

(c) *That the primary applicant and any sub-recipients are capable of managing project funds, based on past performance* (5 points). Points will be awarded based on the extent of demonstrated ability to account for funds appropriately and timely use of funds received either from HUD or other federal, state, or local programs, or private programs. HUD may include information at hand or available from public sources such as, but not limited to, newspapers, Inspector General or Government Accounting Office Reports or Findings, and/or hotline complaints that have been proven to have merit.

Rating Factor 2: Need/Extent of the Problem (10 Points)

Points will be awarded based on the extent to which your proposal establishes that your proposed research will address documented problems, target areas or target groups. In responding to this factor, you should document in detail how your project would make a significant contribution toward achieving some or all of HUD's stated goals and objectives for one or more of the topic areas described in Section III (B).

Rating Factor 3: Soundness of Technical Study Approach (50 Points)

Points will be awarded based on the quality of your proposed study plan, under the following four sub-factors, as described in your proposal. Specific components that will be evaluated include the following:

(a) *Soundness of the study design* (30 points). Describe the thoroughness and feasibility of your project and study design, and the extent to which it reflects a comprehensive understanding of the relevant technical literature. It should clearly describe how your study builds upon the current state of knowledge for your focus area. If possible, your study should be designed to address testable hypotheses, which are clearly stated. Your study design should be statistically based, with sufficient data to provide an adequate test of your stated hypotheses. The study design should be presented as a logical sequence of steps or phases, with individual tasks described for each phase. You should identify any important "decision points" in your study plan, and you should discuss plans for data management, analysis and archiving.

(b) *Quality assurance mechanisms* (10 points). Describe the adequacy of quality assurance mechanisms that will be integrated into your project design to ensure the validity and quality of the results. Areas to be addressed include

acceptance criteria for data quality, procedures for selection of samples/sample sites, sample handling, measurement and analysis, and any standard/nonstandard quality assurance/control procedures to be followed. Documents (e.g., government reports, peer-reviewed academic literature) that provide the basis for your quality assurance mechanisms should be cited.

(c) *Project management plan* (8 points). The extent to which your schedule for the completion of major activities, tasks and deliverables, and your budget, confirm that there will be adequate resources (e.g., personnel, financial) to carry out your study design successfully within the proposed time frame, taking into account timing requirements stated in section IV, above.

(d) *Budget Proposal* (2 Points). Two points will be awarded if your budget proposal thoroughly estimates all applicable direct and indirect costs and is presented in a clear and coherent format. One point, or no points, will be awarded if your budget proposal is deficient in this regard, based on the degree of deficiency.

Rating Factor 4: Leveraging of Resources (5 Points)

You are encouraged to demonstrate that the effectiveness of HUD's funds will be increased by securing other public and/or private resources or by structuring the project in a cost-effective manner, such as integrating the project into an existing study. Resources may include funding or in-kind contributions (such as services, facilities, or equipment) allocated to the purpose(s) of your project. Staff and in-kind contributions should be given a monetary value. Larger such commitments will be awarded more points under this Rating Factor.

You should provide evidence of leveraging/partnerships by attaching to your application letters of firm commitment, memoranda of understanding, or agreements to participate from those entities identified as partners in the project efforts. Each letter of commitment, memorandum of understanding, or agreement to participate must include the organization's name, proposed level of commitment (with monetary value), and responsibilities as they relate to specific activities or tasks of your proposed program. The commitment must also be signed by an official of the organization legally able to make commitments on behalf of the organization.

Rating Factor 5: Coordination, Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability (5 Points)

(a) The extent to which you have coordinated your activities with other organizations that have or are in the process of conducting similar or related work;

(b) Evidence that your proposed study builds upon the existing body of related work and it does not significantly duplicate work that is currently being conducted, or has been conducted, by other organizations (to the extent that this can be ascertained); and

(c) The extent to which your project will help generate practical solutions that can be implemented on the local or national level for improving the economic vitality and the quality of life in cities.

(E) Negotiations; Amount To Be Awarded

After HUD has rated and ranked all applications and made selections, HUD may require, depending upon the program, that all winners participate in negotiations to determine the specific terms of the cooperative agreement and budget. HUD is not required to approve or fund all proposal activities. In cases where HUD cannot successfully conclude negotiations with a selected applicant or a selected applicant fails to provide HUD with requested information, an award will not be made to that applicant. In this instance, HUD may offer an award, and proceed with negotiations with the next-highest ranking applicant.

(F) Adjustments to Funding

(1) HUD reserves the right to fund less than the full amount requested in your application to ensure the fair distribution of the funds and that the purposes of this program are met.

(2) HUD will not fund any portion of your application that: is not eligible for funding under specific program statutory or regulatory requirements; does not meet the requirements of this NOFA; or may be duplicative of other funded programs or activities from previous years' awards or other selected applicants. Only the eligible portions of your application (including non-duplicative portions) may be funded.

(3) Purchase or lease of equipment having a per unit cost in excess of \$5,000 will not be funded unless prior written approval is obtained from HUD.

(4) If funds remain after funding the highest-ranking applications, HUD may fund all or part of the next highest-ranking application in a given program. If you, the applicant, turn down an award offer, HUD will make an offer of