

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL LOCAL HOUSING INCENTIVE ACCOUNT 2020 PROGRAM GUIDE



METROPOLITAN
COUNCIL

Local Housing Incentives Account

Section 1: General Information

Purpose

The Metropolitan Livable Communities Act¹ (LCA) established the requirements for the distribution of Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA) funds to help cities meet their affordable and lifecycle housing goals. To implement the LHIA, the Metropolitan Council (Council) partners with Minnesota Housing, the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund and others in a collaborative process for distributing funds to assist affordable housing development and preservation. This process employs an overall set of investment guidelines and shared criteria to which the funding partners may add their own program-specific criteria.

Funding Availability and Award Limits

LHIA	
Funding Available	\$4,500,000
Grant Term	3-years

Award Limits

- The LHIA contribution to fill the gap in **homeownership** applications are limited to no more than one-half of the difference between the purchase price of the home and the total per-unit hard costs, unless a mechanism is in place to ensure a minimum affordability term of 15 years.
- The Metropolitan Council reserves the right to award less than the amount requested and to award less than the available funding in a funding cycle.

Eligible Grantees

By [state statute](#), LHIA grantees must be a local governmental unit, which may be a:

- A. Municipality (a statutory or home rule charter city or township) currently participating in the Metropolitan Livable Communities Local Housing Incentives Program
- B. Metropolitan county
- C. Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Economic Development Authority, Community Development Authority or Port Authority

Projects proposed by categories (B) and (C) must be located in [participating municipalities](#).

Applicants that receive a Livable Communities Act (LCA) grant must have adopted a Fair Housing Policy prior to the disbursement of LCA funds. A sample policy can be found here:

<https://metro council.org/Handbook/Files/Resources/Best-Practices/Fair-Housing-Policy-Guide.aspx>

Individuals or developers are **not** eligible grantees. Local government units in which a project will be located must sign an Acknowledgement of Receptivity Form.

Grantees (i.e, the local government unit), must match LHIA awards on a dollar-for-dollar basis

¹ MN Statutes §473.254, Subd. 6

Acknowledgement of Receptivity Form

Because of differences in the funding programs administered by the joint funding partners, private parties such as developers are eligible to apply for funding through Minnesota Housing's Consolidated Request for Proposals (RFP). Developers, however, are **not** eligible to directly receive LHIA grants.

To ensure the eligible city, county, or development authority supports LHIA-eligible applications, any proposal for funds under this program **must include** an Acknowledgement of Receptivity form (attached) from the local unit of government within which the project is proposed.

This form has two purposes:

1. to establish communication between the city in which the proposed project will occur and the developer of the project at the onset of the application process; and
2. to verify that an eligible entity will act as the grantee of any funds awarded for the project and be responsible for all requirements of the grant contract, including funding match requirements

Note that although two or more eligible applicants may partner on an LHIA application, a grant award will be made only to a single eligible applicant. Further, if a project crosses jurisdictional boundaries, such as an application for a scattered-site housing project, all cities in which project work will be done must be participating communities and must agree on one grantee to receive the award and administer the grant.

Section 2: Application and Evaluation Process

Funding from partner agencies is coordinated through an annual Request for Proposals (RFP) known as the Consolidated RFP, administered by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. The Consolidated RFP is advertised in the State Register and on the Council and Minnesota Housing websites, and an electronic notification is sent to all communities participating in the Local Housing Incentives Account Program. Applicants apply for LHIA funds through the Consolidated RFP (<http://mnhousing.gov>).

Applicants that do not apply to Minnesota Housing but apply directly to one of the four Metropolitan Suballocator Jurisdictions; Dakota County, City of Minneapolis, City of Saint Paul, Washington County, are also eligible to receive LHIA funds. Livable Communities staff will work with staff from the respective suballocator on application review. The information in this guide applies in the same manner.

Because LHIA grants are awarded through a joint process, there are multiple sets of criteria that apply during the evaluation process.

Shared Evaluation Criteria

- preserving existing affordable housing stock;
- providing workforce housing choices;
- increasing homeownership opportunities for underserved populations;
- exhibiting strong implementation partnerships;
- identifying significant leveraged resources;
- demonstrating a high degree of readiness;
- achieving comprehensive community support;
- using land efficiently;
- displaying efforts to end long-term homelessness;
- adhering to green or sustainable development criteria; and
- locating developments within walking distances of public transit stations and stops.

LHIA Threshold and Competitive Criteria

- A significant component of the project must serve households with incomes at or below 60% of Area Median Income (AMI).
- All Projects must have an affirmative fair housing marketing plan.

The Council will give priority to:

- rental proposals creating or preserving affordability for persons at or below 30% of AMI;
- proposals that serve large families by providing units with two or more bedrooms;
- proposals serving people experiencing long-term homelessness;
- proposals that consider displacement impact and mitigation strategies; and
- proposals that provide a housing type not currently available or serve a population not currently served in or near the project area.

The Council will give preference if:

- A municipality currently has a net fiscal disparities contribution of \$200 or more per household;
- A municipality does not use its expenditure from the Affordable and Lifecycle Housing Opportunity Amount (ALHOA) as the source for its matching funds; or
- A project exceeds the current building code requirement that:
 - a minimum of 5% of the total units in a development be designed and constructed to meet accessibility requirements, and an additional 2% of the dwelling units must be adaptable for vision or hearing impaired persons.
 - If any applications are received for projects exceeding these minimums, any other applications for affordable housing projects outside the Metro Mobility service area will receive the same preference, even if they do not propose to exceed those minimums.

Evaluation Process

All proposals received through the Consolidated RFP process are reviewed by Minnesota Housing staff for completeness and project feasibility. Proposals meeting baseline criteria are then reviewed by a joint selection committee, including staff from Minnesota Housing, the Council and other funding partners. Proposals are discussed regarding their overall concept, consideration of the shared evaluation criteria and each individual funder's criteria, funders' past experience with the applicant, success on projects from previous funding allocations, familiarity with the project, or expertise related to any aspect of the proposals. The selection committee also rates the proposals on the applicant's organizational capacity to deliver the project. Funds are then allocated to each proposal selected based on its composite rank and the best use of each of the funding partners' resources.

Eligible Uses for LHIA grants

- Gap financing costs, including land acquisition;
- Property (structure) acquisition;
- Demolition;
- Site preparation (e.g., water, sewer, roads);
- General construction/structural additions;
- Alterations and rehabilitation;
- Interior and exterior finishing;
- Roofing;
- Electrical, plumbing, and/or heating and ventilation.

Ineligible Uses for LHIA grants

- Soft costs, or administrative overhead;
- bonds and insurance;
- legal fees;
- permits;
- travel;
- grant/bid preparation costs.
- Cleanup/abatement costs

Section 3: Reporting Requirements

LHIA grantees are required to submit periodic progress reports. Until the first draw request is made, quarterly progress reports are required. Thereafter, the detail supplied with payment requests comprises the bulk of the progress reports, which are augmented with semi-annual reports. A final progress report is required with the last payment request. When the grant is closed, the grantee's chief financial officer is required to certify to the appropriate expenditure of funds.

Questions

Contact Tara Beard, Livable Communities Manager

Tara.Beard@metc.state.mn.us

651-602-1051

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEPTIVITY OF A METROPOLITAN COUNCIL LCA FUNDING AWARD

The _____ (“Grantee”) agrees to accept and make available in a timely manner to
(city/township, county, development authority)
the Request for Proposal (RFP) Applicant, _____, any Local Housing Incentives Account
(LHIA) award to the Grantee to assist the housing development or activity proposed in this application, if such an award is
made, and to provide the funding match as required by state statute. The Grantee certifies that the
housing development, for which the application is submitted, is located in _____, which is a
(city/township)
participant in the Metropolitan Council’s Livable Communities LHIA program.

By: _____
(Authorized City Official)

PROPOSED PROJECT INFORMATION (Required for grant contracting purposes)

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name Project Address Project City
Street boundaries or major intersections:

PROJECT STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Name Address City Zipcode

Phone Number Fax Number E-mail address

GRANTEE (CITY/TOWNSHIP, HOUSING/DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY) CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Name Title Phone E-mail Address

Signature

GRANTEE’S “AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL” CONTACT INFORMATION

Name Title Phone E-mail Address

Signature



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