

**Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
Housing Study Grant
Program Description and Evaluation Criteria (Revised April 2015)**

Purpose

The Housing Study Grant Program is designed to stimulate ideas for regional, community and neighborhood plans encompassing housing, community, economic, and place-based development opportunities in Nebraska.

Match Requirement

Except as set forth in the following sentence, a cash match of at least fifty percent (50%) is required for all housing studies. If the proposed housing study is part of a “comprehensive plan,” the match requirement will be a minimum of seventy percent (70%).

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include any housing or economic development entity, for-profit or non-profit, without direct access to funds from property tax revenues.

Application Components

The area to be included in the study must be a specifically defined geographic area, and may include a neighborhood, community, region or county. The Housing Study Grant may be used to finance a new study or an update to a study conducted five (5) or more years previously. Exceptions to the foregoing may be granted by NIFA on a case by case basis.

The Application must indicate how the study will address the following components:

1. The housing needs of the selected area must be evaluated and proposed future housing development identified. Some portion of the final study should include recommendations for projects potentially eligible for NIFA financing.
2. The incorporation of an identified public planning process in order to encourage citizens to actively participate in the shaping of the future of their community.
3. Evidence of coordination with and participation of the local municipality and other stakeholders in the community in the process of the study.
4. The inclusion of recommendations for, at a minimum, development of one of the following: future land use planning, community facilities, transportation needs, and or employment opportunities.
5. The Application must include a detailed timeline for the completion of the study. The final study should include a workable timeline for the implementation of the proposed recommendations.
6. The Application must include a detailed budget setting forth all costs and expenses related to the proposed study. All professionals providing services in connection with the completion of the

study must be clearly identified with contact information (or, if not yet identified, the selection process to be used to select those professionals must be set forth in the application). If the housing study is part of a comprehensive plan, please clearly identify the cost of the housing study component in the budget for the comprehensive plan.

7. The study and public planning process should also consider and address the following key elements of Place-Based Development:

- Uses and Activities
- Sociability
- Comfort and Image
- Access and Linkage

Reference: <http://www.pps.org/reference/grplacefeat/>

Review Criteria

Each application will be reviewed and evaluated using the following general criteria:

- The area to be included in the study must be consistent with and contained within an area's planning and zoning regulations.
- Demographics, housing stock quality, housing types, and community design characteristics must be elements considered in the study.
- Proposed studies must have the support, and preferably partial funding, from the local governing jurisdiction(s).

Additional Supporting Documentation

- Written evidence of the commitment and source for matching cash funds.
- Independent letters of support (addressed to NIFA) from the governing jurisdiction(s) and community organizations written expressly to support the application for the proposed study.
- Applicant's most recent annual financial report.
- A detailed description of the applicant's experience in community or housing development. Include a professional resume of any proposed third party service providers that will participate or provide services in connection with the study.

Funding Amount

NIFA anticipates having approximately \$162,500 in funds available annually to make Housing Study Grants.

- The maximum Housing Study Grant award to any applicant for a particular study is \$60,000. There is no minimum.

- Applicant will be required to provide a minimum of 50% of the total cost of the proposed study in cash matching funds for a housing study and a minimum of 70% of the total cost of the proposed study in cash matching funds for a housing study completed as part of a comprehensive plan.
- The study is expected to be completed within an 18-month period following acceptance by grantee of a NIFA letter agreement for a Housing Study Grant.

Other Considerations

NIFA reserves the right to modify or withdraw the program providing Housing Study Grants and may exercise such right at any time and without notice and without liability to any applicant or other parties for their expenses incurred in the preparation of a proposal or otherwise.

NIFA reserves the right to reject any applications which are not consistent with the housing priorities identified by the NIFA Board.

Evaluation Criteria

The following sets forth the general criteria to be considered by NIFA in reviewing Applications for Housing Study Grants and the eligible points for each category. Applications that do not meet all threshold requirements are **not** eligible for a Housing Study Grant award.

1. Matching Cash Requirement:

A. Housing Study:

More than 50% cash match - 20 points

At least 50% cash match - 10 points

Less than 50% cash match – Does not meet threshold

B. Housing Study as part of a Comprehensive Plan:

More than 70% cash match - 20 points

At least 70% cash match - 10 points

Less than 70% cash match – Does not meet threshold

2. Evidence of Public Planning Process:

Detailed description of a community-based public planning process - 20 points

Incomplete or inadequate description of public planning process - 0 points

3. Evidence of Need:

Proposed study meets identified needs not met by other entities in the community - 20 points

No apparent evidence of need - 0 points

4. Community Coordination:

Evidence of coordination with other programs, organizations, and governmental agencies - 20 points

No evidence of community coordination - 0 points

5. Letters of Support:

At least 3 letters of support, addressed to NIFA, including one from a local governing jurisdiction included in the housing study area - 10 points

At least 3 letters of support addressed to NIFA, none of which are from a local governing jurisdiction located within the housing study area- 5 points

Less than three letters of support addressed to NIFA – Does not meet threshold

6. Previous Experience:

Applicant provides evidence of a demonstrated record of prior experience in community or housing development - 10 points

Applicant does not provide evidence of a demonstrated record of experience in community or housing development - 0 points

7. Place-Based Development Elements

Evidence that place-based development concepts will be identified and addressed as part of the study – 10 points

No evidence that place-based development concepts will be identified and addressed – 0 points

Note: NIFA reserves the right to award incremental points for any of the above criteria at its sole and absolute discretion.

Total Possible Points = 110

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