



OFFICE OF HEALTHY HOMES AND
LEAD HAZARD CONTROL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-3000

MEMORANDUM FOR: Matthew E. Ammon, Director, Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, L

FROM: Brenda Reyes, Director, Policy and Standards Division, LP

SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact under the National Environmental Policy Act – Notice of Funding Opportunity for Fiscal Year 2024: **Lead and Healthy Homes Technical Studies Grant Program (FR-6800-N-15)**

It is the finding of this office that the publication of the attached Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Lead and Healthy Homes Technical Studies Grant Program, described by the attached funding notice (FR-6800-N-15), does not constitute a major federal action having an individual or cumulative significant effect on the human environment, and therefore does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

The notice sets out the guidance to govern the Lead and Healthy Homes Technical Studies Grant Program. The Lead Technical Studies program is authorized under sections 1051 and 1052 of the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (Title X of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992, 42 U.S.C. § 4854 and 4854a). The Healthy Homes Technical Studies program is authorized under sections 501 and 502 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970 (12 U.S.C. §§ 1701z-1 and 1701z-2). Funding is provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118-42), approved March 09, 2024, and by the Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328), approved December 29, 2022.

The Lead and Healthy Homes Technical Studies Grant Program no longer involves solicitation of pre-applicants. Awards will be in the form of cooperative agreements with applicants in one or more of the following categories:

- State governments
- County governments
- City or township governments
- Special district governments
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
- Independent school districts
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities
- Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education

- Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education
- For profit organizations other than small businesses
- Small businesses
- U.S. territories or possessions

The purpose of the program is to fund studies to improve knowledge of housing-related health and safety hazards and to improve or develop new hazard assessment and control methods, with a focus on lead and other key residential health and safety hazards.

- The overall goal of the Lead Technical Studies program is to gain knowledge to improve the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of methods for evaluation and control of residential lead-based paint hazards.
- The overall goal of the Healthy Homes Technical Studies program is to advance the recognition and control of priority residential health and safety hazards and more closely examine the link between housing and health.

Eligible Lead and Healthy Homes Technical Studies Program activities include:

Specifically, the notice describes several categories of eligible activities that meet the overall goals and objectives of the program. However, HUD is particularly interested in some selected priority research topic areas. A limited amount of hazard control activities, which may involve construction limited to what is necessary to conduct the proposed research, may be conducted as part of these programs. No more than 20% of the total award may be used for construction activities. The construction activities may support or supplement a new housing construction or substantial rehabilitation projects to improve indoor environmental quality. Most funds dedicated to construction activities supported by a Healthy Homes Technical Studies grant shall be spent for interventions not intended for lead hazard control. The priority topic areas include:

Lead Technical Studies Grant Program

- 1) Evaluation of the effectiveness of specific residential lead hazard control interventions.
- 2) The value of lead risk assessments when triggered by children with blood lead levels (BLLs) at or near CDC's blood lead reference value of 3.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$.
- 3) Analysis of available data and databases, i.e., research using existing data to address key scientific issues related to the identification and control of lead-based paint hazards.
- 4) Use of novel methods for lead risk assessment.
- 5) Use of novel methods for dust lead measurements for hazard assessment or clearance.

Healthy Homes Technical Studies Grant Program

- 1) Assessing novel or promising methods for implementing integrated housing health and safety assessments and subsequent interventions (i.e., the healthy homes model) in high-risk homes.
- 2) Research that identifies actions that protect the health and safety of the families from hazards resulting from natural disasters and help them to mitigate the risks of such health and safety hazards in housing occurring before such anticipated disasters.
- 3) Developing easily replicable, cost-effective methods for identifying, preventing, and controlling mold and excess moisture in various types of residential buildings, with a focus on affordable housing.
- 4) Innovative methods to identify the sources and control the hazards to improve the indoor air quality in the residences of the people we serve.
- 5) Researching the combined efficacy of evidence-based injury prevention packages for preventing injury in high-risk populations, particularly children and seniors in low-income households.
- 6) Researching novel aspects of mitigation of residential asthma triggers.
- 7) Studies that address important healthy homes issues in Federally recognized, Native American communities.

A grant award under this NOFO does not constitute approval of specific sites or projects where activities that are subject to environmental review may be carried out. The provisions of section 305(c) of the Multifamily Housing Property Disposition Reform Act of 1994, implemented by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58, “Environmental Review Procedures for Entities Assuming HUD Environmental Responsibilities,” are applicable to properties assisted with Lead and Healthy Homes Technical Studies Grant Program funds. Therefore, recipients conducting eligible construction and rehabilitation activities must comply with 24 CFR Part 58, or Part 50 as applicable. Upon award, each recipient will execute a cooperative agreement with HUD. The terms and conditions of the cooperative agreement for this program will incorporate the Environmental Review requirements including the provision that no commitment or expenditure for physical or choice-limiting activities may be made until HUD has either approved the Request for Release of Funds and Related Environmental Certification from the Responsible Entity under 24 CFR part 58 or completed its own environmental review under 24 CFR part 50, as applicable, and notified the grantee. The results of the environmental reviews may require that proposed activities be modified, or proposed sites rejected.

The Office has considered the potential environmental impacts of the (above) listed eligible activities of the notice and determines that they generally fall into one of two categories, either categorically excluded from review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and subject to the related federal laws at 24 CFR §§ 50.4 and 58.5, per §§ 50.20(a)(2) and 58.35(a)(3), or categorically excluded and not subject to the related federal laws, per §§ 50.19(a), (b)(1), (b)(3), (b)(5), and (b)(9) and exempt from environmental review, per 24 CFR 58.34(a)(1), (a)(3), (a)(5), and (a)(9). There is a possibility that the program could contribute toward new housing construction or substantial rehabilitation of existing housing, and thus be subject to an Environmental Assessment per §§ 50.31 and 58.40.

The Office included in its analysis the provision of exposure to and disposal of hazardous materials. Waste disposal must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of EPA's regulations at 40 CFR parts 260-268 (RCRA) and 300-374 (CERCLA), state, and local regulations. Worker protection shall be accommodated through adherence to applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) general industry and construction industry worker protection requirements (29 CFR parts 1910 and /or 1926), or applicable state and local occupational safety and health regulations, whichever are most stringent.

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

Concurrences:

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Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes

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