

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT****[Docket No. FR-5415-N-24]****Notice of Public Interest (NOPI) for Fiscal Year 2010  
Transformation Initiative: Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program****AGENCY:** Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, HUD.**ACTION:** Notice of Public Interest (NOPI).

**SUMMARY:** The purpose of this NOPI is to inform the research community of the opportunity to submit grant applications to fund quality research under the broad subject area of sustainability. HUD is primarily interested in sponsoring cutting edge research in affordable housing development and preservation; transportation-related issues; economic development and job creation; land use planning and urban design; green and sustainable energy practices; and a range of issues related to sustainability. This NOPI is governed by the information and instructions found in HUD's Fiscal Year 2010 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Policy Requirements and **General Section** that the Department posted on June 7, 2010 (FR 5415-N-01).

**APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE:** The pre-application deadline date is 11:59:59 p.m. eastern time on **February 4, 2011**. **Pre-applications and full applications must be received by Grants.gov.** Applicants need to be aware that following receipt, applications go through a validation process in which the application may be accepted or rejected. Please allow time for this process to ensure that you meet the timely receipt requirements. Please see the 2010 **General Section** for instructions for timely receipt, including actions to take if the application is rejected. The **General Section** contains information on using the most current Adobe Reader, timely receipt policies, and other application information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Questions regarding specific program requirements should be directed to the agency contact identified in **Section VII** of this program NOPI. Questions regarding the **General Section** should be directed to the Office of Departmental Grants Management and Oversight at (202) 708-0667 (this is not a toll-free number) or the NOFA Information Center at (800) HUD-8929 (toll-free). Persons with hearing or speech impairments may access these numbers via TTY by calling the Federal Information Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. The NOFA Information Center is open between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except for federal holidays.

**OVERVIEW INFORMATION**

**A. Federal Agency Name:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research

**B. Funding Opportunity Title:** Transformation Initiative: Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program (SCRGP)

**C. Announcement Type:** Initial announcement.

**D. Funding Opportunity Number:** FR-5415-N-24; OMB Approval Number is 2528-0264.

**E. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** The CFDA Number for this program is 14.523.

**F. Dates:** The pre-application deadline date is **February 4, 2011. Both the pre-application and full application must be received by Grants.gov.** Please note that following receipt, applications go through a validation process in which the application may be accepted or rejected. Applicants need to be aware of the requirement to register with Grants.gov. Registration requires a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Data Numbering System (DUNS) number, active registration in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), Registration with Grants.gov, and authorization by the applicant organization eBusiness Point of Contact identified in the CCR registration to authorize the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) to submit the application on behalf of the applicant. Failure to have a complete registration package will result in your application being rejected by the Grants.gov system. Please allow time for the registration process and the Grants.gov system to ensure that you meet the timely receipt requirements. Refer to the 2010 **General Section** for instructions for timely receipt, including actions to take if the application is rejected. Applicants should carefully read the APPLICATION and SUBMISSION INFORMATION in the 2010 **General Section**, posted June 7, 2010 (FR 5415-N-01). This section contains information on using the most current Adobe Reader, timely receipt policies, and other application information.

### **G. Additional Overview Content Information**

**1. Purpose of the Program.** The purpose of the Transformation Initiative: Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program (SCRGP) is to fill key data and information gaps, and to begin to develop and evaluate policy alternatives that communities can adopt to facilitate decision making about various community investments. Additionally, HUD believes that the results from the program will enable it to develop a broader sustainability agenda beyond current departmental priorities, as well as any future efforts or initiatives that may be considered based on the results of the research.

**2. Award Information.** In FY2010, approximately \$1,500,000 was made available to carry out this effort by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Pub. L. 111-117 approved December 16, 2009). This program is approved by HUD's authority and administered under the Transformation Initiative (TI) account. The maximum grant performance period is for 24 months (2 years). Applicants may request a minimum of \$150,000, up to \$500,000 for an award, depending on the scope and scale of the proposed research. Awards under this NOPI will be made in the form of a Cooperative Agreement. A Cooperative Agreement means that HUD will have substantial involvement during performance of the contemplated research project.

**3. Eligible Applicants.** Nationally recognized and accredited institutions of higher education; non-profit foundations, think tanks, research consortia or policy institutes, and for-profit organizations located in the U.S. However, the sponsored researcher is solely responsible for the completion of the application, carrying out the research, and must meet the following program requirements:

- a. Be a U.S. citizen or U.S. national (such as a person born in the Swains Island or American Samoa) within the meaning of 8 U.S.C. § 1408, or be a lawful permanent resident (or the recipient of an Alien Registration Recipient Card-Form I-551, commonly referred to as a Green Card) or other qualified alien (such as an alien who has been granted asylum or refugee status) within the meaning of 8 U.S.C. § 1651(b); and,
- b. The proposed research project can be completed within the 24 months grant performance period.

## **FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

The results from the research performed under the Transformation Initiative: Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program (SCRGP) will fill key data and information gaps and will be evaluated to assist in the implementation of effective policy tools that promote sustainable development, and green and energy efficient practices. HUD believes that the results from this research program will enable the Department to adopt a broader sustainability agenda beyond current programs.

#### **A. Background**

The Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program (SCRGP) will support efforts by the research community to build on the existing evidence-based studies in the broad area of sustainability, and to evaluate new and existing tools and strategies that promote and implement more effective policies that: preserve housing affordability; improve accessibility through effective transit systems that create neighborhoods of opportunity for all residents; reduce the regulatory barriers to sustainable development and strengthen land use planning and urban design standards; advance economic opportunities that create jobs and promote diverse communities; and, that address the health of the environment by reducing carbon emissions and conserving energy.

The Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) and the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC) are currently collaborating with other Departmental program offices, as well as, partner federal agencies—including the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)—to identify additional subject areas that may be explored for this program. A central challenge is to develop new ideas that will add to the current body of knowledge in these aforementioned areas. The proposals that are awarded under this new research program will be chosen based on how well they respond to this challenge.

#### **1. The Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R)**

The Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) has directed and sponsored many departmental efforts to address sustainability. Though not directly related to the current sustainability agenda, PD&R's Regulatory Barriers Research program has examined

several state and local practices, including zoning policies that may be exclusionary, subdivision requirements, barriers to housing rehabilitation, environmental regulation, and impact fees all of which could have significant impacts on sustainable development efforts, particularly to the degree that they may create barriers to affordable housing development and encourage or promote sprawl. A series of reports demonstrated how local regulatory policies and practices can prevent or limit the development of affordable housing or contribute to sprawl or “unsmart growth.”

*A Study of Subdivision Requirements as a Regulatory Barrier* (2007), for example, examined how local subdivision requirements (e.g., street widths, sidewalks, water and sewer, site and lot size zoning standards) exceed what is necessary to meet basic health and safety standards, thereby acting as regulatory barriers to affordable housing development, the most egregious being large lot size zoning. The report presented a benchmarking analytic tool for communities to conduct self-evaluations to determine if their subdivision standards create regulatory barriers to affordable housing and sustainable development practices. *Reducing Regulatory Barriers to Multifamily Housing* (2008) showed how communities, through exclusionary zoning policies and practices, may limit the supply of affordable housing in urban and suburban jurisdictions.

A third report, *Impact Fees: Equity and Housing Affordability—A Guidebook for Practitioners* (2008), offers guidance to communities, particularly growing communities, on how to establish developer fees for new facilities (e.g., schools, roads, water/sewer, police/fire, etc), that are consistent with sustainability principles, discourage unsustainable growth, and effectively address challenges related to unforeseen costs of development. These reports have been distributed widely, and feedback suggests that they are an important source of information and guidance for local officials and community stakeholders.

In the late 1990s and early 2000’s, PD&R supported important research efforts on smart growth and regional land use planning which resulted in the landmark reports, *Growing Smart* and *Regional Approaches to Affordable Housing*, both published by the American Planning Association. These reports have been disseminated widely and served as the framework for creating sustainable approaches to local and regional growth management. At least 13 states incorporated language into legislation or bills from the *Growing Smart Guidebook* model statutes. For example, two bills were enacted in Illinois that were based on the *Guidebook*: (1) *The Local Planning Technical Assistance Act* and (2) the *Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act*, which created a statewide program of affordable housing development. And in 2009, Maryland enacted the *Smart and Sustainable Growth Act*, which established a consistency test for zoning against a comprehensive plan that incorporated almost verbatim language from the *Guidebook*.

The Affordable Housing Research and Technology Division (AHRT) has led PD&R’s efforts to support coordinated housing and transportation policies and practices that are directed towards regional sustainability and removing regulatory barriers to affordable housing development and promoting regional sustainability. In recent years, the Division has directed the Department’s implementation of the joint HUD-FTA (Federal Transit Administration) interagency agreement to promote better coordination of housing and transportation programs that will ultimately encourage the development of affordable housing near transit.

In 2003, HUD and FTA sponsored a roundtable hosted by the National Academy of Sciences which focused on possible data sharing and discussed a joint project to develop a geographic information system (GIS) mapping system.

In 2005, HUD and FTA entered into an Interagency Agreement (IAA) to pursue additional opportunities for joint collaboration on housing and transportation issues. The IAA provided support for a study completed in April 2007 entitled, *Realizing the Potential: Expanding Housing Opportunities near Transit*, which included case studies of potential transit oriented developments (TODs) in 5 cities and recommendations for greater inter-agency and inter-governmental cooperation.

Pursuant to the joint HUD-FTA working group, PD&R initiated a 5-city effort to assess the feasibility of transit oriented development practices at the local level that would provide affordable housing choices near transit systems. The purpose of this study is to advance the nation's understanding of the need for mixed-income and affordable housing opportunities near transit, and to expand the expertise of key stakeholders in addressing this need. This initiative is now serving as an integral part of the HUD-FTA collaboration to promote joint housing and transportation planning.

In 2008, the division published and submitted a joint HUD-FTA Action Plan and report to Congress entitled *Better Coordination of Transportation and Housing Programs to Promote Affordable Housing near Transit*. The report outlines interagency strategies that encourage coordination between housing and transportation agencies and to promote compact, mixed-income development and affordable housing near transit. Congress also earmarked \$500,000 for PD&R to support the implementation of the report's recommendations. To that end, two procurements were competitively awarded in September 2009:

- *Transportation I – Coordinating Housing and Transportation: A Model Housing Transportation Plan*. This study calls for the development of a model housing and transportation plan that may provide the framework for local communities to encourage integrated housing and transportation planning. The model plan would consist of a partnership between a regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and at least one central city that is responsible for developing a Consolidated Plan. Among the activities currently underway are: (a) a site selection process to identify the community where the plan will be implemented; (b) a design charrette that identifies local issues, strengths, and weaknesses relevant to the development of affordable housing near transit; and, (c) the development of a final Housing-Transit Model Plan that details efforts to develop affordable housing adjacent to transit stations.

- *Transportation II – Strategies for Expanding Affordable Housing near Transit*. The objective of this procurement is to implement various elements of the 2008 HUD-FTA Action Plan that was submitted to Congress aimed at expanding the availability of affordable housing near transit. There are three primary tasks involved in this procurement:

1. *Implement an outreach plan* that includes: (1) presentations before housing-transportation panels at three selected conferences; (2) preparing a power point presentation for use by HUD and FTA on the subject of affordable housing near transit; and, (3) hosting a webinar for key stakeholders to discuss coordinated local and regional planning in support of expanding the supply of affordable housing near transit.

2. *Convene three meetings of an expert roundtable/review panel of housing and transportation experts*, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and transit officials to

provide input into the project, discuss research methods and tools, and encourage ongoing dialogue among HUD, DOT and key housing and transportation stakeholders;

3. *Prepare three policy papers on the following topics as identified in the HUD-FTA report:* (a) Federal, state and local barriers that impede affordable housing development, and offer incentive-based opportunities for building affordable housing near transit; (b) financing tools and strategies for implementing affordable housing near transit; and, (c) an analysis of the planning and land acquisition processes and practices involved with affordable housing and transit oriented development projects.

## **2. The HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities (“The Partnership”)**

On June 16, 2009, HUD, DOT, and EPA, created a new interagency partnership to work together to help communities better coordinate housing and transportation planning at the local and regional levels. The primary mission of the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities (“The Partnership”) is to ensure that affordable housing and transportation needs are achieved within the context of promoting more inclusive neighborhoods, by establishing goals for reducing energy consumption, and protecting the environment.

To implement the mission of The Partnership, the three agencies worked together to develop six livability or sustainability principles<sup>1</sup> that form the basis for creating a sustainable community or neighborhood. These six guiding principles also provide the framework for The Partnership’s collaborative efforts, for HUD’s sustainability agenda, and for PD&R’s research initiative. They are:

1. **Provide more transportation choices.** Develop safe, reliable and economical transportation choices in order to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nations’ dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health.
2. **Promote equitable, affordable housing.** Expand location and energy efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
3. **Increase economic competitiveness.** Enhance economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers as well as expanded business access to markets.
4. **Support existing communities.** Target federal funding toward existing communities to increase community revitalization, the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
5. **Leverage federal investment.** Cooperatively align federal policies and funding to remove barriers, leverage funding and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth.
6. **Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban or suburban.

Since the creation of The Partnership, all three agencies have worked together to identify areas where more effective collaboration can take place. Each agency has also undergone an internal review of its programs, statutes, and policies to address and remove

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<sup>1</sup> These six livability principles were first introduced at the June 16, 2009 Committee on Appropriations hearing and lifted from testimony given by HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, DOT Secretary Ray LaHood, and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson.

barriers that prevent effective coordination—or, that pose challenges for its constituent groups seeking to improve joint planning at the local level. Together, The Partnership has agreed to redefine affordability to reflect the true nature of housing and transportation costs that impact the lives of American families. The goal here is to provide consumers with more reliable information to help them make more informed decisions. And finally, through effective leveraging of federal funds and investments, The Partnership is working to offer incentives to communities that pursue coordinated planning; to provide technical assistance; to establish robust and reliable performance standards for achieving desired results; and to encourage continued collaboration until sustainability goals are met.

### **3. The Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC)**

In FY2009, Congress approved the creation of HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC). The new office is working with DOT and EPA, as well as other federal partners, to facilitate the activities related to the Obama administration's sustainability agenda. Under the direction of Shelley Poticha, OSHC is engaging other program offices at HUD, including PD&R, to integrate and adapt the livability principles to all of HUD's policies and programs. OSHC is also working closely with HUD's regional and field offices—along with DOT and EPA counterparts—to promote sustainability practices, integrated planning and other coordinated efforts.

A central mission of the new office is to implement the Sustainable Communities Initiative (“the Initiative”). This initiative seeks to encourage communities to adopt a more integrated approach to planning—one that emphasizes coordinated housing and transportation efforts at both the regional and local levels. To accomplish this major undertaking, the Initiative devoted \$100 million in competitive grants to promote regional planning. OSHC jointly administered the regional planning grants with DOT and EPA.

As part of the Initiative, HUD awarded \$40 million for Community Challenge Grants for communities seeking to reform zoning standards and planning regulations that may prevent coordinated housing and transportation efforts at the local level. In an unprecedented move, DOT agreed to provide \$35 million in TIGER II planning grants for winning communities to leverage HUD and DOT dollars to help facilitate joint planning projects. These funds may be used by a state, local government or a municipality to direct investments for various downtown revitalization projects, for instance; or, for infill development, for Brownfields reuse or vacant property redevelopment, and for small towns or rural community efforts to preserve historic buildings or protect farmland. The winners of HUD's Community Challenge Grants and DOT's TIGER II planning grants were announced, alongside the regional planning grants, in October 2010.

Finally, the Initiative reserved \$10 million for major research activities, including program evaluation and demonstration projects developed jointly by the three partner agencies. Working together, The Partnership, along with assistance from PD&R, will identify areas where improvements in data sharing and technological capacity can take place; and where information platforms, analytic tools, and research may be expanded to serve the needs of each agency and the research community at large. Efforts would be made to better track housing and transportation expenditures by location, create broader measures of affordability and accessibility, and establish standardized and efficient performance measures. HUD and its federal partners will also work to identify best practices or exemplary models in sustainable development. And where feasible, this collaborative effort

will evaluate how well federal investments respond to the needs of private industry, our non-profit stakeholders, and consumers as a whole.

#### **4. The Historical Context**

Conventional planning and development decisions that result from inadequate coordination between housing and transportation entities has contributed to a number of societal ills, including race and income inequality, the decentralization of jobs, and inaccessibility to quality affordable housing. The spatial mismatch between housing and jobs—exacerbated by poor transportation planning—has resulted in the reliance on the automobile, translating to longer commutes and traffic congestion. To respond to the changing needs of a rapidly growing, diverse, and aging population and to accommodate expansion and growth, many communities increase taxes to raise capital for infrastructure improvements, such as building roads, bridges and highways. The impact on the economic well being of American families is also significant. According to numerous studies, the average American family now spends 34 percent of its total household income on housing-related expenses, and another 19 percent on transportation.

Along with the economic costs associated with excessive, poorly planned development, these trends have given rise to unprecedented levels in green house gas and carbon emissions. The negative externalities on society that result from fragmented, uncoordinated decisions raise additional concerns about public health, as evidenced by noted studies that point to a number of health problems, such as asthma and other chronic illnesses that are caused by poor air and water quality. Some studies suggest that sprawling patterns of development have contributed to the obesity epidemic in America and in other countries, which often leads to adult-onset diabetes, hypertension, among other diseases.

To address these mounting challenges, communities of all forms—urban, suburban, and rural—are adopting strategies to improve land use planning and growth management practices; to develop better, healthier, more sustainable community design standards that improve the built environment and conserve valuable land and natural resources; to lure private investments that generate jobs; to remove the barriers to affordable housing; and, to promote diverse, quality neighborhoods that are accessible to transit and other community amenities. This program invites researchers to submit proposals that evaluate existing and new approaches to promote livable, sustainable communities.

#### **B. Goals of Research**

Research activities performed under the Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program should be original and result in substantive contributions to the existing scholarship on sustainability. To the degree possible, proposals should also yield methodological advances for evaluating public policy in this area. Preference will be given to proposals aimed at addressing current challenges that communities face in light of the current housing, energy, and economic crises. Projects may focus on any local, state, or federal policy relevant to the Department's sustainability agenda. Proposed research should attempt to address HUD's mission to expand homeownership opportunities and to preserve affordable housing for its target populations; to support community engagement and involvement; and to promote inclusive, mixed-income communities—urban, suburban, and rural—that enhances the livability, health and well being of all families.

The following list is intended to demonstrate the range of policy-relevant issues that may be the focus of the proposed research. While extensive, this list is not exhaustive.



Omission of a topic from this list *does not* indicate that HUD has no interest in funding the research. These suggested subject areas are directly aligned with HUD’s mission, its Strategic Plan, and departmental goals. We are asking that applicants submit proposed research in one of four areas—three are specific categories, the fourth is a broad research category. The three specific areas are: (1) affordable housing development and preservation; (2) coordinated housing and transportation planning; and, (3) healthy community design. A fourth category is reserved for other topics related to sustainability, including energy conservation, to allow applicants flexibility for topics that are not directly related to the three specific issue areas.

### C. Specific Topics

HUD is interested in funding proposals that significantly build on existing tools, scholarship, and practices in the area of sustainability research. Applicants are also encouraged to submit proposals that evaluate new methodologies, provide additional insight about what works, and to advance our knowledge of the most effective policies for creating a sustainable neighborhood or community. The following topics are suggested for three specific areas within the broad subject category listed in the preceding section above (**Section B**).

- (1) Affordable housing development and preservation. For this category, HUD is primarily interested in how communities have adopted policies that expand the supply of affordable housing. Of particular concern is how these communities preserve affordable housing options in the long run. Possible topics include:
  - a rigorous comparative analysis of various housing affordability policies and financing strategies;
  - incentivizing the adoption green building practices for public- and assisted-housing;
  - developing benchmarks for green building retrofitting practices for existing housing stock that will be reserved for affordable housing; and,
  - strategies for development of affordable housing projects on former brownfields, underutilized parcels of land, or vacant properties.
- (2) Coordinated housing and transportation planning. HUD is currently working with federal partners, local regional and state government entities, advocacy organizations, developers, and planners to improve coordinated planning activities at the local and regional levels. For this category, examples of acceptable research topics include:
  - local strategies that reduce or remove the regulatory barriers to affordable or mixed-income development in close proximity to transit;
  - a comparative analysis of existing tools for financing affordable and/or mixed-income transit oriented development, including TIF financing and other forms of value capture;
  - behavioral changes, migration patterns, or demographic trends associated with transit oriented development;
  - a rigorous analysis on the impact of TOD on neighborhood property values and the impacts on low- and moderate-income families; and,
  - an analysis of the costs and benefits of affordable housing development near transit.

(3) Creating pedestrian-oriented and environmentally friendly communities through healthy community design. There is a paucity of quality, evidence-based research on the impact of community design on health outcomes. More rigorous analyses are required to determine if there is a strong relationship between the built environment and the socio-economic and health impacts on a community. HUD believes that healthy design is the cornerstone of sustainable communities. To that end, we invite applications to consider submitting proposed research specific to this issue. Examples of acceptable topics include:

- an analysis of built environment impacts on various health outcomes;
- identification and evaluation of approaches for creating healthy communities;
- identification of a model plan(s) that integrates healthy design standards; and,
- a review and evaluation of incentives that encourage physical activity through healthy community design.

(4) Open category. This category allows applicants to pursue studies or research on a sustainability issue that does not fit neatly into the other three specific categories described above. Possible topics for this category include:

- how to address the housing-jobs imbalance, especially in communities experiencing economic decline;
- evaluating behavioral changes of families resulting from energy efficient improvements in multifamily dwellings;
- efforts to create “resilient cities” through economic expansion and investment;
- the impact of location- or placed-based decisions on various social and economic outcomes;
- evaluating methodologies for improving storm water management and water infrastructure, soil erosion, and air quality;
- the role of “green” jobs or other business models that generate new opportunities for employment, especially for low- and moderate-income populations, and that generate competition in local and regional economies;
- evaluation of the effectiveness of form-based codes and other new and existing tools for managing sprawl and urban growth;
- measurement of the impact of urbanization on rural communities or the socio-economic benefits and costs of compact development;
- strategies for overcoming local government fragmentation when addressing growth impacts on community infrastructure; and,
- creating incentives for multi-use, clustered development.

#### **D. Authority**

HUD’s authority for making funding available under this NOPI is the Department of Housing and Urban Development Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Pub. L. 111-117 approved December 16, 2009). This program is approved by HUD’s authority under the Transformation Initiative (TI) account. It is being implemented through this NOPI, which, among other things, establishes the policies governing its operation.

#### **II. Award Information**

In FY2010, approximately \$1,500,000 was made available to carry out this effort by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Pub. L. 111-117 approved December 16, 2009). The maximum grant performance

period is for 24 months. Applicants may request a minimum of \$150,000, up to \$500,000 for an award, depending on the scope and scale of the proposed research. Awards under this NOPI will be made in the form of a Cooperative Agreements. A Cooperative Agreement means that HUD will have substantial involvement during performance of the contemplated research project.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

**A. Eligible Applicants.** Nationally recognized and accredited institutions of higher education; non-profit organizations, foundations, research consortia or policy institutes; for-profit organizations located in the U.S. (HUD will not pay a fee or profit for the work performed under this NOPI); and, contract research institutions or academic entities that will sponsor a researcher or experts as the applicant. However, the sponsored researcher assumes the sole responsibility for the completion of the application and conducting the research. In addition, the researcher must meet the following program requirements:

- a. Be a U.S. citizen or U.S. national (such as a person born in the Swains Island or American Samoa) within the meaning of 8 U.S.C. § 1408, or be a lawful permanent resident (a recipient of an Alien Registration Recipient Card-Form I-551, commonly referred to as a Green Card), or other qualified alien (such as, an alien who has been granted asylum or refugee status) within the meaning of 8 U.S.C. § 1651(b); and,
- b. The proposed research project can be completed within the 24 months grant performance period.

**B. Cost Sharing or Matching.** Refer to *Rating Factors* under **Section V.A** of this NOPI.

### **C. Other**

**1. Eligible Activities.** Grant funds awarded under this NOPI must be used to support direct costs incurred in the timely completion of the research product. Eligible costs include, but are not limited to, the researcher's salary, compensation for associates to work on the project, computer software, data purchases, travel expenses to collect data or to make presentations at meetings, transcription services, and compensation for interviews.

**2. Threshold Requirements Applicable to All Applicants.** All applicants must comply with the threshold requirements as defined in the **General Section** and the requirements listed below. **Applications that do not meet these requirements will not be eligible to receive an award.**

- a. The applicant must meet the eligibility requirement as defined in **Section III. A.** of this NOPI entitled "Eligible Applicants";
- b. All proposals must be relevant to the stated goals and objectives of the Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program (SCRGP), as stated in **Section II** of this NOPI;
- c. If selected for award, the primary applicant shall enter into a Grant Agreement with HUD that provides for payment of the grant by HUD to the organization, from the organization to the approved researcher(s), and that further provides all required certifications and assurances;
- d. The applicant may not request more funding than the stated maximum grant as outlined in **Section II** of this NOPI;
- e. Applications must receive **a minimum score of 75 points** to be considered for funding;

- f. The organization (or the primary applicant on behalf of the researcher), must have a DUNS number and an active registration at the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) to receive HUD grant funds (See the **General Section**); and,
- g. For timely receipt, electronic applications must be **received** by Grants.gov no later than 11:59:59 p.m. eastern time on the application deadline date.

**3. Other Requirements.** All applicants must comply with the nondiscrimination and other requirements as defined in the **General Section** (and the requirements listed below).

**a. Compliance with Civil Rights Laws.**

(1) With the exception of federally recognized Indian tribes and their instrumentalities, (a) applicants and their sub recipients must comply with all applicable fair housing and civil rights requirements in 24 CFR 5.105(a), including, but not limited to, the Fair Housing Act; VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title II of the American Disabilities Act; Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974; (b) if the applicant's state or local government has passed a law or laws proscribing discrimination in housing based on sexual orientation or gender identity, or a law or laws proscribing discrimination based on lawful source of income, the applicant and any proposed subrecipients must comply with those laws.

(2) If the applicant is conducting programs or activities with funds received under a HUD program NOFA/NOPI in a state or local jurisdiction that has passed a law or laws proscribing discrimination in housing based upon sexual orientation or gender identity, or a law or laws proscribing discrimination in housing based on lawful source of income, the applicant and its subrecipients must comply with those laws of the states or localities in which the programs or activities are conducted.

(3) If you are a federally recognized Indian tribe, you must comply with the nondiscrimination provisions enumerated by 24 CFR 1000.12, as applicable.

**b. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Requirements.** Under Section 808(e)(5) of the Fair Housing Act 42 U.S.C. 3608(e)(5), HUD has a statutory duty to affirmatively further fair housing. HUD requires the same of its funding recipients. Applicants under this NOPI are not required to submit an affirmatively furthering fair housing plan for their proposed research activities. Nevertheless, applicants are encouraged to review the Consolidated Plans and Analyses of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (for example, HUD's regulations at 24 CFR 91.225 (a) in the jurisdiction in which their research activities will take place in order to take into account impediments to fair housing choice in their proposed research.

**c. Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)."** Executive Order 13166 seeks to improve access to federally assisted programs and activities for individuals who, as a result of national origin, are limited in their English proficiency. Applicants obtaining federal financial assistance from HUD shall take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities to LEP individuals. As an aid to recipients, HUD published *Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients: Title, VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons* (LEP Guidance) in the Federal Register on January 22, 2007 (72 FR 2732). For assistance and information regarding LEP obligations, go to [http://www.justice.gov/crt/lep/guidance/HUD\\_guidance\\_Jan07.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/crt/lep/guidance/HUD_guidance_Jan07.pdf). For more information on LEP, please visit <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/promotingfh/lep.cfm>.

**d. Accessible Technology.** Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 508) requires HUD and other federal departments and agencies to ensure, when developing, procuring,

maintaining, or using electronic and information technology (EIT), that the EIT allow, regardless of the type of medium, persons with disabilities to access and use information and data on a comparable basis as is made available to and used by persons without disabilities. Section 508's coverage includes, but is not limited to, computers (hardware, software, word processing, email, and Internet sites), facsimile machines, copiers, and telephones. Among other things, Section 508 requires that, unless an undue burden would result to the federal department or agency, EIT must allow individuals with disabilities who are federal employees or members of the public seeking information or services to have access to and use of information and data on a comparable basis as that made available to employees and members of the public who are not disabled.

Where an undue burden exists to the federal department or agency, alternative means may be used to allow a disabled individual use of the information and data. Section 508 does not require that information services be provided at any location other than a location at which the information services are generally provided. HUD encourages its funding recipients to adopt the goals and objectives of Section 508 by ensuring, whenever EIT is used, procured, or developed, that persons with disabilities have access to and use of the information and data made available through the EIT on a basis comparable as is made available to and used by persons without disabilities. This does not affect recipients' required compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and, where applicable, the Americans with Disabilities Act. Applicants and recipients seeking further information on accessible technology should go to <http://www.section508.gov/>.

**e. Conducting Business in Accordance with Core Values and Ethical Standards/Code of Conduct.** Applicants subject to 24 CFR parts 84 or 85 (most nonprofit organizations and state, local, and Indian tribal governments or government agencies or instrumentalities that receive federal awards of financial assistance) are required to develop and maintain a written code of conduct (see 24 CFR 84.42 and 85.36(b)(3)). Consistent with regulations governing specific programs, your code of conduct must prohibit real and apparent conflicts of interest that may arise among officers, employees, or agents; prohibit the solicitation and acceptance of gifts or gratuities by your officers, employees, or agents for their personal benefit in excess of minimal value; and outline administrative and disciplinary actions available to remedy violations of such standards.

Before entering into an agreement with HUD, an applicant awarded assistance under a HUD program NOFA/NPOI issued in FY 2010 will be required to submit a copy of its code of conduct and describe the methods it will use to ensure that all officers, employees, and agents of its organization are aware of its code of conduct. The code of conduct must be dated and signed by the Executive Director, or Chair of the governing body of the organization. The date of the document cannot be earlier than the date the program NOFA/NOPI for FY 2010 was published on Grants.gov.

**D. Preliminary Applications.** HUD will use the response to the factors below to rate, rank, and invite applicants to submit a full application. The responses provided to the factors in your preliminary application are the only source of information that will be utilized to invite an applicant to submit a full application. Applications must not identify the researcher, either directly or indirectly through citations. The preliminary application shall consist of a cover sheet with the name and contact information for the applicant and must not exceed 5 pages in length. In addition, the application must be submitted and formatted to fit an 8 ½ by 11-inch

paper, double-spaced, with one-inch margins (for the top, bottom, left, and right sides of the document) and in standard Times New Roman 12-point font. Please do not include the name of the applicant on each page but make sure it is numbered. Note that although submitting pages in excess of the page limit will not disqualify the application, HUD will not consider the information on any excess page.

#### **E. Criteria for Preliminary Application Factor Ratings**

**1. Rating Factor 1: Policy Relevance and Statement of Need (30 Points):** This factor addresses the extent to which there is a need for the proposed research. The proposal must provide clear evidence on the problems or challenges that the proposed research will attempt to address. Applicants must also discuss how the proposed research will inform local, state and federal policy on issues related to sustainability.

**2. Rating Factor 2: Contribution of the Proposed Research (30 Points):** The primary researcher or principal investigator must clearly describe how the proposed research makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the respective field of study. The proposed research is expected to significantly enhance the existing scholarship on the effectiveness of public policy and should ideally yield substantive methodological advancements.

**3. Rating Factor 3: Technical Merit and Feasibility of the Proposed Research (30 Points):** Under this factor, an applicant must describe the research design that includes method clear description of the methodological approach, reliable data sources that will be utilized, and data collection instruments, or other observational techniques. The proposal should also include reliable analytic methods for addressing research questions and hypotheses.

**4. Rating Factor 4: Realism of the Proposed Schedule (10 Points):** Under this factor, applicants must include a timeline for the expected completion of the proposed research. The schedule must include a description of research activities and tasks that are connected to a specific deadline. It is expected that the proposed research will be completed within two years of award.

#### **IV. Application and Submission and Timely Receipt Information**

**A. Instructions to Download Application Package.** Applications can be downloaded from the web at: [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply\\_for\\_grants.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp). All applications must be submitted electronically. The information required to submit an application is contained in the program section of this NOPI and the **General Section**. See the **General Section** for specific procedures concerning the electronic application submission and timely receipt requirements. **Grants.gov Customer Support.** Grants.gov provides customer support information on its website at <http://www.grants.gov/contactus/contactus.jsp>. Applicants having difficulty accessing the application and instructions or having technical problems can receive customer support from Grants.gov 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 Grants.gov Help Desk can be reached twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, except federal holidays. HUD recommends calling the Help Desk rather than emailing, because determining the basis for the problem may take some conversation with the Grants.gov Support Customer Service

Representative. See the **General Section** for information regarding the registration process or ask for registration information from the Grants.gov Support Desk.

Applicants may request general information from the NOFA Information Center at (800) HUD-8929 or (800) HUD-8339 (TTY) between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays. When requesting information, please refer to the name of the program you are interested in.

## **B. Full Application Content and Form of Application Submission**

Applicants who met all threshold requirements and were selected based on the preliminary selection process described above will be invited to submit a full application. **The full application must, at a minimum, contain the following elements:** (a) a table of contents, (b) an executive summary, and (c) a narrative for the rating factors, (d) a detailed budget, (e) budget narrative, and (f) additional forms. The full application will be posted at Grants.gov and eligible applicants will be those notified of selection through the pre-application process. Full applications received from entities other than those invited by HUD to submit a full application will not be read and are ineligible for funding.

### a. **Table of Contents.**

b. **Executive Summary (700 words or less).** The Executive Summary should, at a minimum, include a summary of the proposed research project that addresses the following information:

- (1) Overview of the proposed research (including title).
- (2) The specific objective of the research that will be conducted.
- (3) Problems/issues being addressed.
- (4) Methodology being employed to conduct the research.
- (5) Intellectual merit of conducting the research.
- (6) The broader impact of conducting the research.
- (7) How the researcher meets the eligibility criteria for the program.
- (8) Researcher's address, telephone number, facsimile number, and e-mail address.

c. **Narrative statement addressing the rating factors.** HUD will use the narrative response to the "Rating Factors" to evaluate, rate, and rank applications. There are four rating factors to be addressed: (i) capacity of the applicant and relevant experience to do scientific research; (ii) need for proposed research; (iii) soundness of approach; and (iv) realism and value to the government. The narrative statement is the main source of information that HUD relies on to make its selection. Thus, it is very important that the applicant becomes fully familiar with the rating factors for the program. The narrative should be numbered in accordance with each factor and sub-factor. Be sure to thoroughly address each rating factor and sub-factor and provide sufficient information about every element. Please do not include Social Security numbers in the application.

The application narrative, bibliographies, and any supporting documents must not exceed 30 pages in length (excluding forms, assurances, budget narrative, table of contents, and executive summary), and must be submitted and formatted to fit an 8 ½ by 11-inch

paper, double-spaced, with one-inch margins (for the top, bottom, left, and right sides of the document) and in standard Times New Roman 12-point font. Each page must be numbered and the name of the researcher and applicant. The double-spacing requirement applies to the narrative section of the application (excluding references and bibliographies).

Submitting pages in excess of the page limit will not disqualify the application; however, HUD will not consider the information on any additional page. **Please do not attach your response to each factor separately. Follow the instructions in the General Section on the use of zipped files, file extensions, and file names. File names should not contain spaces, dashes or special characters. Failure to follow the file name requirements can result in a reject of the application by the Grants.gov system.**

d. **Budget.** The budget submission must include the following:

**HUD\_424\_CB\_Grant\_Application\_Detailed\_Budget.** This budget form shows the total budget by year (12 month period), and by line item for the program activities to be carried out with the proposed HUD grant. Make sure that the amount shown on the SF\_424, HUD\_424\_CB, and budget narrative are consistent and the budget totals are correct. Please remember to double-check addition when totaling the categories on the HUD\_424\_CB form so that all items are included in the total. The budget form must be fully completed. If there is inconsistency between any required forms and/or budget narrative, the HUD\_424\_CB will be used. If the correction results in a proposed budget that exceeds the grant maximum, the applicant will not be able to correct the amount requested and the application will be disqualified. If an application is selected for award, the researcher may be required to provide greater specificity and justification to the budget during the grant agreement and negotiations process.

e. **Budget Narrative.** A narrative must be submitted that explains how the applicant arrived at the cost estimate for each line item. The proposed cost should be reasonable for the work to be performed and consistent with rates established for the level of expertise required to perform the work proposed. The applicant must pay close attention to ensure the accuracy of cost estimates, to determine the necessity for and justification of the proposed costs, and the methods used to correctly compute all budget items and totals.

*Indirect costs.* Indirect costs, if applicable, are allowable based on an established approved indirect cost rate. **Applicants must have on file, and submit to HUD if selected for award, a copy of their approved indirect cost rate agreement.** Applicants that are selected for funding but do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement established by the cognizant federal agency, will be required to establish a rate. In such cases, HUD will issue an award with a provisional rate and assist applicants with the process of establishing a final rate.

*Appendix.* The appendix section of an application must not exceed ten (10) pages in length (excluding forms, budget narrative, resumes, back up material, letters of reference, and assurances). Each page must be numbered and include the researcher's name and the name of the organization (or primary applicant).

f. **Forms. All forms listed below must be placed in the appendix section of the application.** The following forms are required for submission:

1. SF\_424\_Supplement, Survey\_on\_Ensuring\_Equal\_Opportunities\_for\_Applicants (Faith\_Based\_EEO\_Survey (SF\_424\_SUPP)).
2. SF\_LLL\_Disclosure\_of\_Lobbying\_Activities, if applicable.



3. HUD\_2880\_Applicant/Recipient\_Disclosure/Update\_Report (HUD\_Applicant Recipient\_Disclosure\_Report), if applicable.

**HUD\_2993\_Acknowledgement\_of\_Applicant\_Receipt.** Applicants/researchers/faculty members are not required to include this form for electronic applications as they can track their application on line by going to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and clicking on “Track My Application”. Applicants that have requested a waiver and are approved for the submission of a paper application and use this form to obtain a receipt. approved e.

**HUD\_96011\_Third\_Party\_Documentation\_Facsimile\_Transmittal (Facsimile Transmittal Form on Grants.gov).** This form must be used as the cover page to transmit third party documents and other information. Applicants are advised to download the application package and complete the SF 424, which will pre-populate the Transmittal Cover page. The Transmittal Cover page will contain a unique identifier embedded in the page that will help HUD associate your faxed materials to your application. Please do not use your own fax sheet. HUD will not read any faxes that are sent without the HUD 96011 fax transmittal cover page. **Note: In order for your application to be transmitted you must complete this form even if you are not faxing any documents. In the section of the form titled “Name of Document Transmitting,” enter the words “Nothing Faxed with this Application.” Complete the remaining highlighted fields and enter the number “1” in the section of the form titled “How many pages (including cover) are being faxed?” It is important that you read the General Section for other specifics.**

**4. Certifications and Assurances. Please read the General Section for detailed information on all Certifications and Assurances.**

When submitting attachment files, please pay close attention to the requirements for naming the attachment files. Attachment file names cannot have spaces, dashes, special characters or be longer than 50 characters in length. Failure to follow these directions will result in a “VIRUSDETECT” error message and your application being rejected by the Grants.gov system.

**C. Submission Date and Time Receipt Requirements.**

The abstracts for the first step in this process must be received by Grants.gov no later than 11:59:59 p.m. eastern time on the pre-application deadline date of February 4, 2011. **Electronic applications must be received by Grants.gov on or before 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on the application deadline date.** Once received applications go through a validation process. Applicants must allow time for the validation process. Please see the 2010 **General Section** for instructions for timely receipt, including actions to take if the application is rejected. Applicants can then track their applications by clicking on the “Track My Application” link and logging on using their Password and ID. HUD urges applicants to submit their applications early.

**D. Intergovernmental Review**

This program is excluded from the Intergovernmental Review process.

**E. Funding Restrictions**

1. Funding will only be provided to researchers who meet the standards for eligible applicants outlined in **Section III. A.**

2. Grant funds awarded under this NOPI may not be used to pay for computer hardware and/or meals.
3. Indirect cost rates and honorariums cannot be charged against grants under this program.
4. Fee or profit will not be paid for work done under this NOPI.
5. Applicants must comply with the Delinquent Federal Debt Requirement as defined in the **General Section**.

#### **F. Other Submission Requirements**

Applications submitted under this NOPI for both steps in the process must be received electronically through the Federal website Grants.gov, unless a waiver of this requirement is granted in accordance with the instructions below. Applicants are required to submit applications electronically via the website [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply\\_for\\_grants.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp). See sections IV.B and F of the **General Section** for additional information on the electronic process requirement and how to request a waiver from the requirement if necessary. Applicants requesting a waiver must submit their requests in writing no later than 15 days prior to the application deadline date. The letter must be addressed to Dr. Raphael W. Bostic, Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, and submitted via e-mail or fax to:

Regina C. Gray, Ph.D.  
 Division of Affordable Housing Research and Technology  
 E-mail: Regina.C.Gray@hud.gov  
 FAX: (202) 619-8360

Paper applications will not be accepted from applicants that have not been granted a waiver. If an applicant is granted a waiver, approval notice will provide instructions for submission. **All applications in paper format must have received a waiver to the electronic application requirement and the application must be received no later than 3:59:59 p.m. close of business on or before the application deadline date.** Applicants that receive a waiver to submit a paper application are not exempt from the requirement to have a DUNS number and active registration in CCR.

#### **V. Application Review Information:**

##### **A. Criteria**

**1. Rating Factor 1: Capacity to do the Research (30 Points).** In reviewing this factor, HUD will determine the extent to which the researcher clearly addresses the following:

- a. Describe the research skills and expertise possessed to conduct research. Research skills and expertise developed within the last two (2) years will be considered recent.
- b. List and identify key project team members/staff and partners and include their titles and names, respective roles, and time each individual involved in the project.
- c. Describe the knowledge, past employment and experience possessed to undertake the proposed research hypothesis. Knowledge and experience will be judged in terms of how relevant it is to the research proposed (e.g., course work, teaching, research projects completed in the past, and presentations). Activities within the

last three (3) years in the area of the proposed research will be considered relevant.

- d. Describe educational and professional background, publications, books, referred journals articles, chapters, contributed to books, articles in issued proceeding, and any other articles, text and poster presentations made during the last three (3) years, and grants and awards received during the last seven years.
- e. Provide a detailed list that outlines the preliminary steps that were taken (e.g., literature review, research hypothesis, data surveys, questions to be answered), to identify the proposed topic/hypothesis.
- f. Include three (3) letters of reference (please place letters in the appendix; these will not be included in the page count).

**2. Rating Factor 2: Need for the Research (20 Points).** This factor addresses the extent to which there is a need and a demand for funding the proposed research. HUD encourages applicants to undertake research that will provide critical information regarding outcomes and impacts and a broader understanding of the proposed activity. In reviewing this factor, HUD will determine the extent to which the researcher clearly addresses the following:

- a. Describe the need for funding the proposed research (i.e., based on questions derived from identified gaps in the literature, and/or knowledge from professional practice).
- b. Describe the significance of the work, including its relationship to past research. Reviewers will determine how well the applicant makes a compelling case for funding the proposed project in the context of the existing literature and knowledge base for the topic proposed.
- c. Discuss the results or findings that the proposed research is expected to produce, including the broader impact expected, and explain why the information will be generally accepted by researchers and practitioners in your field and other related disciplines.

**3. Rating Factor 3: Soundness of Approach (30 Points).** This factor addresses the relationship between the need proposed in **Factor 2**, the quality and policy relevance of the proposed research and methodology, specific activities required to carry out the research, a dissemination plan, support for the proposed research, and efforts to address HUD's policy priorities. This factor will be evaluated based on the extent to which the proposed work plan will demonstrate the following:

**a. (12 Points) Quality of Research.**

(1) State the proposed research question/hypothesis and how it relates to the need described in **Rating Factor 2**;

(2) Describe in detail the proposed research design as it relates to the question/hypothesis stated above;

(3) Explain how the proposed methodology will be used to complete the proposed research project;

(4) Explain why the proposed methods are most appropriate and will produce data and information that will successfully answer the proposed research hypothesis;

(5) Identify potential obstacles in completing the research, including challenges of collecting credible data and discuss how they will be handled. If the research product is dependent on any data sources that are not readily attainable and require obtaining

permission to access them, please outline the alternatives that will be utilized to complete the study should access to the data sources not be obtained; and,

(6) Describe the quality assurance mechanisms that will be integrated into the proposed research design to ensure the validity and quality of the results.

**b. (12 Points) Specific Activities.** The research schedule must identify all the major tasks/benchmarks involved in completing the proposed research project. The tasks/benchmarks must be presented in a logical sequence of steps and phases, with individual tasks described for each, as well as plans for data management and analysis.

(1) Indicate the sequence in which these tasks/benchmarks will be performed;

(2) The sequence and duration of this effort should be presented in quarterly (3 month) intervals for the entire life of the grant (use of a milestone chart to present this information is preferred);

(3) Describe the plan that will be used to manage and analyze the data; and,

(4) Identify any key individuals assisting in the proposed activities.

Individuals who propose extremely complex and time-consuming data collection efforts, (e.g., major longitudinal studies or a very large number of site visits within the grant period), should consider whether such an approach may present a challenge to complete the project within the grant performance period. For example, if the proposed methodology is based on information that may not be publicly available until after the end of the grant period (e.g., Census information), or a data collection plan that will take longer than the allotted grant performance period, zero points will be awarded for this factor. All proposed activities must be relevant to and consistent with the stated research program identified in **Rating Factor 1**.

**c. (2 Points) Additional Support.** This subfactor addresses the researcher's ability to secure additional support from other entities to carry out the proposed research. The researcher must provide a support letter from that entity that details and outlines the specific types of support/resources—in the form of a match or in-kind contribution—that will be provided to support the research (i.e., labor cost to transcribe interviews, assistance with cost associated with data collection, student workspace, etc.). To receive points under this rating subfactor, **this letter must be signed and included with the application at the time of submission and be signed by the appropriate executive officer/official authorized and be submitted on Official letterhead addressed to Kevin Neary, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research Evaluation and Monitoring, Office of Policy Development and Research, Room 8124, 451 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20410.** If the support letter cannot be attached the application the letter can be faxed using the HUD\_96011 Third-party\_Documentation\_Facsimile\_Transmittal (Facsimile\_Transmittal\_Form on Grants.gov). This form must be used as the cover page to transmit this letter (as well as other information). Please do not use your own fax sheet. HUD will not read any faxes that are sent without the HUD\_96011 fax transmittal cover page.

**d. (4 Points) HUD Policy Priorities.** As described in the General Section, HUD is encouraging applicants to undertake programs and projects that are consistent with the Six Livability Principles for Sustainable Communities, and to assist communities in achieving the Departmental Policy Priorities. Applicants who undertake activities that result in the achievement of the specific policy priorities will receive points under this subfactor. As outlined in the **General Section**, this year each NOFA/NOPI will specify the Policy Priorities that are applicable to the program. Under the Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program, NOPI applicants can receive a total of four (4) points and may only respond

to four (4) activities listed under the following three (3) policy priorities: 1) *Sustainability*, 2) *Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing*, and 3) *Using Housing as a Platform for Improving Other Outcomes*. It is up to the applicant to determine which of the policy priorities outlined below (and only the priorities listed below), to address in order to receive the available four (4) points.

(1) Sustainability. HUD's Strategic Plan calls for a priority to be placed on investments that encourage and create inclusive, sustainable communities. For the Department, "sustainability" means ensuring that the land that we build on is uncontaminated; the investments we make in neighborhoods help residents lead healthy, safe, affordable and productive lives; the buildings we invest in are energy efficient and healthy; and, the regions we support are economically strong and provide opportunities for all residents to actively participate. A central mission for HUD is to expand housing opportunities that are affordable, energy efficient, and provide access to a range of valuable community services. Each of the following three activities under this policy priority is worth 1 point. To earn points under the *Sustainability* policy priority, please choose exactly two (2) activities below and provide clear, thorough responses to each:

- *Promote and preserve community assets*. Describe how the proposed research will promote and preserve community assets – including, but not limited to, affordable housing development and preservation, small business support, fresh food markets, parks, health and wellness centers, bus, transit and other public facilities, quality schools, and economic development planning (Subgoal 4A).

- *Improvements to health and safety of the community*. Describe and outline how the proposed research seeks to improve the health and safety of a community, particularly of children, the elderly and other vulnerable populations, by promoting green practices and healthy design, construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of housing and the improvements to the surrounding community infrastructure (Subgoal 4B).

- *Support and Promote Energy Efficiency*. Identify the type of support and promotion of a green, environmentally friendly, and healthy housing market by retrofitting existing housing or by supporting energy efficient new construction proposed by the end of the grant performance period (Subgoal 4B).

In addition, under this policy priority, please respond to **at least one (1) or more** of the outcome measures listed below and explain how success will be measured during the grant performance period:

(a) Outcome Measures

- Describe the plans to disseminate the knowledge learned from the completed research to provide long-term benefits and increase knowledge in the field.
- Demonstrate the need for additional research that could result in new skills and technical expertise in the subject matter.
- Identify the activities that the researcher will engage in that will demonstrate the knowledge gained as a result of conducting this type of research during the life of award.
- Describe the technical capabilities that will be developed, examples may include needs assessments, data analysis utilization of technology, performance management and evaluation specific to the programmatic purpose of the grant.

Now, identify and discuss one or more corresponding measures of success below:

(b) Measures of success:

- Implementation of a dissemination plan that will provide long-term benefits and increase knowledge in the field.
- Development of at least two (2) new research activities that the researcher engaged in that demonstrated the knowledge gained as a result of conducting this type of research during the life of award.

(2) Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH). HUD believes that residents should be provided opportunities to live in quality, healthy, and economically vibrant communities regardless of race, income, religious faith or ethnic background. To achieve this mission, HUD strives to create inclusive, diverse communities where all people have access to affordable housing, employment opportunities, quality schools, hospitals, and other valuable amenities. Each of the following three activities under this policy priority is worth 1 point. To earn points under the *Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing* policy priority, please select **exactly one (1)** of the following activities below and provide a clear and concise response:

- *Respond to Community Housing Needs*. Describe how the proposed research will strive to address the housing needs of American communities by removing the impediments to homeownership, by reducing the number of families searching for quality, affordable homes, and by expanding the supply of these homes. Explain how your program will develop measures and policies that will tap into underserved markets with the greatest unmet need, reduce discrimination and concentration of poverty, and create diverse, mixed-income communities of opportunity (Subgoals 2B, 2D, 4C).

- *Preserve Affordability, Improve Quality of Homes*. Explain how the proposed project will identify approaches that preserve long-term affordability and quality of federally subsidized public and assisted housing units, as well as, privately-owned and managed rental homes (Subgoals 1C, 2C).

- *Expand Homeownership Choices*. Describe how the research will evaluate existing strategies and explore new tools for expanding housing opportunities in diverse communities that offer a wide range of public services in close proximity to transit. Describe how the project will expand opportunities for low-income families to live in diverse, mixed-income communities and how the proposal addresses the removal of barriers to multifamily housing development through the use of incentives (Subgoals 1B, 1C, 2D, 4E).

Additionally, to receive the **(1) point** under the *Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing* policy priority, please also respond to **at least one (1) or more** of the outcome measures listed below and explain how success will be measured during the grant performance period:

(a) Outcome Measures:

- Identify the partnerships/relationships that will be established with other entities to capture and track the data collected as a result of the research conducted.
- Outline what data will be collected and analyzed during the project.
- Recommend potential improvements in the area that the research is being conducted to increase possible positive spin-off effects and modifications to existing policies and procedures that create barriers or inhibit the achievements in the proposed area of study.

Now, identify and discuss one or more corresponding measures of success below:

(b) Measure of Success:

- Development of a plan that recommends potential improvements in the area that the research is being conducted that provides specific benefits to a community(ies) and

possible modifications to existing policies and procedures which create barriers or inhibit the achievements in the proposed area of study.

- An outline of data that was collected and analyzed during the project period and how it will be utilized in the proposed area of study.

(3) Using housing as a platform for improving other outcomes. One surefire way to promote the social and economic stability of a community is to ensure that families are self-sufficient because they reside in neighborhoods that promote access to supportive public and social services, such health care clinics, job training programs, recreational facilities, and a host of opportunities that empower communities. Evidence supports the positive relationship between housing location, service delivery, and social and economic security. To earn points under the *Using Housing* policy priority, please choose **exactly one** (1) of the two activities listed below and provide a clear, concise response:

- *Improve Health Outcomes*. Clearly describe how the proposed research will address the health challenges faced by vulnerable populations residing in urban and rural communities. Explain how the project will provide education and information services for these communities (Subgoal 3B).

- *Increase Economic Security and Promote Self Sufficiency*. Describe how the research will explore strategies for improving access to job opportunities and workforce development through information sharing, coordination with federal, state and local programs, and other means, with a strong emphasis on preserving homeownership opportunities (Subgoals 1C, 3C).

Additionally, to receive the **(1) point** under the *Utilizing Housing as a Platform for Improving Other Outcomes* policy priority, please also respond to **at least one (1) or more** of the outcome measures listed below and explain how success will be measured during the grant performance period:

(a) Outcome Measures:

- Identify the partnerships/relationships that will be established with other entities to increase access to public benefits through outreach and other means.
- Outline what data will be collected and analyzed during the project.
- Recommend potential improvements in the area that the research is being conducted to increase possible positive spin-off effects and also possible modifications to existing policies and procedures which create barriers or inhibit the achievements in the proposed area of study.

Now, identify and discuss one or more corresponding measures of success below:

(b) Measure of Success:

- Development of a plan that recommends potential improvements in the area that the research is being conducted to increase possible positive spin-off effects and also possible modifications to existing policies and procedures which create barriers or inhibit the achievements in the proposed area of study.
- An outline of data that was collected and analyzed during the project period and how it will be utilized in the proposed area of study.

To recap, the requirements for satisfying this rating subfactor:

For the *Sustainability* policy priority, **select two (2) of the activities listed** and provide a thorough response. Then, provide **one (1) or more responses** under “Outcome Measures” and corresponding “Measure of Success.” Under the *Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing* policy priority, please **choose exactly one (1) listed activity** and provide a

clear, concise response. Then, provide **one (1) or more responses** under “Outcome Measures” and corresponding “Measure of Success.” Finally, under the *Using Housing as a Platform for Improving Other Outcomes* policy priority, please **select exactly one (1) activity** and provide a clear, thorough response. Then, provide **one (1) or more responses** under “Outcome Measures” and corresponding “Measure of Success.”

Applicants can only receive a total of four (4) points for this subfactor based on responses to each selected activity, outcome measure, and success measure—two (2) activities under *Sustainability* that include at least one measurable outcome(s) linked to a success measure(s); one (1) activity under *Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing* that includes at least one measurable outcome linked to a success measure, and one (1) activity under *Utilizing Housing* that includes at least one measurable outcome linked to a success outcome.

**4. Rating Factor 4: Value to Government (10 Points).** In evaluating this factor, HUD will consider the likelihood that the goals of the proposed project will be realized given (a) the total budget, (b) the time budgeted for the Principal Investigator, (c) the time budgeted for other personnel, (d) the demonstrated capability of other personnel, (e) overhead and travel costs, (f) scheduling of tasks, and (g) resources provided by sources other than HUD.

**5. Rating Factor 5: Achieving Results and Program Evaluation (10 Points).** This factor reflects HUD’s goal to embrace high standards of management and accountability. It measures the student’s commitment to assess their performance to complete their proposed research within the grant performance period. Researchers are required to develop an effective, quantifiable, outcome oriented evaluation plan for measuring performance and determining the outputs to achieve their proposed outcome(s). The Logic Model is a summary of the narrative statements presented in Factors 1 through 4. Therefore, it should be consistent with the information contained in the narrative statements.

In evaluating this factor, HUD will assess the extent to which the researcher demonstrates how results of completing the research will be measured as outlined in the proposed work plan. To meet this factor requirement, researchers must submit a completed HUD 96010 HUD Program-Outcome-Logic-Model. Researchers must select from the list of activities and outcomes to determine their specific methods and measures that will be used to assess progress and evaluate program effectiveness. If an item is not found on the list of activities or outcomes, applicants can select “other” and then insert the activity and/or outcome and unit of measurement. Researchers can use the “other” option for up to three activities and three outcomes. See the instructions tab in the Logic Model for further details. HUD will not accept activities or outcomes selected as “other” that do not contain an identified statement of the activities/outcomes or units of measurement. Utilizing this form will help researchers to ensure that performance measures are being met and achievable realistic goals are being established.

a. Logic Model instructions (using a Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> form) are provided on the Logic model form that can be downloaded from [http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/apply\\_for\\_grants.jsp](http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp). Researchers who do not have access to Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> 2003 or 2007, should contact the NOFA Information Center at (800) HUD-8929. Individuals with hearing or speech impairments may access this number via the toll-free Federal Information Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

**NOTE: A narrative response is not required for this factor as all applicants must use the Logic Model form to respond to this factor.** However, if a narrative is included, these



pages will be included in the page count. HUD has developed a new approach to completing this form. Applicants should also review the Logic Model training, which can be found online at <http://www.hud.gov/webcasts/index.cfm>.

b. HUD will review the outputs and outcomes in relation to the needs identified.

“**Outcomes**” are ultimate goals. A researcher must clearly identify the outcomes to be measured and achieved. Examples of outcomes are the completion of the research, the plan to disseminate the research, and the benefits of the research study to HUD’s policy priorities and annual goals and objectives.

In addition, a researcher must establish outputs that lead to the ultimate achievement of the outcomes. “**Outputs**” are the direct benchmarks and indicators that will allow a student to measure their performance. Performance indicators should be objectively quantifiable and measure actual achievements. At a minimum, the researcher must address the following activities in the evaluation plan:

(1) Identify benchmarks that will be used to track the progress of the research study and

(2) Indicate the sequence in which tasks will be performed. Researchers must also reference policy priorities, as stated in their response to **Factor 3**, and relate them to the completion of the research project.

HUD will evaluate the Logic Model in accordance with the matrix provided in Attachment 1 of the **General Section**.

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

### **1. Application Selection Process.**

Three types of reviews will be conducted:

- a. A threshold review to determine an applicant’s basic eligibility;
- b. An initial review for all applications that pass the threshold review, to determine which applicants will be asked to submit a full proposal; and
- c. A technical review that will rate and rank all full proposals based on the “Rating Factors” listed in **Section V.A**.

Only those preliminary applicants that are invited to submit a full application will receive a technical review and be rated and ranked.

**2. Rating Panels.** To review and rate applications, HUD may establish panels that may include experts or consultants not currently employed by HUD. These individuals may be included to obtain certain expertise.

**3. Ranking.** HUD will fund applications in rank order until all available program funds are awarded. To receive an award for funding, **an application must receive a minimum score of 75 points** out of a possible 100 for Factors 1 through 4. The **RC\_EZ\_EC\_II** communities’ two bonus points described in the **General Section** do not apply to this NOPI. **If two or more applications have the same number of points, the application with the higher points for Factor 3, shall be selected. If there is still a tie, the application with the higher points for Factor 2, shall be selected.**

HUD reserves the right to reduce the amount of funding requested in order to fund as many highly ranked applications as possible. Additionally, if funds remain after funding the highest ranked applications, HUD may fund part of the next highest-ranking application. If a researcher turns down the award offer, HUD will make an offer to the next highest-ranking application.

HUD may not fund any portion of an application that is not eligible for funding under regulatory requirements and that fails to meet the requirements of the NOPI.

**4. Correction to Deficient Applications.** See the **General Section**.

**C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

Announcements of awards are anticipated on or before **May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011**.

**VI. Award Administration Information**

**A. Award Notices**

After all selections have been made, HUD will notify all winning primary applicants (not researchers) in writing. HUD may require winning applicants and researchers to participate in additional negotiations before receiving an official award. For further discussion on this matter, please refer to the **General Section**.

**B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.** Refer to the **General Section**.

**1. Debriefing.** The **General Section** provides the procedures for requesting a debriefing. All requests for debriefings must be made in writing and submitted within 30 days of receipt of comments to Regina C. Gray, Ph.D., Division of Affordable Housing Research and Technology, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Room 8132, 451 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20410-6000. Applicants may also write to Dr. Gray via e-mail at [Regina.C.Gray@hud.gov](mailto:Regina.C.Gray@hud.gov).

**2. Environmental Requirements.** The provision of assistance under this program is categorically excluded from environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321) and not subject to compliance actions for related environmental authorities under 24 CFR 50.19(b)(1) and (b)(9).

**3. Administrative.** Grants awarded under this NOFA will be governed by the provisions of 24 CFR part 84 (Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations), OMB Circular A-21 (Cost Principles for Educational Institutions) and OMB Circular A-133 (Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations). Applicants can access the OMB circulars at the White House Web site at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html>.

**C. Reporting Requirements**

1. All researchers that receive grant funds under this program are required to submit a quarterly progress report which describes the progress of the effort and the likelihood that it will be completed on time. Reports must be submitted electronically.

At the end of the grant performance period, researcher must submit to HUD two copies and a CD-ROM containing an electronic copy of the paper documenting the research finding in its final version, as well as a final report which summarizes the entire work and achievements conducted under this award.

2. Applicants will also be required to submit quarterly financial status reports using the form SF 425.

3. Applicants selected for funding should also be aware that they will be required to report sub-award information within 30 days of making a sub-award in an amount of \$25,000 or greater as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-282), referred to as the Transparency Act and by the acronym FFATA. The

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 calls for the establishment of a central Web site that makes available to the public full disclosure of all entities receiving federal funds. Applicants should be aware that the law requires the information provided on the federal web site to include the following elements related to all sub-award transactions \$25,000 or greater.

- a. The name of the entity receiving the award;
- b. The amount of the award;
- c. Information on the award, including the transaction type, funding agency, the North American Industry Classification System code or Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number (where applicable), program source, and an award title descriptive of the purpose of each funding action;
- d. The location of the entity receiving the award and primary location of performance under the award, including the city, state, congressional district, and country/parish;
- e. A unique identifier (DUNS number) of the entity receiving award and of the parent entity of the recipient (DUNS number of the parent entity) should the entity be owned by another entity;
- f. Federal parent award number and sub-award grant number,
- g. The tier level the sub-award was made at; and
- h. Any other relevant information specified by OMB.

There are exceptions for sub-awards less than \$25,000 made to individuals or to an entity whose annual expenditures are less than \$300,000.

Applicants should also be aware that the sub-award provision carries to all tiers (e.g. a direct award is made by HUD to an organization that in turn makes an award to another organization that then makes another award and so on). Collection of the tier level at which the award is made as well as federal parent award number can help in tracing the sub-award data as it tiers down several levels. OMB has published Interim Final Guidance to agencies regarding the FFATA subrecipient reporting requirements in the Federal Register on September 14, 2010 (75FR55663.)

3. Compliance with Section 872 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Pub. L. 110-417), hereafter referred to as “Section 872.” Section 872 requires the establishment of a government-wide data system to contain information related to the integrity and performance of entities awarded federal financial assistance and making use of the information by federal officials in making awards. It is anticipated that the federal data system will be known as the Federal Awardees Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). Only federal officials and the entity will be able to view the information in the FAPIIS system.

In furtherance of requirements of Section 872, each recipient of federal funds with a cumulative value greater than \$10 million and their direct (i.e., first-tier) subrecipients would be required to report to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). The data collection requirements includes information about certain civil judgments, criminal convictions, and outcomes of administrative proceedings that reached final disposition within the most recent 5-year period and were connected with the award or performance of a federal or state award. Recipients and first-tier subrecipients must report information at least semi annually to maintain the currency of the information.

Section 872 also requires that an entity be allowed to submit comments to the data system about any information that system contains about the entity. Use of the FAPIIS

system requires a DUNS number and current valid registration in the CCR for HUD awardees and first-tier subrecipients. OMB issued a proposed rule for compliance with Section 872 and other matters on February 18, 2010. Comments were received and OMB is expected to issue a final rule in the near future. The terms and conditions to the award will contain requirements for meeting the reporting requirements of the Transparency Act and Section 872.

### **VII. Agency Contacts**

Individuals may contact Dr. Regina Gray, Division of Affordable Housing Research and Technology, at (202) 402-2876. Persons with speech or hearing impairments may call the Federal Information Relay Service TTY at 800-877-8339. Except for the “800” number, these telephone numbers are not toll-free. Individuals may also reach Dr. Gray via e-mail at Regina.C.Gray@hud.gov.

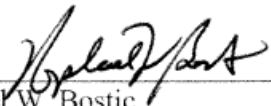
### **VIII. Other Information:**

**A. Proprietary Information.** Because it is the intent of this program to accelerate the use of the information provided, any information or research results, which the researcher proposes to remain proprietary, must be discussed in their application. Since it is important that the information received be made available, such request for retention of proprietary information would be considered during the review process.

**B. Paperwork Reduction Act.** The information collection requirements contained in this document have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520) and assigned OMB control number 2528-0264 for the Transformation Initiative: Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program. In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, HUD may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection displays a currently valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to **average 56** hours per annum per respondent for the application and grant administration. This includes the time for collecting, reviewing, and reporting the data for the application, semi-annual reports, and final report. The information will be used for grantee selection and monitoring the administration of funds. Response to this request for information is required in order to receive the benefits to be derived.

**C. Environmental.** This NOPI does not direct, provide for assistance or loan and mortgage insurance for, or otherwise govern or regulate, real property acquisition, disposition, leasing, rehabilitation, alteration, demolition, or new construction, or establish, revise, or provide for standards for construction or construction materials, manufactured housing, or occupancy. Accordingly, under 24 CFR 50.19(c) (1), this NOFA is categorically excluded from environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321).

Dated: JAN 03 2011

  
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Raphael W. Bostic  
Assistant Secretary for  
Policy Development and Research

[FR-5415-N-24]