



**Public Needs Meeting for the City of Trenton, NJ
FY 2021 Annual Action Plan
February 10, 2021 6:00PM**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) granted a waiver during the global pandemic to allow for use of the internet and use of virtual meetings to allow for public input and comment. Due to the on-going risk from infection, the public hearing for 2021 will be held through virtual media. The following provides an overview of the virtual public needs meeting and summarizes the housing and community development needs and/or comments made by attendees during the meeting.

- The meeting began at 6:00PM with a presentation by M&L of the overall purpose of the public meeting, a general review of the 5-year Consolidated Plan, eligible activities under CDBG, ESG and HOME, the National Standards, Fiscal Year 2021 anticipated funding, request for proposal application process, timeline and next steps in the process, and final submission of the 2021 Annual Action Plan to HUD.
- Throughout the presentation, the meeting was open for public comments on housing and community development needs by those in attendance. The following items/needs/issues were stated by the meeting attendees:
 - Participants noted the need for additional affordable housing in the City of Trenton.
 - There is a continued need for housing rehabilitation across the community.
 - Participants noted the need for continued youth enrichment programs, particularly during these times of the global pandemic. These include:
 - Recreational programs for youth;
 - Community based supervision and services for justice involved youth; and
 - A wide variety of programming and services to meet the unique needs of all youth in the community.
 - Many programs have been able to continue to provide services virtually or through modified, socially distant means.
 - Participants also noted the continued need for supplemental home delivered meals to elderly and disabled residents, many who have less support options due to COVID.
- Participants utilized the chat feature during the virtual meeting to ask questions. City and M&L staff read all questions/comments aloud and provided answers orally to participants. Below are the questions with a summary of the answers:

- *When building new affordable homes, is there a maximum per unit allowed?* HOME has a \$1,000 per unit minimum and has a maximum allowable subsidy. The City will be looking for highly leveraged projects with additional capital to ensure the project is viable.
- *Are you required to partner with a CHDO in order to secure HOME funds?* Not necessarily, there are funds set aside specifically for CHDOs, but only 15%. The remaining funds can be accessed by non-CHDOs.
- *Is the non-profit required to have a building history?* Yes, applicants are required to have a 2-year history for a CHDO project. Best to have experience with similar type of projects. Experience may be based on the skills of the staff and board if it is substantial.
- *Just to confirm...did you say that programs which serve abused children automatically meet the participant income qualification or that this requirement is waived for such programs?*
Depends on the program. Abused children are considered “presumed benefit.” However, the program would need to provide services to only that population. If other populations are served that are not considered “presumed benefit” you would need to do income qualification.
- *May I ask why there are so many dilapidated properties?* There is a lot of housing in need of rehabilitation. This is why it is one of the priorities for the City. Even with the best code enforcement, properties that are no longer economically viable fall into disrepair and are abandoned. Personal property rights are often stronger than the state legal system for code enforcement.
- *Can a for-profit developer partner with a church instead of a non-profit or CHDO when applying for HOME funds?*
Yes, anyone can partner, and partnerships are important. The development arm of a church can be an applicant. Churches must follow Fair Housing law and cannot designate units for only their congregants.
- *Is there a central data base where I can find housing. All I seem to find is disjointed or outdated.* The state has a website; <https://www.nj.gov/njhc/>
- *Can you speak a little more about the employment training aspects of the grant?* The City is interesting in partnering with an organization or institution of higher learning for training and career services that will work toward increasing participant incomes to a living wage. The City is also funding programs through CARES Act CV funds where people are learning new careers during the pandemic.

specific costs related to pandemic like PPE? Or is salary asks sufficient to keep operations going during pandemic?

Due to the need to socially distance, there may be needs for additional staff to operate shelters. ESG-CV also allows for hazard pay, but they can only be for front line staff working directly with persons experiencing homelessness.

- *Please clarify if there are any funds available for rehab under CDBG.* The City operates a homeowner urgent need housing rehab program, for up to \$5,000 to address emergencies. Currently CDBG is not used beyond this for rehab.
- *Do you prefer that our clients self-report their demographic details, or should we report based on our own assumptions (related to race and cultural background, that is.)?* Clients should self-report, however it is important for reporting that the number of beneficiaries and demographic data match.
- *For employment training do organizations use the HMIS for participants of the program?* HMIS is specific to ESG. Currently there aren't any programs for employment training that would be eligible under ESG and be required to enter into HMIS.
- *We currently have a COVID CDBG grant and anticipate needing additional dollars to continue doing landlord tenant counseling as well as representing residents in court once the moratorium is lifted. Is there any prohibition for us applying for new COVID CDBG funding?* There is no prohibition. The City encourages current subrecipients to apply again if there is a continued need.
- The following questions were submitted via email:
 - *Will the grant application be extended?* No. Not at this time.
 - *Is the match required for ESG?* The match has been waived by HUD for the ESG CARES act funding. The match is a requirement for FY21 ESG.
 - *To clarify if we DO NOT apply for the grant can we still apply for the RFP? If we apply for the grant DO we still have to apply for the RFP?* You can respond/apply to any available grant request for proposals.
 - *When will the City accept applications for CDBG funded public services: Job Creation and education and recreation enrichment programs?* The application/RFP will be posted in April 2021 to be implemented on July 1, 2021.