

# Unified Funding 2011

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Early Award

**1. If an application is submitted as an Early Award project, and it is not funded as part of the Early Award round, does it automatically roll over for consideration under the regular Unified Funding round?**

Yes. A separate submission is not required for the regular Unified Funding round. In fact, applicants are prohibited from submitting more than one application for a particular site in UF 2011. Applicants are strongly encouraged to limit early award submissions to only those which clearly demonstrate compliance with one of the State housing policy goals and the ability of the project to proceed to construction within 120 days of award.

**2. Are all Early Award applications required to meet the parameters of the “Green Plus” goal?**

No. The Green Plus standard is not required for all Early Award applications. Green Plus is only one of the several options available to prospective applicants who may apply for an early award.

**3. If an application is submitted as an Early Award round project and it is not complete, will the applicant have an opportunity submit additional documentation to make the project application complete for the regular funding round?**

No. Applications submitted as part of the Early Award round must be complete. If the application is incomplete, the incomplete application will roll into the regular Unified Funding round with no opportunity to provide missing items.

**4. The Green PLUS Early Award goal states that “the project must be within walking distance of a full service grocery store.” What are the definitions of “walking distance” and “full service grocery store”?**

“Walking distance” shall be defined as ½ mile for Family Projects and ¼ mile for Senior projects as described in Section B2.c. of the [Green Building Criteria Reference Manual](#).

“Full service grocery store” shall be defined as an establishment primarily engaged in retailing a general selection of food, such as canned and frozen goods; fresh fruits and vegetables; and fresh and prepared meats, fish, and poultry. It is also expected to provide fresh dairy products and baked goods. The intent is to increase project tenants’ access to affordable, healthy foods thereby reducing the cost of living and improving the health of low income New Yorkers.

**5. How should I measure walking distance?**

The walking distance should be measured [by following the sidewalk](#) from the front door of the affordable unit closest to the nearest public entrance to the full service grocery store [or transit station depending on the housing goal the application would advance](#).

**6. Has HCR set aside a certain percentage or dollar amount of funds to award under the Early Award Round?**

No.

**7. I have a project that meets one of the housing goals described under the Early Award initiative but doesn't meet the readiness criteria for Early Award consideration. May I submit this project for consideration under the basic funding round?**

Yes. Any project meeting the housing goals described under the Early Award initiative that does not meet Early Award readiness standards may be submitted for consideration as part of the basic funding round.

**8. What is the maximum distance a TOD project may be from a transit station?**

The maximum distance is ½ mile and the project must be connected to the station by contiguous pedestrian facilities/sidewalks.

**9. Can an applicant choose the C-1 brownfield category for their 2<sup>nd</sup> Section C item on the GreenPlus Early Award Checklist?**

Yes. If you choose to develop on a brownfield site (item C-1 in Section C of the Green Building Criteria Reference Manual), you must submit a Phase II ESA and demonstrate that any remediation of the property will not adversely affect the requirement to proceed to construction within 120 days of award.

**10. Can a project that proposes serving seniors be submitted as a Lead Abatement Project in the Early Award round?**

No. This program is intended to reduce the threat of childhood lead poisoning from existing rental housing stock located in zip codes identified by the NYS Dept of Health as having significant concentrations of children with elevated blood lead levels. Projects proposed under this housing goal should serve families.

**11. Will early award projects score extra points for meeting more than one of the State housing policy goals?**

No. There are no additional points available for such projects. However, since these projects will likely satisfy a number of LIHC QAP scoring categories, meeting more than one housing goal may result in a more competitive application.

**12. Under the Mixed Income/Mixed Use Revitalization policy goal for early award consideration, does a project have to do both mixed income and mixed use?**

Yes. Projects applying under this early award policy goal must create or rehabilitate a mixed-use building with mixed income housing as described in the RFP.

**13. What does an early award applicant need to provide to show a project can start construction within 120 days of award?**

Applicants should utilize the existing exhibits and attachments in the Unified Funding application to document the likelihood that a project can proceed to construction within 120 days of award. Such documentation includes but is not limited to: status of local approvals, site control, design documents, firm funding commitments for both construction and permanent financing. Applicants should use the application's narrative section (i.e. Attachment F9-Proposal Summary) to describe why the project could proceed to construction within 120 days.

#### **14. What does HCR require for evidence of funding commitments for early award projects?**

Early award applications must provide documentation of firm financing commitments to the greatest extent possible in order to demonstrate the project's ability to proceed to construction within 120 days of award. In the case of governmental funding sources, including Federal Home Loan Bank awards, the application must, at a minimum, provide evidence that funds have been applied for, and there is a reasonable expectation that the funding will be in place by March 31, 2011. In the case of conventional financing sources, the application will be evaluated based upon the documented level of commitment with preference for firm commitments. Early Award applications demonstrating a higher level of readiness and that satisfy all other Early Award requirements will be given a preference. Applicants should use the application's narrative section (i.e. Attachment F9-Proposal Summary) to describe why the project could proceed to construction within 120 days.

#### **15. Can Transit Oriented Development (TOD) projects serve seniors?**

No. The RFP states that the TOD housing goal is intended to encourage "applications proposing workforce housing projects for families."

#### **16. Can the certified mail receipt (Green Card) evidence of CEO Notification be provided after the January Early Award application deadline?**

Yes. HCR understands that due to the short time frame, some Green Card mail receipts may not be available at the time of application submission. Applicants must send the receipt to the Tax Credit Program Manager at the address below by February 2, 2012.

Attention: Arnon Adler  
New York State Homes and Community Renewal  
Hampton Plaza, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
38-40 State Street  
Albany, NY 12207

#### **17. Can an applicant choose the C-1 brownfield category for their 2<sup>nd</sup> Section C item on the GreenPlus Early Award Checklist?**

Yes. If in Section C of the Green Building Criteria Reference Manual you choose to develop on a brownfield site (item C-1), you must submit a Phase II ESA and demonstrate that any remediation of the property will not adversely affect the requirement to proceed to construction within 120 days of award.

#### General Information

##### **1. Can an applicant submit more than one funding application for the same site in UF 2011?**

No. Applicants may only submit one application for funding per site in UF 2011.

##### **2. For a tax credit stand-alone preservation project, is it still required to request a site visit by the A&E Bureau before the application deadline? If yes, what is the timing of this visit?**

Yes, if the work scope is limited to a moderate rehabilitation of the existing premises. The A&E Bureau will visit your site as soon as can be arranged. Factors that will affect the timing of this visit include when the request was received, the travel distance for staff, and proximity to other potential moderate rehabilitation preservation applications. Please keep in mind that these factors may cause the visit to occur after the application deadline has passed. To enhance the site evaluation, it is highly recommended that the applicant have a draft of the proposed physical needs assessment form available prior to this site visit.

**3. Can HTF funding be used for cooperative housing projects?**

Yes. Due to their complexity, however, applicants are advised to discuss cooperative proposals with Regional Office staff prior to submission.

**4. Does HCR have established award target amounts by geographic region of the State?**

No. There are no established geographic award targets. Within statutory limitations, HCR seeks to achieve a fair and balanced geographic distribution of awards in funding projects that advance the State's housing goals.

**5. In order to qualify for \$2.4 million in HTF funding does the project have to meet all four of the criteria listed in the RFP, page 11?**

No. Only one of the four criteria listed in the RFP must be met.

Green Building/Energy Efficiency

**1. When applying for green building points or the Green Building Initiative, do I need to hire a separate LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building expert if my architect is also LEED certified?**

No. Your design professional may also serve as your green building expert. Please refer to our Green Building Criteria Reference Manual, which allows the qualifications of the green building expert to be a LEED accredited professional (AP) or experienced green building design consultant. It is highly recommended that you include with your application, the LEED AP accreditation for the appropriate building certification category or the past experience of your green building expert to clearly document their expertise.

**2. When applying for energy efficiency points or the Energy Efficiency Initiative, what are the required qualifications for the energy consultant?**

Please see the RFP for descriptions of the energy efficiency programs and strategies utilized for this funding round. The associated qualifications for the energy consultant are noted in the descriptions of each program or strategy. For the EPA ENERGY STAR Multifamily High Rise Program, we will accept an energy consultant that can document their expertise in the energy efficient design of buildings similar to the one proposed in your application.

**3. The Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) for both the Low-Income Housing Credit Program and the New York State Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program require all tax credit funded projects to meet a base energy efficiency standard. Section IV.A, Low-Income Housing Credit Program (LIHC), of the Request for Proposals (RFP) (page 7) identifies the HUD Energy Improvements Checklist as this standard. Where do I include this document in the application?**

The Division has identified the HUD Energy Efficiency Checklist as the minimum required standard for all projects funded with federal or state credits. This document applies to all buildings in a project; to the degree the items in the Checklist will be included in the proposed project. Because this document is a base standard applicable to all funded projects and needs to be developed as the design of the project progresses, submission of the Checklist will be required as part of the construction documents submission prior to the commencement of construction, but need not be included in the application.

**4. In past years, the Division allowed the submission of a REScheck analysis for projects that were not located in a System Benefits Charge area in order to meet your energy efficiency standards. I do not see this option referenced in the RFP. Is it still available?**

No. The inclusion of a REScheck analysis as an energy efficiency standard was allowed as an alternative for projects that did not qualify for NYSERDA programs. Since the additional energy efficiency strategies listed in the RFP are not restricted to locations served by NYSERDA's programs, there is no longer a need to offer this alternative.

**5. Section 2040.3 (e) (19) of the DHCR QAP states that projects must meet an energy efficiency standard, acceptable to DHCR, beyond that required by applicable building codes,... According to the RFPs issued in 2009 & 2010, this standard is compliance with HUD's Energy Improvements Checklist, Tier 1 & Tier 2. In developing my project, I have discovered items in the checklist that are not planned for my building and have found others that will require changes beyond that required under the energy efficiency strategy I selected that is referenced elsewhere in the RFP. Am I expected to meet every requirement in the HUD Checklist?**

No. As stated, only those practices *applicable to the construction systems planned for the building must be incorporated, and the recommended practices shall be secondary where conflicts exist between building codes or HCR standards and requirements, including the Green Building Measures listed in the DHCR QAP.*

The HUD Energy Efficiency Checklist sets forth a series of "best practices" and recommendations to be utilized to improve the energy efficiency of buildings. The rationale for utilizing this checklist is to provide a uniform tool for building designers to demonstrate compliance with the requirement in the QAP that a project be designed to exceed minimum requirements of applicable building codes. The Checklist is not intended to require measures beyond other acceptable energy efficiency standards that exceed minimum requirements of applicable building codes, those that would require systems that are not readily available, or that may create undue financial hardships if compliance can be demonstrated without them.

Therefore, DHCR will accept the submission of the HUD Checklist that indicates items deemed necessary by the building designers to demonstrate compliance with the QAP energy efficiency requirement.