An important correction to the NOFA is noted below, followed by FAQs organized according to the section of the NOFA to which they pertain. Each question begins with the NOFA language and page number to which the question refers and is followed by the Question and Answer.

NOFA CORRECTION

Section 1.A.2. Changes from the Previous Year (p. 6) indicates that the list of applicant's staff is optional this year:
"Applicants are *allowed to submit an optional* list of staff qualifications as part of the Appendix." (italics added).

This statement is incorrect. The change is that this year, applicants are *required* to submit a list of staff and their qualifications. See Section IV.B.1.d., Content and Form of Application: (p. 15):

d. "**List of applicant's staff and their qualifications, including any applicable certifications, submitted as .xls or xlsx.** In addition to the list of staff and their qualifications, applicants must include the name(s) of any the HOME Program Regulations – Certified Specialist subcontractors or consultants that have passed the Regulations Training exam…"

NOFA CLARIFICATION

B. Content and Form of Application Submission. 1. Content. c. Reference Letters:

Q. Can HUD, such as a HUD Field Office, provide a letter of reference on behalf of an applicant for the 2015 NOFA whereby the applicant is a TA provider and has conducted TA under 3 open cooperative agreements? Is there any prohibition against this?

A. The NOFA reports that two letters of reference must be from the customers to whom the applicant provided the TA. (e.g., the tribe, TDHE, or grantee). To meet this requirement, letters of reference should be from non-HUD customers. Applicants should refer to the term customers as defined in **Funding Opportunity Description. A. Program Description. 1. Purpose 3.Definitions.** therefore, the letters of reference should be from non-HUD customers.

SECTION I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Section I.A.1, Purpose, states: "Recognizing that HUD's customers often interact with a variety of HUD programs as they deliver housing or community development services, Community Compass brings together technical assistance investments from across HUD program offices" …(p. 2)

Q.1. What investments is HUD referring to? Can an applicant have access to more information on HUD's programs and technical assistance for review in preparing their application?

A.1. Community Compass represents a cross-agency approach to providing technical assistance and building the capacity of HUD customers. The "investments" refers to the Community Compass technical assistance and capacity building funds, TA providers, and staff that engage in technical assistance activities to support HUD programs. The cross-funding approach allows technical assistance to address the needs of multiple HUD programs, often within the same engagement, as well as to address cross-agency issues, such as Fair Housing. To learn more about HUD's programs, visit the HUD Exchange at: https://www.hudexchange.info or go to www.hud.gov.

Section I.A.1, Purpose: States: "Community Compass is centrally managed by HUD Headquarters with involvement of the HUD regional and field offices staff." (p. 2)

Q.2. What is HUD "Headquarters" and where is it? How involved are the regional and field office staff and what is their role? (p. 5)

A.2. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, ("HUD") has its Headquarters in Washington D.C. HUD Headquarters staff plans and manages the Community Compass program and awards and oversees the cooperative agreements. Both Headquarters and field office staff identify TA needs and request TA on behalf of HUD grantees and recipients; share information with TA providers to help shape the initial scope of work; and review status reports throughout the TA engagements. TA providers are assigned tasks by HQ staff and consult with both HQ and field office staff throughout Needs Assessments and Direct TA engagements.

Section I.A.1.b., Eligible Activities indicates that for Direct TA and Capacity Building Engagements, successful applicants "may be tasked to work onsite and/or remotely with HUD's customers…" (p. 5)

Q.3. What does "work remotely" mean? Will the applicant be able to decide which method is best?

A.3. Remote technical assistance may be provided via telephone, conference calls, email reporting, cohort learning, or other means that do not involve on-site TA at the customer's location. HUD determines whether a TA assignment is remote or on-site, and includes this information in the written assignment to the TA provider(s). For on-site engagements, the anticipated travel would be included in a work plan and discussed with HUD when it is being reviewed.

Section I.A.1, Purpose, Page 2 of the 2015 Community Compass NOFA states that "…Applicants are encouraged to procure subcontractors and consultants to demonstrate expertise across a wide-range of HUD programs as well as in specific skills and policy areas."

Q.4. Who are the subcontractors? …the recipients of our community's CDBG funding (e.g., specific summer youth programs)?

A.4. Subcontractors or Consultants: Roles and responsibilities: Applicant organizations often contract with other organizations and individuals who bring additional skills, expertise, and experience to complement those of the applicant organization. They are considered part of the applicant's team, and may be included in the applicant's description of expertise and capacity, provided that the applicant has an agreement or contract with the subcontractor or consultant at the time of application submission.

SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION.

Section II. A. Available Funds, states that applicants must indicate the TA funding source for which they wish to be considered. (p. 8). The funding sources are identified in the Table of Categories, Programs and Topics, and Funding Sources, (pp. 2-4).

Q.5. Are applicants allowed to specify the program(s) or topic area(s) within the funding categories that they want to conduct work in?

A.5. No, applicants may not specify programs or topics for which they want to deliver TA. However, when identifying the funding sources for which they wish to be considered, they should consult the Table of Categories and consider the programs and topics in which they have experience and expertise. Rating Factor I.a., Experience and Expertise in TA Programs and Topics (pp. 18-19) requires applicants to describe their experience and expertise in at least one of the program areas or topics in their designated category(ies). This provides applicants the opportunity to demonstrate their expertise in the programs and/or topics in which they are most qualified and interested. HUD will select applicants for funding and for TA assignments based on the applicant's demonstrated, relevant experience and expertise in the categories, programs, and topics in which HUD expects to focus its TA.

II. A. Available Funds
The NOFA estimates the amounts to be awarded under the TA funding sources listed below. (p. 8)
1. Departmental TA: $20.5 million
2. McKinney-Vento TA: $10 million
3. McKinney-Vento National Data Analysis Project (formerly HMIS TA): $7 million
4. Public Housing Administrative Receivership and Recovery (PHA Recovery): $2 million
5. Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) TA: $5.4

Q.6. Can we request to be funded under more than one funding source and if so, would it require a separate application for each? How does HUD determine how much an award amount will be awarded?

A.6. Applicants may request consideration for funding under more than one funding source. Applicants are to submit only one application regardless of the number of funding sources under which they would like to be funded. HUD determines the selection and funding of applicants based on review of the eligible applicant scores, available program funding, TA program priorities, demonstrated expertise, and if applicable, TA funding from prior years.

II. Award Information. C. Minimum/Maximum Award Information.
Estimated Total Funding: $44,900,000; Per Project Period; "Minimum Award Amount: $250,000 Per Project Period" Maximum Award Amount: $15,000,000 Per Project Period. (p. 9)

Q.7. How long is a "project period" under HUD's programs? What do the "Minimum Award Amount: $250,000 Per Project Period" and "Maximum Award Amount: $15,000,000 Per Project Period" mean in this context?

A.7. The award "project period" is 3 years. HUD anticipates that $250,000 would be the minimum amount awarded over the three-year award period, with the exception of applicants receiving funds under NAHASDA. An applicant awarded funding for Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant Program TA may receive less than the minimum award amount. HUD anticipates that $15,000,000 would the maximum award for the 3-year project period.

II. D. Period of Performance. Projects may be assigned by HUD on a demand-response basis throughout the term of the cooperative agreement. Estimated Project Start Date: 12/31/2015 and Project End Date: 12/30/2018 (Example) Multiple assignments within the three-year term of the cooperative agreement.

Q.8. In this section, does on-demand mean it starts and stops or could it be continuous or a combination of project assignments? How would Multiple assignments within the three-year term of the cooperative agreement work if more than one award is awarded to an applicant?

A.8. HUD, customers, and/or TA providers identify TA and capacity building needs. HUD prioritizes the identified needs and assigns or tasks TA providers to conduct the technical assistance or capacity-building activities. A TA Provider must be available to discuss assignments with HUD and carry them out as needed. An assignment could go on for a few months to over a year; however, the award terms remain the same. The TA work must be completed before the award expiration date.

Q.9. Please clarify if funding provided by HUD's Community Compass Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program FR-5900-N-06 is to be used to provide technical assistance funding to applicants or to provide funding for applicants to provide technical assistance to others?

A.9. The funding would be awarded to eligible applicants thereafter referred to as TA Providers to deliver TA to HUD's "customers" – see description in 1. Purpose, pages 1-2 of NOFA. HUD's customers are generally grantees that are current or new recipients of HUD program funding, i.e., CDBG or CoC recipients, etc., and their responsibility is to deliver HUD's programs effectively as HUD intends. The TA delivery would be the "service" provided by the TA Provider (the applicant awardee-if awarded) as assigned by HUD to assist grantees to administer the HUD programs. Please review the 2015 Community Compass NOFA rating Factor requirements on pages 17-26.

Recommendations:
- See references to Subcontractors in the NOFA on the following pages: 2,10, 11,15, 17, and 21
- Review the NOFA rating factors on pages 17-26 to determine whether a subcontractor that may be on board your team could help you to meet those rating factor(s) criteria

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.

A. Eligible Applicants.
Section III.A. Eligible Applicants: states that the "eligible applicants" include cities, states, PHAs etc.

Q.10. Does this mean that HUD grantees and PHAs should apply to this NOFA to receive TA? (pp. 9-10)

A.10. "Eligible applicants" are those organizations that may apply under this NOFA for funding to provide technical assistance and to build the capacity of HUD grantees and other customers. Successful applicants are organizations and experts that will provide TA and training and develop products and tools for HUD grantees. Eligible cities, states, and PHAs with applicable experience and expertise can apply to this NOFA if they want to provide TA. HUD grantees, PHAs and others should not apply for technical assistance through this NOFA. . Those

interested in receiving TA should contact their Field or Regional Office and visit the HUD Exchange at www.hudexchange.info and follow the instructions for ask or assistance.

III. C.4. Other Requirements states that selected providers "will be deployed as HUD deems necessary across the country…" (p. 12)

Q.11. What does this mean? Do TA providers have to relocate temporarily to conduct the work? Are these permanent assignments?

A.11. HUD will assign TA work to TA Providers throughout the country. The majority of TA work is conducted remotely, with TA provider staff working with grantees via email, reporting, conference calls, etc. Although Needs Assessments and Direct TA assignments require the TA provider to go to the grantee's location, visits of this nature would be short in duration assignments, TA providers may be engaged on-site for longer periods of time.(generally only a few days) and do not require relocation. In some instances, such as PIH.

SECTION IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

IV.B.1. Content, includes a table of forms, including the Faith-Based EEO Survey (SF424 Supplement, Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Applicants), *if applicable*."

Q.12. Is the form voluntary for all applicants? (p. 14)

A.12. Applicants are not required to submit the form Faith-Based EEO Survey as it is voluntary. However, as stated in the table, non-profit organizations, not including private universities, are "encouraged to submit the survey" with their applications.

**B. Content and Form of Application Submission. Content
a. One-page application summary, submitted in .pdf, .doc, or .docx format.**
Applicants are required to indicate the TA funding sources for which they would like to be considered for award "as part of the <u>one-page Application Summary</u>."

Q.13. Is there a list of what is required on the one-page summary? Pages 13-14, 12-16 of NOFA

A.13. The list can be found on pages 14 and 15 of the Community Compass NOFA; a complete outline of all the application submission requirements can be found on pages 12-16 along with requirements in the General Section NOFA, and the rating factor requirements Rating Factors in Section V. A. Review Criteria, pages 17-26 of the NOFA.

IV. B.2.a. Format and Form:

Q.14. Are applicants required to use a 12 font or can we use a smaller font? Are we required to use any particular font type? (p. 15)

A.14. Applicants are required to use a 12-point font with at least .05 margins on the Narrative Factors 1-3. No specific type of font is prescribed.

Section IV.B.2.b…states that "HUD will consider the degree to which the narrative response to rating factors is clear, concise, well organized, and free of grammatical errors."

Q.15. Is there a specific format we should use to organize the application? (p. 15)

A.15. There is no particular format to organize the application other than the Narrative Responses to Rating Factors 1-3, which must be clearly labeled and included in the appropriate section. It is highly recommended that applicants follow B. Content and Form of Application Submission format outlined in pages 12-16 of the NOFA.

SECTION V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Rating Factor 1: Capacity of the Applicant Maximum Points: 45/a. Experience and Expertise in TA Programs and Topics (16 points). For this sub-factor, applicants should refer to the Table of Categories, Programs and Topics, and Funding Sources in Section I.A.1.a. of this NOFA. This sub-factor evaluates an applicant's experience and expertise in the categories and programs and topics in which HUD expects to focus its TA.

Q.16. What page of the NOFA is this on? Is the experience to be described limited to HUD an HUD grantees or can it be experience with other entities outside of HUD? (pp2-4)

A.16. The Table of Categories, Programs and Topics, and Funding Sources can be found under these sub categories **I. Funding Opportunity Description. A. Program Description. Purpose. a. TA focus areas - Table of Categories, Programs and Topics, and Funding Sources** on pages 2-4 of the NOFA. As long as the applicant's demonstrated expertise and experience is related to the programs and topics, the experience could be gained through TA or activities with non-HUD funded entities.

**Rating Factor 1: Capacity of the Applicant
 Experience and Expertise in TA Programs and Topics**

Scoring. Points for this sub-factor will be awarded as follows: The degree to which the applicant clearly demonstrates experience and expertise relevant to at least one TA program or topic areas.

Q.17. Can you please share some of the technical assistance topics that HUD might be looking for that would be supported through the <u>Indian Housing Block Grant and NAHASDA sections of this program</u>?

A.17. There are a variety of training and technical assistance topics that are supported under NAHASDA T/TA funding. The most common T/TA topics for which we receive requests from Tribes and TDHEs include but are not limited to: Title VI, leveraging, Board of Commissioners' and Tribal Council roles and responsibilities, procurement, financial management, audit basics, program income, Executive Director orientation and refresher, self-monitoring, occupancy, maintenance, NAHASDA, low-income housing tax credits, policies and procedures, contract administration, grant and proposal writing, capacity building, alternative sour of funding, construction, administrative issues, human resources, program income, self-sufficiency, methamphetamine prevention and remediation, environmental review, IHP/APR, admissions and occupancy, project implementation, tribally-determined wage rates, mixed-income development, new trends in construction, transitional housing, strategic planning, housing models for foster care, bookkeeping and accounting, asset building, data reporting, homeownership training, and community needs assessment.

Q.18. Is a description of one program topic/area rated the same as a description of 2, 3, or more programs, topics, and/or areas? (p.19)

A.18.: The Rating Factor I Scoring section on page 19, spells out how the sub-factor points are awarded. First, demonstration of experience and expertise requires that applicants address all sub items pertaining to experience (e.g., how experience gained, time period; responsibilities and/or activities, accomplishments) and expertise (e.g., knowledge of program rules, qualifications, etc.). Applicants (other than Native Housing and Community Development applicants) will be rated higher if they demonstrate experience and expertise in m than one category (breadth), with maximum points awarded to those that demonstrate experience and expertise in three or more categories, Similarly, applicants will be rated higher if address more than one topic or program within a category (depth), with the maximum po awarded if they address three or more categories.

Scoring. The description of experience will be scored based on: the description of how the experience was gained<u>, including the capacity in which the experience was gained (e.g., as a TA provider, program administrator, evaluator, etc.);</u> the time period during which the experience was gained; the responsibilities held and/or activities performed; and the m accomplishments and outcomes achieved. Experience that is more recent (i.e., within the last five years) will receive more points than experience gained longer ago (i.e., more than five y ago).

Q.19. How will HUD measure the role or capacity held by the applicant? Which one is worth more points or award amount? (p . 19)

A.19. HUD will measure the applicants experience and ability to carry out the TA work based on the application package that the applicant submits with emphasis on the applicant's ability to provide relevant background, experience, and expertise in their answers to Rating Factors 1-3 to show the ability to conduct the type of TA work that will HUD will be assigning.

Rating Factor 1.b. Eligible Activities. (13 points): Please describe one or more recent TA engagements conducted within the past 3 years (between January 2012-May 2015) in which the applicant conducted one or more of the eligible activities described in Section I. A.1.b., Community Compass Eligible Activities. The eligible activities are: Needs Assessments; Direct TA and Capacity Building Engagements; Develop and Maintain Tools and Products; Self-Directed and Group Learning; Knowledge Management; Data analysis, reporting, and performance measurement; and NAHASDA Allocation Formula Administration and Negotiated Rulemaking Support.

Q.20. Is HUD excluding applicants that were not selected under the HUD NOFAs in the past three years that cannot list other eligible activities if not conducted under these HUD awards? (p. 20)

A.20. HUD is not excluding prior applicants or those that didn't conduct activities under HUD's programs; HUD is looking at the responses provided by applicants addressing the eligible activities each applicable and individual rating factor.

Q. 21. I understand that the awarded applicants will provide a wide berth of HUD TA at the community level, but would like clarification on which HUD programs and what type of HUD's TA and capacity-building services are provided by Community Compass?

A. 21. The Table of Categories, Programs, and Topics, and TA Funding Source (pp. 2-4) identifies HUD programs and topics that are expected to be targeted for TA under the FY 2015 Community Compass program. This list is not all inclusive; HUD may identify other priorities technical assistance. The eligible activities that may be funded under Community Compass are identified under **Section I.A.1.b., Eligible Activities**. More information about HUD's programs can be found at www.hudexchange.gov.

Q.22. Who are the end users or recipients of the TA?

A.22. Funding awarded to eligible applicants ("TA Providers") and is used to deliver TA and build capacity of HUD's "customers" – see description in 1. Purpose, pages 1-2 of NOFA. HUD's customers- include grantees, PHAs, Tribes, Continuum of Care, and other recipients of HUD fund recipients. In addition to direct TA, successful applicants may develop tools and products and deli training to build knowledge, skills and capacity of HUD's customers.

**Rating Factor 2: Soundness of Approach Maximum Points: 35
Community Assessment and TA Approach.**

Q.23. Does recopying the info from this rating factor including the specifics of the Community Snap shot count against the 50 page limit or just the actual pages where we address the info? (p 22)

A.23. Any information included in the rating factor responses, including Rating Factor 2 counts toward the number of 50 application pages.

Q.24. In the Community Snapshot scenario if you choose, for instance, to address the City, as well as at least one other entity, must you address all of the issues within the City or can you limit your response to just some of the issues? For example, you may be a provider with experience in CDBG and HOME, but less so in HOPWA and ESG?

A. 24. Applicants that wish to be considered for: McKinney-Vento TA & National Data Analysis Project: must address CoC; NAHASDA TA: must address TDHE, and PHA Administrative Receivership and Recovery: must address PHA. Applicants may address more than one entity but, must address CoC, TDHE, PHA, as applicable. If an applicant addresses the City, it must respond to multiple issues presented; not just single issue or a program. Finally, applicants must address all elements for each entity; it is required in each response i.e., an Applicant includes two entities, but does not address all required elements for one entity – this would not receive full points.

GENERAL SECTION

B.2. Ranked Order.

Q.25. How will HUD distinguish and select between applications that glean the same final score, i.e., 95? (p. 28)

A.25. HUD uses the same criteria, identified in the NOFA, to review, rate, score, and rank eligible applications' applications. Applicants may not be funded in rank order in order to ensure coverage across HUD's TA priorities; funding decisions will be decided based on the factors in **B.4. Funding Decisions.**

B. Review and Selection Process. 3. Threshold Eligibility Requirements.

Q.26. What are the eligibility criteria for the Threshold review? Where can one find the references for this review? (pp. 2, 4, 16, 22, 25)

A.26. The General Section of the HUD NOFAs can be found at the following grants.gov link:

http://www.grants.gov/search-grants.html?agencies%3DHUD%7CDepartment%20of%20Housing%20and%20Urban%20Development; you may download a copy and review the Threshold requirements on pages 2, 4, 16, 22, and 25.

Q. 27. I'm looking for the grant application for the Community Compass Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program, although I found the NOFA, it says that the application period has opened but there is no application. Where would one find it?

A. 27. You must refer to grants.gov and carefully follow the instructions to download the application. Upon following the steps to open the application package a zip file will open up with several attached files, including the General Section of the NOFA for the various application forms whereas the "FY 2015 Community Compass" NOFA outlines the requirements on pages 13-16, and the Rating Factors on pages 17-26. Should you have any trouble obtaining the application files, please let us know right way by writing to us at community.compass@hud.gov

Q.28. How do we contact HUD if we have questions or concerns about the NOFA or application process?

A.28. Please submit specific questions to communitycompass@hud.gov