

unsatisfactory performance has been verified and related to: (1) Mismanaging funds, including the inability to account for funds appropriately; (2) untimely use of funds received either from HUD or other Federal, State, or local programs; and (3) significant and consistent failure to meet performance targets. Among the specific outcomes to be measured are the number of jobs created or retained, the number of people trained, the number of housing units rehabilitated or constructed and made available for low- and moderate-income persons, or other relevant objective performance measures related to your previous job experience and/or grant programs. Applicants that can demonstrate a closer and greater linkage between the expected outcomes and the previously generated outcomes will receive higher points for this sub-factor.

#### **Rating Factor 2—Need and Extent of the Problem (25 Points)**

The Rural Housing and Economic Development program is designed to address the problems of rural poverty, inadequate housing and lack of economic opportunity. This Factor addresses the extent to which there is a need for funding the proposed activities based on levels of distress, and an indication of the urgency of meeting the need/distress in the applicant's target area. In responding to this Factor, applications will be evaluated on the extent to which the level of need for the proposed activity and the urgency in meeting the need are documented and compared to the target area and national data.

(1) In applying this factor, HUD will compare current levels of need in the area (*i.e.*) Census Tract(s) or Block Group(s), immediately surrounding the project site or the target area to be served by the proposed project and in the national level of need. This means that an application that provides data that show levels of need in the project area expressed as a percent greater than the national average will be rated higher under this Factor. Notwithstanding the above, an applicant proposing a project to be located outside the target area could still receive points under the Rating Factor 2 if a clear rationale and linkage is provided linking the proposed project location and the benefits to be derived by persons living in more distressed area(s) of the applicant's target area.

(2) Applicants should provide data that address indicators of need as follows:

(a) *Poverty Rate* (5 points)—data should be provided in both absolute and percentage form (*i.e.*, whole numbers

and percents) for the target area(s). An application that compares the local poverty rate in the following manner to the national average at the time of submission will receive points under this section as follows:

(i) Less than the national average = 0 points;

(ii) Equal to but less than twice the national average = 1 point;

(iii) Twice but less than three times the national average = 3 points;

(iv) Three or more times the national average = 5 points.

(b) *Unemployment* (5 points)—for the target area:

(i) Less than the national average = 0 points;

(ii) Equal to but less than twice the national average = 1 point;

(iii) Twice but less than three times the national average = 2 points;

(iv) Three but less than four times the national average = 3 points;

(v) Four but less than five times the national average = 4 points;

(vi) Five or more times the national average = 5 points.

(c) *Other indicators of social and/or economic decline that best capture the applicant's local situation* (5 points)—Data that could be provided under this section are information on the community's stagnant or falling tax base, including recent commercial or industrial closings; housing conditions, such as the number and percentage of substandard and/or overcrowded units; rent burden (defined as average housing cost divided by average income) for the target area; local crime statistics, etc. To the extent that the applicant's statewide or local Consolidated Plan, its Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI), and/or its Anti-Poverty Strategy identify the level of distress in the community and the neighborhood in which the project is to be carried out, references to such documents should be included in preparing the response to this Factor.

In rating applications under this Factor, HUD reserves the right to consider sources of available objective data other than, or in addition to, those provided by applicants, and to compare such data to those provided by applicants for the project site. This data includes the use of U.S. Census data.

(a) HUD requires use of sound and reliable data (*e.g.*, U.S. Census data, State statistical reports, university studies/reports that are verifiable) to support distress levels cited in each application. A source for all information along with the publication or origination date must also be provided.

(b) Updated Census data are available for the following indicators:

(i) Unemployment rate—estimated monthly for counties, with a two-month lag;

(ii) Population—estimated for incorporated places and counties, through 2000;

(iii) Poverty rate—2000 data being the most recent available.

(c) *Demographics of Distress—Special Factors (10 points)*. Because of HUD's concern with meeting the needs of certain underserved areas, you will be awarded a total of ten points if you are located in or propose to serve one or more of the following populations, if your application demonstrates that 100 percent of the beneficiaries supported by RHED funds are in one or more of the following populations. You must also specifically identify how each population will be served and that the proposed service area meets the definition of "eligible rural area" as described in Section III(A)(2) of this NOFA:

(i) Areas with very small populations in non-urban areas (2,500 population or less);

(ii) Seasonal farmworkers;

(iii) Federally recognized Indian Tribes;

(iv) Colonias;

(v) Appalachia's Distressed Counties;

or

(vi) The Lower Mississippi Delta Region (8 states and 235 counties/parishes). For these underserved areas, you should ensure that the populations that you serve and the documentation that you provide is consistent with the information described in the above paragraphs under this rating factor.

#### **Rating Factor 3—Soundness of Approach (30 points)**

This factor addresses the overall quality of your proposed workplan, taking into account the project and the activities proposed to be undertaken; the cost-effectiveness of your proposed program; and the linkages between identified needs, the purposes of this program and your proposed activities and tasks. In addition, this factor addresses your ability to ensure that a clear linkage exists between innovative rural housing and economic development. In assessing cost-effectiveness, HUD will take into account your staffing levels, beneficiaries to be served, a timetable for the achievement of program outcomes, the delivery of products and reports and any anticipated outcomes or products. You will receive a greater number of points if your workplan is consistent with the purpose of the RHED program, your program goals and the resources provided.