



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-0050

## **Preferred Sustainability Status**

HUD's FY 2011 General Section serves as the basis for all competitive grant activities of the agency. In it, HUD debuted Preferred Sustainability Status (PSS), which allows applicants who reached a certain qualifying score in OSHC's grant programs access to bonus points for selected other HUD programs.

The most notable consequence for your organization or consortium as it pertains to the General Section is detailed in Section V.A.a.b. The language and list of eligible programs is included below. You can also find the General Section at [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/administration/grants/nofa11/2011gensecanncmnt](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/administration/grants/nofa11/2011gensecanncmnt).

For specified grant programs during FY 2011, applicants submitting requests for projects within your geographies will have the opportunity to qualify for up to two bonus points as. The relevant geography is:

- For Regional Planning Grantees, within the regional geography of your grant;
- For Community Challenge grantees, within your project geography;
- For Regional Planning Grant Applicants with Preferred Sustainability Status, within the regional geography of your grant application.

The entity that can certify projects for PSS bonus points is the lead applicant to OSHC's grant program.

### **Other Benefits**

In addition to the bonus points available for certain grant programs, OSHC is extending some of the technical assistance, capacity building, and networking materials that would typically be reserved for grantees to all of the communities holding the Preferred Sustainability Status. When the Capacity Building intermediaries identified from the NOFA competition this summer are announced, the full suite of that training and assistance will be revealed. For now, the early opportunity has been for PSS non-grantees to take part in the Summer Smarts Series being hosted online by OSHC.

### **Securing PSS Bonus Points**

The process to certify an application for the PSS bonus points is simple:

- 1) If an applicant from your PSS geography** is applying for a grant from a program that is offering the PSS bonus points, they will contact your organization to seek certification that their project meets three basic criteria:
  - a) The applicant is engaged in activities, that in consultation with the designated Point of Contact of the HUD designated Preferred Sustainability Status Community furthers the purposes of the Regional Planning Grant Program or the Challenge Grant Program; and*
  - b) The applicant's proposed activities either directly reflect the Livability Principles cited and contained in HUD's General Section to the FY2011 NOFAs or will result in the delivery of services that are consistent with the goals of the Livability Principles; and*
  - c) The applicant has committed to maintain an on-going relationship with a HUD Preferred Sustainability Status Community for the purposes of being part of the planning and implementation processes in the designated area.*

- 2) **If you determine that a proposed project meets these criteria, fill in a copy of HUD Form 2995.** This form, and the General Section, is at [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/administration/grants/nofa11/2011gensecannomt](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/administration/grants/nofa11/2011gensecannomt).
- 3) **The applicant is responsible for including the form in its application.** OSHC staff will review the certification and alert the program office in question whether an entity qualifies for the bonus points. While the certification is the driving document in this process, HUD retains the right to do additional diligence to confirm that the points are merited, and to determine whether to award the bonus points.
- 4) **If your organization wants to apply** for a program where bonus points are offered, you fill out the form and then contact the HUD Regional Administrator to have the form certified. You then submit the document with your application and the process would continue as previously stated.

### **What This Means for You**

HUD has tried to make the process as streamlined as possible. We stand ready to support you, and we trust that you will exercise prudent judgment in determining whether a project can advance sustainability and whether you will be able to maintain synergy with the applicant should they receive HUD funding.

### **Suggested Checklist for Evaluating Applications Seeking PSS Bonus Points**

We recommend that entities considering requests for certification for PSS bonus points review at least a detailed summary of an application, with at least a summary of the proposed project and the location of the project, with any relevant information about transportation choices to the location and/or nearby housing choices. You may want to request a short description from the applicant explaining why the proposed project aligns with the Livability Principles and your planning effort.

At a minimum, you should consider the following questions when deciding whether to certify an application for PSS bonus points:

- 1) Does the proposed project align with the Livability Principles? For your reference, they can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/#livabilityprinciples>.
- 2) Does the proposed project align with my planning effort?
- 3) What aspects of the proposed project, if any, do not align with the Livability Principles or my planning effort?

### **General Section Language**

#### **b. Preferred Sustainable Communities Status Bonus Points.**

In FY2011, HUD will award 2 bonus points to applicants that are working in the following ways with communities that have received Preferred Sustainability Status under the HUD FY2010 Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program and/or the FY2010 HUD funded Challenge Grant Program (hereafter referred to as the Preferred Sustainability Status Communities).

- 1) The applicant is engaged in activities, that in consultation with the designated Point of Contact of the HUD designated Preferred Sustainability Status Community furthers the purposes of the Regional Planning Grant Program or the Challenge Grant Program; and
- 2) The applicant's proposed activities either directly reflect the Livability Principles cited and contained in HUD's General Section to the FY2011 NOFAs or will result in the delivery of services that are consistent with the goals of the Livability Principles; and
- 3) The applicant has committed to maintain an on-going relationship with a HUD Preferred Sustainability Status Community for the purposes of being part of the planning and implementation processes in the designated area.

To be eligible to receive bonus points, an applicant is required to obtain a certification from the Designated Point of Contact for the designated Preferred Sustainability Status Community using form HUD2995 which verifies that the

applicant has met the above criteria. The form will certify the nexus between the proposed activities of the applicant and the Livability Principles as they are being advanced in the Preferred Sustainability Status Community. It must be signed and dated anytime from the date of the publication of the funding opportunity on [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) to the deadline date of the funding opportunity. Any certifications signed before or after those dates will not be acceptable. If the applicant is from the agency that holds Point of Contact status in a particular Preferred Sustainability Status Community, the form HUD2995 must be certified by the appropriate HUD Regional Administrator in consultation with field staff.

## Eligible Programs

HUD anticipates making the Preferred Sustainable Status Communities bonus points available in the following program NOFAs:

- Asthma Interventions in Public and Assisted Multifamily Housing Grant Program
- Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI)
- Capital Fund Education and Training Community Facilities Program
- Choice Neighborhoods
- Continuum of Care
- Fair Housing Initiatives Program
- Healthy Homes Production
- Healthy Homes Technical Studies
- Hispanic Institutions Assisting Communities (HSIAC)
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program (HBCU)
- HOPE VI Main Street
- HOPE VI Revitalization Housing Counseling Program
- Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
- Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Program
- Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration
- Multifamily Energy Innovation NOFA
- Rural Innovation Fund
- Section 4 Capacity Building for Community Development and Affordable Housing (Limited Competition)
- Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly
- Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program
- Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP)

Please note that HUD may revise this list at any time. Applicants are advised to carefully review the program NOFA for which they intend to apply to determine the availability of Preferred Sustainable Status Communities bonus points.

To view the listing of Preferred Sustainable Status Communities Points of Contact and to determine if your program will be operating within a Preferred Sustainable Status Community area, go to [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/administration/grants/fundsavail](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/administration/grants/fundsavail). At that site you will find a link to a map and listing of preferred status areas and contacts.

## Preferred Sustainability Status Frequently Asked Questions

- Will the preferred status apply to all HUD funds or only discretionary funds? If discretionary, is that all discretionary funds or only certain programs?

PSS applies to a specific set of HUD discretionary programs. Formula funds are not affected by the status.

- How much discretionary funding is distributed each year and to how many applicants? (as a grantee, we are trying to get a sense of the volume of requests we may get for certification.)

In FY2010, HUD released approximately \$2.3 billion in discretionary grant programs. That figure will be lower in FY2011, and not all of those dollars are included as PSS-eligible. The rate of application varies widely by region.

- Will HUD review/approve our certification of applicants?

HUD reserves the right to do additional diligence on grants; barring that a certification submitted by the PSS holder is binding.

- What is the competitive basis for HUD's discretionary programs? Are they all national in scope? Regional? Statewide? If statewide, will we need to work with our state housing development authority on certification of applicants that go directly through them?

There is a range of programs funded by the agency at multiple levels. While coordination with other agencies can enhance the efforts of sustainability that are at the heart of all of your grants, certification is a task for which your organization/consortium has sole responsibility.

- Can we change the single point of contact for the PSS?

The ultimate responsibility for approving the certification rests with the lead applicant. As such we will work through the existing Point of Contact, and expect that to be the signature on the form. If the lead applicant wants to set a review process that has someone else manage the work, this is acceptable, but the Point of Contact has ultimate accountability. Make sure that the person given this task has the ability to utilize the guidance provided on making the certification.

- Does the preferred status apply only to HUD discretionary grant programs or do DOT and EPA intend to follow the same practice for some of their grant programs? Because this is part of the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities between HUD-DOT-EPA, will the PSS have any weight in applications to DOT or EPA?

At this point, only selected HUD grant programs are recognizing Preferred Sustainability Status. But conversations are underway with several federal agencies that could yield additional programs that will provide bonus points to PSS communities.

- What happens if a region that achieved Preferred Sustainability subdivides? In our initial application for SCI, our region was 25 counties in two states. Our new alignment is smaller – does PSS apply to our initial 25 counties or to the newly drawn configuration?

The geography that secured the designation holds the status. The lead applicant will still be entity with ultimately responsible for certifying applications. If both regions meet eligibility requirements for the FY2011 NOFA and wish to apply, each would receive 2 bonus points.

- Can we get a copy of the Form 2995 that we would be required to complete for entities seeking the preferred sustainability status points?

The form is available at [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/administration/grants/nofa11/2011gensecannmt](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/administration/grants/nofa11/2011gensecannmt).

- Do you need documentation of grantee geography?

Check the website at <http://hudstage.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofa11/psscontacts.cfm>. If the map that we have posted does not clearly delineate the geography of your region or project area (or we have no map), then yes, we need your map. (NOTE: those who submitted maps between 4/15 and 5/30 should wait another couple of weeks before checking the website to allow submissions to be posted.)

- What type of capacity building opportunities may be available to PSS organizations?

1) There is a call/webinar series being developed for the summer. Some sessions will be specifically for grantees, but others will be open to PSS organizations as well; 2) the capacity building intermediaries identified through the NOFA competition will be available by late summer, and they will work with grantees and PSS holders to develop additional training opportunities.

- Is there a timeline or schedule for when the discretionary funding for the 23 programs identified in the General Section eligible for the PSS bonus points will be available? Will the PSS contacts be made aware directly when these programs are opened for applications?

PSS holders can sign up at Grants.gov to get e-alerts of upcoming grant competitions. OSHC will work to keep the cohort apprised as well.

- In a situation where there is a regional PSS and a local PSS, does the applicant need to obtain Form 2995 from each or does one PSS contact suffice? Does HUD have a preference in that situation?

One PSS suffices (and you can only get two points!). While OSHC has no preference, but it would be nice if the certifier were the one that made the most sense. This will be a coordination effort between the two PSS holders in the same geography.

- Does the PSS terminate at the end of FY11 or will it continue into any future FYs?

PSS status is for FY2011 grant programs. Some of the benefits of that may extend past the September 30, 2011 year's end because of the nature of grant program timing. It is expected that grantees will have their status renewed for FY2012, and some of you nongrantees may end up becoming grantees in next year's cohort!

## Program List

- Asthma Interventions in Public and Assisted Multifamily Housing Grant Program
- Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI)
- Capital Fund Education and Training Community Facilities Program
- Choice Neighborhoods
- Continuum of Care
- Fair Housing Initiatives Program
- Healthy Homes Production
- Healthy Homes Technical Studies
- Hispanic Institutions Assisting Communities (HSIAC)
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program (HBCU)
- HOPE VI Main Street
- HOPE VI Revitalization
- Housing Counseling Program
- Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
- Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Program
- Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration
- Multifamily Energy Innovation NOFA
- Rural Innovation Fund
- Section 4 Capacity Building for Community Development and Affordable Housing (Limited Competition)
- Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly
- Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program
- Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP)

## Preferred Sustainability Status (PSS)

### Background

HUD has developed a system to award up to two bonus points on applications for grants in regions that have received Preferred Sustainability Status (either by being awarded a Sustainable Communities Planning Grant or having a highly scored proposal, as determined by HUD). In order to receive these bonus points, applicants have to demonstrate consistency with the Sustainable Communities planning process.

H-GAC is completing the review of two applications that have already been received. For future grants the recommended review process will follow the steps below:

### Recommended Approval Process

Due to the short turn-around that will be needed for these requests, the recommendation is that the Executive Committee of the Coordinating Committee act as the reviewing body for future eligible grants that request PSS sign-off. H-GAC staff will coordinate with applicants to receive the necessary information required by the Executive Committee to make the decision.

Applicants requesting PSS sign-off would be required to submit to H-GAC staff (the designated Point of Contact on the HUD PSS website), the following materials:

1. A complete copy of the grant application or a summary if the complete copy is not available
2. SF424 forms that indicate the applicant, funding program, budget breakdown and narrative of the project
3. Local letters of support if applicable
4. Response (a short narrative is acceptable) to the following 3 HUD criteria:
  - (1) The applicant is engaged in activities, that in consultation with the designated Point of Contact of the HUD designated Preferred Sustainability Status Communities, further the purposes of the regional planning grant program;
  - (2) The applicant's proposed activities either directly reflect the Livability Principles cited and contained in HUD's General Section to the FY2011 NOFAs or will result in the delivery of services that are consistent with the goals of the Livability Principles;
  - (3) The applicant has committed to maintain an on-going relationship with the HUD Preferred Sustainability Status Communities for the purposes of being part of the planning and implementation processes in the designated area.

Upon review of the above materials and recommendation by the Executive Committee, HUD form 2995 ('Certification of Consistency with Sustainable Communities Planning and Implementation') will be completed by H-GAC staff and submitted to HUD.

### Additional Information

HUD website detailing PSS process:

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/administration/grants/nofa11/2011gensecann\\_cmt](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/administration/grants/nofa11/2011gensecann_cmt)

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT SELECTION

### Background

Public engagement is a key component of the planning process established in the grant program by HUD. The consultant team will lead the development and implementation of a robust and inclusive public engagement process in the 13-county region over the three-year time-frame of the grant. The team will work to build the capacity of local communities and residents to participate in all stages of the planning process. The team will work in close partnership with the consortium to leverage the expertise and in-kind resources of consortium member organizations.

### Current Situation

H-GAC issued a Request for Proposals to conduct public engagement. Eleven consultant teams submitted on the proposal. Prime contractors for these teams are:

AECOM  
AmericaSpeaks  
Design Workshop, Inc.  
Edelman Southwest  
Fregonese Associates  
HDR Engineering, Inc.  
John Manlove Marketing and Communications  
Pierpont Communications, Inc.  
Sam Houston State University  
The Bradby Group  
Urban Green

A committee of eleven representatives from the grant's coordinating committee, including H-GAC, Blueprint Houston, the City of Houston, Harris County, Houston Tomorrow, Houston Wilderness, LISC, METRO, Neighborhood Centers Inc., the Port of Houston Authority, and the United Way of Greater Houston evaluated the proposals. Based on their scoring, five firms were invited to interview.

The firm interviews were conducted on Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Of the eleven evaluation team members, ten evaluation team members heard presentations and questions and answers from the five teams. After the conclusion of the presentations the evaluation team deliberated from 5:00 to 7:25 pm to reach their recommendation.

The committee's recommendation and ranking are shown below:

1. AmericaSpeaks (subs: Outreach Strategists, LLC and Institute for Sustainable Peace/Center for Collaboration)
2. AECOM (subs: Knudson LP, Vesta Rea & Associates, Franklin Industries, Urban Core Collaborative, RJ Rivera Associates, Mind Mixer)
3. Design Workshop (subs: Walter P. Moore, MetroQuest)

### Action Requested

Request approval of the evaluation team's consensus to move the above ranking as the recommendation to the H-GAC Board of Directors.

## **Technical Advisory Groups and Regional Transect Groups Selection Procedures**

### **Background**

The Coordinating Committee By-Laws give the Coordinating Committee the authority to appoint members to the Technical Advisory and Regional Transect groups and also develop their operating procedures. In April, the Coordinating Committee approved the formation of a subcommittee to meet and discuss the following topics:

- How can the meetings of the groups be structured to facilitate open exchange of ideas and allow interested members of the public to engage?
- What is the best way to ensure exchange of information among the groups, and between the groups and the Coordinating Committee?
- How should members be selected/appointed and what criteria should be used?
- What is the ideal size of the groups?
- How can we reach out to potential members to generate interest in serving in the groups?
- What are the roles and responsibilities for the groups?

Several Coordinating Committee members volunteered to serve on the subcommittee and additional members were solicited to ensure a broad representation of interests. The following organizations participated in the subcommittee: Bay City Community Development Corp, Blueprint Houston/Center for Houston's Future, Chambers County, Harris County, City of Houston, Houston Tomorrow, HARC, City of Huntsville, Montgomery County, Neighborhood Centers, Inc. , Waller County Economic Development Partnership.

The Subcommittee held two meetings to discuss the general function and operating procedures of the groups with a focus on developing the Workgroup Participation Form and discussing recruitment and selection of members.

### **Recommended Nomination/Recruitment Process and Timeline**

- Coordinating committee members will actively recruit and contact individuals they would recommend to serve on the Technical Advisory and Regional Transect Groups and encourage them to complete the Workgroup Participation Form by June 17.
- The Work Group Subcommittee will meet on June 22 to review applications and nominate individuals to serve on each of the Technical Advisory and Regional Transect Groups
- The Subcommittee will aim to place individuals in groups that match their expertise and interest while also ensuring each group has adequate representation.
- The Subcommittee will identify gaps in participation for various work groups and recommend targeted recruitment to fill necessary gaps.
- A recommended slate of nominees for work group participation will be presented for Coordinating Committee approval at the June 29 meeting
- Additional individuals will be recruited and nominated by the Subcommittee for approval at the July 26 Coordinating Committee meeting.

**Recommended Action:** Coordinating Committee approve the above nomination/recruitment process and timeline for the Technical Advisory Groups and Regional Transect Groups.