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New Directions to Get to Our Goals and Employ our Workforce: *WAP Agency Opportunities in HUD's FY 2011 Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant NOFA* By Nathan Warren

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This past month, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan announced funding availability to support sustainable local initiatives through the FY 2011 Regional Planning and Community Challenge Planning Grant Programs from the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities. HUD has already released an advance NOFA for the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program (SCRPG) with funding set at \$67 million. The SCRPG grant program provides funding to help improve regional planning efforts that integrate housing, transportation and energy decisions, and increase regional and local capacity to incorporate equity into the planning process. The program supports metropolitan and multi-jurisdictional planning efforts through a consortium-based model.

Eligibility

Grant eligible applicants are multijurisdictional and multi-sector partnerships consisting of a consortium of government entities and non-profit partners. Some of the eligible activities include tasks necessary to develop a comprehensive Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD), to align investments, and develop policy. In developing a RPSD, efforts include adopting a housing plan that ensures a range of existing and projected housing, including an assessment of the need for affordable housing. Plans should also identify the relationship between affordable housing to current and future employment and workforce development. Additionally, the plan should support energy efficiency initiatives and green building plans aimed at reducing building energy consumption. The plan may include strategies for maximizing energy efficiency of existing buildings; federal, state, local, and private financing tools that support energy efficiency and renewable energy investments; innovative ownership, or leasing mechanisms and community-scale energy systems (e.g., district heating).

WAP Connection

Previous year (FY2010) applicants and awardees of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant were able to use the local/regional WAP plan (one example: City of Kansas City, MO) as part of the framework for developing a RPSD. This could serve as continued opportunity for a local WAP agency to leverage a partnership with a regional entity, as a part of the RPSD within the larger grant. The WAP connection is directly related to two of the six categories in HUD's FY2011 Policy Priorities: 1) job creation and 2) housing as a platform for improving other outcomes. As it relates to job creation, WAP service providers and activities sustain economic development in low-income communities and job creation opportunities for low-income residents of HUD-assisted housing. And, WAP agencies have the potential to connect HUD

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assistance to other agency programs and benefits in efforts to improve outcomes such as the health of low- and moderate-income populations.

Grassroots Efforts

An “equity” category built into the FY2011 grant specifically highlights the need to integrate affordable housing as well as grassroots engagement in the planning process. This may be a possible discussion topic and leveraging opportunity between state weatherization director’s and local and regional planning entities (also informal learning for CAPs) to scope for future regional weatherization strategies. Social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity related to energy use and climate change as well as public health and environmental impact are major themes. Other opportunities for connectivity with WAP include identifying community-scale interventions that will result in significant market penetration of energy planning initiatives in one or more communities, as well as developing strategies for engaging residents in energy reduction strategies such as Community Action Agencies.

For more details on the grant programs, resources and HUD staff contact information please visit www.hud.gov/sustainability. Now available are an archive of the August 12 [webcast](#) and [slides](#) from HUD on the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant FY2011 NOFA is now available.

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