

FY 2023 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants NOFO Questions and Answers

Note: In accordance with the HUD Reform Act, HUD cannot provide a determination to questions that ask about a specific situation (e.g., whether something would be eligible or how it would be rated) outside of reviewing a submitted grant application during its formal review process. This Q&A is meant to provide general clarification to the NOFO language.

- 1. Our neighborhood has a lot of distressed housing, but it is neither “public housing” or “assisted housing.” Can we still apply for a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant if our application meets the other eligibility criteria, but does not have “severely distressed public or HUD-assisted housing”?**

No, the “Eligible Target Housing” threshold requires that there be a severely distressed public housing or HUD-assisted housing project at the center of the planning process to comply with statutory requirements. Please see the Eligible Target Housing threshold in the NOFO. The terms “assisted housing,” “public housing,” and “severely distressed housing” are defined in the Program Definitions section starting on page 11.

- 2. Our housing authority just completed a substantial rehabilitation of a public housing complex. However, none of the rest of the complex or neighborhood changed and residents report the same issues that they had before regarding environmental, open space, food security, and employment challenges. Some residents and I just found out about the Choice Neighborhoods program. Can our PHA still apply for a planning grant for a project looking at everything except renovation of units?**

No, a public housing project that currently meets the statutory definition of “severely distressed” must be at the focus of a Choice Neighborhoods grant application to comply with statutory requirements. We encourage you to work with the housing authority, your local government, nonprofits working in your area and other stakeholders to identify strategies to address resident concerns.

- 3. We are a PHA that owns a residential building and all the units, while affordable, are not assisted by HUD. Would that qualify for a Choice Neighborhoods grant?**

No, the project must be receiving one of the types of HUD assistance listed in the NOFO (e.g. public housing, project-based section 8) to comply with statutory requirements.

- 4. If we have a co-applicant, aside from being an eligible applicant, must the co-applicant also meet all of the threshold requirements, statutory and regulatory requirements affecting eligibility and administrative/national/departments policy requirements for HUD recipients?**

Yes, the Co-Applicant must also meet all eligibility requirements.

- 5. The NOFO states that ineligible applicants are those who are party to outstanding civil rights matters including being a defendant in a fair housing act lawsuit. Our organization settled a case with HUD's Office of Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity (FHEO) and the Department of Justice a few years ago and is operating under a consent decree. Are we eligible to apply for a Choice Neighborhoods grant?**

Applicants with *unresolved* civil rights matters are ineligible. As stated in the NOFO, applicants that are currently in compliance with a consent decree or one of the other agreements listed are still eligible. If you have questions specific to your organization, please contact FHEO in advance of submitting a Choice Neighborhoods grant application.

- 6. What is the chance of a financially Troubled PHA getting a grant? Can you please elaborate about how and when HUD will make decisions about a Troubled PHA's eligibility? The NOFA explains that HUD will make those decisions in individual cases, but is it possible to get a determination of eligibility prior to submitting the application? If a PHA is considered troubled, would they still be able to apply as a Co-Applicant?**

Troubled PHAs may still be eligible for a Choice Neighborhoods grant if the reasons it is designated as troubled are not for reasons that would impede its ability to carry out the grant activities. Such PHAs are encouraged to consult with their local Field Office to discuss their status. PHAs designated as troubled are strongly encouraged to consider partnering with another entity (such as a local government or a nonprofit) to serve as the lead applicant for purposes of the Choice Neighborhoods grant.

- 7. For the rating factor that requires submission of the Certification of Consistency with the Consolidated Plan (form HUD-2991), what version should we use? The version that I found on the section of HUD's website where forms are posted references the Continuum of Care program.**

As stated in the NOFO, applicants should use the version of the forms that were provided in the grants.gov application package download. The form included there has not expired and is for general use.

- 8. Can I submit a code of conduct for just lead applicant? Or must I submit the code of conduct for the lead and co-applicants?**

The code of conduct is not submitted as part of the grant application. If awarded a grant, then both the lead applicant and co applicant must submit it.