

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

**[Docket No. FR-5700-N-05]**

**Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for Fiscal Year 2013**

**FY2013 Transformation Initiative: Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program**

**AGENCY:** Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, HUD.

**ACTION:** Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

**SUMMARY:** The purpose of this NOFA announcement is to offer researchers 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 quality, equitable affordable housing development and preservation; transportation and infrastructure planning; and “green,” energy-efficient practices. Priority is given to applications that advance evidence-based research on the effectiveness of Federal programs in these areas, which includes HUD programs, such as HOME Investment Partnerships, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Public Housing, and Choice Neighborhoods Grant programs, and the range of HUD programs that address issues related to sustainability. This NOFA is governed by the information and instructions found in HUD’s General Section that the Department posted on August 8, 2012 (FR-5700-N-01).

**APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE:** The application deadline is 11:59:59 p.m. eastern time on **May 29, 2013**. Applications must be received by [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) no later than 11:59:59 p.m. eastern time on the application deadline date.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Questions regarding specific program requirements should be directed to the agency contact identified in **Section VIII** of this program NOFA. Questions regarding the General Section should be directed to the Grants Management Office at (202) 708-0667 (this is not a toll-free number). Persons with hearing or speech impairments may access these numbers via TTY by calling the Federal Information Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

**OVERVIEW INFORMATION**

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

**B. Funding Opportunity Title:** FY2013 Transformation Initiative: Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program (SCRGP)

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

**D. Funding Opportunity Number:** The Funding Opportunity Number is FR-5700-N-05; OMB Approval Number is 2528-0261.

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

**F. Dates:** The application deadline is 11:59:59 p.m. eastern time on **May 29, 2013**. Applications must be received by Grants.gov no later than 11:59:59 p.m. eastern time on the application deadline date.

Since the Principal Investigator (PI) is most knowledgeable of the content of the application submitted under this program, the PI will receive all HUD correspondence related to the application. Note that only the PI, as designated Point of Contact, will be notified about the status of the application. Therefore, please ensure that the name, title, address, telephone number, facsimile number, and e-mail address for the PI is accurate and up to date. Applicants should be aware that following receipt, applications will go through a preliminary 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. See the FY2013 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.

**Registration at SAM.gov Requirement.** Applicants must register or update a current registration in the Central Contractor Registration now part of the System for Award Management (SAM), found at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. Applicants interested in participating in the FY13 Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program are strongly encouraged to submit applications early. Applicants must register, registration requires a (1) Dun and Bradstreet Universal Data Numbering System (DUNS) number, (2) active registration in active registration in the SAM, (3) registration with Grants.gov, and (4) 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. Applicants must have an active registration to receive funding from HUD.

The System for Award Management (SAM) is a free web site that consolidates the capabilities you used to find in CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS. Future phases of SAM will add the capabilities of other systems used in Federal procurement and awards processes. Frequently Asked Questions can be found at <https://www.fsd.gov/app/answers/list>. Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin the registration process early to allow time for the registration process and the Grants.gov system to ensure that all timely receipt requirements are met. Refer to the 2013 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 General Section, posted on August 8, 2012 (FR 5700-N-01). The General 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 FY13 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 in sustainability initiatives. For this round of sustainability research grants, HUD is primarily interested in sponsoring cutting edge research in quality, equitable affordable housing development and preservation; transportation and infrastructure planning; and “green,” energy-efficient practices. Priority is given to applications that advance evidence-based research on the effectiveness of Federal programs in these areas, which includes HUD programs, such as HOME Investment Partnerships, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Public Housing, and Choice Neighborhoods Grant programs, and the range of HUD programs that address issues related to sustainability. 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. Available Funds.** Funding for the FY2013 Sustainable Communities Grant Program is guaranteed under the Furthering Continuing Resolution Act, 2013 (Pub. L. 113-6, approved March 26, 2013). The total funding for the program is \$500,000. Applicants can request a minimum amount that may be requested is \$75,000 or a maximum of \$125,000.

**3. Funding Categories.** HUD is looking for research proposals that advance our knowledge on how communities pursue and implement investment strategies that enrich the social and economic health of those communities. HUD will sponsor research under the following three funding categories: (1) quality, equitable affordable housing development and preservation; (2) transportation and infrastructure planning; and (3) “green,” energy-efficient practices. HUD will accept multiple applications; however, applicants may only submit one application per funding category. For proposals that could fit into more than one category, applicants should take care in deciding which category is best related to their research.

**4. Award Information.** For FY2013, \$500,000 is available to carry out this effort by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Furthering Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (Pub. L. 113-6, Approved March 26, 2013). This program is approved by HUD’s authority and administered under the Transformation Initiative (TI) account. Subject to statutory constraints, the enacted appropriation will, in effect, carry the authorization for the FY2013 program. The grant performance period is for 24 months (2 years). There will be up to five (5) awards given. The minimum amount that may be requested is \$75,000. The maximum amount that may be requested is \$125,000.

**5. 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 that employ or contract with the sponsored researcher are eligible applicants. Any combination of the aforementioned entities may comprise a Research Team that will combine expertise and will coordinate research activities. A

Research Team must designate a lead applicant to act as the fiscal agent and manager for the grant. Note that although private, for-profit entities are eligible to participate and to cover their direct and indirect costs, they are not allowed to earn a profit from the project.

The sponsored researcher (Principal Investigator, Project Manager, and Lead Researcher) is solely responsible for completing the application and carrying out the research. The sponsored researcher must 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. § 1641(b). For-profit entities are eligible to participate; however, while they are allowed to cover their direct and indirect costs, they are not allowed to earn a profit from the project. Please note that Fiscal Year 2010 Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program award recipients are not eligible to apply for this grant. However, they may participate in other HUD grant competitions, or be subrecipients (sub-grantees, subcontractors, etc.) for this grant NOFA.

## **FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

The results from the research performed under the FY13 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 agenda on sustainability beyond current programs. HUD is looking for research proposals that advance our knowledge on how communities pursue and implement investment strategies that enrich the social and economic health of those communities. HUD will fund research proposals in the following three specific areas: (1) quality, equitable affordable housing development and preservation; (2) transportation and infrastructure planning; and (3) “green” and energy-efficient practices. Priority will be given to applications that specifically discuss how the proposed evidence-based research will address the effectiveness of existing Federal programs in these areas.

#### **A. Background**

The FY13 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. HUD is seeking proposals that evaluate new and existing tools and strategies to promote and implement effective policies that: (1) expand and preserve quality, equitable affordable housing development; (2) improve accessibility through effective transit systems that create neighborhoods of opportunity for all residents; and that (3) address the health of the environment by reducing carbon emissions and conserving energy through cost-effective “green” and energy-efficient practices and policies.

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 the aforementioned research areas. The proposals that are awarded under this new research program will be chosen based on how well applicants respond to this challenge. Great emphasis is placed on proposed research that builds on evidence-based knowledge and that addresses the effectiveness of Federal programs in these areas.

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

Over the last several decades, 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 examined the impact of state and local practices, including zoning policies that may be exclusionary, burdensome subdivision requirements, barriers to housing rehabilitation, costly environmental clean-ups for Brownfields redevelopment, and excessive impact fees—all of which could have significant consequences 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 may 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 creating barriers to affordable housing development, the most egregious of these being large lot size zoning. Researchers involved in the evaluation developed a benchmarking analytic tool that communities could use to determine whether their subdivision standards impede affordable housing development. *Reducing Regulatory Barriers to Multifamily Housing* (2008) demonstrated 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 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 unplanned growth, and effectively address challenges related to unforeseen costs of development. These reports have been distributed widely, and feedback suggests they offer an important source of information and guidance for local officials and community stakeholders.

In the late 1990's and early 2000's, PD&R supported important research efforts on smart growth and regional land use planning that 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 development. 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 that 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, 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 that would provide a visual analysis on housing and transportation needs for America's growing population.

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—Transportation I and Transportation II—were competitively awarded in September 2009 and are now in the final stages of completion:

- *Transportation I – Coordinated Housing and Transportation: A Model Housing Transportation Plan.* This procurement 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. Recently published and available on HUDUser.org, the report produced: (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. PD&R expects for Transportation II to be available on HUD User in the winter of 2013.

In 2011, PD&R announced recipients of its first round of Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program. Applicants proposed research in one or more of four areas—three

were specific categories, the fourth was a broad research category. The three specific areas were:

- (1) affordable housing development and preservation;
- (2) coordinated housing and transportation planning; and,
- (3) healthy community design.

The fourth category was reserved for other topics related to sustainability, including green and energy-related subjects, to allow applicants flexibility for topics that were not directly related to the three specific issue areas. Over 300 applicants submitted first-stage preliminary proposals. Of those, 27 semi-finalists were selected to submit full proposals, and 6 recipients were announced late fall. To learn more about the FY10 Sustainable Communities Research Grant recipients and their submitted research, please visit the HUDUser.org Sustainability Resource Center site at: <http://www.huduser.org/portal/sustainability/grants.html>.

PD&R has continued to support President Obama's broader agenda on sustainability through the pursuit of quality data, informational tools, and resources that assist its researchers and analysts as they conduct research in related areas. This round of sustainability grants will allow the larger research community to participate in this effort.

## **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 physically accessible transportation choices in order to decrease combined household and 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, and racial and ethnic groups that expand mobility and lower the combined costs of housing and transportation, while providing

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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.



- housing options for persons with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to improve access to jobs and expand educational opportunities.
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 investments. Cooperatively align federal policies and funding to remove barriers, leverage funding and increase the accountability and cost 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 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 objective 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 in a commitment to achieving livability goals. In June of this year, HUD, DOT, and EPA announced that a select number of their competitive assistance programs would be more formally aligned. For the first time, the three agencies will take the other agencies' investments into account while making grant allocation decisions and utilize common language in notice of funding proposals. This reciprocal arrangement will bring a new level of coordination to federal investments and ensure that they are designed to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness. To learn more about the Partnership and its activities and initiatives, please visit: [www.hud.gov/sustainability](http://www.hud.gov/sustainability).

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

In fiscal year 2009, Congress created the 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 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 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 Fiscal Year 2010 in competitive grants to promote regional planning.

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, for transit-oriented development (DOT), or 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 OSHC’s 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, identified 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 are also working to identify best practices or exemplary models of 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.

In Fiscal Year 2011, the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities extended another round of funding new Regional Planning and Community Challenge Grants. In addition to the competitive grants, HUD allocated \$5.65 million for OSHC’s FY11 Capacity Building for Sustainable Communities Grant. The goal of this grant was to identify intermediary organizations that could provide capacity building or technical assistance support for the recipients of the FY2010 and FY2011 Regional Planning and Community Challenge Grants. Grantees for this program serve as “intermediaries” who facilitate the exchange of successful ideas, lessons learned, emerging tools and public engagement strategies to help the Regional and Community Challenge grantees successfully implement their plans, track process, and achieve expected outcomes. Awards were announced in October 2011mid-August of FY2011.

OSHC is working closely with PD&R and partner agencies to develop and implement an analytic tool that estimates combined housing and transportation costs that may be applied to core program areas in HUD. Expected sometime in fall 2014, tool will allow the Department to be more strategic in pursuing data-driven, place-based policies that fulfill its goal of redefining and expanding affordability for HUD-assisted communities. Along with the development of the housing and transportation tool, OSHC is undertaking a rigorous 3-year evaluation of the Regional Planning and Community Challenge competitive grant programs to ensure that grantees are successfully meeting program-specific goals. And finally, earlier this year, OSHC and PD&R unveiled a new *Sustainable Communities Clearinghouse* online portal that is to be housed on PD&R's main website, HUDUser.org. This website highlights local and regional best practices on sustainability initiatives and advances in applied research.

#### **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 and maintaining 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 (GHG) 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 indoor and ambient 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 and 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 attract private investments that generate jobs; to remove the barriers to increasing and preserving affordable housing; and, to promote diverse, quality neighborhoods that are accessible to transit and other community amenities.

This fiscal year's Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program focuses primarily on the strategies that communities employ to advance various sustainability goals and initiatives. HUD will fund proposals that help the Department better understand how these strategies, tools and practices may help inform our policies and to achieve a high-priority goal—to create sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all.

## **B. Goals of Research**

Research activities performed under the FY13 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 proposed research 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 that is relevant to the Department's sustainability agenda. HUD also welcomes research that evaluates cross-national comparisons of social and economic systems or research that highlights international best practices on various issues related to sustainability.

This year's program emphasizes research and practice that help the Department better understand how communities pursue and achieve various sustainability goals. Specifically, HUD is interested in learning how community investments in quality, equitable affordable housing development and preservation, transportation and infrastructure planning, and "green," energy-efficient practices generate sustained economic growth and lead to quality, diverse communities that provide access to all. All research proposals should attempt to address HUD's mission to create strong, sustainable and inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all.

## **C. Funding Categories – Research 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, inclusive neighborhood or community. Applicants may submit research proposals under one or more of the three funding categories: (1) quality, equitable affordable housing development and preservation, (2) transportation and infrastructure planning, and (3) "green," energy-efficiency practices. HUD will accept multiple applications; however, applicants may only submit one proposal per funding category. For proposals that could fit into more than one category, applicants should take care in deciding which category is best related to their research. Priority is given to applications that advance evidence-based research on the effectiveness of Federal programs in these areas, which includes HUD programs, such as HOME Investment Partnerships, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Public Housing, and Choice Neighborhoods Grant programs, and the range of HUD programs that address issues related to sustainability. Applicants should explicitly

describe the extent in which their proposed research informs HUD policies and practices in the area of sustainability.

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 three suggested subject areas are directly aligned with HUD's mission, its long-range Strategic Plan, and departmental goals.

- 1) Promote Quality, Equitable 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 quality, equitable affordable housing for both new and existing units in the long run through “smart,” cost-effective investments. These investments should take place in neighborhoods and communities that offer a range of quality transportation choices that expand access to a variety of public amenities for all who reside in them. Proposals should focus on public and private financing and leveraging of assets to preserve affordable housing. Possible topics include but not limited to:
  - a rigorous comparative analysis of various housing affordability policies and financing strategies, including an analysis of the effectiveness of various affordability/financing strategies for increasing access to affordable housing and sources of mortgage credit for populations typically lacking such access;
  - addressing the housing-jobs imbalance in declining or “shrinking cities” through effective public-private partnerships or multi-level collaborative efforts;
  - exploring how demographic and neighborhood change affects the demand for quality affordable housing;
  - analyzing the effects of tenant-based housing assistance on the geographic mobility of a specific population—examples of subject populations include, but are not limited to, minorities, low-income, and persons with disabilities, minority, low-income, and disabled persons to provide improved access to quality housing that is physically accessible for persons with disabilities, and that expands job training and education opportunities near quality, physically accessible transit, and other community services;
  - developing benchmarks for green building retrofitting practices for existing housing stock that will be repurposed or sited for affordable housing; and,
  - expanding the supply of affordable housing projects on former Brownfields, underutilized parcels of land, areas that serve environmental justice goals, or vacant properties by reducing the cost of clean-up and development, while improving environmental standards.
  
- 2) Transportation and Infrastructure Investment. HUD is looking for research proposals that attempt to quantify the social and economic benefits of community leveraging and investment near quality, physically accessible transit, and in proximity to mixed-income or affordable housing. Specific emphasis is placed on how transit-oriented

(TOD) expands accessibility for variety of residents, but also creates race and income diversity of neighborhoods through the expansion of access for a diverse population. For this category, examples of acceptable research topics include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting a comparative analysis of the benefits of existing tools for financing affordable and/or mixed-income transit oriented development, including tax increment tax increment financing (TIF) and other forms of value capture;
- establishing incentives for multi-use, clustered development and evaluating the economic impact on surrounding communities and the region as a whole;
- strategies for overcoming local government fragmentation or lack of coordinated planning for transportation or infrastructure projects;
- a rigorous analysis on the impact of TOD on neighborhood property values;
- addressing mobility issues for individuals and families with children, aging Americans, persons with disabilities, veterans and other special needs populations;
- measuring the impact of urbanization on rural communities, or the socio-economic benefits and costs of compact development and the impact on low- and moderate-income families; and,
- a systematic analysis of the cost-benefit impacts of affordable housing development near transit.

3) Green, Energy-Efficiency. This category allows applicants to pursue studies or research on “green” or energy-efficient policies and practices that generate or preserve economic growth. Possible topics for this category include:

- evaluating behavioral changes the result from energy efficient improvements in multifamily dwellings from a tenant or owner perspective;
- incentivizing the adoption of green building practices for public- and assisted-housing through the creation of private-public partnerships; and,
- evaluating the role of “green” jobs or other energy-related business models that provide new opportunities for employment and generate competition in local and regional economies.

#### **D. Authority**

HUD’s authority for making funding available under this NOFA is the Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Furthering Continuing Resolution Act, 2013 (Pub. L. 113-6, approved March 26, 2013). This program is approved by HUD’s authority under the Transformation Initiative (TI) account. It is being implemented through this NOFA, which, among other things, establishes the policies governing its operation.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

For Fiscal Year 2013, \$500,000 is available to carry out this effort by the Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Furthering Continuing Resolution Act, 2013

(Pub. L. 113-6, approved March 26, 2013). This program is approved by HUD's authority and administered under the Transformation Initiative (TI) account. Subject to statutory constraints, the enacted appropriation will, in effect, carry the authorization for the FY13 program. The maximum grant performance period is for 24 months (2 years). Applicants may request a minimum of \$75,000 up to \$125,000 for an award, depending on the scope and scale of the proposed research. Up to five (5) awards will be given. Awards under this NOFA 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.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

**A. Eligible Applicants.** See requirements under **Section VII.F** of this NOFA.

**B. Match and Leveraged Funds.**

1. Matching Funds

Applicants are encouraged, but not required to provide a match; however, leveraged funds may be contributed provided in the form of cash, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both. If offering leverage, successful applicants must have the required amount of leveraged resources at the time of signing the cooperative agreement. Proof of commitment to leverage must come in the form of a signed, written agreement and submitted with the application.

2. In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions may include physical items, such as office supplies, and materials for projects. They can also be in the form of office and meeting space, including allowed use of computers, the phones, fax and copy machines, or the use of a vehicle, and other project related items. In-kind contribution can also be contribution of professional time. When an individual donates his/her time in a professional capacity to supervise members, train or engage in member development, provide technical assistance on a project, evaluate a project, oversee project quality, or provide pro bono work as a member of the nonprofit organization on a permanent or temporary basis, the time involved is an in-kind contribution.

**Eligible Activities.** Grant funds awarded under this NOFA 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.

**C. Other**

1. **Threshold Requirements Applicable to All Applicants.** To receive an award of funds, applicants must meet all threshold requirements contained in HUD’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Policy Requirements and the General Section to HUD’s FY2013 NOFAs for Discretionary Programs (“General Section”), and the requirements of this NOFA. In particular, applicants should carefully review those provisions that could result in the failure to receive funding, including the Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and **System for Award Management (SAM)** requirements, resolution of outstanding Civil Rights Matters, provisions relating to Delinquent Federal Debts, and Name Check Review. Where multiple entities comprise a consortium or research team, each member must meet the civil rights threshold requirements. Applications that do not meet all the threshold requirements will not be eligible for funding from this program. Additional threshold requirements include:
  - a. Match and Leverage. Applicants are encouraged but not required to provide a match. Leverage. Leverage may be provided in the form of a cash award, in-kind contribution, or a combination of both. In-kind contributions may be in the form of staff time, donated materials, services, or other allowable uses that contribute directly to the completion of the funding request (Section III B.1 & 2).
  - b. Eligibility requirements. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in **Section VII.F** of this NOFA.
  - c. Ineligible Applicants. HUD will not evaluate an application from an ineligible applicant.
  - d. The applicant may not request more funding than the stated maximum grant as outlined in **Section VII.C** of this NOFA;
  - e. 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,
  - f. 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.
  
2. **Award requirements.** If selected for funding, applicants must be fully staffed and ready to perform all approved work activities within 45 days of award.
  - a. All proposals must address one or more of the three funding categories as described in **Section VII.D** and be relevant to the stated goals and objectives of the FY13 Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program (SCRGP), as stated in **Section VII.A** of this NOFA;
  - b. If selected for award, the primary applicant shall enter into a Cooperative 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;
  - c. Applications must receive a minimum score of 75 points to be considered for funding;



3. 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; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title II of the American Disabilities Act; and 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 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 NOFA 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. Effective Communication. Applicants obtaining federal financial assistance from HUD shall take appropriate steps to ensure effective communication with persons with disabilities including steps to ensure that all notices and communication are effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other communications-related disabilities consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and HUD regulations at 24 CFR 8.6 and Title II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act as applicable.
- f. 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.

- g. Code of Conduct. Before entering into an agreement with HUD, an applicant awarded assistance under a HUD program NOFA issued in FY2013 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.

#### **IV. APPLICATION, SUBMISSION AND AWARD SELECTION INFORMATION**

HUD invites interested parties to submit NOFA applications under the FY13 Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program (SCRGP). The application deadline is 11:59:59 p.m. eastern time on **May 29, 2013**. Applications must be received by Grants.gov no later than 11:59:59 p.m. eastern time on the application deadline date.

**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.

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

Applicants must meet all threshold requirements **the application must contain the following:** (a) a table of contents, (b) an executive summary, (c) a narrative for the rating factors, (d) a detailed budget, (e) budget narrative, (f) an Appendix; and (g) additional forms. The application must be submitted to Grants.gov by the stated deadline.

##### Table of Contents.

- a. 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) An **Overview** of the proposed research (including title).
  - (2) A description of the **Research Objective(s)**.

- (3) A brief **Statement of the Problem** and how the proposed research will address HUD policy priorities.
  - (4) A statement of the **Methodology** that will be employed to conduct the research.
  - (5) A statement that discusses how the proposed research makes a **Valuable Contribution to Existing Research**.
  - (6) A statement that discusses the **Broader Impact** of conducting the research.
  - (7) A statement that describes the **Background, Expertise, Relevant Past Research** of the applicant.
  - (8) Researcher's address, telephone number, facsimile number, and e-mail address.
- b. Narrative statement addressing the rating factors. HUD will use the narrative response to the four Rating Factors to evaluate, rate, and rank final applications. The rating factors to be addressed are: (i) capacity of the applicant and relevant experience to do scientific research; (ii) need for proposed research; (iii) soundness of approach; and (iv) a budget narrative that describes how public resources will be used effectively. The narrative statement is the main source of information that HUD relies on to make its selection. Thus, it is very important that applicants become familiar with the rating factors for the program. Applicants are encouraged to exercise care when addressing each rating factor and their subfactors, paying close attention to what is required. Responses should be clear and well written. Please do not attach the response to each factor separately. The narrative should be organized in accordance with each factor and subfactor to make it easier for reviewers to follow. 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 include the name of the Principal Investigator(s) 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. Follow the instructions in the 2013 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](http://Grants.gov) system.

- c. Budget. The budget submission must include the following form: HUD\_424\_CB\_Grant\_Application\_Detailed\_Budget. This budget form shows the total budget by year (12-month period), and by line item for each program activity to be carried out for the proposed research project. 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 the 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 proposed budget 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.

- d. 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 are allowed under the FY13 Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program and are based on an established approved indirect cost rate. If selected for award, applicants must have a copy of their approved indirect cost rate agreement on file and are required to submit a certified copy of the agreement to HUD. Applicants that are selected for funding but do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement will be required to establish an agreement. In such cases, HUD will issue an award with a provisional rate and assist applicants with the process of establishing a final rate.

- e. 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 applicant).
- f. Additional Forms. All forms listed below must be placed in the appendix section of the application. The following forms are required for submission:
  - i. SF\_424\_Supplement,  
Survey\_on\_Ensuring\_Equal\_Opportunities\_for\_Applicants  
(Faith\_Based\_EEO\_Survey (SF\_424\_SUPP)).
  4. SF\_LLL\_Disclosure\_of\_Lobbying\_Activities, if applicable.
  5. HUD\_2880\_Applicant/Recipient\_Disclosure/Update\_Report  
(HUD\_Applicant\_Recipient\_Disclosure\_Report), if applicable.
  6. 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 [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) and clicking on "Track My Application". Applicants that have requested a waiver and are approved for the submission of a paper application should use this form to obtain a receipt.

v. HUD\_96011\_Third\_Party\_Documentation\_Facsimile\_Transmittal (Facsimile\_Transmittal\_Form on [Grants.gov](http://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 2013 General Section for other specifics.

**C. 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](http://Grants.gov) system.

**D. Intergovernmental Review.** The FY13 Sustainable Communities Research Grant 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 described in **Section VII.F.**
- 2) Grant funds awarded under this NOFA may not be used to pay for computer hardware and/or meals.
- 3) Fee or profit will not be paid for work done under this NOFA.
- 4) Applicants must comply with the Delinquent Federal Debt Requirement as defined in the 2013 General Section.
- 5) Grantees that have not obtained required staff to perform the work, as negotiated with HUD as part of the terms and conditions of the award staffed up within the required 45-day period, may be terminated at the sole discretion of HUD.
- 6) Grantees that have not retained required staff to perform the work, as negotiated with HUD as part of the terms and conditions of the award may be provided a set date by which additional staff that are capable of performing the required work elements and are approved by HUD must be hired or face termination of the award.

**F. Other Submission Requirements.** Applicants requesting a waiver must submit their requests in writing stating the reason for the request (Reference HUD regulation at 24 CFR part 5). Grantees that do not meet performance standards and requirements may be

terminated by HUD or HUD may reduce the activities in the award and reduce funding associated to the reduced work level.

Applications submitted under this Notice 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). Refer to the 2013 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 Erika C. Poethig, Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, at the address below. A copy of the written request must also be emailed or faxed to:

Regina C. Gray, Ph.D.  
Division of Affordable Housing Research and Technology  
HUD Office of Policy Development and Research  
451 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Room 8132  
Washington, DC 20410  
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. 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 SAM.

## V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### A. Evaluation Criteria

**Rating Factor 1:** Capacity to do the Research (*30 Points Total*). This factor addresses the applicant's capacity to successfully implement the proposed activities in a timely manner. The applicant must clearly state how they meet the required qualifications for the proposed research. Applicants applying for consideration in more than one research category must clearly express their organizational ability to effectively implement more than one. Rating under this factor evaluates the organizational structure of the consortium undertaking the program.

The rating of the "applicant" or the "applicant's staff" for technical merit or threshold compliance, unless otherwise specified, includes subcontractors, consultants, sub-recipients, community-based organizations, and members of consortia that are firmly committed to your project. In rating this factor, HUD will determine the extent to which the key personnel, the

research team, subcontractor(s) and partners, and all project staff clearly demonstrate the following:

- a. Qualifications of Staff. All applicants shall provide a narrative detailing the background, skills and expertise of ALL staff involved in carrying out the proposed research. The narrative shall provide names, titles, and explain the responsibilities of the Principal Investigator(s), Primary Researcher(s), or the Research Team. It shall also include this description for the research team and staff, subcontractors/subrecipients and partners, and detail the procedures for allocating resources, setting goals, and determining progress towards implementation of proposed research project. Applicants shall demonstrate that they either have sufficient personnel or the ability to procure qualified experts or professionals with the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities in preparing and delivering the products that the proposed research is expected to produce. Applicants should be prepared to initiate eligible activities within 45 days of the effective date of the grant award. This includes the number and type of staff to be dedicated to the project, from any of the firmly committed partner organizations.
- b. Past Research Activities. Applicants shall discuss past research undertaken within the last three (3) years. All activities must be relevant to the subject area or research category chosen for this proposal, including, but not limited to: publications; authored or co-authored books; peer-reviewed journal articles, chapters, or books; unpublished articles issued during meetings or conference proceeding; and any other articles, text and poster presentations made during the last three (3) years.
- c. Past Performance. If applicable, the applicant should highlight any research grants that were successfully managed during the last 7 years, describing deliverables and project outcomes. Applicants should describe any challenges they faced in executing past research projects and how they implemented strategies to overcome them. Note: This criterion includes the involvement of graduate research assistants.
- d. Letters of Recommendations. Applicants must secure three (3) letters of reference from individuals familiar with the researcher's qualifications, expertise, and past performance. Please address these letters to Dr. Regina Gray (see address above) and place them in the Appendix. (Reference letters are not included in the page count).

**Rating Factor 2:** Need for the Research (*30 Points Total*). 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 based on questions derived from identified gaps in the literature, and/or knowledge from professional practice. The applicant will address the need for funding the proposed research based on



- substantive issues raised in the existing body of scholarship and identify gaps or questions left unanswered (5 points).
- 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 based on how well it will attempt to close the existing gaps identified in item (a.) above (10 points).
  - c. Discuss the results or findings that the proposed research is expected to produce, including the broader impact expected, who would most likely benefit from the research, and how the results will build on the existing body of knowledge in the field and other related disciplines. How do the results help other researchers in the field? Policy makers? Practitioners? (5 points).
  - d. Explain how the proposed research are expected to produce evidence on the effectiveness of programs, policies and practices specifically related to the advancement of HUD's sustainability goals and the livability principles stated by the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities (10 points).

**Rating Factor 3:** Soundness of Approach (30 Points Total). This factor addresses the relationship between the need proposed in **Rating Factor 2**, the quality and policy relevance of the proposed research and methodology, specific activities required to carry out the research, a dissemination plan, and all tasks related to the achievement of the goals for the proposed research. This factor will be evaluated based on the extent to which the proposed work plan will demonstrate the following:

a. (14 Points) Quality of Research.

State the proposed research question/hypothesis and how it relates to the need described in **Rating Factor 2**.

- 1) Describe in detail the proposed research design as it relates to the question/hypothesis stated above.
  - 2) Explain how the methods employed will be used to complete the proposed research project.
  - 3) Explain why the methods are most appropriate and will produce data and information that will successfully answer the proposed research hypothesis.
  - 4) 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 or require obtaining permission that may cause a delay, please outline the alternatives that will be utilized to complete the study should access to the data sources be unavailable.
  - 5) Describe the quality assurance mechanisms that will be integrated into the proposed research design to ensure the validity and quality of the results.
- b. (14 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.
  - 4) Identify any key individuals assisting in the proposed activities. Individuals who propose an extremely complex and time-consuming data collection plan (e.g., major longitudinal studies or a very large number of site visits within the grant period) should consider whether such an approach could delay the completion of the project within the grant performance period. For example, if the proposed methodology is based on information that may not be publicly available until 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/Leverage. 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 leverage—in the form of cash 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 included with the application, signed by the appropriate executive officer/official authorized, and submitted on Official letterhead addressed to Mark Shroder, Ph.D., Associate 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 to the application, the letter can be faxed using the HUD\_96011 Third-party\_ Documentation\_Facsimile\_Transmittal (Facsimile\_Transmittal\_Form on [Grants.gov](http://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.

**Rating Factor 4:** Effective Use of Government Resources – Budget (*10 Points Total*). 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) leveraged resources provided by sources other than HUD. Applicants are expected to submit a narrative that fully and explicitly addresses these 7 elements.

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

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

Two reviews will be conducted:

- a. First, a threshold review to determine an applicant's basic eligibility; and
- b. Second, a technical review that will rate and rank proposals based on the four "Rating Factors" listed in **Section V.A.**

## **2. Review Panels.**

To review and rate applications, HUD will create evaluation panels that may include experts or consultants not currently employed by HUD. These individuals may be included to obtain certain expertise. For the FY13 Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program, there will be no blind review as in the previous competition. However, every effort has been made to ensure fairness and accountability during the evaluation process.

## **C. Ranking.**

HUD will fund applications in rank order until all available program funds are awarded. To be considered for funding, an application must receive a minimum score of 75 points out of a possible 100. . If two or more applications have the same number of points, the application with the higher points for **Rating Factor 2**, shall be selected. If there is still a tie, the application with the higher points for **Rating Factor 3**, 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 the applicant turns down the award offer, HUD will make an offer to the next highest-ranking application.

HUD also reserves the right to ensure that each research category under this program is represented.

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 NOFA.

## **D. Correction to Deficient Applications.**

See the **2013 General Section.**

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**A. Award Notices.** After all selections have been made, HUD will notify all winning primary applicants in writing. Letters will be sent to the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) *only*. 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 **2013 General Section.**

**B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.** Refer to the **2013 General Section.**

1. Debriefing. The 2013 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 notification letters. Due to the large volume of inquiries applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their request 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), OMB Circular A-122 (Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations), 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. Progress Reports. All researchers that receive grant funds under this program are required to submit quarterly progress reports that describe the progress of the effort and the likelihood that the research will be completed on time. Progress reports should reflect the tasks and activities originally proposed in the submitted application. If applicable, please highlight missed deliverables in the context of the proposed research schedule, and how the research schedule would need to be modified for completion of the research. Reports must be submitted electronically.
2. Financial Status Reports. Grantees will be required to submit quarterly financial status reports using the form SF 425.
3. Final Submission Requirements. At the end of the grant performance period, the researcher must submit two copies and a CD-ROM containing an electronic copy of the paper documenting the research findings in its final version. Grantees must also submit a final report that summarizes all the project activities, benchmarks, outcomes and achievements conducted under this award.
4. Sub-award Information. 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.
5. 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.
  6. 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 tapers 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.)

#### **D. Compliance with Section 872 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization**

**Act.** 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 subrecipient(s) 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 Regina Gray, Ph.D., 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 are strongly encouraged to contact Dr. Gray via e-mail at [Regina.C.Gray@hud.gov](mailto: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 project results that the researcher wishes 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 will 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 2528-0261 for the FY13 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 480 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 NOFA does not direct, provide for assistance or loan and mortgage insurance for, 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: *April 12, 2013*

*Erika C. Poethig*  
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Erika C. Poethig  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Policy Development

[FR-5700-N-05]