





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-6000

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

MEMORANDUM FOR: Todd M. Richardson, General Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, R
Matthew E. Ammon, Director, Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, L

FROM: Calvin C. Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring, RR 
Michelle M. Miller, Deputy Director, Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, L 

SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact under the National Environmental Policy Act - Fiscal Year 2021 Notice: Authority to Accept Unsolicited Proposals for Research Partnerships (FR-6500-N-USP)

It is the finding of the Offices of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) and Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH) that the subject Notice (FR-6500-N-USP), does not constitute a major federal action having an individually or cumulatively significant effect on the physical/human environment and, therefore, does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

This Notice announces the availability of Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 funds from PD&R and OLHCHH and provides guidance information and application instructions for Unsolicited Proposals for Research Partnerships (URPs). The Notice provides for approximately \$1 million from PD&R and up to \$2 million from OLHCHH. Additional funds may become available for award as a result of HUD's efforts to recapture unused funds or use carryover funds, subject to statutory constraints. URPs and healthy homes research are authorized under title V of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970 (12 U.S.C. 1701z-1 et seq.); lead-based paint hazards research is authorized under the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992; and funding is provided, and the transfer of funds from OLHCHH to PD&R is authorized, by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260, approved December 27, 2020).

The Unsolicited Research Partnerships awards will be in the form of cooperative agreements with applicants in one or more of the following categories:

- Philanthropic Entities
 - For the purposes of this Notice, HUD defines a philanthropic entity as one among the subset of 501(c)(3) organizations that directly fund research activities. These include private foundations, educational institutions that may have a separate foundation, public charities, and operating foundations.

- Other Federal agencies
- States or local governments and their agencies
- Indian Tribes
- Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs)
- Colleges or universities located in the United States

An additional purpose of the URPs is to increase participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) of higher education and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in all program areas. HUD seeks proposals from MSIs and HBCUs as well as from eligible entities listed above, that are not themselves MSIs and HBCUs but have developed a partnership with one or more MSIs and/or HBCUs. Research Partnerships are a vehicle to allow greater flexibility in addressing important policy questions and to better utilize external expertise in evaluating the local innovations and effectiveness of programs affecting residents of urban, suburban, rural, and tribal areas. HUD can accept proposals that address current research priorities and allow innovative research projects that could inform HUD policies and programs, especially ones that help HUD support underserved communities and advance equities including:

- Promoting self-sufficiency and economic opportunity
- Enhancing rental assistance
- Reducing homelessness
- Supporting sustainable homeownership and financial viability
- Control of lead hazards and other hazards in homes
- Providing effective and equitable disaster recovery
- Studies on how opportunity zones are being used to revitalize low-income communities
- Reducing barriers to affordable housing
- Fair Housing Act – Research how recipients of federal funds can better affirmatively further the purposes of the Fair Housing Act.
- Equity and impact of the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)
- Accessibility in the HCV program
- Climate Resilience, Environmental Justice, and Energy Efficiency across the housing sector

Generally, construction is not an eligible purpose for HUD funds awarded in response to unsolicited proposals. To the extent that such a use is permitted, e.g., for controlling lead and other housing-based hazards, or providing effective disaster recovery, expenditure of such funds is subject to HUD's regulations at 24 CFR parts 50 and 58. In accordance with 24 CFR 50.19(b)(1), (3) and (5), PD&R Research Partnership Initiative awards are exempt or categorically excluded from environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321) and not subject to environmental review under the related laws and authorities.

A FY 2021 OLHCHH's Lead and Healthy Homes Technical Studies (LHHTS) award does not constitute approval of specific sites where activities that are subject to environmental review may be carried out. The provisions of section 305(c) of the Multifamily Housing Property Disposition Reform Act of 1994, implemented by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58, "Environmental Review Procedures for Entities Assuming HUD Environmental Responsibilities," are applicable to properties assisted with LHHTS grant funds. Therefore, recipients conducting eligible construction

and rehabilitation activities must comply with 24 CFR part 58. Recipients that are States, units of general local government or Native American tribes must carry out environmental review responsibilities as a responsible entity under part 58. Recipients that are academic, not-for-profit, for-profit institutions or specialized units of local government must contact and partner with a non-recipient responsible entity, usually the unit of general local government or Native American tribe, to assume the environmental review responsibilities for construction or rehabilitation activities funded (in whole or in part) under this Notice. Reasonable expenses incurred for compliance with these environmental requirements are eligible expenses under this Notice. Under 24 CFR 58.11, where the recipient is not a State, unit of general local government or Native American tribe, if a responsible entity objects to performing the environmental review, or the recipient objects to the responsible entity performing the environmental review, HUD may designate another responsible entity to perform the review or may perform the environmental review itself under the provisions of 24 CFR part 50. When HUD performs the review itself, following grant award execution, HUD will be responsible for ensuring that any necessary environmental reviews are completed.

For all cooperative agreements under this Notice, recipients and other participants in the project are prohibited from undertaking, or committing or expending HUD or non-HUD funds (including leveraged funds) on, a project or activities under this Notice (other than activities listed in 24 CFR 58.34, 58.35(b) or 58.22(f)) until the responsible entity completes an environmental review and the applicant submits and HUD approves a Request for the Release of Funds and the responsible entity's environmental certification (both on Form HUD-7015.15) or, in instances where the recipient is not a State, unit of general local government or Native American tribe and HUD performs the environmental review under part 50, HUD has completed the review and notified the grantee of its approval. The results of the environmental reviews may require that proposed activities be modified, or proposed sites rejected. Further guidance on environmental review requirements will be provided by the OLHCHH Program Environmental Clearance Officer.

PD&R and OLHCHH have considered the potential environmental impacts of the above listed research priorities, further detailed in the Notice, and determined that they generally fall into one of two categories, either categorically excluded from review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and subject to the related federal laws at 24 CFR § 50.4 or § 58.5, per §§ 50.20(a)(2) or 58.35(a), or categorically excluded and not subject to the related federal laws, per § 50.19(a), (b)(1), (b)(3), (b)(5), and (b)(9), or exempt activities per § 58.34(a)(1), (a)(3), (a)(5), and (a)(9).

Publication of the Notice does not provide approval of a major Federal action having a significant impact on the human environment, sets forth the Environmental Requirements under applicable HUD environmental review regulations for individual projects, and provides particular methods and standards by which evaluation and hazard reduction work is to be performed. Before actions that could have a physical impact or limit the choice of alternatives may be taken, there will be an environmental review done under 24 CFR part 50 (by HUD) or 24 CFR Part 58 (by a responsible entity) that will assess the potential environmental impacts in a local setting before the impacts or any choice limiting activities may take place. Accordingly, it is the determination of this Office that a Finding of No Significant Impact may be made.

Concurrences:

**KAREN
GRIEGO**

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Karen M. Griego
Program Environmental Clearance Officer
Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy
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Date

**CHRISTOPHER
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Christopher H. Hartenau
Environmental Clearance Officer
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Date

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Acting Director
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Approvals:

Todd M. Richardson
General Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Policy Development and Research

Date

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Matthew E. Ammon, Director
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Homes

Date