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**MONTANA BOARD OF HOUSING
LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT PROGRAM
2005**

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SUMMARY OF THE LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT

PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN SECTION 42 OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE

The low income housing tax credit is available under Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. The credit is a federal income tax credit for owners of qualifying rental housing which meets certain low income occupancy and rent limitation requirements.

Except for certain buildings substantially financed with tax-exempt bonds, an owner must first obtain a credit allocation from the appropriate state agency before claiming the tax credit. The **2004** per state resident amount of tax credit allocated annually for housing was limited to \$1.75, with a minimum cap of **\$2,075,000**. In **2005**, the amount will be **\$2,075,000** plus any inflation factor the IRS may calculate. Montana receives the minimum cap because of our population. The Montana Board of Housing (MBOH) is the state agency that allocates the tax credits for housing located in Montana.

The following is a brief summary of some elements of the low income housing tax credit and is provided for informational purposes only. There are numerous technical rules governing a building's qualification for the tax credit, the amount of the tax credit, and an owner's ability to use the credit to offset federal income taxes. **THE MBOH DOES NOT AND WILL NOT MAKE ANY REPRESENTATION CONCERNING THE APPLICABILITY OF THE TAX CREDIT TO A PARTICULAR BUILDING OR OWNER. DEVELOPERS OR OWNERS INTERESTED IN APPLYING FOR A CREDIT ALLOCATION SHOULD CONSULT THEIR OWN TAX ACCOUNTANT OR ATTORNEY IN PLANNING A SPECIFIC TRANSACTION.**

Overview of Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) are allocated by the State of Montana through the Montana Board of Housing to applicants with normally the highest point scores. This is based on the information submitted within their application, market study, other information obtained by MBOH staff, and justification with support documentation. At or before the allocation is made, the applicant solicits an investor who would purchase these tax credits. Credits are normally allocated to the applications with the highest point totals.

The tax credits are awarded each year for a ten-year period. Hypothetically, a project awarded \$100,000 in tax credits is essentially awarded \$1,000,000 (\$100,000 X 10 years) for the ten-year period. When an investor purchases the credits, the money from the purchase is infused into the financing for the building of the project. The investor purchases the tax credits, for example, \$.75 on the dollar (\$100,000 X \$.75 X 10 years) equating to \$750,000. Typically, the investor pays at a range of \$.70 to \$.90 on the dollar. This money directly reduces the amount of dollars financed in a project, thereby reducing the amount each tenant must pay (Low Income) as well as assuring that the project cash flows.

Along with this, there is the requirement that the investor, through an LLP/LP becomes the 99.99% owner of the project for fifteen years while they declare \$100,000 each year for ten years as credit on their income tax. Generally, once fifteen years have passed, the project is sold back to the applicant (.01% partner) for a negotiated amount and the ownership is transferred.

Throughout the tax credit life (a minimum of 15 years, which may be extended to 31 years or more) the project must comply with the requirements of tax credit administration and receives periodic file audits and inspection of units by the staff of the Montana Board of Housing.

MBOH Policy on Non-Discrimination.

The Montana Board of Housing is an Equal Opportunity concern. All employees, who work for or with this Agency, agree not to discriminate against any client or co-worker based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin and any other classes protected in Montana. The failure of any employee to take the Agency policy seriously and to in fact discriminate will lead to immediate termination of employment.

Eligible Types of Buildings and Rental Units

The tax credit is available for residential rental buildings which are part of a qualifying low income project. The rental units must be available to the general public. Residential properties which are ineligible for the credit generally include transient housing, housing initially leased for less than six (6) months, buildings of four (4) units or less which are occupied by the owner or a relative of the owner, nursing homes, life care facilities, retirement homes providing significant services other than housing, dormitories, and trailer parks.

Credit Amounts

The tax credit can be used in conjunction with the acquisition and substantial rehabilitation, substantial rehabilitation or construction of qualifying residential rental housing. Depending upon the type of building and its financing, the annual tax credit for buildings is approximately nine (9) percent or approximately four (4) percent, and is based on either a present value of 70% or 30% of the qualified basis of the building. As long as the building continues to qualify for the credit, the owner may claim the credit each year during the 10-year credit period. Except for certain buildings substantially financed with tax-exempt bonds, the credit is limited to the amount of credit allocated to the building by the appropriate state agency.

New Construction or Substantial Rehabilitation. For a new building placed in service which is not federally subsidized, the annual tax credit is approximately nine (9) percent of the building's qualified basis. The annual credit percentage for new buildings placed in service

which are not federally subsidized will be set in such a manner that the credit's present value over the 10-year credit period will equal 70 percent of the building's qualified basis. If an owner substantially rehabilitates a building (basically by incurring rehabilitation expenditures the greater of either **\$5,000 hard costs** per rental unit or an amount which is not less than 10% of the adjusted basis of the building during a 24-month or shorter period), the rehabilitation expenditures are treated as a separate new building for purposes of the tax credit. **The “per unit” calculation is the total amount of the project divided by the number of units within the project.**

Federally Subsidized Buildings.

For new buildings receiving a federal subsidy, the annual tax credit is approximately four (4) percent of qualified basis. The annual credit for federally subsidized new buildings placed in service will be set in such a manner that the credit's present value over the 10-year credit period will equal 30 percent of qualified basis. These credit percentages also apply to federally subsidized, substantial rehabilitations treated as new buildings.

A federal subsidy is a loan of federal funds provided directly by a federal agency or indirectly by a local or state governmental entity where the interest rate on the loan is less than the applicable federal rate (which is based on prevailing interest rates on federal obligations). Financing provided by state or local governments, the interest on which is exempt from federal income tax under Section 103 of the Internal Revenue Code, is also considered a federal subsidy. A Farmers Home Administration Section 515 loan is an example of a federal subsidy. Section 8 rental "certificate" or "voucher" subsidy is not considered to be a federal subsidy.

Acquisition and Substantial Rehabilitation. For an existing building which is acquired and substantially rehabilitated, the tax credit will be approximately four (4) percent for qualified acquisition costs and approximately nine (9) percent for the qualified substantial rehabilitation costs, provided that the rehabilitation is not federally subsidized. For such buildings, credit will be at a level providing a present value of 30 percent or 70 percent, respectively.

Project Requirements

Qualifying Buildings. In order to qualify for the tax credit, an eligible building must be part of a qualifying low income project.

Targeting. A project is a qualifying low income project only if it meets one of the following two requirements:

1. At least 20% of its units are rent-restricted and rented to households with income at 50% or less of area median gross income, adjusted for family size (the "20-50 test")(Maximum rent is calculated at 30% of 50% Area Median Income); or

2. At least 40% of its units are rent-restricted and rented to households with income at 60% or less of area median income, adjusted for family size (the "40-60 test")(Maximum rent is calculated 30% of 60% Area Median Income).

The owner must make an irrevocable election between the 20-50 test and the 40-60 test. Regardless of the election made, the credit is only allowed for the portion of the building dedicated to low income use (for example, if the owner elects the 40/60 test and only 40% of the units are low income, the owner would qualify for tax credits on 40% of the eligible basis as defined in this summary).

Rent Limitation. Gross rent for each low income unit may not exceed 30% of the applicable income ceiling (30% of 50% of median or 60% of median, as applicable, calculated based on the number of bedrooms in the unit). Gross rent includes the rent paid by the tenant, including utility costs, but excludes Section 8 or other federal rent subsidies. If the tenant pays utilities directly, the maximum rent must be reduced by a utility allowance.

Compliance Period

Owners must continue to meet the credit requirements for a 15-year period, five years beyond the 10-year credit period. Failure to comply, reducing the number of the low income units or reducing floor space for which the credit is based during the 15-year compliance period, will result in a recapture, including non-deductible interest, of at least a portion of the credits taken previously by the owner.

To be eligible for Section 42 credits, a building must be subject to an extended low income housing commitment between the owner and the state agency, executing a 30 year extended use agreement with an option to sell the project at year fifteen (15). The owner must meet compliance criteria for the full extended use agreement.

Any application indicating an Extended Use period beyond the 15-year compliance period extends the time an owner may request sale of a Tax Credit project to that time identified on the restrictive covenants. An example would be a selection of 16 years extended use beyond the initial 15 years, totaling 31 years, forfeits the right to request that the Board locate a non-profit buyer to maintain LIHTC units until the 32nd year.

Qualified Basis

Credit Calculations. To calculate the credit each year, the taxpayer applies the applicable credit percentage to the qualified basis of a qualifying building. The "qualified basis" is that portion of the "eligible basis" attributable to low income units in the building.

Eligible Basis. Eligible basis of a qualifying building is generally the same as its adjusted basis for tax purposes, determined at the time the building is placed in service. Generally, eligible basis consists of:

1. The cost of new construction or substantial rehabilitation; or
2. The cost of purchasing an existing building and the cost of substantial rehabilitation.

Eligible basis includes costs of common areas and comparable amenities provided to all residential rental units in the building. However, eligible basis must be reduced to reflect any rehabilitation or historic preservation credit claimed with respect to the building. Eligible basis excludes land cost, costs attributable to any portion of the building which is not residential rental property (except common areas), and costs attributable to non-low income units which are above the average quality of the low income units in the project. Cost certifications must list all items in basis (parking lot, paving, community areas, covers for parking, etc.)

Qualified Basis. To determine the qualified basis of a qualifying building, the taxpayer multiplies the eligible basis of the building by the lesser of the "unit percentage" or the "floor space percentage". The "unit percentage" is the number of low income units in the building expressed as a percentage of the number of all residential rental units in the building. The "floor space percentage" is the total floor space of the low units in the building expressed as a percentage of the total floor space of all residential rental units in the building. Low income units are eligible units which are occupied by low income tenants (with income at or below 50% or 60% of area median gross income, depending on the owner's election of the 20-50 or 40-60 test) and which comply with the gross rent limitation (30% of the applicable 50% or 60% income limit). The credit is only allowed for the portion of the building dedicated to low income use.

Limits on Utilizing the Tax Credit

A building qualifying for the tax credit can be syndicated. Individual investors in the building are subject to the passive loss, passive credit, and at-risk rules in the Internal Revenue Code. Certain for-profit corporations not subject to the passive credit and at-risk rules may be able to use the project's tax credit more easily than individual investors. The low income housing credit is a part of the general business credit and therefore is also subject to the limits on such credit.

Allocation of Credit

Need for Allocation. Except for certain projects substantially financed with tax-exempt bonds, an owner must first obtain a credit allocation from the MBOH before claiming the tax credit. The MBOH is the state agency which allocates the tax credit for housing located in Montana. Where tax-exempt bond financing is used to finance a project, the issuer of bonds must determine the amount of allocation using the same criteria as the MBOH's Qualified Allocation Plan. The MBOH makes an allocation on IRS Form 8609.

Allocation Applies Throughout Credit Period. An owner needs to obtain a credit allocation only once with respect to a building for which the credit will be claimed. The credit allocation then applies each year during the 10-year credit period. Regardless of the maximum

credit otherwise available (based on applying the applicable credit percentage to the qualified basis), the credit claimed each year for a building may not exceed the credit allocation for that building.

Time for Obtaining Allocation. The owner must obtain a credit allocation for a building by the close of the calendar year in which the building is placed in service.

OR

Carryover Provision. A carryover of tax credit allocation for a period of two (2) years may be permitted if the owner/developer can certify that more than ten percent (10%) of the project's costs have been expended prior to the end of the calendar year in which the allocation is made and the taxpayer has title to the property.

Ten Percent for Non-profits. Ten percent of each state's credit allocation must be set aside for buildings which are part of projects involving "qualified nonprofit organizations". To qualify as such, an organization must be exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) or (4) of the Internal Revenue Code and must have as one of its exempt purposes, the fostering of low income housing, must own an interest in the project, and must materially participate in the development and operation of the project throughout the compliance period. Such nonprofit organizations may not be affiliated with or controlled by a for-profit organization.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS, ELIGIBLE COMPETITIONS, AND FEE SCHEDULE

Administrative Process

1. Read this packet of material.
2. Determine the degree that your building(s) and development correspond to the MBOH's Development Selection Criteria, contained in the enclosed Allocation Plan.
3. Consult your tax attorney or accountant concerning: (a) each building's eligibility for the tax credit; (b) the amount of the credit, if any, for which your building(s) may be eligible; and (c) your and/or your investor's ability to use the tax credit.
4. Send the application for Reservation of Low Income Housing Tax Credit, and the applicable fee (based on the fee schedule below) to the MBOH. A separate application is required for each project. A single application should be made for all buildings within a single project.
5. Applications received by the submission deadline of the application cycle will first be reviewed for completeness and soundness of the development. Applications must have evidence of site control, documentation of proper zoning, and a sketch plan of the site. The application must include a preliminary financing letter from a lender indicating the proposed terms and conditions of the loan. The financing letter must be a formal expression of interest in financing the project, sufficient to support the terms and conditions represented in the application. Applications must also demonstrate that they are financially sound. This would include reasonable financing terms, costs, expenses, and sufficient cash flow to support the operations of the project. This includes documentation (market study) that a market exists to support the project and that the project meets the needs of the community. A market study that does not provide a synopsis with reference to page location specifically identifying items listed at page 4 of the QAP guidance may be considered insufficient and returned without consideration. Incomplete applications will be returned for potential submission in the next round. The remaining applications will be reviewed and ranked according to the allocation plan, and its selection criteria. Applications not meeting the minimum criteria will be denied. Eligible developments selected and prioritized are evaluated for the amount of credit allocation needed for feasibility and long-term viability.

The Board determines whether to make a tax credit reservation for your development. Once the Board approves an application for future reservation of tax credits, the applicant has 90 days in which to provide evidence the project is progressing (i.e., purchase of land, conditional financing commitment). If the applicant cannot show significant evidence toward meeting the reservation requirements (detailed in #6), the Board may withdraw conditional approval of the application.

6. If the Board approves your application for a reservation of credit, it will request the following from the partnership, prior to entering into a Reservation Agreement.

- Demonstrated financial ability to proceed (conditional financing commitment)
- Completed purchase of site
- Final zoning approval
- Multi-year revenue and expense pro forma schedule
- Certain other updated application material

Upon receipt of the above, the MBOH will mail a Reservation Agreement to the partnership. The partnership should review, sign, and return this Agreement with the balance of the reservation fee (based on the fee schedule below). Upon receipt, the MBOH will sign the Agreement, and return a copy to the partnership.

7. Once the partnership enters into a Reservation Agreement with the MBOH, the partnership must then meet the conditions described in the Reservation Agreement, and provide the required documentation before they receive an allocation of tax credits. Once an allocation, or carry forward allocation is made, the MBOH will send the partnership a certificate of allocation.
8. If a Carryover Allocation of tax credits is requested, prior to issuance of the Carryover, the MBOH will require a firm commitment from a lender outlining the terms and conditions of financing, or a letter evidencing acceptance of an approved loan by the lender.

ELIGIBLE COMPETITIONS

Applications must be to the MBOH's office by 5:00 pm Mountain Time on the application submission date.

<u>Submission</u>	<u>Application Presented to Board</u>
January 7, 2005	March or April Board Meeting
May 6, 2005	June or July Board Meeting

Applications must be complete when submitted to the MBOH. Minor corrections to applications may be allowed. Applications requiring substantial revision or which are substantially incomplete will be deferred to the next application round. Developments need to meet the 10% carry forward requirements, including an accountant's cost certification, filed restricted covenants and other documents, by November 12, 2005

FEE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

The total reservation fee, including the application fee, equals 4.5% of the amount of the credit actually reserved. The application fee equals 1.5% of the amount of credit reservation requested in your application, payable with your application. The MBOH will not consider applications submitted without an application fee.

The balance of the total reservation fee (less the application fee) is due at the time the partnership enters a Reservation Agreement with the MBOH. Once the partnership enters a Reservation Agreement and pays the total reservation fee, the fee is non-refundable. If the partnership fails to meet the conditions described in the Reservation Agreement, and therefore, does not receive a credit allocation, the reservation fee will be forfeited to the MBOH.

Developments will incur a reasonable compliance monitoring fee, to offset the costs MBOH compliance monitoring. The compliance monitoring fee of \$25.00 per low income unit (and will continue to be subject to change), is payable at the time of the Owner's Submission of the Owner's Certificate of Continuing Program Compliance.

MONTANA BOARD OF HOUSING INFORMATION REQUEST AND RELEASE POLICY

General Program Information

All general program information will be provided as requested either by mail, fax or the web. General information may include but is not limited to program terms and guidelines, income and mortgage limits, funds availability, project lists etc.

Request Procedure

If requesting information from an application and/or compliance file, a written request must be submitted and must include the following:

- File(s) that are being requested.
- Specific information or documents being requested for each file.
- The reason the information is being requested.

Depending upon the size of each request the Board may provide copies of the documents being requested as a courtesy. However the Board reserves the right to require the party making the request to have the copying done themselves at the Board's office and pay for the expense of making the copies.

Policy on Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

Information submitted to the Board is subject to the public's right to know guaranteed by the Montana Constitution except where the demands of individual privacy clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure.

Information contained in an application or compliance file is subject to disclosure as described in the Board's administrative rule, ARM 8.111.203, which follows:

8.111.203 CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

(1) Information submitted to the board by private parties is generally open to public review and disclosure. Therefore, applications, financial information and other information submitted to the board under any of its programs are subject to inspection and copying by interested members of the public except as provided in this rule. Some information may be protected from public disclosure. Information that is constitutionally protected from disclosure is information in which there is an individual privacy interest that clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure.

(2) If a person or entity submitting information to the board considers any of that information confidential and wishes the information documents to be withheld from public disclosure, the submitting party must identify which part of the information is considered confidential upon their submission and the basis upon which the party believes the information should be withheld from public disclosure.

(3) The type of information which may be withheld from the public disclosure is very limited. If individual documents are not specified and a basis not identified, the board will deem all the information submitted to the board as subject to public disclosure. A submitting party should consult with legal counsel to determine what information may be protected and for what reason. A statement that all information submitted by a submitting party is confidential will be considered ineffective.

(4) The board will take reasonable steps to protect information designated as confidential from public disclosure and for which a reasonable basis is stated for the confidentiality. If information has been designated as confidential and a basis for confidentiality stated, upon receiving a request to review any such information board staff will notify the submitting party of the request in writing by United States mail at an address provided by the submitting party. The notice will identify the party making the request, and the stated purpose for the request.

(5) It is the responsibility of the submitting party upon receipt of the notice to take such action as is necessary to protect the information from disclosure, including obtaining a court order protecting the documents from disclosure if necessary. If the board does not receive an order from a court of competent jurisdiction ordering the board to maintain confidentiality of the requested information or the board is not notified of other arrangements made between the requesting and submitting parties within 10 days from the date of the notice of the request, the information will be disclosed to the requesting party. The board will not assert the right of confidentiality for a submitting party in a court of law.

(6) Any information not designated as confidential with a specified basis for confidentiality will be subject to public disclosure without notification to the submitting party.

(7) Tenant certifications, income information and information in individual loan files are confidential and will not be disclosed to the public.

(8) If a requesting party wants copies of information maintained by the board, and depending on the number of copies to be made, the board may require the requesting party to provide for their own copying, either by making the copies with a copier and paper provided by the requesting party or by paying the expense of a copy service to make the copies.

Information in compliance files and application information submitted to the Board prior to the effective date of the rule (June 8, 2001) will not be disclosed until the person who submitted the information is given notice of the request and the opportunity obtain an order protecting the information from disclosure as provided in ARM 8.111.203

Compliance File Policy

If information or documents are being requested, said project owner will be notified of the request by telephone and facsimile, the project owner will be told the identity of the party making the request, and the stated purpose for the request. It is the project owner's duty to obtain a court order protecting their documents from release. If the Board does not receive a court order within 7 working days from the day the request is received by the Board, the documents will be released to the person requesting them.

Tenant Certifications and Income Information will be considered confidential and will not be released.

Individual Loan Files

Personal financial information will be considered confidential and will not be released.

QUALIFIED ALLOCATION PLAN
FOR THE LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT
2005

Introduction

Congress established the Low Income Tax Credit program with the Tax Reform Act of 1986. The Montana Board of Housing (MBOH) implemented and began administering its Low Income Housing Tax Credit program in 1987 in the State of Montana. Since then, it has assisted in providing for the retention, rehabilitation, and construction of rental housing for low income individuals and families for over 4,144 units throughout Montana.

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989 required the appropriate administering agencies (in this case, the MBOH) to develop a Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) defining the process to distribute Low Income Housing Tax Credits to low income rental housing developments in Montana. The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 provided a permanent extension for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit.

This allocation plan is intended to ensure the selection of those developments which address the most pressing housing needs of the state in accordance with the guidelines and requirements established by the federal government.

The final Qualified Allocation Plan for administration and distribution of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit was reviewed by the MBOH Board on **July 12, 2004**, was distributed for public comment and subjected to public hearing on **August 20, 2004** in **Missoula, MT**, then approved by the MBOH Board on **September 13, 2004 (tentative)**. The Governor of Montana, Judy Martz, approved the final plan on **(TBA)**.

For **2005** the MBOH makes available its authorized volume cap of **at least \$2,075,000** (may increase for inflation) of credit authority. The MBOH evaluates, decides, and allocates credits to the selected developments. Federal legislation requires that the administering agency allocate only the amount of credit it determines necessary to the financial feasibility of the development.

Administrative Requirements

Any public relations actions that require notification to the public involving MBOH funds must specifically state that funding is from MBOH. This will also be stated and included in advertisements, public notices, and on signs at construction sites.

The Board, or its staff, may query any concerns related to tax credit application, the management, construction, or operation. Questionable or illegal housing practices or management, insufficient or inadequate response by the applicant, general partners, or management company as a whole or in part may be grounds for non-consideration.

Applicants having a first-time project in Montana will not receive an approval of a second Tax Credit project until the first project has been placed in service and successfully managed for at least one full year.

Due to the increasing need for maintaining low income rental housing in Montana, the MBOH has established rehabilitation of existing housing stock, acquisition rehabilitation, new multifamily rental units, and eventual home ownership as its priority for consideration.

General Partners must notify the MBOH of any desired changes to be made during application/construction/rent-up by first requesting authorization to change accompanied by the proposed change(s) and justification.

Rehabilitation Tax Credit applications must include a detailed list of rehabilitation activities to be accomplished in each unit. Once rehabilitation is completed, the applicant must provide an itemized status for each unit. Work not completed as identified, or changed without prior approval may result in the loss or reduction of tax credits.

Deadline for submission of required 10% information falls on the 2nd Friday of November of the year of the allocation. Deadline for submission of required information for 8609s is six months after the placed-in-service document is issued to the project for each building. The Board may extend the deadline when other governmental processes beyond the owner's control impede the process.

Approved developments that miss deadlines for issuance of 10% letters or for issuance of Low-Income Housing Credit Allocation Certificates, Form 8609, must pay a \$1,000 penalty. The Board may waive this penalty when other governmental processes beyond the owner's control impede the process.

Subsequent changes submitted to application criteria requiring Board action may incur a levy of additional fees. Changes to tax credit sites, construction of building(s), architectural, engineering, or any on-site review by staff or any member of the MBOH will incur additional charges in addition to the annual compliance fees. This action is not to discourage participation between the applicant and the MBOH, but rather to fund un-programmed travel and expenses for review. Fees will be determined based upon the cost of travel.

Application Process

The MBOH allocates tax credits on IRS Form 8609 when a qualified building is placed in service (available for occupancy). In order to facilitate planning by owners and developers of potential tax credit developments, MBOH provides credits through a two-step process (reservation and allocation).

Applicants may apply for reservation of tax credits for a particular development during the following Eligible Competition periods.

Eligible Competitions

Applications must be to the MBOH's office by 5:00 pm Mountain Time on the application submission date.

<u>Submission</u>	<u>Application Presented to Board</u>
January 7, 2005	March or April Board Meeting
May 6, 2005	June or July Board Meeting

Submit complete applications to the MBOH. MBOH may allow minor corrections to applications, but will return applications requiring substantial revision or those that are substantially incomplete.

Between the submission deadline and the Board meeting, as required by federal law, MBOH notifies the chief executive officer of the local jurisdiction of each proposed development to solicit comments on the development. The MBOH notifies community housing providers, low income housing advocates, and local community legislatures, soliciting comments on the proposed development.

If all of the authorized credits are reserved after a particular cycle, MBOH may place additional applications on a prioritized waiting list, based on Development Selection Criteria ranking, for review in the event credits become available at a later date.

MBOH reviews applications received by the submission date for completeness and soundness of the development. Tax credit recipients must demonstrate effective compliance as prescribed by the projects restrictive covenants during the initial rent-up. This must be considered prior to consideration for subsequent tax credit projects. The staff reviews applications that have another tax credit project currently being completed to determine if the applicant has sufficient resources to complete two or more projects at one time. In this review, criterion that may be used but is not limited to, the percentage of completeness of current project(s) and/or past project work performance. If staff or the Board determines that a new project does not seem to be viable or reasonable, together with an existing project, the new application may be turned down without scoring.

Applicants with current project(s) that have outstanding substantial IRS Form 8823's may be turned down without the application being scored.

Applicants must provide evidence of site ownership (or a valid option on the property), documentation of proper zoning, and a sketch plan of the site. Include architect site drawings and floor plans for the project.

A preliminary financing letter from a lender indicating the proposed terms and conditions of the loan must be included. The financing letter must formally express interest in financing the project in sufficiency to support the terms and conditions represented in the project financing section of the application. Applications must demonstrate financial soundness. This would include reasonable financing terms, costs, expenses, and sufficient cash flow to support the operations of the project. The application must include:

- Project/unit amenities
- Profit or non-profit status
- Total years of commitment to project
- Selection of target audience (20-50)(40-60)
- If targeted for ownership, number of years
- Letters of community support
- Proof of ownership or a signed commitment to purchase
- Elderly stipulation of 55 or 62 and over if the project is for elderly.
- The application must include a market study documenting that a market exists to support the project and that the project meets the needs of the community, be verified that analysis was conducted at “arms length”, and be signed and notarized with date.

. The market study must clearly identify the following on a summary sheet:

-
- Average (comparable) market unit rents in immediate area

0 Bedroom \$ _____
1 Bedroom \$ _____
2 Bedroom \$ _____
3 Bedroom \$ _____
4 Bedroom \$ _____ **Reference page** _____

- Vacancy Rate _____% **Reference page** _____
- Capture Rate _____% **Reference page** _____
- (projected income eligible tenants who will move in next year / proposed units)**
- Units needed in market area _____ **Reference page** _____
- Absorption Rate _____% **Reference page** _____
- (proposed units / existing LIH, market area units required)**
- **Penetration Rate** _____% **Reference page** _____
- (existing LIH units/total eligible households)**
- **Number of LI households that can afford rent of proposed project** _____
Reference page _____

If a project proposes a property tax exemption, documentation of intent to conduct a public hearing must be submitted with the application. Without documentation of intent, the project will be underwritten as if no exemption was received. Documentation of public hearing(s) must be submitted prior to the time the 10% documents are issued.

Tax Credit Applicants will place an advertisement in the local newspaper of their intent to apply, and by doing so, encourage public comment to be submitted to the Montana Board of Housing. Such notice will include Name of Project, Number of Units, Location of Project, For-profit or Non-profit status, and, if applicable, Intent to Request Tax-exempt Status for the project. The notice will be placed as a box advertisement in the newspaper within 30 days prior to or not more than 5 working days after the due-date of the application and will allow for not less than 30 days for response. The ad will be published twice within a seven-day period. A copy of the notice, annotated with dates published, will be placed in the application.

Example of Public Notice

(Name of Developer, address, telephone number), a (for-profit/non-profit) organization, hereby notifies all interested persons of (city, town, community name) that we are planning to develop, (Name of project) an affordable multi-family rental housing complex on the site at (street location). This complex will consist of (number) (one bedroom, two bedroom, three bedroom) units for (elderly persons/families). This project (will/will not) be exempt from property taxes.

An application (will be/has been) submitted to the Montana Board of Housing for federal tax credits financing.

You are encouraged to submit comments regarding the need for affordable multi-family rental housing in your area to the Montana Board of Housing, PO Box 200528, Helena, MT 59620-0528 or FAX (406) 841-2841. Comments will be accepted through February 28 (for the first round), and May 30 (for the second round).

MBOH will return incomplete or unsound applications. These applications may be resubmitted for consideration during the next round once completed or fully justified. An application submitted by an entity with a poor demonstrated track record of quality experience in completed development or management of low income housing, whether located in Montana or other states, will also be returned. The remaining applications will be reviewed and ranked according to the allocation plan, and its selection criteria. Applications not meeting the minimum criteria will be denied.

Application Threshold Criteria – What is considered by the MBOH staff in the application packet to meet the threshold for scoring:

- Completeness
- Application fee
- Received by the deadline date
- Proof of ability to successfully conduct compliance
- Proof of ability or capacity to construct two or more LIHTC projects simultaneously
- Cash flow analysis

- Market analysis
- **Site control through ownership or a legal form of option to purchase**

As part of its review of applications, the MBOH contacts community officials of the project location to discuss relevant selection criteria information pertaining to the application and the proposed project. The MBOH may also confirm specific information in the application or seek clarification regarding information represented in the application. This will include checking developer team references and all other sources as appropriate (i.e. credit reports and direct contact with the project developer). Failure to respond to written MBOH request by the application within 10 working days may result in reductions in application scoring results.

Eligible developments selected and prioritized in the application cycle will be evaluated for the amount of allocation needed for feasibility and long term viability. Three underwriting evaluations will be conducted prior to awarding credit (a.) at application, b.) when a reservation or binding commitment is made, and c.) prior to issuance of Form 8609). Tax credits will be limited to the amount that the MBOH, in its sole discretion, deems necessary to make the development feasible. However, the evaluation is not a warranty that the owner or developer should undertake the development, or that no risk is involved for the investor.

Set asides

The total amount of tax credit available to Montana for **2005** is **\$2,075,000** plus any unused credits, if any, from earlier allocations which may be carried forward.

Ten percent [10%] of the **available** credit available (**\$207,500**) is required to be set aside for the entire year, for projects involving qualified non-profit organizations. A qualified non-profit must: a.) be a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) organization which has as an exempt purpose of fostering low income housing; b.) own an interest in the project; and c.) materially participate in the development and operation of the project throughout the compliance period. Such non-profit organizations may not be affiliated with or controlled by a for-profit organization. This is a requirement of federal law.

Twenty percent [20%] (**\$415,000**) of the **available** credit amount is reserved for developments receiving \$100,000 or less in credits. If eligible applications are not received to use the set aside within the January **7,2005** round, the credits will be available for general allocation. If, within the first round, there exist a large project application that was not fully funded with tax credits, but scored well enough to be considered, it may be funded by the board during the first round. This may be accomplished when applications for small projects have been fully funded and the board deems that remaining funds should be applied toward the partially funded large project.

Twenty percent [20%] of the available credit is reserved for developments for the preservation of existing low income housing, acquisition and/or rehabilitation of housing stock to be converted into LIHTC projects, or vacant buildings to be configured into

LIHTC units. If, within the first round there are no requests, or this set-aside is not fully utilized, the amount remaining will be applied toward unfunded large projects.

Twenty-five percent [25%] of the total annual credit **allowance (\$518,750)** will be the maximum credit allocated to any one development or developer.

MBOH reserves the right to determine in which set aside a project will compete (subject to eligibility thereof), regardless of eligibility for any other set aside outlined above. If a project is submitted that has the appearance of one project but is submitted as more than one in order to utilize the small project set aside, this will not be allowed and the project will be placed in the proper category as determined by Board staff.

A statement will be placed on the Restrictive Covenants, Exhibit A-2 indicating the number of units at the appropriate elected rent levels, e.g., 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, as determined by the application. Owners will be required to maintain those rent levels through the extended use period of the project.

DEVELOPMENT SELECTION CRITERIA

The MBOH staff reviews all applications received in the application cycle for completeness, soundness, and eligibility based on federal requirements. The MBOH staff provides to the Board only those applications meeting the minimum threshold (as established below). **Analysis of applications and points awarded to these applications are both subjective and objective. Subjective scoring will be the result of the feasibility of each project and its justification in sufficient detail to establish ranking within the application pool. Applications are scored against other applications in the same round. Criteria listed below are the minimal required but subject to change should an applicant provide better or more pertinent information.** The Board considers the applications according to the Development Selection Criteria and their resultant ranking and subsequently approves or disapproves the tax credit applications.

Each application must include a narrative addressing the twelve development criteria and how the application meets each criterion, the market study as well as all other documentation requested in the application.

1. Extended Low Income Use* (0-10 points): Federal law requires a 30-year extended use agreement with an option to sell the project at year 15. A development which maintains units for low income occupancy beyond the fifteen year minimum compliance period receives special preference. Developments bound by the terms committed to in the application process through the use of a Land Use Restriction Agreement receive points listed herein for extended beyond the initial compliance period.

15 years - 0 points
19

- 20 years - 4 points
- 25 years - 6 points
- 30 years - 8 points
- over 30 years-10 points

2. Serves Lowest Income Tenants* (0-22 points): Federal law requires that to be eligible for tax credits, developments must choose as a threshold, either a minimum occupancy of 20% of total units by tenants at 50% of area median income, or a minimum of 40% of total units affordable at 60% of area median income. A proposal receives special preference, and points indicated below, for the percentage of eligible units at the following area median income levels. A development receives points in both the 50% category and the 60% category, if the development targets both income levels. **Developments will be bound by the terms committed to in the application process through the use of a Land Use Restriction Agreement.**

<u>Area Median Income Level</u>	<u>Percentage of Eligible Units</u>	<u>Points</u>
40% or below	20% (or greater)	2
50% or below	15-20%	6
50% or below	21-40%	10
50% or below	41-60%	15
50% or below	61-100%	20
60% or below	40%	0
60% or below	41-60%	2
60% or below	61-100%	4

3. Project Location (0-7 points):

- a. Developments located in a community identified as distressed or hard-to-develop areas. Please note this is not the same as IRS or HUD identified areas. To receive credit for this, the city, county, or local PHA must have identified within its “housing plan” that a specific areas has been deemed a “distressed” or “hard-to-develop” area (0-2 points).
- b. Developments located in an area with a high **concentration** of substandard units **as identified by local organized housing entities** (0-2 points).
- c. Developments located in a given area in regard to services to tenant. (schools, medical services, shopping, transportation) (0-3 points).

4. Housing Needs Considerations (0-4 points): Meets area housing needs and priorities as evidenced by area housing providers. **Addresses area market concerns, such as vacancy rate and type of housing required. Evidence provided in the application indicates that the community supports the project through**

neighborhood meetings with attendance rosters, minutes, and/or local charrettes with supporting documents, concept drawings, and input from community, etc.

(0-4 points).

5. Project Characteristics (0-14 points):

a. Proposes the preservation of existing federally assisted housing stock or increases the affordable housing stock through the use of either the Rural Development 515 program, HOME program, the Community Development Block Grant program or the FHLB Affordable Housing Program (AHP) (0-2 points).

b. Appropriateness for area housing market. (rehab. vs. new construction, or addressing vacant buildings). **Comparisons will be made with the Market Study to determine how it addresses the considerations for rehabilitation or preservation of existing housing versus need for new construction** (0-4 points).

c. Appropriateness of size of development for community (0-3 points).

d. Development targets projects intended for eventual low-income tenant ownership. Applicant must provide at time of application, a) a feasible plan that transfers property in whole at the end of year 15, b) the future selling price at the end of year 15, c) a method for the completion of homebuyers counseling by the tenant, and d) any other information requested by the MBOH. Information will be reviewed for conformance with Section 429H)(6) and IRS Ruling 95.49. Applicants will not qualify for points under the extended low-income use category (Scoring Criterion #1) if the property is intended for eventual home ownership (0-1 point).

e. Developments that include higher efficiency, quality and amenities provided by the facility in comparison with other applications in the same round of competition. Items which may be considered would be higher quality cabinets, floor and wall finishes, dishwashers, carports, central computer or recreation rooms, emergency buttons in each unit, on site managers, air conditioning (especially if medically warranted) and playgrounds. Items deemed luxury would be similar to swimming pools or tennis courts. These items are meant only to be examples and are not to be considered complete lists. In each round all projects will be **compared with the other applications. The amenities and qualities itemized will be analyzed and awarded points accordingly. Projects submitted having the same blueprint appearance as other projects completed in, or out of state, may not receive as great a consideration as those, for example, that use cutting-edge design; maximize energy efficiency; use existing terrain and landscaping that matches the surrounding area to enhance the grounds; use of innovative accessibility.** The added costs attributed to the project because of efficiency, higher quality and amenities will be considered on a project by project basis for a cost to benefit assessment (0-4 points).

6. Sponsor Characteristics (0-13 points):

- a. Sponsorship or partnership arrangement (**a basic letter**) with a local government, public housing authority or private non-profit housing provider evidenced by a partnership agreement or signed agreement to participate. (**0-3 points**)
- b. Participation by an entity with a demonstrated track record of quality experience in completed development or management of low income housing. The Board will consider all members of the development team and whether housing projects have been developed and operated with the highest quality either in Montana or other states. Special attention will be paid to existing projects, amount of active local community participation used to develop projects and a management entity with a good compliance track record and specialized training. If an entity has a poor demonstrated track record, whether with respect to developments in Montana or in other states, the Board reserves the right to allocate up to ten (10) negative points. The MBOH reserves the right to contact community officials, developer team references, credit bureaus, other state tax credit administering agencies and all other sources as appropriate (**0-5 points** or as much as minus (-) 10 points for failure to respond within 10 working days of MBOH letter of inquiry).
- c. Demonstration of a Montana presence. In order to assist in providing a better quality product consistent with the purposes of the MBOH and federal law, a development will qualify for points if a member of its development team is Montana based. One (1) point will be awarded for each of the following (**0-4 points maximum**):
- Developer or Project Manager
 - Contractor or Construction Manager
 - Either the Consultant, Syndicator, Attorney, Accountant, Architect or Engineers
 - If a developer has existing project(s) in Montana with a demonstrated quality product. A developer must demonstrate an active local community participation used to develop projects.
- d. Project involves existing housing as part of a community revitalization plan. Written confirmation should be submitted from a qualified public official stating that the project involves the use of existing housing as part of a community revitalization plan (**1 point**).

7. Readiness of the Development to Proceed (0-6 points): A development may qualify for some or all of the points in this category.

- a. Commitment for Financing. The financing letter must clearly state that there has been a complete underwriting of the project including cash flow and market considerations (**0-3 points**).

b. Proper zoning in place including but not limited to intended use, Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval, conditional use approval, etc., (0-3 points).

8. Participation of Local Tax-Exempt Organization (0-2 points). Proposals involving significant participation by a local tax-exempt organization (local government, public housing authority, private non-profit housing providers), is evidenced by a signed agreement to participate. Examples of significant participation would be **non-profit organizations providing on-site services**, screening and referring tenants through a formal agreement, donation of land or sale at a reduced price to enhance affordability, use of grant money to develop infrastructure, or significant fee waivers on city fees. **Note: Information submitted during each round of applications is compared to other applications within the same round. Only new agreements, land donations, and/or grants requested or negotiated for the current round will be considered for awarding points.**

9. Tenant Populations With Special Housing Needs* (0-10 points). The rating received for this category will be based on identified community and state housing needs, and whether the proposed project addresses those needs. A project will receive one (1) point for each 10% of the units targeting the following identified needs:

- a. Units targeted specifically for individuals with children (Family units 2 bedrooms).
- b. Large Family (3 and 4 bedroom).
- c. Handicapped Units Exceeding Minimum Fair Housing Requirements.
- d. Units Targeted specifically for elderly, mentally or developmentally disabled (must include written agreement with service provider or advocate for the target group).

10. Public Housing or Other Housing Provider or Special Needs Waiting Lists* (0-8 points). Applicants need to demonstrate that, from other waiting lists and public housing providers, this project focuses on the preponderance of that need. In addition to working with other housing providers in fair housing concerns and issues, applicant must establish a waiting list for the project prior to renting-up the units.

- a. Development characteristics correspond to needs shown by public housing or other Housing Provider or Special Needs waiting list tenants (0-2 points).
- b. Written commitment to give priority to households on waiting lists for public housing or waiting lists for other Housing Providers or Special Needs groups. Housing addresses market needs with rent levels appropriate to market addressed. If sponsors are using Public Housing Authority waiting lists to establish need, unit types and rents for the project must meet the needs of those tenants. Other housing provider waiting lists can be used to substantiate need, if in fact the project addresses those specific needs (0-6 points).

Letters from local housing providers will receive favorable scoring when:

- An agreement contains an original signature of both the housing provider and the applicant agreeing to the acceptance of the housing provider's waiting list.
- A statement by the housing provider indicating:
 - o The number of households waiting for low-income housing.
 - o The number of households on the waiting list eligible for housing in the project.
 - o The number of households waiting for Section 8 vouchers.
 - o The potential number of households holding Section 8 vouchers for the project.
 - o A statement that the applicant will accept all eligible applicants on the local housing providers waiting list.
 - o A statement identifying the size of units required, as well as any special-needs requirements for the community.

11. Preservation of Affordable Housing Projects (0-2 points). Existing housing stock or projects applying for rehabilitation tax credits that have completed their initial 15-year compliance period (0-2 points).

12. Community Support (1-10 points). Developments with demonstrated community support will receive preference under the plan. This support must be project specific and address how the project meets the needs of the community. New letters of support (as well as new letters of non-support) must be submitted for each application for each round of competition. Generic support for affordable housing will receive no preference. The development must also document (market statistics or market study) that a market exists to support the project and that the project meets the needs of the community. Developments with the highest priority concerning market need in comparison with other applications in the same round of competition as well as overall level of need will receive a preference.

13. Intermediary Costs (1-10 points). Developments with the lowest percentage of intermediary costs are compared with other applications in the same round of competition. (Development fees, attorneys, consultants, architects, etc.) For projects with identities of interest, developer overhead and construction overhead, fees may also be considered intermediary costs. Soft costs will also be considered in this analysis.

14. Developer Knowledge and Responsiveness (Up to minus (-) 20 points).

- a. Applicants with weak management track records, i.e., fail to train personnel to monitor or maintain the project, receive one or more IRS Forms 8823, or fail to retrain management every three years may impact on the area of developer knowledge. MBOH desires that each person involved in such management training receive certification from a qualified management-training course (Minus (-) 10 points).

b. The MBOH may levy an additional negative 10 points against the application if MBOH generated letters requesting clarification or explanation are not responded to and received by ten (10) working days following date of postage from the MBOH Minus (-) 10 points.

* Indicates federally mandated preference

Total Points Achievable = 118. Developments must score a minimum of 90 points as a threshold for further consideration.

MBOH reserves the right to disapprove any development for any tax credit allocation, regardless of its ranking under the criteria outlined above.

Fee Schedule (subject to change)

The total Reservation Fee, including the Application Fee, is 4.5% of the amount of the credit actually reserved. An Application Fee equal to 1.5% of the amount of credit reservation requested in your application is payable with your application and is **non-refundable**. An application will not be considered received by the MBOH unless the MBOH receives the Application Fee.

The balance of the total Reservation Fee (remaining 3% of the reserved credit after payment of the Application Fee) is due at the time you enter a Reservation Agreement with the MBOH. Once the partnership enters a Reservation Agreement and pays the total Reservation Fee, the fee is **non-refundable**. If the partnership fails to meet the conditions described in the Reservation Agreement, and therefore, do not receive a credit allocation, the MBOH nevertheless retains the total Reservation Fee.

Developments will be charged a reasonable compliance monitoring fee, to offset the costs incurred by the MBOH for required compliance monitoring. The compliance monitoring fee will be **\$25.00** per low income unit (and will continue to be subject to change), payable at the time of the Owner's submission of each Owner's Certificate of Continuing Program Compliance.

Determination Of Credit Amount

Federal law mandates that, although a proposed development may be technically eligible for a credit amount, the state housing credit agency (MBOH) may not allocate more credit than is necessary for the financial feasibility of the development and its viability as a qualified low income housing project throughout the compliance period. With the passage of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, federal law now requires the MBOH to consider:

1. The sources and uses of funds and total financing planned for the project.
2. Any proceeds or receipts expected to be generated by the tax credits.

3. The percentage of costs used for project costs other than the cost of intermediaries.
4. The reasonableness of the developmental and operational costs of the project.

In addition to following federal law requirements, the MBOH has incorporated the "State Tax Credit Administration Standards", adopted by the National Council of State Housing Agencies (NCSHA), into its application review procedures.

Based on this evaluation, MBOH will estimate the amount of credit it will reserve for each application. This determination is made solely at MBOH's discretion, and **is not** intended to be a representation to anyone as to the feasibility of the development. Rather, it will serve as the basis for making a reservation of credits. A similar analysis will be done at the time of allocation and placement in service, when development costs are finalized.

Federal law permits MBOH to reserve a greater amount of credits than otherwise available for projects in a Qualified Census Tract or in HUD designated Difficult Development Areas. The increased credit amount is not automatic, and will only be approved on projects when the MBOH determines the credit is needed for financial feasibility.

Development Cost Limitations

In an attempt to balance housing needs in Montana with appropriate use of the state's allocation of tax credit authority, the MBOH sets the following cost limitations for the purpose of calculating the tax credit.

1. Per unit costs/cost per square foot. The MBOH will evaluate per unit costs and cost per square foot for all projects for reasonableness, taking into account the type of housing, other development costs as detailed below, unit sizes, and the intended target group of the housing. The MBOH will also consider the area of the state and the community where the project will be located in this review.

2. Builder's overhead. Builder's overhead will be limited to a maximum of 2% of construction costs and improvements (i.e., site work, demolition, construction, construction contingencies, and other construction related costs including general requirements) in accordance with NCSHA standards.

3. General requirements. General requirements will be limited to 6% of total construction costs as defined above, excluding general requirements, in accordance with NCSHA standards.

4. Builder's profit and developer fees. The following fee limitations are in accordance with NCSHA standards:

- a. Builder profit will be limited to 6% of construction costs as defined under the Builders Overhead Section above.

b. Developer fees will be limited to a maximum of 15% of total project costs (excluding the developer and builder fees, land costs, and costs of acquisition if a rehabilitation project). Consultant fees will be included as part of the developer fee. Architectural, engineering, and legal fees are considered to be professional services, not consultant fees. Fees for professional services will be examined for reasonableness.

c. Developer fees will be limited to a maximum of 8% of costs of acquisition (excluding land costs) if a rehabilitation project.

d. Disclosure of developer/consultant fees commingled within the project and/or profit as a result of brokered activities will require a statement of total profit. If the developer/consultant receives a commission on the sale of the homes or structures to the multifamily project and also receives the contractor profit, at a minimum, the cost of the homes and the contractor profit and overhead must be subtracted from the total development cost before calculating the 15% maximum. Failure to fully disclose such activity may result in the project's disapproval. (See identities of Interest, below)

5. Identities of Interest. Identities of interest are defined as a financial, familial, or business relationship that permits less than arms length transactions. This includes, but is not limited to, existence of a reimbursement program or exchange, common financial interests, common officers, directors, or stockholders, or family relationships between officers, directors, or stockholders. The Montana Board of Housing reserves the right to negotiate lower Developer and Builder fees on projects when an identity of interest exists between parties.

6. Operating Expenses. The MBOH evaluates operating expenses and vacancy rate projections for all projects for reasonableness, taking into account the type of housing, unit sizes, and the intended target group of the housing. The MBOH also considers the location of the project within the area of the state and the community.

7. Operating Reserves. Minimum operating reserves should equal four months of projected operating expenses, debt service payments, and annual replacement reserve payments. Using an acceptable third party source, this requirement can be met by either cash, letter of credit from a financial institution, or a developer guarantee that a syndicator has accepted the responsibility for a reserve.

8. Replacement Reserves. Minimum replacement reserves should equal **\$250 (\$200** for elderly projects) per unit annually for new construction and \$300 (\$250 for elderly projects) for rehabilitation developments. **The goal for replacement reserve is \$1,000 per unit. Upon allocation of tax credits, the project has five years to attain then maintain replacement reserves at that level.** Exceptions may be made for certain special needs or supportive housing developments. Exceptions will need to be documented and will be reviewed on a case by case basis. In projecting replacement reserves (15 year pro-forma), developments should take into account a realistic rate of inflation foreseeable at the time of application. The applicant will require continuous compliance with the development cost limitations established in this

Qualified Allocation Plan. The applicant will provide the MBOH with a disclosure of fees as part of the Accountant's Certification discussed in this document.

Market Study

Developments submitting an application must submit a complete comprehensive Market Study prepared by a disinterested third party. **Only Market Studies are acceptable. A Market Analysis or Feasibility Analysis is not an acceptable substitute. Application received without a Market Study will be returned un-scored. Application fees will not be returned.** Please refer to the instructions for the Tax Credit Supplement of the Uniform Application for complete requirements.

Capital Needs Assessment

Developments that consist of the rehabilitation of an existing structure need to submit a Capital Needs Assessment conducted by a competent party. **Each application for rehabilitation/preservation will provide a line-by-line Needs Assessment for each unit and the building as a whole within 60 days following the Boards decision to award Tax Credits.** Please refer to the instructions for the Tax Credit Supplement of the Uniform Application for complete requirements.

State Law Requirements

The applicant and development team must certify and agree to comply with Montana State law requirements (e.g., certificate of contractor registration, workers compensation, unemployment compensation and payroll taxes). The MBOH will include this certification in the execution of all Reservation and Carryover Allocation documents.

Reservation

Once MBOH has ranked applications and determined credit amounts for each application, MBOH will make recommendations to the Board as to reservation of credits. A reservation is a commitment conditioned on evidence of timely progress toward completion of the development acceptable to MBOH, and compliance with federal tax credit requirements.

Once the Board has approved the application for future reservation of tax credits, the applicant will have 90 days in which to provide evidence the project is progressing (i.e., purchase of land, conditional financing commitment). If the applicant cannot show significant evidence toward meeting reservation requirements, the MBOH may withdraw conditional approval of the application.

Status Reporting

All applicants receiving reservations of credits will provide written status reports every 90 days, beginning 90 days after the reservation date. The documentation regarding the progress should be development specific, and include such items as planning approval and building permits, firm debt and/or equity financing commitments, and construction progress. Owners must provide a copy of the Certificate of Occupancy for each building with the status report covering the period during which it was issued

The applicant must immediately notify the MBOH in writing if changes occur in the project with respect to the Applicant, the Developer, or any other principle participant in the project. The Board reviews and approves any proposed major changes to the project including but not limited to quality of construction, unit composition, target group, location and changes in areas where the project has been scored based on the scoring outlined in this Allocation Plan. The review and approval must happen prior to the change taking effect or being completed. Changes, which are completed without Board approval, could result in the loss of some or all credits.

Recapture Of Reservations

The MBOH recaptures an approved Tax Credit reservation when a project fails to make successful process toward completion. Submitting status reports demonstrating satisfactory evidence of the project's completion fall squarely on the shoulders of the applicant. A site visit by the staff may be conducted prior to the issue of the IRS Form 8609.

Accountant And Owner Certification

Prior to issuance of a Carryover Allocation or IRS Form 8609, the MBOH requires an independent third party CPA cost certification, including a statement of eligible and qualified basis for the project. The Accountant Certification must include a breakdown of costs similar to the project costs and uses of the application, including development cost limitation categories as discussed in this allocation plan. The owner must provide a certification, under penalty of perjury, providing the owners name and address, the placed in service date, taxpayer identification number, the project name and address, the total eligible and qualified basis, and the percentage of the project financed by tax-exempt bonds.

Tax Credit Proceeds

In order to adequately evaluate sources and uses for Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects, the sponsor/developer will be required to provide information to the MBOH regarding the proceeds or receipts generated from the tax credit. At application, expected proceeds must be estimated by the sponsor/developer. When equity sources are committed, the sponsor/developer must provide the MBOH with a copy of the commitment or agreement. Prior to issuance of IRS Form 8609, the MBOH will require the accountant's certification to include gross syndication proceeds and costs of syndication, even though the costs are not allowed for eligible basis.

Rural Development Projects

The MBOH requires a copy of the final Rural Development cost certification, as well as the Accountant Certification of tax credit eligible and qualified basis, and the owner's certification. While a Rural Development project may be technically eligible for an amount of credit, such project frequently receives an award less than the maximum amount of credit, because less credit is required to fill the financing gap. The MBOH will award only the amount of credit determined necessary to make the project feasible.

Tax Exempt Bond Financed Projects

Projects with tax-exempt financing under the volume limitation on private activity bonds are eligible to receive tax credits outside the state's tax credit allocation volume cap. With the exception of not having eligible competition periods or submission deadlines, each project is required to submit the same information and meet the same requirements included in the current Qualified Allocation Plan as a project submitting an application under the State's tax credit allocation volume cap. If the minimum criteria are not met, the project will not receive an allocation of tax credits.

Projects with tax exempt financing must submit a certification from the bond financing agency indicating that the project meets the public purpose requirements of the bonds and that the project is consistent with the needs of the community.

Carryover Allocations

Federal law provides that the state housing credit agency may give a Carryover Allocation to certain qualified buildings which are placed in service not later than the close of **2007**. Federal law requires that more than 10% of the expected basis in the project (including land) must be expended by the later of: a) the end of the year in which the allocation was made, or b) six months following the date of the allocation and that the owner must have title to the property in order for a project to qualify for a carryover commitment. In addition, the developer must have a loan commitment from a lender outlining the terms and conditions of financing, or a letter evidencing acceptance of an approved loan by the lender prior to receiving a Carryover Allocation. The developer must provide evidence that the Land Use Restriction Agreement (Declaration of Restrictive Covenants for Low-Income Housing Credits) has been executed and recorded. Montana requires that the 10% test be met by the end of the year in which the reservation of the tax credit has been made.

Once a Carryover Allocation is provided, the developer provides written status reports to the MBOH outlining progress toward completion every 90 days, beginning 90 days from the Carryover Allocation date. The documentation regarding the progress should be development specific, and include such items as planning approval and building permits, firm debt and/or equity financing commitments, and construction progress.

Placed In Service/Issuance of 8609

The MBOH will not issue an IRS Form 8609 until a building is placed in service, the MBOH has completed the final credit award evaluation, and the developer has provided an Accountant's Certification, a recorded executed original of the Restrictive Covenant agreement including the date, deed book and page numbers of record, and an Owner's Certification that the building has been placed in service. A building is placed in service when the building is certified or officially declared as available for occupancy. Once the 8609(s) is issued and delivered to the owner(s) he/they should sign the document(s) and send a copy of each back to MBOH. **Projects should submit for 8609s not later than six months from the placed-in-service dates(s). Future applications may have points reduced when requests for 8609s are submitted after the six month period has lapsed.**

Compliance Monitoring

Federal law requires state allocating agencies (MBOH) to monitor compliance with provisions of Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code. Federal law requires allocating agencies to provide a procedure the agency will follow in monitoring for non-compliance and inform tax credit recipients (owners) of procedures and requirements. Included in the requirements are procedures for notifying the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) of any non-compliance of which the allocating agency becomes aware.

MBOH Policy on Civil Rights Compliance.

The owner/ developer/borrowers and any of its employees, agents, or sub-contractors in doing business with the Montana Board of Housing understands and agrees that it is the total responsibility of the owner(s) to adhere to and comply with all Federal Civil Rights legislation inclusive of the Fair Housing Laws, Americans With Disabilities Act as well as any State and local Civil Rights legislation along with any required related codes and Laws. Should the Agency not specify requirements, such as design, it is not the less the owner(s) responsibility to be aware of and comply with all non-discrimination provisions related to race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin and any other classes protected in Montana. This includes design requirements for construction or rehabilitation, Equal Opportunity in regard to marketing and tenant selection and reasonable accommodation and modification for those tenants covered under the Laws.

The following procedure outlines MBOH plans for monitoring compliance on tax credit projects. Federal income tax regulations related to Procedures for Monitoring Compliance with Low-Income Housing Credit Requirements are published in 26 CFR Part 1 and 602.

Accessibility

The Fair Housing Act including design and accessibility applies to LIHTC properties.

Compliance Monitoring Requirements

Submission Deadlines

Owners must submit Owner Certifications (a separate certification must be submitted for each project having an allocation of tax credits) and Tenant Income Certifications on the prescribed forms prior to January 25th of each year. At the owners request to MBOH an earlier certification date may be set. However, once the certification date is set, certifications will be due at the same time each year. Federal regulations stipulate there must be no more than 12 months between certifications.

Fees

An annual fee of \$25 per low income unit (will continue to be subject to change) will be payable to the MBOH when the owner submits annual certifications. The fee is to offset the costs of tax credit monitoring procedures.

An Officer or owner of the entity, which owns the property, must sign the Owners Certification. Managers or management companies of projects who are not owners may not sign this document.

Ownership/Management Changes

Notification of changes to ownership, property management companies, managers, site managers, or changes to points of contact must be made to the MBOH prior to, or immediately upon affected change by the owner or partnership.

Compliance Term

The owner must comply with the unit set aside percentage represented by the owner in the Declaration of Restrictive Covenants for Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Owners must continue the set aside for the entire fifteen-year compliance period. Owners who received credits after 1989 must continue the set aside for the fifteen year compliance period, plus the 15 year extended use period. The owner must maintain the set aside for any additional period covered by the Declaration of Restrictive Covenants.

Partnership Documentation

Once the limited partnership documentation has been completed, a copy of the agreement must be forwarded to the MBOH compliance office.

Owner Annual Certification (26 CFR 1.42(c)(1))

The MBOH will require a signed statement of Owner Certification from the owner on an annual basis. This statement must be filed with the MBOH every year during the compliance period, and if applicable, during the extended use agreement. Certifications are contained in Exhibit B of the Restrictive Covenants for any projects with Executed and filed Restrictive Covenants. The Final Regulations published in September 1992, added several items to the certification requirements. Owners must file annual certifications on the form provided by MBOH. This form may not be substituted.

Project Manager Education

Project managers (those completing and approving tenant income certification process paperwork) require training and certification by a competent and recognized “TC training professional entity.” Management company compliance personnel should all be certified (and current).

Tenant Income Certifications (26 CFR 1.42 (c)(2))

An annual Tenant Income Certification must be completed and signed by the owner/manager and tenant, and filed with the MBOH, in addition to the Owners Annual Certification. Projects eligible for an exemption from annual certification under IRS Revenue Procedure 94-64, (which applies to projects which are 100% low income where every unit is occupied by a qualified tenant and credit is claimed on 100% of the units) must provide certifications for all tenants the first year or each year until the project reaches 100% low income occupancy. Any exemptions from annual certification granted do not exempt the owner from obtaining and providing to the MBOH certifications for all new tenants each year.

1. For Rural Development projects, the MBOH will accept Form FmHA 1944-8-Tenant Certification. Tax credit income is based on the Annual Income (section 17.f.) rather than Adjusted Income portion of the form. MBOH will not require owners to send in documentation supporting the numbers represented on the form with the Tenant Certifications. MBOH will review supporting documentation as part of the On-Site Review process.

2. For all other projects, the owners must complete the MBOH Certification of Tenant Eligibility and Income Verification and file it with the MBOH on an annual basis for each tenant. MBOH will not require owners to send in documentation supporting the numbers represented on the form with the Tenant Certifications. MBOH will review supporting documentation as part of the On-Site Review process. With MBOH approval, an owner’s form may be substituted, if it

contains all the required information. Please note the tenant must certify income "under penalty of perjury".

3. A tax credit unit must fall under the provisions of maximum monthly rent restrictions to meet compliance requirements. Restrictions to the maximum monthly rents by unit size are available on the "Maximum Income and Rent Table" provided by the MBOH. Maximum monthly rents, including the utility allowance, cannot be exceeded.

Annual Operating Expense Information

All project owners must submit operating income and cost information for the projects latest fiscal period. This information will be used to maintain a database of all tax credit projects in the state.

1ST Year 8609

All project owners must submit a copy of the project's first year 8609's that were or will be filed with the IRS.

On-Site Review Process (26 CFR 1.42 (c)(2))

The MBOH will perform an on-site review and inspection of each project at least once every three years. MBOH will notify the owner/manager in advance prior to the review. During this review MBOH staff will:

1. Tour and inspect the project and **inspect** a minimum of 20% of the units in each building. MBOH, at its discretion, may request to view additional units based on the initial inspection. The MBOH will not notify the Owner/Manager which units are to be sampled in advance.
2. Inspect supporting documentation for numbers represented on the Certification of Tenant Eligibility and Income Verification or the FmHA Tenant Certification for a sample of tenants. The MBOH will not notify the Owner/Manager which tenant records are to be sampled in advance.
3. Inspect rent records for a sample of units.
4. If applicable, review completed IRS Forms 8609 and Schedule A of Form 8609 for the project for the last tax filing.

Complete **copies of tenant** official **tax credit** rental files **from original lease-up forward must** remain within the State of Montana at the location of the rental property or the regional in-state office.

If MBOH determines it is necessary, projects may be inspected more than once every three years. The cost of any additional inspections will be billed to the respective project.

Under the inspection provision (26 CFR 1.42 (d)), the MBOH has the authority to perform an on-site inspection of any low-income housing project at least through the end of the compliance period of the buildings in the project. As discussed under "Compliance Term" above, on-site reviews may continue through the extended use period for applicable projects.

If concerns over occupancy restrictions, under Section 42 of the Code or the implementing regulations require the MBOH to undertake additional monitoring (or the MBOH elects to undertake additional monitoring), the MBOH will require the owner to substantiate compliance. The Owner will take any and all actions reasonably necessary to comply. The Owner will pay a reasonable fee to the MBOH for such monitoring activities performed by the MBOH.

Records Retention (26 CFR 1.42 (5)(b))

Federal regulations require the owner of a low income housing project receiving tax credits to retain the following information for each qualified low income building in the project. The information must show for each year in the compliance period:

1. The total number of residential rental units in a building (including the number of bedrooms and the size in square feet of each residential rental unit).
2. The percentage of residential rental units in the building that are low income units.
3. The rent charged on each residential rental unit in the building (including any utility allowances).
4. The number of occupants in each low-income unit if the rent was determined by the number of occupants in each unit (projects receiving credit before the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1989).
5. The low income unit vacancies in the building and information that shows when, and to whom, the next available units were rented. If a unit is left vacant, or in a mixed use project is rented to a non-qualifying tenant, the owner must maintain documentation showing a diligent attempt was made to rent the unit to a qualifying tenant.
6. The annual income certification of each low income tenant (by unit), including annual certifications for each continuous tenant.
7. Documentation to support each low income tenant's income certification. This must include a copy of a) verification of income from third parties such as employers or state agencies paying unemployment compensation, b) the tenant's federal income tax return, and c) Forms W-2.

8. The eligible basis and qualified basis of the building at the end of the first year of the credit period.

9. The character and use of any non-residential portion of the building included in the eligible basis of the building, if applicable.

Under the record retention provision of the IRS compliance regulations, the owner is required to retain the above mentioned records for at least 6 years after the due date for filing the federal income tax return for that year. Records for the first year of the credit period, however, must be retained for at least 6 years beyond the due date for filing the federal income tax return for the last year of the compliance period. Owner should also retain records relating to the amount of credit claimed for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, including the Form 8609 and Schedule A of Form 8609.

Notice To Owner (26 CFR 1.42 (e)(2))

Under the notification-of-noncompliance provisions, the MBOH must provide prompt written notice to the owner if MBOH does not receive the certification(s) described in this document, or is not permitted to inspect the tenant income supporting documentation, rent records, or the project. In addition, the MBOH must provide prompt written notice to the owner if MBOH discovers by inspection, review, or in some other manner, that the project is not in compliance with the provisions of Section 42.

Correction Period (26 CFR 1.42 (e)(4))

The owner will be given a correction period of up to 90 days from the date of notice. During this time, the owner must supply any missing certifications and/or bring the project into compliance with the provisions of Section 42. IRS regulations require MBOH to notify the IRS even if the non-compliance is cured so the IRS may determine whether a penalty is necessary. IRS does not intend to have MBOH determine whether penalties will be assessed.

If the project is out of compliance, a penalty may apply to all units in the project. The IRS will determine whether penalties will be assessed for the project. Penalties may include:

1. Recapture of any accelerated portion of the tax credits for prior years.
2. Disallowance of the credit or a portion of the credit for the entire year in which the non-compliance occurs.
3. Assessment of interest for the recapture year and previous years.

Notice To IRS (26 CFR 1.42 (e)(3))

MBOH must file IRS Form 8823 "Low-Income Housing Credit Agencies Report of Noncompliance" with the IRS no later than 45 days after the end of the correction period, and no

earlier than the end of the correction period. Again, MBOH must file this notice whether or not the noncompliance or failure to certify is corrected.

Liability (26 CFR 1.42 (g))

Compliance with the requirements of Section 42 is the responsibility of the owner of the building for which the credit is allowable. MBOH's obligation to monitor for compliance with the requirements of Section 42 does not make the Agency liable for an owner's noncompliance.

No member, officer, agent, or employee of MBOH shall be personally liable concerning any matters arising out of, or in relation to, the compliance monitoring of a low-income housing project.

Allocation Plan Revisions

This Allocation Plan may be amended at any time after giving public notice, scheduling and holding a public hearing, and with the approval of the MBOH and the Governor.

Closing

The MBOH is charged with allocating no more tax credits to any given development than is required to make that development economically feasible. This decision shall be made solely at the discretion of MBOH, but in no way represents or warrants to any sponsor, investor, lender, or others that the development is feasible or viable.

MBOH's review of documents submitted in connection with this allocation is for its own purposes. In allocation of the tax credits, MBOH makes no representations to the owner or anyone else regarding adherence to the Internal Revenue Code, Treasury regulations, or any other laws or regulations governing Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

No member, officer, agent, or employee of MBOH shall be personally liable concerning any matters arising out of, or in relations to, the allocation of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit.

**2004 HIGH COST AREAS (to be updated for 2005)
LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS**

Section 42(d)(5)(C) of the Internal Revenue Code defines a Qualified Census Tract as any census tract or equivalent geographic area in which at least 50% of households have an income less than 60% of the Area Median Gross Income (AMGI). Section 42 defines a Difficult Development Area as any area designated by the Secretary of HUD as an area that has high construction, land and utility costs relative to the AMGI.

When an area, which can be a county or a specific census tract, is designated as either a Qualified Census Tract or a Difficult to Develop Area, a project proposed for a high cost area is eligible for an increase in eligible basis of up to 130%. This means that a greater amount of tax credits than otherwise available may be approved, if it is determined that the greater amount is needed for financial feasibility of given projects.

MONTANA BUREAU OF CENSUS DESIGNATED QUALIFIED CENSUS TRACTS

<u>County/Metropolitan Area</u>	<u>Tract(s)</u>
Big Horn County	9403.00, 9406.00, 9407.00
Blaine County	9401.00, 9402.00
Chouteau County	9401.00
Daniels County	9402.00, 9403.00
Gallatin County	6.00, 9.00, 11.00
Glacier County	9401.00, 9402.00, 9403.00
Golden Valley County	1.00
Hill County	403.00, 9401.00, 9402.00
Lake County	9405.00
Lewis and Clark County	9.00
Lincoln County	5.00
Missoula MSA, Missoula County	2.01, 3.00, 5.00, 7.00
Phillips County	9402.00
Pondera County	9403.00
Ravalli County	8.00
Roosevelt County	9401.00, 9402.00, 9404.00
Rosebud County	9404.00
Sanders County	9401.00
Sheridan County	9402.00
Silver Bow County	1.00
Great Falls MSA, Cascade County	5.00, 6.00, 7.00, 8.00
Billings MSA, Yellowstone County	2.00, 3.00
Valley County	9405.00

MONTANA HUD DESIGNATED DIFFICULT TO DEVELOP AREAS

Beaverhead County Big Horn County Blaine County Broadwater County

Carbon County	Carter County	Chouteau County	Custer County
Daniels County	Dawson County	Deer Lodge County	Fallon County
Fergus County	Flathead County	Gallatin County	Garfield County
Glacier County	Golden Valley County	Granite County	Judith Basin County
Lake County	Liberty County	Lincoln County	Madison County
McCone County	Meagher County	Mineral County	Musselshell County
Park County	Petroleum County	Phillips County	Pondera County
Powder River County	Powell County	Prairie County	Ravalli County
Richland County	Roosevelt County	Sanders County	Sheridan County
Silver Bow County	Sweet Grass County	Teton County	Toole County
Treasure County	Valley County	Wheatland County	Wibaux County