2005

AFFORDABLE COMMUNITIES AWARDS

An Annual Award Program of the

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

HUD's **Affordable Communities Award** is a new annual award program designed to acknowledge and honor those communities that are expanding affordable housing opportunities by reducing regulatory barriers and creating an environment supportive of the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing. This award program is a component of the Department's new ***America's Affordable Communities Initiative: Bringing Homes Within Reach Through Regulatory Reform.***

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-0001

Every day, state and local governments make many important decisions affecting affordable housing opportunities in their communities. I am gratified that so many local communities support and sponsor efforts to provide affordable housing. All state and local governments should view expanding the supply of affordable housing as an opportunity to strengthen and support their communities and economies, rather than a burden to be resisted.

Unfortunately, too many localities still have cumbersome, excessive, or exclusionary regulatory requirements and processes that discourage the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing. To address this issue, the Department has recently announced ***America's Affordable Communities Initiative: Bringing Homes Within Reach Through Regulatory Reform.*** Under this initiative, HUD will work with states and localities to identify and remove excessive, unnecessary, or burdensome regulations that impede the production and rehabilitation of affordable housing. HUD's ***Affordable Communities Initiative*** will make the goal of reducing regulatory barriers a top priority. I hope that through this effort we all can encourage appropriate attention, education, focus and action to change many people's thinking from ***"Not in My Backyard"*** to ***"Why Not in My Community?"*** To that end, the Department announces this Affordable Communities Awards program. This annual award will recognize outstanding achievements by state and local governments in reducing regulatory barriers and creating an environment supportive of affordable housing. To learn more about ***America's Affordable Communities Initiative***, please visit the Initiative's website at www.hud.gov/affordablecommunities.

A major goal of the Initiative is to better define the problem of regulatory barriers to affordable housing and educate the American people about the challenges this nation faces in meeting affordable housing needs. The Initiative also will--

- Identify and analyze regulations at all levels of government that are duplicative, contradictory or burdensome and therefore act as barriers to the production of affordable housing;

- Assist state and local governments in developing comprehensive programs to remove regulatory barriers;

Work with other federal agencies to identify and streamline their regulatory requirements;

Recommend legislative and regulatory changes;

Promote, conduct, and review studies that analyze the affordable housing problem and recommend solutions; and

Promote the positive aspects of affordable housing.

Many communities already have taken bold and imaginative steps to implement regulatory and institutional reforms that encourage expansion of the supply of affordable housing. These model communities have eliminated duplicative time-consuming design review processes; reduced multiple or duplicative layers of approval processes; reformed out-of-date building codes; enacted codes to encourage rehabilitation; eliminated excessive fees; and removed restrictive and exclusionary zoning ordinances. Perhaps most importantly, these communities have abandoned archaic and negative thinking about affordable housing and its place within their communities.

It is important to recognize and reward those communities that have assumed a leadership role in reexamining their existing regulatory systems and taken the often difficult statutory and administrative steps necessary to create an environment in which affordable housing of all types - from work force housing for teachers and civil servants to lower-income housing for those most in need - is welcome and can flourish as a community asset. To recognize these extraordinary communities, I am announcing the first annual "Affordable Communities Awards." These awards will be given to states, counties, towns, cities, and other municipalities that have instituted lasting, creative institutional reforms that have increased the supply of affordable housing. We invite nominations from states and localities, as well as from builders, developers, nonprofit organizations, national organizations, faith-based groups, and individuals.

I look forward to learning about the extraordinary accomplishments that states and local communities have made this past year in expanding affordable housing opportunities for all American families.

Sincerely,

Alphonso Jackson

Affordable Communities Award Program

A. Eligible Awardees

The Affordable Communities Awardees will be selected from states, counties, cities, towns, townships, and other municipalities that have made significant changes in their procedures, processes, fees, and regulations to reduce regulatory barriers to the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing for lower- and moderate-income families.

It is anticipated that ten awards will be given annually, although the number of awards may be increased or decreased depending upon the quality of the applications. One award will be given annually to a state and three awards each to:

- Cities;
- Counties; and,
- Towns, townships, or other incorporated municipalities.

The Secretary will also acknowledge other highly meritorious applicants that are not award winners.

This new prestigious national award program will recognize those states and localities that have taken a leadership role in regulatory barrier removal and that can serve as national models for others. Although no monetary award will be given, award winners will be nationally recognized and honored and the activities of the awardees highlighted. HUD will also announce the awardees through such publicity as a national public affairs release, local press releases, detailed information on the activities and accomplishments of the awardees on the Initiative website (www.hud.gov/affordablecommunities), or publication of a book of best practices that can serve as models for other communities that are working on regulatory barrier removal.

B. What is a Regulatory Barrier to Affordable Housing?

Barriers are public statutes, ordinances, regulatory requirements, fees, processes, and procedures that significantly impede the development or availability of affordable housing without providing a commensurate and demonstrable health or safety benefit. Affordable housing is decent quality housing that America's hard-working families can buy or rent without sacrificing other necessities of life by spending more than 30 percent of their income on shelter. Regulatory barriers have serious adverse impacts upon affordable housing supply and the lives of those who need such housing. Some of these impacts also have negative impacts on the community at large.

- Due to regulations that limit the supply of affordable housing, middle-income workers, including workforce heroes such as nurses, police officers, firefighters, teachers, and other vital community workers, often live far from the very communities they serve.

- Workers who are forced to live far from their jobs must regularly commute long distances by car, clogging roads and highways, contributing to air pollution, and resulting in significant losses in productivity.

- Low-income, minority, and disabled persons have an especially difficult time finding suitable, affordable housing alternatives.

- Elderly Americans – soon to include the "baby boom" generation – often are unable to find suitable homes or apartments near their children.

- Young families just starting out in life may not be able to find appropriate housing choices in the very communities in which they were raised.

C. Nominations

Interested individuals, local or national organizations, nonprofit organizations, builders, developers, faith-based organizations, or governments entities may submit a nomination to recognize states or localities that have demonstrated extraordinary achievement in eliminating regulatory barriers to housing affordability. State and local governments may nominate themselves or other local governments for awards.

D. Selection Criteria

Projects will be evaluated and selected by HUD's ***Affordable Communities Initiative Team***. The team consists of senior-level HUD staff representing all major components of the Department, who have been selected for their knowledge of regulatory barriers and their commitment to working with states and localities in fashioning creative solutions. In selecting award winners, the team will consider the following factors:

1. Nature of the Regulatory Reform

1a. Scope. The breadth and scope of the reforms adopted by the nominated state, locality, or group of localities that allows increased development, construction, or rehabilitation of affordable housing. Preference will be given to efforts that involve multiple reforms as part of a larger strategy of regulatory barrier removal. Local actions that assist only a limited number of projects but fail to also address broad-based institutional and systemic barriers to the overall affordable housing supply do not qualify.

1b. Seriousness of Barrier That is Being Addressed. Many regulatory barriers involve deep-seated economic and institutional preferences and interests. This factor will give greater preference and weight to those regulatory reforms that have historically been the most difficult to change.

2. Impact: Demonstrated impact of the regulatory change on the cost and supply of new and rehabilitated affordable housing in the community.

3. Transferability: The degree to which the reform implemented in the community may be applied throughout the nation.

4. Partnership: The degree to which public, private, and nonprofit sectors and key constituencies worked together to accomplish the regulatory reform.

5. Innovativeness: The degree to which the community has applied new approaches and solutions to address barriers.

E. Nomination Instructions

Deadline for Submissions: ON OR BEFORE MARCH 15, 2005

Applications must include the following:

- Completed checklist of materials.
- All required materials.
- Supporting documentation.

Photographs of representative projects resulting from the instituted reforms are permitted, but are not required. The minimum font size is 11 points.

Applications for the 2005 Affordable Communities Award process must be postmarked no later than **March 15, 2005** and should be submitted to the **Regulations Division, Office of General Counsel, Room 10276, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20410-0500.** Applicants will receive an acknowledgement notice from the Affordable Communities Initiative Team upon receipt. If you have not received

an acknowledgment email by **Match 31, 2005**, please contact the Initiative team at affordablecommunitiesinititative@hud.gov.

On or about May 15, 2005, the Director of the Affordable Communities Initiative will notify the finalists.

2005 AFFORDABLE COMMUNITIES AWARD TIMELINE

November 17, 2004	Award program announced and applications available from www.hud.gov/affordablecommunities or hard copy available from the Initiative Office.
March 15, 2005	Completed Application Packets must be postmarked no later than this date.
May 15, 2005 (On or about)	Finalists will be chosen and notified.
June, 2005 (Tentative)	Award Presentations

2005 NOMINATION DATA SHEET

1. Award Consideration Category:

Each application may be nominated for one award category only. Please check the appropriate box before beginning the application process.

State___ City____ County_____

Town, Township, or other Incorporated Municipality_____

Nominations of groups or associations of local governments should check the category applicable to the majority of governments in the group or association.

2. Nominating Organization /Individual:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone (business/day): _____

Fax (business/day): _____

Email Address: _____

3. Nominated Government (Separate form for each nomination):

Government Name & Location: _____

Primary Government Contact person with knowledge of the reforms:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone (business/day): _____

Fax (business/day): _____

Email Address: _____

4. Essay:

Unless otherwise indicated, written responses must be limited to no more than 4 pages plus supporting documentation. Please respond to each of the essay topics in narrative form using the following guidelines:

- Headers on each page should include the applicant's name and the contact name.
- Each essay response should be no more than four typed pages.
- Provide supporting documentation.
- Ensure that all responses are neatly typed and double-spaced, have one-inch margins on all sides, and are printed in at least an 11-point font.
- Identify each essay element described below with the appropriate identifying alphabetical header (A-D)

A. Describe the condition of the affordable housing market and regulatory constraints in your community prior to the adopted reform.

B. Describe the political and institutional background that resulted in recognition by the community that the instituted reform was necessary.

C. Provide a brief summary of the actions taken by the community that addressed one or more regulatory major barriers including implementation measures. Describe why each particular reform was selected.

D. Cite, to the best of your knowledge, with both empirical and anecdotal evidence, the impact that these reforms have had in the nominated community on the production, cost, supply, or rehabilitation of affordable housing, including number of additional units, construction costs, housing prices, and rents. Describe, where applicable, any relevant partnership or collaboration involved in the initiation, development, or implementation of the reform including names and contacts of participating organizations.

5. Supporting Documentation:

Comprehensive supporting documentation is **essential** for the team to evaluate the submission. Such documentation may include items such as the following:

A. New or modified statutes, ordinances, administrative processes, handbooks, resolutions, etc., which evidence adoption of the regulatory reforms; and,

B. Data, newspaper articles, studies, etc., which provide evidence that the adopted reforms have been fully implemented and show the impact of the reforms upon the supply of affordable housing in the community. Photographs and other evidence of any development resulting from the reforms are also permitted.

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JOIN THE AFFORDABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Whether or not you choose to nominate a project or not, the Initiative team invites you to continue to work toward increasing the supply of affordable housing in your community, and to visit its websites: www.hud.gov/affordablecommunities, or http://www.regbarriers.org/. If you would like to receive periodic updates on regulatory reform activities, please join our listserv at rbc@huduser.org. If you have specific application questions that are not addressed in these instructions, please contact the Initiative at AffordableCommunitiesInitiative@hud.gov.