

FISCAL YEAR 2023 NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HOMEOWNERSHIP INITIATIVE GRANT

Frequently Asked Questions

The purpose of this document is to answer questions about the Fiscal Year 2023 Homeownership Initiative Grant published on March 5, 2024. The questions and answers published in this document may have changed since the Homeownership Initiative Notice of Funding Opportunity Preview [FAQs](#) was published on January 8, 2024.

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Section 1. General Questions

1.1 What is the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Department’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: The NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant is a new, fixed amount award that will fund Grantees who navigate their clients through three stages of the housing counseling home buying process: pre-purchase counseling, the home purchase and mortgage origination process, and post-purchase counseling. This award is designed to help eligible program participants navigate the various barriers that may arise before, during, and after a home purchase.

1.2 Will the Office of Housing Counseling offer a general training for the application process on the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Yes, the Office of Housing Counseling will provide a webinar training. The training will be advertised through the Office of Housing Counseling’s mailing list and it will be [archived on the HUD Exchange](#) for those that miss the live webinar. The archive will provide the audio, presentation, and transcript of the training. Click [here](#) to sign-up for the Office of Housing Counseling’s mailing list.

1.3 What is the Period of Performance of the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: The period of performance is from October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2025.

1.4 How has the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant changed since the Homeownership Initiative Preview was published?

Answer: A Preview of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant was published on July 27, 2023. The changes to the NOFO after the Preview publication are the following:

- **Section II.D., Period of Performance.** The Homeownership Initiative Grant period of performance is updated to October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2025.
- **Section IV.F.2.a., Definition of Unit.** “Mortgage origination” was added to the second component of the unit definition. Additionally, information regarding approved housing counseling topics for the pre- and post-purchase counseling components was added to this section.
- **Section VI.A.6. Additional Rounds of Funding.** This subsection was added.

1.5 Does the Homeownership Initiative Grant replace the Comprehensive Housing Counseling Grant for FY 2023?

Answer: No, the Homeownership Initiative Grant does not replace the Comprehensive Housing Counseling Grant for FY 2023. The Homeownership Initiative Grant is a new grant opportunity.

1.6 Can interested Applicants of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant plan for this grant opportunity in upcoming years after FY 2023?

Answer: Funding for future years of the Homeownership Initiative Grant is contingent upon congressional appropriations.

1.7 Are successful Applicants able to charge the Homeownership Initiative Grant for costs incurred prior to the Period of Performance?

Answer: No. Pre-award costs are not allowed under the Homeownership Initiative grant.

1.8 What is the Form HUD-91045, Homeownership Initiative Chart?

Answer: The Form HUD-91045, Homeownership Initiative Chart, is a form that all Applicants should submit with their NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant application. Applicants should complete each question on the form. In Questions 1 and 3, Applicants are asked to submit information for each of their Subgrantees and/or Branches they plan to fund with this grant. If the Applicant plans to fund more agencies than the space allows in

Questions 1 and 3, they can submit an additional document to answer Questions 1 and 3 for those additional Subgrantees and/or Branches listed.

1.9 What is the Draft Homeownership Initiative Statement of Work (SOW) in Appendix B of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: The Draft Homeownership Initiative SOW is provided in the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant in order to apprise all Applicants of the task requirements for this grant. The Draft SOW contains two sections: I. Administrative Requirements and II. Program Requirements. Both sections list tasks required of the Grantee. The Draft SOW is subject to change. HUD will provide the Final Homeownership Initiative SOW in the Grantees' award packages.

The Administrative Requirements section lists the types of tasks that occur during the grant's Period of Performance, which include the following: Unit Negotiation, Grant Execution, Grant Activity Report, Final Report, Grant Closeout, and Other Administrative Requirements.

The Program Requirements section will be utilized by HUD and the Grantee after the unit rate, projected units, and approved costs of managing the network have been negotiated and approved. HUD will complete the table with the approved numbers and provide it to the Grantee to maintain on file.

1.10 What items are being scored in the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: There are two Rating Factors in the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant that are worth 50 points each: (1) The Capacity of the Applicant, which includes the Applicant's demonstrated history with Comprehensive Housing Counseling (CHC) NOFOs; and (2) Need and Advancement of NOFO Priorities, which measure the extent to which the Applicant will be able to contribute to HUD's strategic goals and the grant's program purpose. To do so, the Applicant will answer questions about: (i) underserved communities in the areas served by its network; (ii) targeted populations; (iii) program design; (iv) Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing; (v) affirmative marketing and outreach; and (vi) collaboration. There is also a possibility of obtaining up to four (4) preference points: (1) Promise Zones (PZ) (2 points), and (2) Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI) (2 points).

See Section V.A.1, *Rating Factors*, of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant for more information.

1.11 How is the amount of the Homeownership Initiative Grant award going to be calculated?

Answer: Section V.B.4. of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant states that grant amounts will be determined by the Applicant's NOFO score and may be adjusted by additional factors such as anticipated volume of work, network size, and proposed budgets. HUD also reserves the right to fund less than the amount requested in the application.

1.12 What is Culturally Sensitive, Linguistically Appropriate Housing Counseling, as defined in the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: The Office of Housing Counseling’s definition of Culturally Sensitive, Linguistically Appropriate Housing Counseling in the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant is the following: Housing counseling that is responsive to clients’ abilities and preferred languages, cultural beliefs and practices, identities, and other aspects of diversity. It recognizes that, to achieve greater equity in housing, housing counseling must promote fair housing and fair lending and be accessible, understandable, and relevant to the client, as determined by the housing counseling agencies in cooperation with their clients. See the definition listed in Appendix A of the NOFO.

1.13 In the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant, Rating Factor 2d, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, states that the “Applicant is required to submit a certification that it will affirmatively further fair housing.” How does the Applicant submit this certification?

Answer: With some exceptions for Federally recognized Indian tribes and their agencies or instrumentalities, Rating Factor 2d requires Applicants to describe activities that their Subgrantees and/or Branches will undertake to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing. An acceptable response to Rating Factor 2d on the Form HUD-91045 Homeownership Initiative Chart will serve as certification for purposes of the application that the Applicant and its Subgrantees and/or Branches will Affirmatively Further Fair Housing.

1.14 Are Grantees required to update their housing counseling work plans for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Grantees must have a HUD-approved work plan that demonstrates their plan to provide housing counseling activities specified in the Homeownership Initiative Chart Form HUD-91045, which includes pre-purchase and post-purchase counseling. If the Applicant’s current work plan does not include these activities, prior to applying for the NOFO, the Applicant should submit a modification of the work plan for approval to their HUD Point of Contact (POC) in accordance with the current Housing Counseling Handbook 7610.1 Chapter 3-2(B).

1.15 The NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant states that “Applicants and Subgrantees must disclose to HUD the status of active HUD Office of Inspector General (OIG) audits or investigations at the time of the NOFO application submission date.” How should an Applicant provide this information?

Answer: If an Applicant or Subgrantee needs to disclose the status of an active HUD OIG audit or investigation at the time of application, that Applicant must provide a written statement describing the OIG audit or investigative work occurring at the time of application. This

statement can be included as an attachment to the application. See Section IV., *Application and Submission Information*, of the NOFO for instructions on attaching this statement.

1.16 Can HUD review my application for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant before I submit it to Grants.gov?

Answer: HUD can respond to questions with information that is only publicly available and cannot provide any individualized assistance to applicants, such as an application review for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant.

Section 2. Fixed Amount Award/Unit Pricing and Components

2.1 What is a Fixed Amount Award, as referenced in the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: A Fixed Amount Award is a type of grant that provides a specific level of support without regard to actual costs incurred as opposed to a cost reimbursement grant. For the Homeownership Initiative Grant, Grantees will receive reimbursement based on the unit rate pre-negotiated with HUD for each household they assist in reaching the goal of homeownership and mortgage origination. Specifically, the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant requires that the housing counseling agency assist the household in completing all three unit components which include: pre-purchase counseling, home purchase and mortgage origination, and post-purchase counseling, or certification that post-purchase counseling will be completed 6-12 months after home purchase to be reimbursed for each household.

See 2 C.F.R. 200.1 and 2 C.F.R. 200.201 for information on Fixed Amount Awards.

2.2 Why is HUD using the Fixed Amount Award model for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: HUD seeks to introduce the Fixed Amount Awards method into its grant programming to streamline payment for housing counseling services and help set the industry standard for reasonable payments for housing counseling.

2.3 What kinds of activities will the Homeownership Initiative Grant pay for?

Answer: The Homeownership Initiative Grant will fund an agreed upon number of completed units each paid at an agreed upon unit rate. Each unit must consist of the following three completed components: 1) pre-purchase counseling, 2) home purchase and mortgage origination, and 3) post-purchase counseling, or certification that post-purchase counseling is required and will be completed 6-12 months after home purchase and mortgage origination.

See Section IV.F.2.b. in the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant for more information.

2.4 The NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant references "units" that have to be completed for payment under the grant. What is considered a "unit" under this grant?

Answer: A unit is defined as a household that has successfully completed the following three components: 1) pre-purchase counseling; 2) purchase of a home and mortgage origination; and 3) post-purchase counseling, or certification that post-purchase counseling is required and will be completed 6-12 months after home purchase. See Section IV.F.2., *Fixed Amount Award*, in the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant for more information.

2.5 What types of housing counseling activities can be completed to fulfill the unit's counseling components for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: For the pre-purchase counseling component, counseling activities may include, but are not limited to, the topics listed in 24 C.F.R. 214.300(e)(1). Post-purchase counseling refers to counseling relevant to the client *after* home purchase and mortgage origination. Topics could include, but are not limited to, those listed in 24 C.F.R. 214.300(e)(2) and (3).

2.6 Does a household need to receive a mortgage as part of their home purchase in order to fulfill the second component of the unit for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Yes, to complete a unit, the counseled household must have successfully completed the three components, including both purchase of a home and mortgage origination. For the purposes of this initiative, only households who receive a mortgage as part of their home purchase will fulfill the unit requirements. As part of Grant Activity Reporting, the Grantee will be required to submit mortgage-related data for each household counseled. For more information, see the Home Purchase and Mortgage Origination Data Template in Appendix B, Draft Homeownership Initiative Statement of Work, Section 1., Administrative Requirements.

2.7 Can the Homeownership Initiative Grant reimburse direct client assistance?

Answer: Direct client assistance, such as downpayment assistance, is not authorized by the housing counseling program statute nor the relevant appropriations act, and thus cannot be included in the rate. The fixed fee rate should include only those costs reasonable and necessary for providing housing counseling services.

2.8 Can the Homeownership Initiative Grant reimburse activities provided by non-certified housing counselors (for example, for work provided by an agency's bookkeeper for their housing counseling program)?

Answer: For information on how to calculate unit rates, see FAQ 2.9 of the FY 2023 NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant FAQs. Housing counseling services provided in connection with HUD programs must be provided by a HUD-certified housing counselor (24 C.F.R. 214.103(n)).

2.9 How should an Applicant calculate the unit rates for our Subgrantees and/or Branches for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant? What types of activities can be included when calculating the unit rate?

Answer: Applicants are required to submit their proposed unit rates for each of the Subgrantees/Branches they plan to fund on Form HUD-91045, Question 1, the Homeownership Initiative Chart.

Calculations of the unit rate should consider the full cost of housing counseling required to fulfill the unit requirements. Calculations of unit rates should be based on historical data for providing pre-purchase and post-purchase counseling. The calculation may include but is not limited to the costs of salaries, fringe, travel, and marketing and outreach of the housing counseling program.

Additionally, the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) or de minimis rate can be included in the proposed unit rates. NICRAs or de minimis rates will not be reimbursed separately from unit rates (i.e., applied on top of unit rates).

Unit rates should not include costs that the direct Grantee will retain for providing network management, oversight, and quality control. The costs for providing network management, oversight, and quality control can be submitted in Field F in Question 1.

All Subgrantee rates must be individually calculated and will be individually negotiated. However, if the Applicant plans to fund Branch offices, HUD will accept the same unit rate for each Branch office listed in Homeownership Initiative Chart, Question 1, without requiring negotiation for each Branch.

Applicants can refer to existing guidance in HUD's [Model Funding Agreements and Fee Structure paper](#), Section 5, Client Cost Analysis, for assistance when calculating their cost of counseling that fulfills the unit requirements. The document provides a sample method for calculating the cost per client. Alternatively, Applicants may also develop their own calculations utilizing a documented and reasonable methodology.

2.10 Can Grantees include a Subgrantee's indirect costs in the calculated unit rate for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Yes. Section IV.F.2.b. of the NOFO states that a Subgrantee's Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or de minimis rate may be included in their proposed unit rate. During unit rate negotiations, Applicants must specify what indirect costs are included within the unit rate calculations. Indirect rates will not be reimbursed separately from unit rates (i.e., applied on top of unit rates).

2.11 Can Homeownership Initiative Grantees be reimbursed for pre- or post-purchase counseling activities that occurred before the start of the Period of Performance?

Answer: No. All activities that apply to a reimbursable unit must occur within the Grant's Period of Performance.

2.12 Are Homeownership Initiative Grantees required to complete all post-purchase counseling before the end of the Period of Performance?

Answer: In order for an activity to be billable to HUD under the Homeownership Initiative, Post-purchase counseling may take place after the end of the Period of Performance as long as the Grantee fulfills all the specific grant requirements for a unit. The post-purchase component of a billable unit requires that the Grantee have the following on file for each unit at the time the unit is billed: (1) activity logs for all post-purchase counseling sessions for the unit and/or (2) a certification, signed by the household and housing counselor, that post-purchase counseling is required and will take place within 6-12 months after home purchase and mortgage origination.

2.13 What type of housing counseling activity and documentation will satisfy the pre-purchase component of a completed unit for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Individual counseling that satisfies HUD's requirements of pre-purchase housing counseling is required for each completed unit. Grantees will be required to maintain, on file for HUD's review, the activity logs for all of the pre-purchase counseling sessions that make up the reimbursed unit. Please note that homebuyer group education/workshops do not fulfill the pre-purchase counseling component requirement. See Section IV.F.2.b., *Documentation of Component Completion*, of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant for more information.

2.14 What type of housing counseling activity and documentation will satisfy the requirements of the post-purchase component of the unit for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Grantees must maintain on file one of the following: (1) activity logs for all housing counseling that occurred after home purchase for the unit, or (2) certification signed by the client and the housing counselor that housing counseling is required and will take place within 6-12 months after home purchase and mortgage origination. See Section IV. F. 2.b., *Documentation of Component Completion*, of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant for more information.

2.15 What types of documentation will satisfy the home purchase and mortgage origination component of a completed unit for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Grantees will report certain data concerning the household, mortgage, and home purchase. Additionally, Grantees must maintain proof of home purchase which could include the deed, title transfer, or loan closing disclosures. Grantees and the Subgrantees/Branches are not required to attend a client's mortgage closing to fulfill this unit component. See Section IV. F. 2.b., *Documentation of Component Completion*, of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant for more information.

2.16 How should Homeownership Initiative Grantees meet the follow-up requirements to qualify for unit reimbursement?

Answer: The Homeownership Initiative Grant states that at minimum, follow-up processes must meet Housing Counseling program policy as stated in 24 C.F.R. 214.300(c) and the current Housing Counseling Program Handbook 7610.1, Section 3-5(F). Follow-up efforts must be documented in the household's file.

If the housing counseling agency is unable to get in touch with the household for post-purchase counseling after home purchase, the housing counseling file must demonstrate that follow-up efforts were made according to, at minimum, HUD's policies.

At grant execution, Grantees will be required to review and approve all Subgrantee and/or Branch post-purchase counseling follow-up plans to ensure that they meet program policy. Grantees must also maintain all post-purchase counseling follow-up plans for HUD's review.

2.17 Can an agency receive both Comprehensive Housing Counseling (CHC) and Homeownership Initiative Grants? If so, how do the two grants work together?

Answer: Yes. An MSO, Intermediary, or SHFA can receive both a CHC Grant and a Homeownership Initiative Grant. The eligible activities and reporting criteria for these awards are different, so it is important to read the NOFO instructions and grant agreements closely. Grantees must have adequate internal controls to ensure there is no double-billing.

The Homeownership Initiative Grant will only be billable for individual housing counseling client activities that meet all three components of a negotiated unit. In such case, the CHC grant cannot be billed for work done for that three-component unit if reimbursed by this grant.

However, if one or more of the components of the unit, for whatever reason, is not met and thus the Homeownership Initiative grant cannot be billed for the work, the Grantee may choose to bill the CHC grant for the counseling. For example, if a client came to the agency for pre-purchase counseling prior to purchasing a home and the expected loan closure did not occur, the agency could bill the cost-reimbursable CHC grant for the pre-purchase counseling.

2.18 Can the Grantee be reimbursed by the Homeownership Initiative Grant for the costs of managing a network?

Answer: In the Homeownership Initiative Chart (Form HUD-91045), Applicants may request up to 15% of the total that populates in 1.E., Subtotal, for the aggregate costs (direct and indirect) incurred in providing network management, oversight, and quality control. Applicants must list the percentage requested in the Homeownership Initiative Chart in Field F. These costs must not be calculated in the Subgrantees’/Branches’ proposed unit rates.

Section 3. Applicant Eligibility

3.1 Who is eligible to apply for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: The Applicant must be

1. an Intermediary or Multi-State Organization (as defined by 24 C.F.R. 214.3) approved to participate in the HUD Housing Counseling Program prior to the NOFO issue date, or a State Housing Finance Agency who meets the eligibility requirements published in the NOFO, and
2. experienced providing pre-purchase counseling and post-purchase counseling directly or through its Subgrantees and/or Branches.

HUD will use its own records to determine eligibility.

3.2 Are Local Housing Counseling Agencies (LHCA) and housing counseling agencies that are not directly approved by HUD, but participate in the program with an Intermediary, MSO, or SHFA, eligible to apply for funding under the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: While LHCA and non-HUD approved affiliates are not eligible to apply for the NOFO directly, they are eligible to receive a subgrant from an Intermediary, MSO, or SHFA. However, Homeownership Initiative Grantees can only provide subgrants to housing counseling agencies that are affiliates of their current network.

3.3 Does the Applicant need to be a current or previous Comprehensive Housing Counseling (CHC) Grantee to receive a Homeownership Initiative Grant award?

Answer: While an eligible Homeownership Initiative NOFO applicant is not required to be a CHC Grantee at the time of application, prior demonstrated housing counseling experience is a scored subfactor of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant. Specifically, Rating Factor 1.A., Demonstrated History, will use the Applicant’s most recent CHC score to score the subfactor. Therefore, Applicants that are not recent CHC Grantees will not receive points for this subfactor.

3.4 Are SHFAs eligible to apply for the NOFO for Homeownership Initiative Grant if they did not receive a recent CHC Grant award?

Answer: All SFHAs are eligible to apply for the NOFO. However, Rating Factor 1, worth a total of 50 points of the 104 total of the grant score, is based on Applicant capacity and demonstrated history. To assess an Applicant's points for this factor, HUD will use the Applicant's most recent NOFO application score from the CHC Grant. Therefore, if an SHFA has never applied for a CHC grant, they will receive 0 out of 50 points.

Section 4. Subgrantee and Branch Networks

4.1 How will Applicants select Subgrantees and/or Branches for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Section IV.F.1. of the Homeownership Initiative Grant states that Applicants should select the Subgrantees and/or Branches they believe can best help HUD meet its goal of bridging the homeownership gap for historically underserved individuals and families.

All Subgrantees and/or Branches that the Applicant plans to fund if awarded this grant should be listed in Questions 1 and 3 on the Form HUD-91045 Homeownership Initiative Chart. Applicants that provide housing counseling services at their main office must include their office in the list if they plan to participate directly (as opposed to strictly in an oversight capacity) in this grant.

4.2 The estimated total funding for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant is smaller than HUD's Comprehensive Housing Counseling (CHC) grants. Does a Grantee need to fund each Subgrantee/Branch in their network, or can they limit the number of Subgrantees/Branches that they fund?

Answer: Agencies can limit the number of Subgrantees and funded Branches to those they feel are best suited to meet the goals of the funding. There is no minimum or maximum number of Subgrantees or Branches that can participate in this grant.

4.3 Can a Subgrantee that receives a subgrant from an Intermediary, State Housing Finance Agencies (SHFA), or Multi-State Organization (MSO) for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant receive a subgrant from a *different* Intermediary, SHFA, or MSO for the FY23 Comprehensive Housing Counseling Grant?

Answer: No. If a Subgrantee receives both Comprehensive Housing Counseling and Homeownership Initiative Grant funding, it must come from the same direct grantee (i.e., the same Intermediary, SHFA, or MSO). See Section IV.F.1.b. of the NOFO.

4.4 Will Grantees be able to make changes to their Subgrantee and/or Branch list for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: HUD may allow reallocations among existing Subgrantees and Branches on a case-by-case basis. However, the Grantee will need to ensure the unit costs negotiated with HUD are followed for each Subgrantee.

To amend the list of Subgrantees, Branches, or corresponding subgrant amounts, the Grantee must send the HUD Point of Contact (POC) a written request. HUD may decrease the award amount available to the Grantee if changes to the composition of Subgrantees and Branches would have resulted in a lower award amount than was awarded.

Section 5. Grants.gov/Technical Issues

5.1 How do we submit the NOFO application for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Prospective Applicants should review the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant before submitting a grant application on Grants.gov. Individuals who plan to submit grant applications on behalf of an organization must register at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and be listed as the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) in SAM to submit a grant application. [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration involves several steps and may take a few weeks to complete if any issues need to be resolved. Complete registration instructions and guidance are provided on the [Grants.gov website](https://www.grants.gov).

Applicants must download both the Application Instructions and the Application Package from Grants.gov. Applicants should verify they are submitting the application for the correct funding opportunity as applications will only be considered for the competition indicated on the submission. Validated [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) submissions will receive a confirmation of receipt and an application tracking number. If a confirmation notice and application tracking number is not received by the Applicant, the application has not been considered received by [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Only completed applications received by [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) on or before the deadline will be considered timely submissions eligible for consideration.

5.2 Where can I find instructions on how to download the grant application from Grants.gov and how to submit the required application materials for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Please refer to Section IV, *Application and Submission Information*, of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant for detailed information on how to the download application and submit required materials from Grants.gov.

5.3 Where can I find the Form HUD-91045 Homeownership Initiative Chart on Grants.gov for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: See Section IV.A of the NOFO for basic instructions for obtaining the application instructions and package:

1. Go to the “Package” tab of the Grant Opportunity. Click “Preview” to view the instructions and application package. Click “Apply” and “Create a Workspace” to access fillable forms and begin the application process.
2. Click “Download Instructions” to download a WinZip folder containing the Form HUD-91045, Homeownership Initiative Chart. The folder also contains the Homeownership Initiative Grant (PDF) and the Form HUD-50153, Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation (PDF).
3. To upload the filled-out Homeownership Initiative Chart, Form HUD-91045, click “Include in Package” to use the “Attachments Form.” Click the “Add Attachment” box to attach documents and forms.

5.4 I am having problems uploading some of the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant’s forms for my application in Grants.gov. How do I upload forms?

Answer: The Grantee should carefully read all of Section IV., Application and Submission Information of the NOFO. The Grants.gov Workspace will list mandatory and optional forms, fillable as PDFs or webforms, if available. Applicants must complete all required fields and upload the mandatory forms in order for Grants.gov to allow submission of the application package. Grants.gov may not permit submission of an incomplete or improperly filled-out form.

To add required attachments (like Form HUD-91045), click “Include in Package” to use the “Attachments Form.” Then click the “Add Attachment” box to attach documents and forms.

If you are receiving error messages, you may also find helpful information on the Grants.gov website at: grants.gov/applicants/encountering-error-messages.

5.5 I am having an issue with the Grants.gov system. Who can I contact for assistance?

Answer: [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) offers customer support 24 hours a day, seven days per week, except on Federal holidays. Applicants may call 1-800-518-4726 (toll-free) or send an email to Support@Grants.gov. HUD welcomes and is prepared to receive calls from individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as individuals with speech and communication disabilities. To learn more about how to make an accessible telephone call, please visit: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/telecommunications-relay-service-trs>.

5.6 I submitted an application for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant in error on Grants.gov before it was completed. Can I withdraw this version of the application?

Answer: There is no way to withdraw a submission once it has been submitted. However, an Applicant can submit an updated version of their application on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). HUD will only review the last application received.

Section 6. Application Forms and Charts

6.1 What forms do Applicants need to complete during the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant process?

Answer: All Applicants are required to submit the following forms:

- Homeownership Initiative Chart, Form HUD-91045
- Application for Federal Assistance, SF-424
- Applicant/Recipient Disclosure/Update Report, Form HUD-2880
- Applicant and Recipient Assurances and Certifications, Form HUD 424-B
- Certification Regarding Lobbying

Certain Applicants must submit the following forms, if applicable:

- If the Applicant is a State Housing Finance Agency, they must also submit evidence of their statutory authority to operate as an SHFA and must submit evidence of their authority to apply for funds and subsequently use any funds awarded.
- The Applicant must complete and submit the SF-LLL, Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying, if any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or any employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan.
- Applicants who wish to apply for Promise Zone and/or Minority-Serving Institutions Preference Points should see FAQs 6.6 and 6.7 regarding the forms required.

The signature of the authorized representative is applied to the application and completed upon submission of the NOFO application in Grants.gov for the SF-424, HUD-2880, and Certification Regarding Lobbying. All other forms must be uploaded to the grant package.

See Section IV.B., *Content and Form of Application Submission*, of the NOFO for the list of all required and optional forms to be submitted.

6.2 On the SF-424 signature page, should I sign and scan the document in order to upload it to Grants.gov with the Executive Director’s signature, or is there an electronic signature?

Answer: Both the SF-424 and HUD-2880 forms allow electronic signatures. The SF-424 and several of the other required forms can be completed as web-forms in Grants.gov. Instructions on completing Grants.gov web forms can be found in the [Grants.gov online user guide](#).

Additionally, the [SF-424 instructions](#) available on Grants.gov indicate that for line 21 of the form, “If the application is submitted via Grants.gov, the signature of the authorized representative and the date signed are completed upon submission.”

The Office of Housing Counseling will also accept SF-424s that have been signed, scanned, and uploaded in PDF format to Grants.gov.

6.3 There are several questions on the SF-424 and HUD-2880 that ask for a dollar amount. Can you provide guidance on the dollar amounts that should be entered on these required forms for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: On the SF-424, line 18a Applicants should enter a response of \$1.00.

On Form HUD-2880 Applicant/Recipient Disclosure/Update Report, line 4 “Amount of HUD Assistance Requested/Received,” Applicants may enter \$1.00. The amount entered on this line will not be used by HUD as a cap in establishing the maximum grant amount for the Applicant. Applicants should not enter the amount received from HUD in prior grants on this line, as this is an “initial report” and not an “update report.”

Please note that regardless of the amount listed on line 4 on the HUD-2880, Applicants that have received, or expect to receive, HUD assistance for housing counseling in excess of \$200,000 during FY22-23 must select “yes” under question two in “Part I Threshold Determinations,” and complete the remainder of the form.

6.4 On the SF-424, is the Applicant Identifier (line 4) the same number as the Agency ID number in HCS? Also, where can I find the Federal Entity Identifier (line 5a)? Is the Federal Award Identifier (line 5b) our grant number?

Answer: Applicants do not have to enter an Applicant Identifier on Line 4 of the SF-424. On the SF-424, Applicants may leave lines 4, 5a, and 5b blank.

6.5 What is in the WinZip file in the Grants.gov application?

Answer: The following documents are in the WinZip instruction package:

- Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Department’s Homeownership Initiative Grant (PDF)
- Homeownership Initiative Chart, Form HUD-91045 (PDF)
- Form HUD-50153, Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation (PDF)

Applicants can view the [Grants.gov Online User Guide](#) here for more information, or contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726, or support@grants.gov for more information on form submission.

6.6 What are the requirements for claiming the Promise Zone bonus Preference Points for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: To receive bonus Preference Points related to Promise Zones, an Applicant or, if applicable, its Subgrantees, must obtain the required certification on Form HUD-50153, Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation, signed by the authorized official of the designated Promise Zone in order to verify that the Applicant, or one or more of its Subgrantees, have met the required criteria. Form HUD-50153 can be found [here](#).

The physical location of the Applicant's or Subgrantee's office(s) is not specifically identified as a criterion for establishing eligibility for the Promise Zone Preference Points. Form HUD-50153 describes certain geographic criteria that must be met for the proposed activities and projects to be undertaken in connection with a Promise Zone.

Further questions related to Promise Zone designees and Authorized Officials can be sent to: promisезones@hud.gov.

6.7 What are the requirements for claiming the Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) Preference Points for the NOFO for the Homeownership Initiative Grant? How many points can an Applicant receive for this Preference Point category?

Answer: To receive Preference Points related to MSIs, an Applicant, or, if applicable, its Subgrantees, must either:

- Be designated as an MSI, or
- Propose one or more partnerships with an MSI educational institution.

An Applicant, or its Subgrantees, designated by the U.S. Department of Education as an MSI will receive up to two Preference Points when the application includes documentation of the Applicant’s status as an MSI.

An Applicant, or its subgrantees, partnering with an MSI will receive up to two Preference Points when the application includes a Letter of Commitment certifying that a partnership is in

place and signed by an authorizing official of the MSI, and documentation of the college or university's status as an MSI.

Applicants cannot receive more than two points for this Preference Point category. See the definition of Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) in this NOFO.

Section 7. Grant Reporting Requirements

7.1 What are the recordkeeping and reporting requirements for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Homeownership Initiative Grant recipients are required to submit several reports over the course of the grant period. These reports include Grant Activity Reports (GARs) quarterly electronic submissions of the HUD-9902, Housing Counseling Agency Activity Report, in the Housing Counseling System, and a Final Report. GARs include reporting elements reflecting performance goals, objectives, and accomplishments related to the federal award. Mandatory reporting requirements will be detailed in the Grant Agreement.

Additionally, funding received under this NOFO is subject to all OMB Guidance and government-wide regulations applicable to federal financial assistance programs. Please see [2 C.F.R. Part 200](#), archived webinars on [the HUD Exchange website](#), and the Grant Agreement (if funds are awarded) for further details on requirements related to grant recipients' use of federal funding.

See Section IV. F. 2., *Reimbursement Requirements*, and Appendix B, *Draft Homeownership Initiative Statement of Work* of the NOFO for detailed information.

7.2 Are Grantees required to report Homeownership Initiative Grant households on the HUD-9902 Housing Counseling Agency Activity Report?

Answer: The pre-purchase and post-purchase housing counseling activities that occur to complete the unit components must be reported under the "All HUD Funded Activities" column of the HUD-9902 Housing Counseling Agency Activity Report. Additionally, similar to the column dedicated to activities attributed to the Comprehensive Housing Counseling (CHC) grant, there will be a unique column on the HUD-9902 that will be dedicated to reporting activities attributed to the Homeownership Initiative Grant.

7.3 Does the Homeownership Initiative Grant have the same reporting requirements as the Comprehensive Housing Counseling (CHC) Grant?

Answer: No. Applicants should refer to the information that is listed in the Grant Activity Report (GAR) section of the Draft Homeownership Initiative Statement of Work in Appendix B of the NOFO. A final version of the Statement of Work will be provided in the Grantees' award packages.

7.4 Are there reporting requirements for state or local governments that make subawards for the Homeownership Initiative Grant?

Answer: Yes. If a state or unit of general local government Grantee makes assistance available on a competitive basis to affiliates or Subgrantees, then they shall notify the public. The notification shall contain the elements required by [42 U.S.C. § 3545\(a\)\(4\)\(C\)\(i\)](#). This notification may be by any method conducive to providing information to the public.

Additionally, any subawards greater than \$30,000 must be reported in the [Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System \(FSRS\)](#).

7.5 A household received pre-purchase counseling in the past, but the counseling activities were finished, and their client file was closed. The housing counseling agency already received reimbursement for those activities under the Comprehensive Housing Counseling (CHC) Grant. The household returns for new pre-purchase counseling. Can the housing counseling agency receive payment under the Homeownership Initiative Grant if the client fulfills all three components of the unit?

Answer: The housing counseling agency could include that household in the Homeownership Initiative Grant as long as no previously reimbursed counseling activity is included in the pre-purchase activity used to fulfill the first component of the unit.

For example, a housing counseling agency provided pre-purchase housing counseling to a household in early 2022 and the service was eventually terminated in late 2022 and the counseling file was closed. The housing counseling agency received reimbursement for those activities from a CHC grant. The household now returns to the agency to re-start pre-purchase services, and the household eventually fulfills all of the unit requirements for the agency to receive payment from the Homeownership Initiative Grant. That unit is eligible for payment since the client completed *new* pre-purchase services.

As a reminder, Grantees must ensure there is no double-billing and cannot include a household's pre-purchase counseling activities in the Homeownership Initiative grant if they were reimbursed for those activities by a CHC grant or other funding source.