

these policy priorities will receive higher rating scores than applicants who do not address these HUD priorities. Each NOFA in the Program Section of this SuperNOFA will specify which priorities relate to a particular program and how many points will be awarded for addressing those priorities.

(A) *Providing Increased Homeownership and Rental Opportunities for Low- and Moderate-Income Persons, Persons with Disabilities, the Elderly, Minorities, and Families with Limited English Proficiency.* Too often, these individuals and families are shut out of the housing market through no fault of their own. Often developers of housing, housing counseling agencies, and other organizations engaged in the housing industry must work aggressively to open up the realm of homeownership and rental opportunities to low- and moderate-income persons, persons with disabilities, the elderly, minorities, or families with limited English proficiency. Many of these families are anxious to have a home of their own but are not aware of the programs and assistance that is available. Applicants are encouraged to address the housing, housing counseling, and other related supportive services needs of these individuals and coordinate their proposed activities with funding available through HUD's affordable housing programs and home loan programs. Proposed activities support strategic goals 1, 2, and 4.

(B) *Improving our Nation's Communities.* HUD wants to improve the quality of life for those living in distressed communities. Applicants are encouraged to include activities which:

- (1) Bring private capital into distressed communities to:
 - Finance business investments to grow new businesses;
 - Maintain and expand existing businesses;
 - Create a pool of funds for new small and minority-owned businesses;
 - Create decent jobs for low-income persons.

- (2) Improve the environmental health and safety of families living in public and privately-owned housing by including activities which:

- Coordinate lead hazard reduction programs with weatherization activities funded by state and local governments, and the federal government;
- Reduce or eliminate health related hazards in the home caused by toxic agents such as molds and other allergens, carbon monoxide and other hazardous agents and conditions.

- (3) Make communities more livable.

- Provide public and social services.

- Improve infrastructure and community facilities.

Activities support strategic goals 2, 3, and 4.

(C) *Encouraging Accessible Design Features.* As described in Section V, applicants must comply with applicable civil rights laws including the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. These laws, and regulations implementing them, provide for nondiscrimination based on disability and require housing and other facilities to incorporate certain features intended to provide for their use and enjoyment by persons with disabilities. HUD is encouraging applicants to add accessible design features beyond those required under civil rights laws and regulations. These features would eliminate many other barriers limiting the access of persons with disabilities to housing and other facilities. Copies of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) are available from the SuperNOFA Information Center (1-800-HUD-8929 or 1-800-HUD-2209 (TTY)) and also from the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Room 5230, 451 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20410-2000; 202-755-5404 or 1-800-877 8399 (TTY Federal Information Relay Service).

Accessible design features are intended to promote visitability and incorporate features of universal design as described below:

(1) *Visitability in New Construction and Substantial Rehabilitation.*

Applicants are encouraged to incorporate visitability standards where feasible in new construction and substantial rehabilitation projects. Visitability standards allow a person with mobility impairments access into the home, but do not require that all features be made accessible. Visitability means that there is at least one entrance at grade (no steps), approached by an accessible route such as a sidewalk; and that the entrance door and all interior passage doors are at least 2 feet 10 inches wide, allowing 32 inches of clear passage space. A visitable home also serves persons without disabilities, such as a mother pushing a stroller or a person delivering a large appliance. More information about visitability is available at <http://www.concretechange.org>.

Activities support strategic goals 2, 3, and 4.

(2) *Universal Design.* Applicants are encouraged to incorporate universal design in the construction or rehabilitation of housing, retail

establishments, and community facilities funded with HUD assistance. Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The intent of universal design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal design benefits people of all ages and abilities. In addition to any applicable required accessibility features under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Act, the Department encourages applicants to incorporate the principles of universal design when developing housing, community facilities, and electronic communication mechanisms, or when communicating with community residents at public meetings or events. HUD believes that by creating housing that is accessible to all, it can increase the supply of affordable housing for all, regardless of ability or age. Likewise, creating places where people work, train, and interact which are useable and open to all residents increases opportunities for economic and personal self-sufficiency. More information on Universal Design is available from the Center for Universal Design, at <http://www.design.ncsu.edu:8120/cud/> or the Resource Center on Accessible Housing and Universal Design, at http://www.abledata.com/Site_2/accessib.htm.

Activities support strategic goals 1, 2, 3, and 4.

(D) *Providing Full and Equal Access to Grassroots Faith-Based and Other Community-Based Organizations in HUD Program Implementation.*

(1) HUD encourages non-profit organizations, including grassroots faith-based and other community-based organizations, to participate in the vast array of programs for which funding is available through this SuperNOFA. HUD also encourages states, units of local government, universities, and colleges and other organizations to partner with grassroots organizations, e.g., civic organizations, faith-communities, and grassroots faith-based and other community-based organizations that have not been effectively utilized. These grassroots organizations have a strong history of providing vital community services such as assisting the homeless and preventing homelessness, counseling individuals and families on fair housing rights, providing elderly housing opportunities, developing first-time