or eliminate these barriers; and
- You have measures in place to track your progress and evaluate the effectiveness of your efforts to advance racial equity in your award activities.

Note that any actions taken in furtherance of this section must be consistent with Federal nondiscrimination requirements.

This narrative is required and must address the four bullets outlined in the paragraph above. Applicants will submit this narrative according to the instructions in Section IV.B. This narrative

will be evaluated for sufficiency and will not change the applicant's score or rank as compared to other applicants. If the narrative is deemed insufficient, it will be a "Curable Deficiency" that will be communicated to the applicant for correction with a notice of deficiency.

Tribes and TDHEs only: Due to your specific focus on serving tribal communities, all grant activities will benefit underserved communities as defined in this NOFO, including Native Americans and Black and Brown people and communities. If you believe there are potential barriers to historically underserved communities equitably benefiting from proposed grant activities, submit a narrative identifying those barriers, detailing steps to prevent, reduce, or eliminate those barriers, and explaining how you will measure, track progress, and evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to overcome those barriers.

Provide this narrative in Exhibit B.2. Suggested 1 page maximum.

### **Experience Promoting Racial Equity**

In accordance with Executive Order 13985, Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, Executive Order 14091, Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, and Federal fair housing and civil rights laws, your application must demonstrate that the applicant has the experience and/or the resources to effectively address the needs of underserved communities, particularly Black and Brown communities. This may include experience successfully working directly with such groups, experience designing or operating programs that equitably benefit such groups, or experience successfully advancing racial equity in other ways. This may also include experience soliciting, obtaining, and applying input from such groups when designing, planning, or implementing programs and activities.

This narrative is required and must address the issues outlined in the paragraph above. Applicants will submit this narrative according to the instructions in Section IV.B. This narrative will be evaluated for sufficiency and will not change the applicant's score or rank as compared to other applicants. If the narrative is deemed insufficient, it will be a "Curable Deficiency" that will be communicated to the applicant for correction with a notice of deficiency.

Tribes and TDHEs only: HUD's equity provisions enable Tribal Applicants to demonstrate Experience Promoting Racial Equity (EPRE) through their Indian Housing Plans (IHP), or through a separate narrative. If you decide to use your IHP, HUD will consider the IHP's description of experience effectively serving tribal communities to meet the EPRE requirements. Alternatively, you can elect to submit a separate 1–2-page narrative which describes your experience serving and/or resources to effectively address the needs of underserved communities. You must include a statement with your application stating which option you have selected. Your IHP description or narrative description of experience will be evaluated for sufficiency and will be a curable deficiency if it is deemed insufficient.

Provide this narrative in Exhibit B.3. Suggested 1 page maximum.

### **Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing**

With some exceptions for Federally recognized Indian tribes and their instrumentalities, the application must discuss how the applicant will carry out the proposed activities in a manner that

affirmatively furthers fair housing in compliance with the Fair Housing Act and its implementing regulations and how applicants will meet the requirements of the definition of affirmatively furthering fair housing at 24 CFR 5.151. If the applicant will carry out proposed activities with an Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH), the proposed activities should be consistent with the AFH's fair housing goals and with fair housing strategies specified in the jurisdiction's Consolidated Plan or Public Housing Agency Plan.

Applicants must address this requirement by submitting a written narrative which describes how their proposed NOFO activities are aligned with the requirement to affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH). Specifically, applicants should describe how their proposed NOFO activities will meaningfully: (1) address significant disparities based on protected class in unmet housing needs (2) address disparities based on protected class in access to opportunity (3) address segregation and promoting integration (4) transform racially or ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into well-resourced areas of opportunity without displacing existing residents, and/or (5) foster and maintain compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws]. If the narrative is deemed insufficient, it will be a "Curable Deficiency" that will be communicated to the applicant for correction with a notice of deficiency.

Provide this narrative in Exhibit B.4. Suggested 1 page maximum.

Tribal Entities are not required to submit a written narrative related to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing.

## **G. Criteria for Beneficiaries.**

Not applicable for this NOFO.

## **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **A. Obtain an Application Package**

#### **Instructions for Applicants**

All application materials, including the Application Instructions and Application Package, are available through Grants.gov. You must access and review all available application materials. You must submit your application electronically via Grants.gov under the Funding Opportunity Number cited within this NOFO. Your application must list the applicable Funding Opportunity Number.

You can request a waiver from the requirement for electronic submission, if you demonstrate good cause. An example of good cause may include: a lack of available Internet access in the geographic area in which your business offices are located. However, lack of SAM registration or valid UEI is not good cause. If you cannot submit your application electronically, you must ask in writing for a waiver of the electronic application submission requirements. HUD will not grant a waiver if you fail to submit to HUD by email or postmark by mail a request for a waiver at least 15 calendar days before the application deadline. If HUD grants a waiver, a paper application must be received before the deadline for this NOFO. To request a waiver, you must contact:

Name:

Choice Neighborhoods

Email:

ChoiceNeighborhoods@hud.gov

HUD Organization:

Street:

City:

State:

Zip:

## B. Content and Form of Application Submission

You must verify that boxes 11, 12, and 13 on the SF-424 match the NOFO for which you are applying. If they do not match, you have downloaded the wrong Application Instruction and Application Package.

Submission of an application that is otherwise sufficient, but is under the wrong Assistance Listing and Funding Opportunity Number is a Non-Curable Deficiency, and will be rejected, unless otherwise stated under the Threshold requirements section. When applying with a UEI that does not match the organization name as registered in sam.gov will result in an ineligible applications.

### 1. Content

<b>Forms/Assurances/Certifications</b>	<b>Submission Requirement</b>	<b>Notes/Description</b>
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	This form is required.	Review section IV.B.2.a. of this NOFO for detailed application requirements.
Applicant and Recipient Assurances and Certifications (HUD 424-B)	This form is required.	Review section IV.B.2.a. of this NOFO for detailed application requirements.
Applicant/Recipient Disclosure/Update Report (HUD 2880)	This form is required.	Review section IV.B.2.a. of this NOFO for detailed application requirements.
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	This form is conditionally required.	Review section IV.B.2.a. of this NOFO for detailed application requirements.
Certification Regarding Lobbying Activities	This form is required.	
Federal Assistance Representations and Certifications	This form is required via sam.gov	To assure compliance with statutory requirements for HUD programs, you must complete the “Federal Assistance Representations and Certifications”

<b>Forms/Assurances/Certifications</b>	<b>Submission Requirement</b>	<b>Notes/Description</b>
		<p>section of your sam.gov registration. HUD and OMB use information reported within sam.gov for general management of Federal assistance awards programs. For more information on how to update your sam.gov registration, visit SAM.gov or the Federal Service Desk, FSD.gov. You can search for help at FSD any time or request help from an FSD agent Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.</p>
<p>HUD Preference Points - Documentation</p>		
<p>Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)</p>	<p>This form is required.</p>	<p>This form is contained within the Application Package.</p>
<p>Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation (HUD-50153)</p>		<p>This form is contained within the Instruction Package.</p>
<p>Minority Serving Institutions Preference Points - Documentation</p>		
<p>Planning Grants Table of Contents (HUD-53150)</p>	<p>All applicants must complete and submit this form.</p>	<p>As this form is updated annually, make sure to use the FY24 version provided in the grants.gov application package download</p>
<p>Key Eligibility Data form (HUD-53152)</p>	<p>All applicants must complete and submit this form.</p>	<p>Please note there are multiple tabs in the Excel workbook.</p>
<p>Certification of Severe Physical Distress (HUD-53232)</p>	<p>All applicants must complete and</p>	

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	submit this form.	
Leverage documentation cover sheet (HUD-53154)		
Previous Participation Certification (HUD-2530)		
Certification of Consistency with the Consolidated Plan (HUD-2991)		Be sure to use the version of the form provided in the application package download via grants.gov.
Rural Equity Preference Points - Documentation (HUD-425)		Contained in the Instructions Download

**Instructions on Application Organization and Content.** The following provides instructions on the organization and content of your application. It lists the narrative exhibits and other attachments, and instructions for each, that are required as part of the application. All narrative exhibits and other attachments (including forms) are required to be submitted in your application unless otherwise indicated. **Please be advised that not providing information clearly and consistently, and/or not providing exhibits and attachments in accordance with the instructions and documentation requirements in this NOFO, may negatively impact HUD's ability to determine if your application meets threshold requirements or to score your application. This could result in your application not being able to be scored and ranked or a lower score. Please also only submit documents that are required to respond to a threshold requirement and/or rating factor.** HUD forms required by this NOFO are provided in the application package download at <http://www.grants.gov/>. The list of narrative exhibits and attachments, and instructions for each, are specified below.

(1) **Table of Contents.** Use form provided (form HUD-53150). This form also serves as an application checklist to ensure complete submission.

(2) **Narrative Exhibit Attachments.**

**Exhibit A Executive Summary.** There are often many communities that meet the Choice Neighborhoods criteria for housing need and poverty. Explain why you selected this neighborhood and what defining neighborhood characteristics (both needs and assets) led to its selection. Describe the target neighborhood's and target housing's challenges, the current image of the neighborhood (including positive and negative aspects), the Neighborhood Assets (as defined in this NOFO) on which your planning approach will build, and what you plan to use this grant to achieve. Include a profile of the neighborhood (demographic information, crime rates, school performance, employment rate, etc.) and how it compares to the city (or county/parish). Provide a brief overview of the neighborhood planning process and identify key partner

organizations with which you will be working, with particular emphasis on public safety, education, health, and income and employment. Include preliminary observations on the neighborhood's market potential. Describe the basis of how the neighborhood boundaries were established. (Note: HUD reserves the right to ask applicants to provide evidence during the review process that the target neighborhood boundary is generally accepted.)

**Exhibit B Threshold Requirements and Other Submission Requirements.** Respond to the Threshold Requirements (Section III.D) and the Advancing Racial Equity, Experience in Promoting Racial Equity, and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing requirements (Section III.F).

**Exhibit C Capacity.** Respond to the rating factors in V.A.1.A.

**Exhibit D Need - Structural and Design Deficiencies.** Respond to the rating factors in V.A.1.B.

**Exhibit E Soundness of Approach.** Respond to the rating factors in V.A.1.C.

**(3) Forms and Other Attachments.**

Attachment 1. **Key Eligibility Data Form.** Complete the form provided (form HUD-53152). Provide backup documentation, as applicable, in the appropriate attachment identified below.

Attachment 2. **Eligible Applicant Documentation.** Respond to the requirements in III.A.1, as applicable.

- i. Certification for Multifamily Assisted Property Owners.
- ii. Nonprofit applicant.
- iii. Co-Applicant MOU or Letter of Agreement.
- iv. Letter from housing project owner.

Attachment 3. **Eligible Target Housing Documentation - Severe Physical Distress of Targeted Project Certification.** Respond to the requirement in III.A.2 by completing the form provided (form HUD-53232).

Attachment 4. **Eligible Neighborhood Documentation - Eligible Neighborhood Data.** Respond to the requirement in III.A.3 by providing the PDF received via email that contains data generated from the mapping tool provided on [www.hud.gov/cn](http://www.hud.gov/cn).

Attachment 5. **Resident Involvement Documentation.** Provide the required resident notification document as described in IV.G.2.b.

Attachment 6. **Structural and Environmental Deficiencies Documentation.** Respond to the rating factor in V.A.1.B.1.a by providing the documentation identified in that section, as relevant. Include photographs as part of the documentation.

Attachment 7. **Design Deficiencies Documentation.** Respond to the rating factor in V.A.1.B.1.b by providing the documentation identified in that section, as relevant. Include photographs as part of the documentation.

Attachment 8. **Substandard Housing Documentation.** If applicable, respond to the rating factor in V.A.1.B.2.b by providing the documentation identified in that section.

Attachment 9. **Brownfields Cleanup Documentation.** Respond to the rating factor in V.A.1.B.2.c by providing the documentation identified in that section.

Attachment 10. **Staffing Plan.** Respond to the rating factor in V.A.1.C.1.

Attachment 11. **Evidence of Partnerships.** Respond to the rating factor in V.A.1.C.5.

Attachment 12. **Budget.** Respond to the rating factor in V.A.1.C.7.

Attachment 13. **Documentation to Support Consistency with Consolidated Plan.** Respond to the rating factor in V.A.1.C.8 by providing the form HUD-2991.

Attachment 14. **Documentation to Support Consistency with PHA/MTW Plan.** Respond to



the rating factor in V.A.1.C.9 by providing the certification required under that section.

Attachment 15. **Evidence of Local Government Support.** Respond to the rating factors in V.A.1.C.10.

Attachment 16. **Leverage Documentation.** Respond to the rating factor in V.A.1.D. Include the cover sheet provided (form HUD-53154).

Attachment 17. **Preference Points**, if applicable. Respond to the rating factors in V.A.2 by providing the required documentation.

Attachment 18. **Planning Schedule.** Provide the proposed planning schedule for the grant term.

Attachment 19. **City and Neighborhood Maps.** Provide city and neighborhood maps to-scale that clearly identify and label the target neighborhood, target housing, and other useful information to place the proposed project in the context of existing city streets, the central business district, other key city and neighborhood sites, census tracts, neighborhood assets, and other revitalization activity underway or planned. The City and Neighborhood Maps provide essential context for HUD reviewers, so it is essential that applicants provide a map that is readable and at a reasonable scale. Make sure the neighborhood map shows the same boundary used to draw the neighborhood through the mapping tool that generated the eligible neighborhoods data required in Attachment 4.

Attachment 20. **Current Site Plan.** Provide a Current Site Plan that shows and clearly labels the target housing site's various buildings. Demolished buildings should be shown and labeled as such. Label all uses and buildings adjoining the existing development.

Attachment 21. **Photographs of the Target Housing and Neighborhood.** Submit photographs of the targeted severely distressed housing and neighborhood that illustrate the extent of distress as well as reflect the existing assets.

## **2. Other Submission Requirements**

### **a. Standard Application, Assurances, Certifications and Disclosures**

#### **(1) Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Application for Federal Assistance**

The SF-424 is the government-wide form required to apply for Federal assistance programs, discretionary awards, and other forms of financial assistance programs. You must complete and submit the form with the other required forms and information as directed in this NOFO.

By signing the forms in the SF-424 either through electronic submission or in paper copy submission (for those granted a waiver), you and the signing authorized organization representative affirm that you both have reviewed the certifications and assurances associated with the application for Federal assistance and (1) are aware the submission of the SF-424 is an assertion that the relevant certifications and assurances are established and (2) acknowledge that the truthfulness of the certifications and assurances are material representations upon which HUD will rely when making an award to the applicant. If it is later determined the signing authorized organization representative to the application made a false certification or assurance, caused the submission of a false certification or assurance, or did not have the authority to make a legally binding commitment for the applicant, the applicant and the individual who signed the application may be subject to administrative, civil, or criminal action. Additionally, HUD may terminate the award to the applicant organization or pursue other available remedies. Each applicant is responsible for including the correct certifications and assurances with its application submission, including those applicable to all applicants, those applicable only to Federally

recognized Indian tribes, or Alaskan native villages and those applicable to applicants other than Federally recognized Indian tribes, or Alaskan native villages.

## **(2) Assurances (HUD 424-B)**

By submitting your application, you provide assurances that, if selected to receive an award, you will comply with U.S. statutory and other requirements, including, but not limited to civil rights requirements. All recipients and subrecipients of the award are required to submit assurances of compliance with Federal civil rights requirements. *See, e.g.*, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Violence Against Women Act, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; *see also* [24 CFR §§ 1.5; 3.115; 8.50](#); and [146.25](#). HUD accepts these assurances in the form of the HUD 424-B, which also require compliance with HUD Reform Act requirements and all general Federal nondiscrimination requirements in the administration of the Federal assistance award.

## **(3) Applicant Disclosure Report Form 2880 (HUD 2880)**

The form HUD 2880 is required if you are applying for assistance within the jurisdiction of HUD to any project subject to Section 102(d) of the HUD Reform Act . Assistance is provided directly by HUD to any person or entity, but not to subrecipients. It includes assistance for the acquisition, rehabilitation, operation, conversion, modernization, renovation, or demolition of any property containing five or more dwelling units that is to be used primarily for residential purposes. It includes assistance to independent group residences, board and care facilities, group homes and transitional housing but does not include primarily nonresidential facilities such as intermediate care facilities, nursing homes and hospitals. It also includes any change requested by a recipient in the amount of assistance previously provided, except changes resulting from annual adjustments in Section 8 rents under Section 8(c)(2)(A) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 ([42 U.S.C. § 1437f](#)). [See 24 CFR part 4 for additional information.](#)

## **(4) Code of Conduct**

Both you, as the award recipient, and all subrecipients must have a code of conduct (or written standards of conduct). The code of conduct must comply with the requirements included in the “Conducting Business in Accordance with Ethical Standards” section of the Administrative, National and Department Policy Requirements and Terms for HUD Financial Assistance Awards-- 2024, as well as any program-specific requirements. These requirements include ethical standards related to conflicts of interest for procurements in [2 CFR 200.318\(c\)](#) and [2 CFR 200.317](#), as well as HUD-specific conflict of interest standards. HUD maintains a list of organizations that have previously submitted written standards of conduct on its [Code of Conduct for HUD Grant Programs webpage](#). But it is your responsibility to ensure that the standards are compliant with the noted requirements and that HUD has the latest version of the written standards. Updated written standards should be submitted with the application. Any updates to your written standards, after the application period, should be submitted as directed by the HUD program contact for this NOFO.

## **(5) False Statements**

Applicant understands that providing false or misleading information during any part of the application, award, or performance phase of an award may result in criminal, civil or administrative sanctions, including but not limited to: fines, restitution, and/or imprisonment

under 18 USC 1001, 18 USC 1012, or 18 USC 287; treble damages and civil penalties under the False Claims Act, 31 USC 3729 et seq.; double damages and civil penalties under the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act, 31 USC 3801 et seq.; civil recovery of award funds; suspension and/or debarment from all federal procurement and non-procurement transactions, FAR Part 9.4 or 2 CFR Part 180; and other remedies including termination of active HUD award.

### **(6) Lobbying Activities**

Applicants are subject to the provisions of Section 319 of Public Law 101-121, 31 U.S.C. 1352, (the Byrd Amendment), and 24 CFR part 87, which prohibit recipients of federal awards from using appropriated funds for lobbying the executive or legislative branches of the Federal government in connection with a Federal award. All applicants must submit with their application the signed “Certification Regarding Lobbying” form. In addition, applicants must disclose, using Standard Form LLL (SF-LLL), “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” any funds, other than federally appropriated funds, that will be or have been used to influence federal employees, members of Congress, or congressional staff regarding specific awards. Federally recognized Indian tribes and tribally designated housing entities (TDHEs) established by Federally recognized Indian tribes as a result of the exercise of the tribe’s sovereign power are excluded from coverage of the Byrd Amendment, but state-recognized Indian tribes and TDHEs established only under state law shall comply with this requirement.

**b. Resident Involvement.** In accordance with section 24(e)(2)(D) of the 1937 Act, applicants must involve affected residents at the beginning and during the planning process for the transformation program, including prior to the submission of an application. Prior to the application deadline, an applicant must provide written notice to each household of the target housing about the application for this Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant. The notification must include a brief description of the proposed planning process, general timeline, the primary point of contact for the applicant entity with his/her contact information, and the notice must state that residents have the right to ask questions and provide comments. HUD urges applicants to distribute this notice well in advance of the grant application deadline to provide ample time for residents to comment. The applicant must consider these questions and comments when drafting the grant application. The notification must be delivered either by mail or personal delivery to each household (though it does not need to be sent via certified mail). Other forms of communication, such as email messages, website and social media posts, etc. do not satisfy this threshold requirement. In seeking public participation, applicants must ensure that all communications are provided in a manner that is effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other communications-related disabilities consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and, as applicable, the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d and Executive Order 13166 require that grantees take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to services, programs, and activities by persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP persons). To demonstrate compliance with this requirement, the application must include a copy of the notification delivered.

### **3. Format and Form**

Narratives and other attachments to your application must follow the following format guidelines. Do not submit password protected or encrypted files.

80 Pages maximum length of narratives

Double spaced 12-point (minimum) Times Roman font on letter sized paper (8 1/2 x 11 inches) with at least 1-inch margins on all sides.

**a. Application Layout.**

(1) The first part of an application consists of narrative exhibits. The narratives respond to requirements, rating factors, and other criteria in the NOFO, as indicated below.

(2) The second part of an application consists of forms and other attachments. These documents also respond to the rating factors in the NOFO, as well as threshold and mandatory documentation requirements. They include documents such as maps, photographs, application data forms, and various certifications.

(3) Any pages marked as sub-pages (e.g., with numbers and letters such as 25A, 25B, 25C), will be treated as separate pages;

(4) If a section is not applicable, indicate 'N/A' as a clear indication to HUD (do not leave the section blank);

(5) No more than one page of text may be placed on one sheet of paper (i.e., you may not shrink pages to get two or more on a page). Shrunken pages, or pages where a minimized/reduced font are used, will be counted as multiple pages;

(6) Do not format the narrative exhibits in columns. Pages with text in columns will be counted as two pages;

(7) Any tables included in the narrative exhibits of the application must also be double spaced or they will be counted twice.

(8) All pages should be numbered. HUD recommends applicants consecutively number the pages of the Attachments section to ensure proper assembly of their application if printed.

**b. Format and Title Instructions.** Upload each narrative exhibit and attachment as its own separate file, with a title page based on the organization instruction in the section above. Do NOT upload an application that has multiple exhibits or attachments in the same file. HUD will use title pages as tabs when it downloads the application. Each title page should only contain the name of the narrative exhibit or attachment (e.g., “Exhibit A Executive Summary”) and the name of the Lead Applicant. **WARNING:** The file name should be less than 50 characters and not include spaces or special characters. Also, please note that Grants.gov is a system used by the entire Federal government and its structure does not necessarily reflect the Choice Neighborhoods NOFO (i.e. its attachment 1 does not mean the Choice Neighborhoods Attachment 1). Applicants should zip together the multiple attachment files (in one or more zip files, depending on the size) they have prepared in accordance with this NOFO and plug them into the slots provided by Grants.gov.

**c. Application Page Count.**

(1) Each Choice Neighborhoods application must contain no more than 80 pages of narrative exhibits and attachments. HUD will not consider the information on any excess pages, which may result in a lower score.

(2) Exceptions to page limits. The documents listed below constitute the only exceptions and are not counted in the page limit listed above. Extraneous information not requested in the NOFO that is provided in these attachments will be counted toward the page limit.

- Pages submitted at the request of HUD in response to a curable deficiency
- Table of Contents
- Eligible Applicants documentation (Attachment 2)
- The report generated from the mapping tool received via email (Attachment 4)

- Evidence of Partnership letters (Attachment 11)
- Leverage documentation (Attachment 16)
- Standard Forms (SF-424, HUD-424B, Lobbying Certification, SF-LLL, etc.)
- Tabs/title pages that are blank or display a title/header/'n/a' indication

## C. System for Award Management (SAM) and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)

### 1. SAM Registration Requirement

You must register at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) before submitting an application. You must maintain current information in SAM on immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries, as well as on all predecessors that a Federal award within the last three years, if applicable. Information in SAM must be current for all times during which you have an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by HUD.

### 2. UEI Requirement

All entities doing business with the Federal government must use the UEI created in SAM.gov. Your application must include a valid UEI that is registered and active at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). For more information, see: <https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/organization/Federal-acquisition-service/office-of-systems-management/integrated-award-environment-iae/iae-systems-information-kit/unique-entity-identifier-update>. **When submitting an application with a UEI that does not match the organization name as registered in sam.gov will result in an ineligible application.**

### 3. Requirement to Register with Grants.gov

Anyone planning to submit applications on behalf of an organization must register at Grants.gov and be approved by the E-Biz POC in SAM to submit applications for the organization. Registration for SAM and Grants.gov is a multi-step process and can take four (4) weeks or longer to complete if data issues arise. Applicants without a valid registration cannot apply through Grants.gov. Complete registration instructions and guidance are provided on Grants.gov.

## D. Application Submission Dates and Times

### 1. Application Due Date Explanation

The application deadline is 11:59:59 PM Eastern time on

06/10/2024

Submit your application to Grants.gov unless a waiver has been issued allowing you to submit a paper application. Instructions for submitting your paper application will be contained in the waiver of electronic submission.

“Received by Grants.gov” means the applicant received a confirmation of receipt and an application tracking number from Grants.gov. Grants.gov then assigns an application tracking number and date-and timestamp each application upon successful receipt by the Grants.gov system. A submission attempt not resulting in confirmation of receipt and an application tracking number is not considered received by Grants.gov.

Applications received by Grants.gov must be validated by Grants.gov to be received by HUD.

“Validated by Grants.gov” means the application has been accepted and was not rejected with errors. You can track the status of your application by logging into Grants.gov, selecting “Applicants” from the top navigation, and selecting “Track my application” from the dropdown list. If the application status is “rejected with errors,” you must correct the error(s) and resubmit the application before the 24-hour grace period ends. Applications in “rejected with errors” status after the 24-hour grace period expires will not be received by HUD. Visit Grants.gov for a complete description of processing steps after applying.

HUD strongly recommends you review your application before you submit it at Grants.gov. Also, HUD recommends you submit your application at least **48 hours before the deadline** and during regular business hours to allow enough time to correct errors or overcome other problems.

## **2. Grants.gov Customer Support**

Grants.gov provides customer support information on its website at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>. If you have difficulty accessing the application and instructions or have technical problems, contact Grants.gov customer support center by calling (800) 518-GRANTS (this is a toll-free number) or by sending an email to [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). The customer support center is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week, except Federal holidays. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as individuals who have speech or other communication disabilities may use a relay service to reach Grants.gov Customer Support. To learn more about how to make an accessible telephone call, visit the [webpage for Federal Communications Commission](#).

## **3. Grants.gov Application Submission**

You can verify the contents of your submitted application to confirm Grants.gov received everything you intended to submit. To verify the contents of your submitted application:

- Log in to Grants.gov.
- Click the Check Application Status link, which appears under the Grant Applications heading in the Applicant Center page. This will take you to the Check Application Status page.
- Enter search criteria and a date range to narrow your search results.
- Click the Search button. To review your search results in Microsoft Excel, click the Export Data button.
- Review the Status column. To view more detailed submission information, click the Details link in the Actions column.
- To download the submitted application, click the Download link in the Actions column.

Take note of the Grants.gov tracking number, as it is needed by the Grants.gov customer support center should you seek their assistance.

HUD may extend the application deadline for any program if Grants.gov is offline or not available to applicants for at least 24 hours immediately prior to the deadline date, or the system is down for 24 hours or longer and impacts the ability of applicants to cure a submission deficiency within the grace period.

HUD may also extend the application deadline upon request if there is a presidentially declared disaster in the applicant’s area.

If these events occur, HUD will post a notice on its website establishing the new, extended deadline for the affected applicants. HUD will also publish the extension on Grants.gov.

In determining whether to grant a request for an extension based on a presidentially declared disaster, HUD will consider the totality of the circumstances including the date of an applicant's extension request (how closely it followed the basis for the extension), whether other applicants in the geographic area are similarly affected by the disaster, and how quickly power or services are restored to enable the applicant to submit its application.

**NOTE:** Busy servers, slow processing, large file sizes, improper registration or password issues are not valid circumstances to extend the deadline dates or the grace period.

#### **4. Amend or Revise an Application**

Before the submission deadline, you may amend a validated application through Grants.gov by submitting a revised and complete application including the new or changed material. The revised application must be received and validated by Grants.gov by the applicable deadline.

If HUD receives an original and a revised application for a single proposal, HUD will evaluate only the last submission received by Grants.gov before the deadline.

#### **5. Grace Period for Grants.gov Submissions**

If your application is received by Grants.gov before the deadline, but is rejected with errors, you have a grace period of 24 hours after the application deadline to submit a corrected, received, and validated application through Grants.gov. The date and time stamp on the Grants.gov system determines the application receipt time. Any application submitted during the grace period but not received and validated by Grants.gov will not be considered for funding. There is no grace period for paper applications.

#### **6. Late Applications**

An application received after the NOFO deadline date that does not meet the Grace Period requirements will be marked late and will not be reviewed by HUD for funding

consideration. Improper or expired registration and password issues are not sufficient causes to allow HUD to accept applications after the deadline date.

#### **7. Corrections to Deficient Applications**

HUD will not consider information from applicants after the application deadline except for curable deficiencies.

HUD will uniformly notify applicants of each curable deficiency. See curable deficiency definition in section I.A of this NOFO. Examples of curable (correctable) deficiencies include inconsistencies in the funding request and failure to submit required certifications. These examples are non-exhaustive.

When HUD identifies a curable deficiency, HUD will notify the authorized organization representative identified on the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance via email. This email is the official notification of a curable deficiency.

You must email corrections of Curable Deficiencies to [applicationsupport@hud.gov](mailto:applicationsupport@hud.gov) within the time limits specified in the notification. The time allowed to correct deficiencies will be no less



than 48 hours and no more than 14 calendar days from the date of the email notification. The start of the cure period will be the date stamp on the email sent from HUD. If the deficiency cure deadline date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, Federal holiday, or on a day when HUD's Headquarters are closed, then the applicant's correction must be received on the next business day HUD Headquarters offices in Washington, DC are open.

The subject line of the email sent to [applicationsupport@hud.gov](mailto:applicationsupport@hud.gov) must state: Technical Cure and include the Grants.gov application tracking number or the GrantSolutions application number (e.g., Subject: Technical Cure - GRANT123456 or Technical Cure - XXXXXXXXXXXX). If this information is not included, HUD cannot match the response with the application under review and the application may be rejected due to the deficiency.

Corrections to a paper application must be sent in accordance with and to the address indicated in the notification of deficiency. HUD will treat a paper application submitted in accordance with a waiver of electronic application containing the wrong UEI as having a curable deficiency. Failure to correct the deficiency and meet the requirement to have a UEI and active registration in SAM will render the application ineligible for funding.

## **8. Authoritative Versions of HUD NOFOs**

The version of this NOFO posted on Grants.gov includes the official documents HUD uses to solicit applications.

## **9. Exemptions**

Parties that believe the requirements of the NOFO would impose a substantial burden on the exercise of their religion should seek an exemption under the [Religious Freedom Restoration Act](#) (RFRA).

# **E. Intergovernmental Review**

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

# **F. Funding Restrictions**

## **1. Statutory Time Limits.**

a. Required Obligation Date. Funds appropriated for the Choice Neighborhoods program for FY 2024 must be obligated by HUD on or before September 30, 2028. Any funds not obligated by that date will not be available for obligation for any purpose.

b. Required Expenditure Date. In accordance with 31 U.S.C. 1552, all FY 2024 Choice Neighborhoods funds must be expended by September 30, 2033. Any funds not expended by that date will be canceled and recaptured by the Treasury and thereafter will not be available for expenditure for any purpose. The term of a Planning Grant, however, is 30 months from the Grant Award date so no funds will remain obligated and unexpended at cancellation.

**2. Grant Sizing and Use of Grant Funds.** The maximum award for a Planning Grant is \$500,000. No more than \$400,000 of grant funds may be used to pay for costs of overall the planning process. Up to \$150,000 may be used toward Early Action Activities. (Accordingly, at least \$100,000 must be dedicated to Early Action Activities if requesting the maximum grant award.)

## **3. Cost Control Standards.**



a. Cost estimates must represent an economically viable preliminary plan for designing, planning, and carrying out the proposed activities, in accordance with local costs of labor, materials, and services.

b. Projected soft costs must be reasonable and comparable to industry standards and in accordance with the applicable policy, statute and/or regulations.

c. Grantees must provide a detailed budget identifying the specific use of all grant funds. In particular, if a Planning Coordinator has been or will be procured, the budget must break out the fee paid to the Planning Coordinator as well the budget for each specific activity included in the Planning Coordinator contract (such as a market study, etc.).

**4. Budget Deductions.** HUD may delete any unallowable items from the proposed budget and may reduce the grant amount accordingly. HUD will not fund any portion of an application that: (a) is not eligible for funding under specific HUD program statutory or regulatory requirements; (b) does not meet the requirements of this notice; or (c) is duplicative of other funded programs or activities from prior year awards or other selected applicants. Only the eligible portions of an application (excluding duplicative portions) may be funded.

**5. Grant Reduction or Recapture.** If an application is selected for funding, and the grantee subsequently proposes to make significant changes to the planning process, compared to what was presented in this application, HUD reserves the right to amend the award and reduce the amount or recapture the grant. Further, if a grantee fails to propose approvable Early Action Activities, HUD may amend the award to reduce the amount and recapture a portion of the grant.

**6. Withdrawal of Grant Amounts.** In accordance with section 24(i) of the 1937 Act, if a grantee does not proceed within a reasonable timeframe, HUD reserves the right to withdraw any funds the grantee has not obligated under its award. HUD may redistribute any withdrawn amounts to one or more other applicants eligible for Choice Neighborhoods assistance or to one or more other entities capable of proceeding expeditiously in the same locality in carrying out the Choice Neighborhoods plan of the original grantee.

**7. Ineligible Use of Grant Funds.** Grantees may not use Choice Neighborhoods funds to pay for:

a. any activities carried out on or before the date of the letter announcing the award of the Choice Neighborhoods grant.

b. the cost of Choice Neighborhoods grant application preparation (including a potential future Implementation Grant application).

c. any Ineligible Activities.

### **Indirect Cost Rate**

As further explained below, this program is subject to a statute or regulation that imposes indirect cost rate restrictions that are different from the indirect cost rate requirements in 2 CFR part 200, particularly 2 CFR 200.414.

In accordance with section 24 of the 1937 Act, as amended, funding under this program may only be used for direct costs. Therefore, indirect costs are not permitted under this NOFO.

### **G. Other Program-specific Requirements**

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## V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### A. Review Criteria

#### 1. Rating Factors

Rating Category	Rating Factor	Points
<b>A. Capacity</b>		
	Capacity to lead the planning process	9
	Experience Engaging Residents and Community Stakeholders	5
	Experience Conducting Asset & Needs Assessments	3
	Experience Implementing Community Development Plans	3
	<i>subtotal</i>	<b>20</b>
<b>B. Need</b>		
	<i>Unit Distress</i>	
	Structural and Environmental Deficiencies	6
	Design Deficiencies	6
	<i>Neighborhood Distress</i>	
	Poverty/ELI (Neighborhood poverty)	6
	Long-term vacancy or substandard homes	3
	Brownfields Cleanup	2
	<i>Need for Affordable Housing</i>	
	Need for affordable housing in the community	2
	<i>subtotal</i>	<b>25</b>
<b>C. Soundness of Approach</b>		
	Staffing Plan	9
	Resident engagement	7
	Community engagement	7
	Assets and Needs assessment	5
	Partnerships	8
	Visioning and decision-making	5
	Budget	2
	Certification of Consistency with Consolidated Plan	2
	Certification of Consistency with PHA/MTW Plan	2
	Local government support	5
	<i>subtotal</i>	<b>52</b>

<b>D. Leverage</b>		
	Leverage for planning	3
	<i>subtotal</i>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preference Points</b>		
	Promise Zones, Rural Partners Network Community Networks, and/or Minority Serving Institutions (2 points each, max 4 points)	4
	<i>subtotal</i>	<b>4</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>

**A. CAPACITY**

**Maximum Points: 20**

**1. Capacity to Lead the Planning Process** (9 points). This rating factor evaluates the organizational capacity of the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant (if applicable) to effectively lead and coordinate a comprehensive neighborhood planning process based on past experience. Points will be awarded based on the extent to which the application demonstrates that the applicant(s) have experience leading a planning process for complex projects. This includes managing a visioning process with residents and other stakeholders; coordinating partners in developing and prioritizing strategies; and creating a cohesive plan. To demonstrate this past experience, the application must include specific examples that detail the Lead and Co-Applicant's experience in undertaking planning efforts that support any of the CN program's three core goals of Housing, People, and Neighborhood. The examples can be either those of the applicant organization from prior projects or based on the experience of current senior leadership/key staff while working for a different organization prior to being employed by the applicant. The description of the examples must include the start and end dates of when the activities occurred and should be within the past 10 years. Fewer points will be awarded for lack of detail and/or failure to demonstrate capacity. HUD will also consider past performance in accordance with Section V.B.1 in its evaluation of this rating factor.

**2. Experience Engaging Residents and Community Stakeholders** (5 points). This rating factor evaluates the extent to which the application demonstrates how the applicant(s) engaged residents and other stakeholders in prior planning efforts. Points will be awarded based on the extent to which the application demonstrates there was meaningful engagement with residents and community-based partners such as anchor institutions, faith-based institutions, local business owners, and other community organizations, and that these groups influenced the planning process and the determined priority outcomes. Applicants should provide concrete examples of resident and community engagement and the results of that engagement.

**3. Experience Conducting Asset & Needs Assessments** (3 points). Successful applicants will need to conduct a thorough assessment of the existing assets and needs related to both the neighborhood and individual households of the target housing. Neighborhood-level assessments include topics such as identifying the neighborhood's access to key assets, analyzing patterns of disinvestment, categorizing challenges and gaps in neighborhood services and assets. Household-level assessments involve surveying and/or interviewing resident households to help identify the current strengths and challenges in the areas of income and employment, health, and education, as well as resident satisfaction with existing services and preferences for new services. Points will be awarded based on the extent to which the application demonstrates that

the applicant(s) have experience in conducting comprehensive assessments at both the neighborhood-level and household-level.

**4. Experience Implementing Community Development Plans** (3 points). This rating factor evaluates the experience of the Lead Applicant and/or Co-Applicant in implementing projects, activities or other key elements resulting from a complex planning process that involved one or more of the CN goals of Housing, People, and Neighborhood as described in the example(s) in the prior rating factors. Points will be awarded based on the extent to which the key components of prior planning efforts were implemented. Discuss what these elements were; how they were implemented; and the specific role of the Lead Applicant and/or Co-Applicant in implementation.

## **B. NEED**

**Maximum Points: 25**

**1. Severe Physical Distress of the Target Housing.** HUD will evaluate the extent of the severe physical distress of the public and/or assisted housing project(s) that are proposed for redevelopment as part of the Choice Neighborhoods grant.

(a) **Structural and Environmental Deficiencies** (6 points). An application will be evaluated based on the extent to which it demonstrates significant deficiencies in the physical structural elements, building systems, on-site infrastructure, and environmental conditions of the targeted public and/or assisted housing units such that significant rehabilitation or demolition is required. Examples of structural elements include roofs, foundations, and structural walls. Building systems include electrical, plumbing, heating and cooling, and mechanical systems. On-site infrastructure includes site work, sewer and storm drain laterals, or other on-site utilities. Environmental hazards include internal hazards such as lead-based paint, radon, and mold, and external hazards such as air pollution, water or soil contamination, or other conditions impacting the target housing site(s).

This may be demonstrated in an application through narrative description, additional physical inspection information, letters from relevant oversight agencies, and/or pictures in the attachments section. If this application is for more than one public and/or assisted housing project, descriptions must be submitted for each site and HUD will consider documentation provided for all properties. Fewer points may be awarded for descriptions that are inadequate and/or demonstrate less severe distress. Zero points will be awarded if the documentation does not demonstrate severe distress, evidences that the deficiencies are cosmetic or require routine repair/maintenance, or does not provide adequate information to make HUD's rating of this factor possible. If the targeted units are public housing and HUD has already approved a Section 18 demolition of the targeted units, submit a copy of HUD's letter approving the demolition to receive full points. If the targeted units are Indian Housing that have been demolished, the application will receive full points if it contains a copy of the written notification of demolition provided to HUD in accordance with 24 CFR 1000.134.

(b) **Design Deficiencies** (6 points). An application will be evaluated based on the extent to which it demonstrates that there are fundamental design deficiencies, of a type and character that require substantial rehabilitation or reconstruction to fully address, related to:

(1) substantially inappropriate building design or site layout and street connectivity when compared to the surrounding neighborhood which may include inappropriate density;

- (2) inadequate room size and/or unit configurations to meet the needs of existing residents;
- (3) lack of defensible space, related to how the building layout and orientation does or does not allow residents to have more control over security around their homes;
- (4) disproportionately high and adverse environmental health effects associated with ongoing residency;
- (5) physical inaccessibility for persons with disabilities with regard to individual dwelling units (e.g., fewer than the minimum requirement of five percent designated accessible mobility units and an additional two percent designated accessible sensory units), entrances/entryways, and public and common areas; and
- (6) significant utility expenses (at least 30 percent higher than similar properties) caused by energy conservation deficiencies that may be documented by an energy audit. This may be demonstrated in an application through narrative description, additional physical inspection information, letters from relevant oversight agencies, and/or pictures in the attachments section. If this application is for more than one public and/or assisted housing project, descriptions should be submitted for each site and HUD will consider documentation provided for all properties.

The application will receive full points if it demonstrates fundamental design deficiencies, of a type and character that require substantial rehabilitation or reconstruction to fully address, in 3 or more of these deficiencies. Fewer points will be awarded for applications that address fewer than 3 items, demonstrate less severe distress, and/or for responses that are inadequate. The application will receive 0 points if it does not address any of these items, does not demonstrate distress, or does not address this factor to an extent that makes HUD's rating of this factor possible.

If the targeted units are public housing and HUD has already approved a Section 18 demolition of the targeted units, submit a copy of HUD's letter approving the demolition to receive full points. If the targeted units are Indian Housing that have been demolished, the application will receive full points if it contains a copy of the written notification of demolition provided to HUD in accordance with 24 CFR 1000.134.

**2. Severe Distress of the Targeted Neighborhood.** Choice Neighborhoods grants are intended to help communities turn around distressed neighborhoods. HUD will evaluate the level of neighborhood-wide distress through the following rating factors.

(a) **Neighborhood Poverty** (6 points). An application will be evaluated based on the concentration of households in poverty or with extremely low incomes (whichever is greater) residing within the target neighborhood. HUD will use the same data from the mapping tool as used for the Eligible Neighborhood requirement to assign points for this factor.

Concentration of Households in Poverty or with Extremely Low Incomes	Points Awarded
40.00 percent and above	6
Between 33.00 and 39.99 percent	4
Between 25.00 and 32.99 percent	2
Less than 25.00 percent	0

(b) **Long-term Vacancy or Substandard Homes** (3 points). An application will be evaluated based on the current rate of long-term vacant properties or substandard homes within the target neighborhood. Only applicants targeting Indian housing may be evaluated based on substandard homes.

i. An application will earn points for the higher of either the rate of vacant housing or the ratio of vacant housing in the neighborhood to the county/parish in accordance with the table below. HUD will use data from the mapping tool to determine the vacancy rate for this scoring criteria and the Eligible Neighborhood requirement.

Current Long-Term Vacancy Rate in the Target Neighborhood	Current Long-Term Vacancy Rate in the Neighborhood is X times the County/Parish Rate	Points Awarded
14.00 percent and above	3.50 and above	3
Between 11.00 and 13.99 percent	Between 2.75 and 3.49	2
Between 7.00 and 10.99 percent	Between 2.00 and 2.74	1
Less than 7.00 percent	Less than 2.00	0

ii. Alternatively, applications targeting Indian housing can be evaluated based on the percentage of occupied housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities, as indicated by the most recent data from the American Community Survey (ACS) for your neighborhood. If the rate is 8.00 percent or above, the application will earn 2 points. If the rate is between 4.00 and 7.99 percent, the application will earn 1 point. ACS data from census tracts that cover the majority of the neighborhood can be used to approximate neighborhood-level data (please indicate tracts). The application must include a photocopy/print out of published data including the relevant full page or pages from the original source, such as a printed publication or website, and the source must be identifiable on the photocopy/print out itself, for example through a header or footer identifying the publication or a website link in the attachments.

(c) **Brownfields Cleanup** (2 points). An application will earn points if there is a brownfields site in the target neighborhood and if the applicant or another entity has received or applied for a Federal or State government program to address contamination at that site. Such programs may include EPA Brownfields grant programs (Assessment Grant, Revolving Loan Fund Grant, Cleanup Grant, Multipurpose Grant, or State and Tribal Response Program Grant) or programs awarded by State governments that offer grants, loans, tax incentives, or other assistance and are designated for brownfields cleanup and related planning or assessments. You must provide documentation showing the receipt of the program assistance or that an application is currently under consideration. Documentation may include a copy of the award letter or agreement for the grant, loan, tax credits, or other assistance, or documentation of the submitted application that is pending decision at the time of submitting this Choice Neighborhoods grant application. You must also describe how the brownfields cleanup activities will prepare the neighborhood for the planning and implementation of a Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan. Documentation must clearly identify the target brownfield site to allow confirmation that the site is located within the target neighborhood. More information about EPA Brownfields Grants is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields>.

3. **Need for Affordable Housing in the Community** (2 points). An application will receive two points if the Choice Neighborhoods project is in a county/parish where the shortage of housing affordable to very low-income (VLI) renter households (0 to 50 percent AMI) is greater than the national rate using the most currently available census data. HUD will use data included in the mapping tool for this rating factor. The shortage rate is calculated as the number of VLI renter households divided by the number of rental units affordable and available to VLI households, where affordable and available equals units that: (1) have rents not exceeding 30 percent of 50 percent of AMI; and (2) are vacant or occupied by a VLI renter household.

### **C. SOUNDNESS OF APPROACH**

**Maximum Points: 52**

This factor addresses the quality and feasibility of the proposed work plan and evaluates how well applicants have developed a sound and achievable strategy for leading a collaborative planning process that will develop a comprehensive Transformation Plan aligned with the three core goals of Choice Neighborhoods - Housing, People, and Neighborhood

1. **Staffing Plan** (9 points). Points will be awarded based on the extent to which the application demonstrates the applicant has a detailed and feasible staffing plan which will allow for completing all the proposed planning activities and for positioning the plan for implementation. The staffing plan should identify the principal staff positions that will lead the planning process. This plan may also include the use of a Planning Coordinator and/or other procured contractors that will assist with the overall planning process and/or entities that will be responsible for a specific component of the planning process. Describe the role of key staff and contractors (as applicable), including percentage of time that staff will dedicate to this planning process. It should also indicate which roles already have specific people named to them and which roles need to be filled. In order to earn full points, the staffing plan must indicate that the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant will dedicate a "project manager" who will be responsible for the whole grant and will devote at least 50 percent of a full-time equivalent position to the planning process. More points will be awarded to applications that specify key staff roles and/or specific contractors (such as new staff to be hired upon grant award and/or a Planning Coordinator). Also, provide an organizational chart in the attachments that identifies the various organizations participating in the planning effort and shows their relationship to each other in the governance structure (e.g., decision makers, advisors, stakeholders, working groups, residents, etc.).

2. **Resident Engagement** (7 points). Points will be awarded based on the extent to which the application demonstrates how residents of the target housing will be meaningfully engaged in the planning process. How will you conduct continuing outreach to target housing residents and encourage a broad range of target housing residents to engage in the planning process? How will you ensure target housing residents influence the Transformation Plan, including the vision, priorities, and strategies? How will you build capacity among target housing residents to assure they can meaningfully participate in the planning process? What strategies will you employ to ensure effective communication for individuals with disabilities and provide meaningful access to limited English proficient persons?

3. **Community Engagement** (7 points). Points will be awarded based on the extent to which the application demonstrates how other neighborhood residents and community-based partners, such as community organizations, faith-based institutions, anchor institutions, and local business owners, will be meaningfully engaged in the planning process. How will you conduct continuing outreach to these populations to engage them throughout the planning process? What strategies

will you employ to encourage participation from historically uninvolved or excluded stakeholders? How will you ensure neighborhood residents and community-based partners influence the Transformation Plan, including the vision, priorities, and strategies?

**4. Assets and Needs Assessment** (5 points). Points will be awarded based on the quality of your plan to conduct an assessment on both the neighborhood level and the individual household level which will identify your community's unique needs and assets and be used to influence the Transformation Plan. On the neighborhood level: How will you identify: current needs and assets; what has and has not worked; the quality of existing services and amenities; and potential barriers and opportunities related to crime and public safety, education, health, and income and employment? From which other partners and sources will you collect community assets and needs data and how will you do this? On the household level: How will you conduct a household-level asset and needs assessment and ensure a high rate of response? In what other ways will you capture open-ended information from residents and stakeholders to explore the meaning behind the assets and needs assessment results?

**5. Partnerships** (8 points). Points will be awarded based on the breadth, quality, and depth of your partnerships as they relate to the neighborhood and their contribution to the planning process. Provide a letter from each partner that has committed to be substantially engaged in the planning process to develop the Transformation Plan, especially partners in the areas of housing, neighborhood, public safety, education, employment, and health. Each letter should detail the partner's role in the planning process and how will they substantially contribute to the Transformation Plan, including specific commitments such as contribution of in-kind resources to support the planning process, contribution of staff time and expertise related to specific tasks and components of the planning process, leadership positions in working groups or committees, etc. These letters should be unique, individual letters (not form letters) from your partners and provided in the Attachments section of the application.

**6. Visioning and Decision-Making** (5 points). Points will be awarded based on the soundness of your approach to facilitate visioning and decision-making within the planning process. How will your process create, in partnership with residents and stakeholders, a shared vision for the neighborhood that is specific to the strengths and challenges of the neighborhood? How will you select shared goals that are measurable? How will you collectively prioritize among multiple, differing strategies to create a cohesive Transformation Plan, and who will be involved in this process? Who will be involved in this process and how will you ensure it is inclusive and equitable?

**7. Budget** (2 points). Applicants should prepare a budget which identifies all the planning activities related to the grant and includes the required activities listed in Section III.F.1.a, other eligible activities proposed as part of the planning process to develop the Transformation Plan, and the proposed doing while planning project(s), in accordance with the Funding Restrictions stated in section IV.F. As HUD recognizes Early Action Activities will be identified through the planning process, applicants may designate requested funds as a line item labeled, "Early Action Activities TBD." The budget will be evaluated based on the extent to which it shows projected sources of funds and thoroughly estimates all applicable costs in a clear and coherent format, and the extent to which the projected sources are sufficient to fund the scope of the proposed planning process. Provide a detailed Sources and Uses statement that reflects all funding in the attachments. Include all anticipated funding sources (e.g. the CN grant, proposed match,



proposed leverage, and other funding that is neither match/nor leverage) and identify each in a separate column from other funds. If the use of a Planning Coordinator is proposed, the budget must break out the fees paid to that entity and other services it may coordinate. The application may include additional description of the budget in the narrative exhibits as needed to provide further detail on costs and/or restrictions associated with other sources.

**8. Certification of Consistency with Consolidated Plan** (2 points). An application will receive 2 points if the proposed planning process is consistent with the Consolidated Plan for the jurisdiction in which the target neighborhood is located, as evidenced by submitting the Certification of Consistency with the Consolidated Plan (form HUD-2991) signed by the appropriate official. Applications that target Indian housing will automatically be awarded full points and do not need to submit any documentation.

**9. Certification of Consistency with PHA/MTW Plan** (2 points). If the target housing includes public housing, an application will receive 2 points if the proposed planning process is consistent with the PHA Plan, including the MTW Supplement to the PHA Plan, or MTW Plan, as applicable. For such applications, include a letter signed by the PHA Executive Director or Board Chair certifying that the intention to plan for the redevelopment of the target housing site is included in the most recently approved PHA/MTW Plan. Applications that target assisted housing, including Indian housing, will automatically be awarded full points and do not need to submit any documentation.

**10. Local Government Support** (5 points). An application will receive 5 points if it contains a letter from the local government of jurisdiction that details how key staff will be actively engaged in the planning process. It must be signed by the chief executive officer or highest-ranking Housing/Community Development/Planning official of the local government and be submitted in the attachments. If the local government is Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant, this letter does not need to be provided and the application will automatically receive full points. Tribal entities will receive full points if the application contains a tribal resolution or its equivalent indicating support for this planning process.

## **D. LEVERAGE**

**Maximum Points: 3**

HUD views leveraged commitments as an indicator of support in the community for this comprehensive neighborhood planning effort. These additional funds will also increase the effectiveness of the proposed grant activities. These rating factors evaluate the extent to which the application demonstrates that the Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant (if any) have secured financial commitments, in the form of cash, from other sources to carry out the activities proposed in this application, in accordance with the criteria below. Only commitments of cash will be counted as leverage.

**1. Program Requirements that Apply to Leverage.** Applicants must follow these requirements in compiling and documenting leverage for purposes of the NOFO. Otherwise, it may not be possible for HUD to count the commitment at the level claimed. These general requirements apply to all leverage commitments.

(a) **Firmly Committed.** Funding must be firmly committed by an official of the committing organization with authority to make such a commitment as of the application deadline date. "Firmly committed" means that the funding amount and its dedication to Choice Neighborhoods

planning activities is explicit. Endorsements or general letters of support from organizations or vendors alone will not count as resources and should not be included in the application.

(b) Content. Leverage commitment documents supporting the planning process must indicate the dollar amount of the financial commitment as well as the element(s) of the Choice Neighborhoods planning process for which it is being committed. These funds must be committed to either the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant, and the commitment document must also explicitly state to which of these entities the funds are being committed. However, a commitment from a local foundation or the local government to spend its funds directly (rather than provide funds to the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant) on costs related to the planning process may be accepted if the letter details the activities to be funded.

(1) HUD will not accept funding commitments for supportive services, infrastructure, housing development (e.g., acquisition, rehabilitation, demolition, or construction), and relocation as these are ineligible activities under a Planning Grant. Cash commitments for physical projects will only be accepted if they are directly related to the Early Action Activity project that is part of this grant application.

(2) If a commitment document is for more than one activity, each should be indicated individually in the document rather than in one lump sum.

(3) Examples of a valid and accurate commitment: "The City commits \$20,000 to support the Phase I study by an engineer." and "XYZ Foundation commits to funding for the resident ambassador program to support engagement by the residents of the ABC public housing development during the planning process. The value of this commitment is \$25,000 and the funds are committed to the Lead Applicant."

(c) Signature. Funding commitments must be signed and dated by a person authorized to make the commitment. For example, the PHA's Executive Director cannot commit the funds of another agency, organization or government body (unless you can demonstrate otherwise in the application).

(d) Letterhead. Commitment letters must be on letterhead or they will not be accepted.

(e) If the commitment document is not included in the application and submitted before the application deadline date, it will not be considered.

(f) Funds to pay the staff salary and benefits of the Lead Applicant and/or Co-Applicant are not an eligible leverage resource.

(g) Sources of Leverage. Funding may come from a variety of sources, including any of the following:

- (1) Public, private, and nonprofit entities;
- (2) State and local housing finance agencies;
- (3) Local governments;
- (4) Tribal entities and Tribal organizations eligible under Title I of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act;
- (5) Foundations;

(6) Government Sponsored Enterprises such as the Federal Home Loan Bank, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac;

(7) HUD and other federal agencies, provided the statutory language of the funding source allows the funds to be used for these purposes. Public Housing funds and other funding provided under the 1937 Act, as amended, may not be used as match or leverage. Accordingly, if a PHA is providing a leverage commitment, the letter must clearly identify the source of funding of that commitment. In the case of HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the work activity must be included in the CDBG recipient's annual action plan. Such plans may be amended to include the Choice Neighborhoods funded activity(ies);

(8) Financial institutions, banks, or insurers; and

(9) Other private funders.

(h) Match. For purposes of this NOFO, "match" and "leverage" do not have the same meaning. As required by section 24 of the 1937 Act, grantees must have a match of at least 5 percent by the end of the grant term. The match does not have to be secured at the time of the grant application. To encourage applicants to have funds committed from the outset, the grant application will earn points for having leveraged funds committed. Some funds claimed as leverage in the grant application may be used to meet the five percent match requirement (see Section III.C).

## 2. Rating

An application will earn points in accordance with the table below based on the amount of cash leverage commitments made to the Lead or Co-Applicant for the planning process and Early Action Activity relative to the amount of grant funds requested.

Cash Leverage Commitments as Percent of Grant Funds Requested (MSA greater than 500,000)	Cash Leverage Commitments as Percent of Grant Funds Requested (MSA 500,000 or less or targeting Indian housing)	Points Awarded
50.00 percent and above	25.00 percent and above	3
Between 30.00 and 49.99 percent	Between 15.00 and 24.99 percent	2
Between 10.00 and 29.99 percent	Between 5.00 and 14.99 percent	1
Below 10.00 percent	Below 5.00 percent	0

## 2. Other Factors

### Policy Initiative Preference Points

This NOFO supports the following policy initiatives, for which a maximum of four (4) preference points may be awarded. Preference points are added to your overall application score.

Promise Zones (PZ) (2 points)

Minority-Serving Institutions (2 points)

Rural Partners Network Community Networks (2 points)

You may voluntarily choose to address preference point policy initiatives in your application. Addressing these policy initiatives is not a requirement to apply for or receive an award. If you voluntarily choose to address a policy initiative in your application, you will be required to

adhere to the information submitted with your application should you receive an award. The proposed information will be included as a binding requirement of any Federal award you receive as a term and condition of that award.

This NOFO does not offer preference points for Climate Change

All Planning Grantees will be required to develop a Transformation Plan in a manner that supports climate resiliency as stated in section III.F.2.d.

This NOFO does not offer Environmental Justice preference points.

All Planning Grantees will be required to develop a Transformation Plan in a manner that pursues environmental justice as stated in section III.F.2.h

This NOFO does not offer HBCU preference points.

### **Minority-Serving Institutions**

An applicant partnering with an HBCU, Hispanic-Serving Institution, Tribal-controlled postsecondary institution, Alaskan Native-serving or Native-Hawaiian-serving institution, Predominantly Black Institution, Asian and Pacific Islander-serving institution, or Native American-serving nontribal institution will receive up to two (2) Preference Points when the application includes a Letter of Commitment certifying that a partnership is in place and signed by an authorizing official of the MSI and documentation of the status of college or university as an HBCU, Hispanic-serving institution, Tribal-controlled postsecondary institution, Alaska Native-serving or Native-Hawaiian-serving institution, Predominantly Black Institution, Asian and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution, or Native American-serving nontribal institution. This policy preference is pursuant to Executive Orders 13985, 14041, 14045, and 14031.

### **Promise Zones**

HUD encourages activities in Promise Zones (PZ). To receive Promise Zones Preference Points, applicants must submit form HUD-50153, "Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation," signed by the Promise Zone Official authorized to certify the project meets the criteria to receive preference points. To view the list of designated Promise Zones and persons authorized to certify, see the Promise Zone pages on HUD's website.

### **Rural Partners Network Community Networks**

HUD encourages activities in support of the Federal interagency Rural Partners Network (RPN) Community Networks initiative. See <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/04/20/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-the-rural-partners-network-to-empower-rural-communities-to-access-Federal-resources/>. HUD may award no more than two (2) points for activities located in a RPN Community Network. An applicant may not receive both the Underserved Rural Communities preference point and the RPN Community Networks preference points. Applicants eligible for both preference categories will only receive up to two (2) preference points for RPN Community Network.

To receive two (2) points for this preference, applicants proposing projects in a RPN Community Networks must submit the "Certification for Rural Partners Network Community Networks Preference Points" (HUD-XXXX) that identifies the state, county, city, town, and census tract(s)

of the RPN Community Networks in which the activity will be carried out. To view the list of designated RPN Community Networks, please see the Rural Partners Network Community Network website pages at [www.rural.gov](http://www.rural.gov). Applicants who do not complete and submit the form along with the rest of their application package will not be eligible to receive the points. Additionally, applicants who do complete and submit this form, but indicate they intend to use less than 50% of the HUD award within RPN Community Networks, will not be eligible to receive preference points, unless: a.) the applicant can show why they are unable to expend at least 50% of the HUD award within RPN Community Networks, or b.) the applicant is able to make a compelling case for why the amount that will be expended will have a significant impact within RPN Community Networks.

Form HUD 425 can be obtained in the Instructions Download.

## **B. Review and Selection Process**

### **1. Past Performance**

In evaluating applications for funding, HUD will consider an applicant's past performance in managing funds. Items HUD will consider include, but are not limited to:

OMB-designated repositories of governmentwide data, as noted in [2 CFR 200.206\(a\)](#)

The ability to account for funds in compliance with applicable reporting and recordkeeping requirements

Timely use of funds received from HUD

Timely submission and quality of reports submitted to HUD

Meeting program requirements

Meeting performance targets as established in the HUD agreement

The applicant's organizational capacity, including staffing structures and capabilities

Timely completion of activities and receipt and expenditure of promised matching or leveraged funds

The number of persons served or targeted for assistance

Producing positive outcomes and results

HUD may reduce scores based on the past performance review, if specified under V.A. Rating Factors. Whenever possible, HUD will obtain and review past performance information. If this review results in an adverse finding related to integrity of performance, HUD reserves the right to take any of the remedies provided in the [Pre-Selection Review of Performance section of the Eligibility Requirements for Applicants of HUD Financial Assistance Programs](#).

### **2. Assessing Applicant Risk**

In evaluating risks posed by applicants, HUD may use a risk-based approach and may consider any items such as the following:

- (1) Financial stability;

(2) Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in this part;

(3) History of performance. The applicant's record in managing Federal awards, if it is a prior recipient of Federal awards, including timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements, failing to make significant progress in a timely manner, failing to meet planned activities in a timely manner, conformance to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards, and if applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards;

(4) Reports and findings from audits performed under Subpart F—Audit Requirements of 2 CFR part 200 or the reports and findings of any other available audits; and

(5) The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities.

HUD's selection process is designed to ensure that grants are awarded to eligible applicants that submit the most meritorious applications. HUD will consider the information submitted by the application deadline date. After the application deadline date, HUD cannot, consistent with its regulations in 24 CFR part 4, subpart B, consider any unsolicited information that the applicant or any third party may want to provide. HUD may verify information provided in the application as needed by accessing information in HUD systems (e.g., PIC, TRACS, etc.) or by sending a written request for clarification. Responses to such inquiries will be required within two business days.

a. Application Screening.

(1) HUD will screen each application to determine if the Key Eligibility Criteria in Section III.A are met (including screening for technical deficiencies). If it does not, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not receive further review. If yes, then HUD will screen the application to determine if it meets the other threshold criteria listed in Section III.D (including screening for technical deficiencies).

(2) Corrections to Deficient Applications - Cure Period. In accordance with Section IV.D.4, corrections of technical deficiencies must be submitted within three business days of the date of the notification from HUD. Examples of curable (correctable) technical deficiencies include, but are not limited to, inconsistencies in the funding request, omissions on the Key Eligibility Data form, and failure to submit a signature and/or date on a certification. If the response does not correct the deficiency, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not receive further review.

(3) Applications that will not be rated or ranked. HUD will not rate or rank applications that are deficient at the end of the cure period or that have not met the Threshold Requirements described in Section III.D. Such applications will not be eligible for funding.

b. Preliminary Rating and Ranking. Reviewers will rate each eligible application based SOLELY on the rating factors described in Section V.A and assign a preliminary score for each rating factor and total score. HUD will then rank applications in score order.

c. Final Panel Review. A Final Review Panel will:

(1) Review the Preliminary Rating and Ranking documentation to ensure any inconsistencies between preliminary reviewers are identified and rectified and to ensure the Preliminary Rating and Ranking documentation accurately reflects the contents of the application.

(2) Assign a final score to each application and rank them in score order; and

(3) Recommend for selection the most highly rated applications, subject to the amount of available funding.

d. Tie Scores. If two or more applications have the same score and there are insufficient funds to select all of them, HUD will select the application(s) with the highest score for the overall Need Rating Factors. If a tie remains, HUD will select the application(s) with the highest score for the overall Soundness of Approach Rating Factors, then overall Capacity Rating Factors.

e. Remaining Funds. HUD reserves the right to reallocate remaining funds from this NOFO to other eligible activities under section 24 of the 1937 Act, including Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants. If the total amount of funds requested by all applications found eligible for funding under this NOFO is less than the amount of funds available from this NOFO, all eligible applications will be funded in rank order and those funds in excess of the total requested amount will be considered remaining funds. If the total amount of funds requested by all applications found eligible for funding under this NOFO is greater than the amount of funds available from this NOFO, eligible applications will be funded until the amount of non-awarded funds is less than the amount required to feasibly fund the next eligible application. In this case, the funds that have not been awarded will be considered remaining funds.

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **A. Award Notices**

Following the evaluation process, HUD will notify successful applicants of their selection for funding. HUD will also notify other applicants, whose applications were received by the deadline but were not chosen for award. Notifications will be sent by email to the person listed as the AOR in item 21 of the SF-424.

#### **1. Final Award**

After HUD has made selections, HUD will finalize specific terms of the award and budget in consultation with the selected applicant. If HUD and the selected applicant do not finalize the terms and conditions of the award in a timely manner, or the selected applicant fails to provide requested information, an award will not be made to that applicant. In this case, HUD may select another eligible applicant. HUD may also impose specific conditions on an award as provided under [2 CFR 200.208](#).

#### **2. Adjustments to Funding**

To ensure fair distribution of funds and enable the purposes or requirements of a specific program to be met, HUD reserves the right to fund less than the amount requested in an application.

a. HUD may fund no portion of an application that:

- (1) Is ineligible for funding under applicable statutory or regulatory requirements;
- (2) Fails, in whole or in part, to meet the requirements of this notice;
- (3) Duplicates activities funded by other Federal awards; or
- (4) Duplicates activities funded in a prior year.

- b. HUD may adjust the funding for an application to ensure funding diversity, geographic diversity, and alignment with HUD administrative priorities.
- c. If an applicant turns down an award offer, or if HUD and an applicant do not finalize the terms and conditions of the award in a timely manner, HUD may withdraw the award offer and make an offer of funding to another eligible application.
- d. If funds remain after all selections have been made, remaining funds may be made available within the current FY for other competitions within the program area, may be held for future competitions (if allowable in accordance with the applicable appropriation or authorizing statute), or may be used as otherwise provided by authorizing statute or appropriation.
- e. If, after announcement of awards made under the current NOFO, additional funds become available either through the current appropriations, a supplemental appropriation, other appropriations or recapture of funds, HUD may, in accordance with the appropriation, use the additional funds to provide additional funding to an applicant awarded less than the requested amount of funds to make the full (or nearer to full) award, and/or to fund additional applicants that were eligible to receive an award but for which there were no funds available.

### **3. Funding Errors**

If HUD commits an error that, when corrected, would cause selection of an applicant during the funding round of a Program NOFO, HUD may select that applicant for funding, subject to the availability of funds. If funding is not available to award in the current fiscal year, HUD may make an award to this applicant during the next fiscal year if funding is available.

**4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Date.** HUD anticipates announcing awards under this NOFO approximately four months after the application due date.

**5. Choice Neighborhoods Grant Agreement.** If you are selected to receive a Choice Neighborhoods grant, HUD will send you a grant agreement, which constitutes the contract between you (and any Co-Applicant) and HUD to carry out and fund Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant activities.

## **B. Administrative, National and Departmental Policy Requirements and Terms for HUD Applicants and Recipients of Financial Assistance Awards**

Unless otherwise specified, the following requirements apply and are detailed on HUD's Funding Opportunity page in the document titled, "[Administrative, National & Departmental Policy Requirements and Terms for HUD Financial Assistance – 2024](#)." You must review each requirement to ensure compliance is considered when preparing your application materials (e.g., staff, budget, and timeline). Failure to comply with these requirements may impact your ability to receive or retain a financial assistance award from HUD.

1. Compliance with The Fair Housing Act ([42 U.S.C. 3601-3619](#)) and implementing regulations at [24 CFR part 100 et seq](#)
2. Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, [42 U.S.C. 2000d-2000d-4](#)(Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs) and implementing regulations at [24 CFR part 1](#)



3. Compliance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 ([42 U.S.C. 6101-6107](#)) and implementing regulations at [24 CFR part 146](#)
4. Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([29 U.S.C. 794](#)) and implementing regulations at [24 CFR part 8](#)
5. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, [42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq](#)
6. Compliance with Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) requirements, including 24 CFR 5.150 et seq
7. Compliance with Economic Opportunities for Low-and Very Low-income Persons (12 U.S.C. 1701u) requirements, including those listed at [24 CFR part 75](#)
8. Compliance with Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements, including those listed within [Federal Register Notice, FR-4878-N-02](#) (also see [HUD's webpage](#))
9. Compliance with Accessible Technology requirements, including those listed on in [HUD's Policy on Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and Accessible Technology](#)
10. Compliance with Equal Access Requirements (e.g., [24 CFR 5.105\(a\)\(2\)](#) and [5.106](#))
11. Compliance with Ensuring the Participation of Small Disadvantaged Business, and Women-Owned Business requirements at [2 CFR 200.321](#)
12. Compliance with Energy Efficient and Sustainable by Design
13. Compliance with Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (42 USC 4601 et seq.) (URA) requirements, [49 CFR part 24](#), and applicable program regulations
14. Compliance with Participation in HUD-Sponsored Program Evaluation
15. Compliance with OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards ([2 CFR part 200](#))
16. Compliance with Drug-Free Workplace requirements ([2 CFR part 2429](#))
17. Compliance with the requirements related to safeguarding resident/client files (e.g., 2 CFR 200.303(e))
18. Compliance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 ([2 CFR part 170](#)) (FFATA), as amended
19. Compliance with Eminent Domain
20. Compliance with Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities requirements, including 24 CFR parts 8 and 100; 28 CFR part 35
21. Compliance with applicable Violence Against Women Act requirements in the Housing Chapter of VAWA, 34 U.S.C. 12491-12496, 24 CFR part 5, subpart L, and program-specific regulations, if applicable
22. Compliance with Conducting Business in Accordance with Ethical Standards/Code of Conduct, including [2 CFR 200.317](#), [2 CFR 200.318\(c\)](#) and other applicable conflicts of interest requirements

23. Compliance with the [Build America, Buy America \(BABA\) Act](#) procurement requirements
24. Compliance with System for Award Management and Universal Identifier Requirements at [2 CFR part 25](#)
25. Compliance with [section 106\(g\) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 \(TVPA\), as amended \(22 U.S.C. 7104\(g\)\)](#) and implementing regulations at [2 CFR part 175](#) (Award Term for Trafficking in Persons)
26. Compliance with Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters (see [Appendix XII to 2 CFR part 200](#))
27. Compliance with Suspension and Debarment regulations ([2 CFR part 2424](#) and [2 CFR part 180](#))
28. Compliance with environmental justice requirements that apply in accordance with Executive Orders [12898](#) and [14008](#), and OMB Memorandum [M-21-28](#), which implements the *Justice40 Initiative*, section 223 of Executive Order [14008](#).
29. Compliance with [HUD Secretary Fudge’s April 12, 2022 memorandum](#), “Eliminating Barriers That May Unnecessarily Prevent Individuals with Criminal Histories from Participation in HUD Programs”
30. Compliance with equity requirements, including racial equity and underserved communities and LGBTQ+ requirements that apply in accordance with Executive Orders [13985](#), [13988](#), and 14091
31. Compliance with 41 U.S.C. § 4712, which includes informing your employees in writing of their rights and remedies, in the predominant native language of the workforce. Under 41 U.S.C. § 4712, employees of a contractor, subcontractor, grantee, subgrantee, and personal services contractor may not be discharged, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against as a reprisal for disclosing information that the employee reasonably believes is evidence of gross mismanagement of a Federal contract or grant, a gross waste of Federal funds, an abuse of authority relating to a Federal contract or grant, a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, or a violation of law, rule, or regulation related to a Federal contract (including the competition for or negotiation of a contract) or grant. (See [Federal Contractor or Grantee Protections | Office of Inspector General, Department of Housing and Urban Development \(hudoig.gov\)](#))
32. Compliance with [2 CFR 200.216, Prohibition on Certain Telecommunication and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment](#) and Executive Orders 14091 and 14110, which includes prohibition on the use of HUD funds to purchase or fund any form of facial or biometric recognition technology for the purpose of surveillance or any other use that may adversely impact equitable access to housing

### **Environmental Review**

Compliance with environmental requirements, including regulations at 24 CFR 50 or 58:

**(a) Applicability.** All Choice Neighborhoods grantees must comply with applicable environmental requirements. Environmental reviews must be performed by the State or unit of general local government (Responsible Entity) under 24 CFR part 58, regardless of whether the grantee is a PHA. These regulations implement the policies of the National Environmental Policy

Act (NEPA) and other environmental requirements. The Responsible Entity must determine whether each activity assisted under this NOFO is exempt or categorically excluded from NEPA and other environmental review requirements or requires further environmental review. While many planning activities assisted under the NOFO are exempt or categorically excluded from NEPA and other environmental review requirements, other activities, including some Early Action Activities, will require environmental review prior to implementation. When such an activity is proposed, no Choice Neighborhoods grant funds for that activity will be released until the environmental review is complete and HUD has approved a Request for Release of Funds from the Responsible Entity, as applicable. Note the environmental review process may require compliance with other Federal laws and authorities, such as the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which also apply to Choice Neighborhoods activities, even some of those categorically excluded from NEPA review.

**(b) Responsibility.** If the grantee objects to the Responsible Entity conducting the environmental review, based on performance, timing, or compatibility of objectives, HUD will review the facts and determine who will perform the environmental review. At any time, HUD may reject the use of a responsible entity to conduct the environmental review in a case based on performance, timing, or compatibility of objectives, or in accordance with 24 CFR 58.77(d)(1). If a responsible entity objects to performing an environmental review, or if HUD determines that the responsible entity should not perform the environmental review, HUD may designate another responsible entity to conduct the review or may itself conduct the environmental review in accordance with the provisions of 24 CFR part 50.

**(c) Limitations on activities pending clearance.** Unless an action is exempt or is categorically excluded and is not subject to other applicable environmental requirements, you, and any participant in the development process, may not undertake any actions with respect to the project that are choice-limiting or could have environmentally adverse effects, including demolishing, acquiring, rehabilitating, converting, leasing, repairing, or constructing property (i.e., “physical activities”) proposed to be assisted under this NOFO, and you, and any participant in the development process, may not commit or expend HUD or non-HUD funds for these activities, until (i) HUD has approved a Request for Release of Funds following a responsible entity’s environmental review under 24 CFR part 58, or (ii) HUD has completed an environmental review and given approval for the action under 24 CFR part 50. In addition, you must carry out any mitigating/remedial measures required by the responsible entity (or HUD), or select an alternate eligible property or site, if permitted by HUD.

**(d) Supporting Documentation.** You must provide any reports and documentation needed to perform the environmental review to the responsible entity (or HUD, where applicable). Where HUD is conducting the environmental review, applicants should follow the documentation guidance as discussed in PIH Notice 2016-22 (Environmental Review Requirements for Public Housing Agencies, <https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/PIH2016-22.PDF>) or Chapter 9 of the MAP Guide. Guidance on environmental review is available on HUD’s environmental website: <https://www.hudexchange.info/environmental-review/>.

### **Remedies for Noncompliance**

HUD may apply the remedies at [2 CFR 200.339](#) or impose additional conditions to remedy noncompliance with any Federal State, or local statutes, regulations, or terms and conditions of the financial assistance award. If noncompliance cannot be remedied, HUD may terminate a Federal award, in whole or in part, for any of the reasons specified in [2 CFR 200.340](#), Termination.

In accordance with Section 24(i) of the 1937 Act, if the Grantee defaults under the Choice Neighborhoods grant agreement, HUD may withdraw any unobligated grant amounts and may pursue other actions as described in the grant agreement. HUD shall redistribute any withdrawn amounts to one or more other applicants eligible for Choice Neighborhoods assistance or to one or more other entities capable of proceeding expeditiously in the same locality in carrying out the Transformation Plan of the original Grantee, subject to provisions of the appropriations law. HUD will give the Grantee written notice of any default. The notice will give the Grantee the opportunity to cure such default or to demonstrate, by submitting substantial evidence satisfactory to HUD, that it is not in default.

### **Lead-Based Paint Requirements**

When providing housing assistance funding for purchase, lease, support services, operation, or work that may disturb painted surfaces, of pre-1978 housing, you must comply with the lead-based paint evaluation and hazard reduction requirements of HUD's lead-based paint rules (Lead Disclosure; and Lead Safe Housing (24 CFR part 35)); and EPA's lead-based paint rules (e.g., Repair, Renovation and Painting; Pre-Renovation Education; and Lead Training and Certification (40 CFR part 745)).

When providing education or counseling on buying or renting housing that may include pre-1978 housing under your HUD award you must inform clients of their rights under the Lead Disclosure Rule (24 CFR part 35, subpart A), and, if the focus of the education or counseling is on rental or purchase of HUD-assisted pre-1978 housing, then you must also inform clients of the Lead Safe Housing Rule (subparts B, R, and, as applicable, F - M).

## **C. Reporting**

HUD requires recipients to submit performance and financial reports under OMB guidance and program instructions.

### **1. Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters**

You should be aware that if the total Federal share of your Federal award includes more than \$500,000 over the period of performance, the award will be subject to post award reporting requirements reflected in [Appendix XII to 2 CFR part 200, Award Terms and Conditions for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).

### **2. Race, Ethnicity and Other Data Reporting**

HUD requires recipients that provide HUD-funded program benefits to individuals or families to report data on the race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, and family characteristics of persons and households who are applicants for, participants in, or beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries of HUD programs in order to carry out the Department's responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act, Executive Order 11063, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Section 562 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987. These authorities prohibit discrimination in housing and in programs receiving financial assistance from the Department and direct the Secretary to administer the Department's programs and activities in a manner affirmatively to further these policies and to collect certain data to assess the extent of compliance with these policies. Each recipient shall keep such records and submit to the Department timely, complete, and accurate compliance reports at such times, and in such form and containing such information, as the Department may determine to be necessary to enable it to ascertain whether the recipient has complied or is complying with 24 CFR parts 1

and 121. In general, recipients should have available for the Department data showing the demographics of beneficiaries of Federally-assisted programs.

### **3. Compliance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-282) as amended (FFATA)**

FFATA requires information on Federal awards be made available to the public via a single, searchable website, which is [www.USASpending.gov](http://www.USASpending.gov). Accordingly, each award HUD makes under this NOFO will be subject to the requirements provided by the Award Term in Appendix A to [2 CFR part 170](#), “REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION,” unless the Federal funding for the award (including funding that may be added through amendments) is not expected to equal or exceed \$30,000. Requirements under this Award Term include filing subaward information in the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS.gov) by the end of the month following the month in which the recipient awards any sub-award equal to or greater than \$30,000.

### **4. Program-Specific Reporting Requirements**

Grantees are required to submit a progress report on a quarterly basis throughout the grant term through the HUD-provided template.

## **D. Debriefing**

For a period of at least 120 calendar days, beginning 30 calendar days after the public announcement of awards under this NOFO, if requested, HUD will provide a debriefing related to their application. The AOR or the AOR’s successor must submit a written request for debriefing via mail or email to the POC in Section VII Agency Contact(s) of this NOFO. Information provided during a debriefing may include the applicant’s final score for each rating factor, final evaluator comments for each rating factor, and the final assessment indicating the basis upon which funding was approved or denied.

## **VII. AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

HUD staff will be available to provide clarification on the content of this NOFO. Questions regarding specific program requirements for this NOFO should be directed to the POC listed below.

Name:

Phone:

Email:

[ChoiceNeighborhoods@hud.gov](mailto:ChoiceNeighborhoods@hud.gov)

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as individuals who have speech or communication disabilities may use a relay service to reach the agency contact. To learn more about how to make an accessible telephone call, visit the webpage for the [Federal Communications Commission](#).

Note that HUD staff cannot assist applicants in preparing their applications.

## VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

### 1. Compliance of this NOFO with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to the environment has been made for this NOFO in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 50, which implement section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C.4332(2)(C)). The FONSI is available for inspection at HUD's Funding Opportunities web page.

### 2. Web Resources.

- [Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing](#)
- [Assistance Listing\(formerly CFDA\)](#)
- [Climate Action Plan](#)
- [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#)
- [Code of Conduct Requirements and E-Library](#)
- [Environmental Review](#)
- [Equal Participation of Faith-Based Organizations](#)
- [Fair Housing Rights and Obligations](#)
- [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System](#)
- [Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act \(FFATA\) Subaward Reporting System](#)
- [Grants.gov](#)
- [Healthy Homes Strategic Plan](#)
- [Healthy Housing Reference Manual](#)
- [Historically Black Colleges and Universities \(HBCUs\)](#)
- [HUD's Disability Overview](#)
- [HUD's Strategic Plan](#)
- [HUD Grants](#)
- [HUD Reform Act](#)
- [HUD Reform Act: Hud Implementing Regulations](#)
- [Limited English Proficiency \(LEP\)](#)
- [NOFO Webcasts](#)
- [Procurement of Recovered Materials](#)
- [Promise Zones](#)
- [Rural.gov](#)
- [Rural Partners Network Community Networks](#)
- [Section 3](#)
- [State Point of Contact List](#)
- [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)
- [Real Estate Acquisition and Relocation](#)
- [Unique Entity Identifier](#)
- [USA Spending](#)



### 3. Program Relevant Web Resources

- Choice Neighborhoods program website: <https://www.hud.gov/cn>

4. **Posting Application Information and FOIA Reporting.** After the selection process, HUD may post on-line certain summary and contact information from Choice Neighborhoods applications (e.g., the Executive Summary, neighborhood map, Lead Applicant contact information, etc.) to facilitate connections between eligible applicants (both those selected for grant funding and those who are not) and other entities (e.g., foundations, philanthropies, etc.) that might be interested in supporting the project proposed in the application.

Also, HUD makes frequently requested materials, including information on the highest-scoring funded grant applications, available on the Choice Neighborhoods website and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) website. To avoid disclosure of personal identifiable information (PII), proprietary information, business confidential information, or other content that should not be disclosed to the public, HUD will only post applications redacted pursuant to FOIA. Those recipients who receive an award may be required to provide a redacted version of their applications within 30 days of notification from HUD. When submitting a redacted version, recipients may black out information that would be considered trade secrets, commercial or financial information, and information that is privileged or confidential, as provided in 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4), should the information be disclosed to the public. HUD will take the recipient's proposed redaction under advisement when determining what information should be released to the public. Please direct questions regarding specific reporting requirements to the point of contact listed in Section VII. Agency Contact.

In addition, for those applications which are funded, the grantee must post a copy of its application (appropriately redacted per the above) on the grantee's public website for the duration of the grant period.

## APPENDIX