

# The 2016 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified Allocation Plan For the State of North Carolina

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The 2016 Qualified Allocation Plan (the Plan) has been developed by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (the Agency) as administrative agent for the North Carolina Federal Tax Reform Allocation Committee (the Committee) in compliance with Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Code). For purposes of the Plan, the term “Agency” shall mean the Agency acting on behalf of the Committee, unless otherwise provided.

The Plan was reviewed in one public hearing and met the other legal requirements prior to final adoption by the Committee. The staff of the Agency was present at the hearing to take comments and answer questions.

The Agency will only allocate low-income housing tax credits in compliance with the Plan. The Code requires the Plan contain certain elements. These elements, and others added by the Committee, are listed below.

A. Selection criteria to be used in determining the allocation of tax credits:

- Project location and site suitability.
- Market demand and local housing needs.
- Serving the lowest income tenants.
- Serving qualified tenants for the longest periods.
- Design and quality of construction.
- Financial structure and long-term viability.
- Use of federal project-based rental assistance.
- Use of mortgage subsidies.
- Experience of development team and management agent(s).
- Serving persons with disabilities and the homeless.
- Willingness to solicit referrals from public housing waiting lists.
- Tenant populations of individuals with children.
- Projects intended for eventual tenant ownership.
- Projects that are part of a community redevelopment effort.
- Energy efficiency.
- Historic nature of the buildings.

B. Threshold, underwriting and process requirements.

C. Description of the Agency’s compliance monitoring program, including procedures to notify the Internal Revenue Service of noncompliance with the requirements of the program.

In the process of administering the tax credit, Rental Production Program (RPP) and Workforce Housing Loan Program (WHLP), the Agency will make decisions and interpretations regarding project applications and the Plan. RPP and WHLP are state investments dedicated to making rental developments financially feasible and more affordable for working families and seniors. Unless otherwise stated, the Agency is entitled to the full discretion allowed by law in making all such decisions and interpretations. The Agency reserves the right to amend, modify, or withdraw provisions contained in the Plan that are inconsistent or in conflict with state or federal laws or regulations. In the event of a major:

- natural disaster,
- disruption in the financial markets, or
- reduction in subsidy resources available, including tax credits, RPP and WHLP funding,

the Agency may disregard any section of the Plan, including point scoring and evaluation criteria, that interferes with an appropriate response.

**II. SET-ASIDES, AWARD LIMITATIONS AND COUNTY DESIGNATIONS**

The Agency will determine whether applications are eligible under Section II(A) or II(B). This Section II only applies to 9% Tax Credit applications.

**A. REHABILITATION SET-ASIDE**

The Agency will award up to ten percent (10%) of tax credits available after forward commitments to projects proposing rehabilitation of existing housing. The Agency may exceed this limitation in order to completely fund a project request. In the event eligible requests exceed the amount available, the Agency will determine awards based on the evaluation criteria in Section IV(H)(3).

The following will be considered new construction under Section II(B) below:

- adaptive reuse projects,
- entirely vacant residential buildings,
- proposals to increase and/or substantially re-configure residential units.

**B. NEW CONSTRUCTION SET-ASIDES**

**1. GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS**

The Agency will award tax credits remaining after awards described above to new construction projects, starting with those earning the highest scoring totals within each of the following four geographic set-asides and continuing in descending score order through the last project that can be fully funded. The Agency reserves the right to revise the available credits in each set-aside in order to award the next highest scoring application statewide under Section II(G)(1).

<b>West 16%</b>		<b>Central 24%</b>		<b>Metro 37%</b>	<b>East 23%</b>	
Alexander	Lincoln	Alamance	Moore	Buncombe	Beaufort	Jones
Alleghany	Macon	Anson	Orange	Cumberland	Bertie	Lenoir
Ashe	Madison	Cabarrus	Person	Durham	Bladen	Martin
Avery	McDowell	Caswell	Randolph	Forsyth	Brunswick	Nash
Burke	Mitchell	Chatham	Richmond	Guilford	Camden	New Hanover
Caldwell	Polk	Davidson	Rockingham	Mecklenburg	Carteret	Northampton
Catawba	Rutherford	Davie	Rowan	Wake	Chowan	Onslow
Cherokee	Surry	Franklin	Scotland		Columbus	Pamlico
Clay	Swain	Granville	Stanly		Craven	Pasquotank
Cleveland	Transylvania	Harnett	Stokes		Currituck	Pender
Gaston	Watauga	Hoke	Union		Dare	Perquimans
Graham	Wilkes	Iredell	Vance		Duplin	Pitt
Haywood	Yadkin	Lee	Warren		Edgecombe	Robeson
Henderson	Yancey	Montgomery			Gates	Sampson
Jackson					Greene	Tyrrell
					Halifax	Washington
					Hertford	Wayne
					Hyde	Wilson
					Johnston	

**2. REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

- (a) If necessary, the Agency will adjust the awards under the Plan to ensure the overall allocation results in awards for two (2) Redevelopment Projects. Specifically, tax credits that would have been awarded to the lowest ranking project(s) that do(es) not meet the criteria below will be awarded to the next highest ranking Redevelopment Project(s). The Agency may make such adjustment(s) in any set-aside.

- (b) The following are required to qualify as a Redevelopment Project:
- (i) The site currently contains or contained at least one structure used for commercial, residential, educational, or governmental purposes.
  - (ii) The application proposes adaptive reuse with historic rehabilitation credits and/or new construction.
  - (iii) Any required demolition has been completed or is scheduled for completion in 2016 (not including the project buildings).
  - (iv) A unit of local government initiated the project and has invested community development resources in the Half Mile area within the last ten years.
  - (v) As of the preliminary application deadline, a unit of local government formally adopted a plan to address the deterioration (if any) in the Half Mile area and approved one or more of the following for the project:
    - donation of at least one parcel of land,
    - waiver of impact, tap, or related fees normally charged, or
    - commitment to lend/grant at least \$750,000 in the Metro region and \$250,000 in the East, Central or West of its housing development funds (net of any amount paid to the unit of government) as a source of permanent funding.

The Agency will require official documentation of each element of local government participation.

#### C. USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Up to \$750,000 will be awarded to eligible rehabilitation and/or new construction project(s) identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (RD) state office as a priority. These projects will count towards the applicable set-asides and limits. The maximum award under this set-aside to any one Principal will be one project. Other RD applications will be considered under the applicable set-asides.

#### D. NONPROFIT AND CHDO SET-ASIDES AND LIMITS

##### 1. SET-ASIDES

If necessary, the Agency will adjust the awards under the Plan to ensure that the overall allocation results in

- ten percent (10%) of the state's federal tax credit ceiling being awarded to projects involving tax exempt organizations (nonprofits) and
- fifteen percent (15%) of the Agency's HOME funds being awarded to projects involving Community Housing Development Organizations certified by the Agency (CHDOs).

Specifically, tax credits that would have been awarded to the lowest ranking project(s) that do(es) not fall into one of these categories will be awarded to the next highest ranking project(s) that do(es) until the overall allocation(s) reach(es) the necessary percentage(s). The Agency may make such adjustment(s) in any set-aside.

##### (a) Nonprofit Set-Aside

In order to qualify as a nonprofit application, the proposed project must either:

- not involve any for-profit Principals or
- comply with the material participation requirements of the Code, applicable federal regulations and Section VI(A)(2).

(b) CHDO Set-Aside

In order to qualify as a CHDO application,

- the proposed project must meet the requirements of subsection (D)(1)(a) above and 24 CFR 92.300(a)(1),
- the Applicant, any Principal, or any affiliate must not undertake any choice-limiting activity prior to successful completion of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) environmental clearance review, and
- the project and owner must comply with regulations regarding the federal CHDO set-aside.

The Agency may determine the requirements of the federal CHDO set-aside have been or will be met without implementing subsection (D)(1)(b).

2. LIMITS

No more than twenty percent (20%) of the overall allocation will be awarded to projects where a nonprofit organization (or its qualified corporation) is the Applicant under Section III(C)(5). New construction awards will be counted towards this limitation first (in score order), then rehabilitation awards.

E. PRINCIPAL AND PROJECT AWARD LIMITS; BASIS BOOST

1. PRINCIPAL LIMITS

- (a) The maximum awards to any one Principal will be a total of \$1,800,000 in tax credits, including all set-asides. New construction awards will be counted towards this limitation first (in score order), then rehabilitation awards.
- (b) The Agency may further limit awards based on unforeseen circumstances.
- (c) For purposes of the maximum allowed in this subsection (E)(1), the Agency may determine that a person or entity not included in an application is a Principal for the proposed project. Such determination would include consideration of relationships between the parties in previously awarded projects and other common interests. Standard fee for service contract relationships (such as accountants or attorneys) will not be considered.

2. PROJECT LIMIT

The maximum award to any one project will be \$1,000,000.

3. AGENCY-DESIGNATED BASIS BOOST

The Agency may boost the eligible basis of all projects by up to fifteen percent (15%) if the flat nine percent tax credit rate in Section 42(b)(2)(A) is not reinstated. The Agency will boost the eligible basis of rehabilitation projects and those committing to the targeting in Section IV(B)(2) by up to an additional fifteen percent (15%). Projects using the DDA or QCT basis increase are not eligible under this section.

F. COUNTY AWARD LIMITS AND INCOME DESIGNATIONS

1. AWARD LIMITS

- (a) Rehabilitation and East, Central, and West Regions

No county will be awarded more than one project under the rehabilitation set-aside. No county will be awarded more than one project under the new construction set aside.

(b) Metro Region

The initial maximum award(s) for a county will be its percent share of the Metro region based on population (see **Appendix K**), unless exceeding this amount is necessary to complete a project request. If any tax credits remain, the Agency will make awards to the next highest scoring application(s). A county may receive one additional award, even if in excess of its share.

2. INCOME DESIGNATIONS

The Agency is responsible for designating each county as High, Moderate or Low Income. The chart below follows the N.C. Department of Commerce 2015 County Tier designations. Specifically, Tier 3 are High Income, Tier 2 are Moderate, and Tier 1 are Low.

High	Moderate		Low	
Brunswick	Alamance	Hoke	Alleghany	Lenoir
Buncombe	Alexander	Lee	Anson	Macon
Cabarrus	Avery	Madison	Ashe	Martin
Carteret	Burke	McDowell	Beaufort	Montgomery
Chatham	Caldwell	Mitchell	Bertie	Nash
Durham	Catawba	Onslow	Bladen	Northampton
Forsyth	Cherokee	Pamlico	Camden	Pasquotank
Haywood	Cleveland	Person	Caswell	Perquimans
Henderson	Craven	Pitt	Chowan	Richmond
Iredell	Cumberland	Polk	Clay	Robeson
Johnston	Currituck	Randolph	Columbus	Rockingham
Lincoln	Dare	Rowan	Edgecombe	Rutherford
Mecklenburg	Davidson	Sampson	Gates	Scotland
Moore	Davie	Stanly	Graham	Surry
New Hanover	Duplin	Stokes	Greene	Swain
Orange	Franklin	Transylvania	Halifax	Tyrrell
Pender	Gaston	Wayne	Hertford	Vance
Union	Granville	Wilkes	Hyde	Warren
Wake	Guilford	Yadkin	Jackson	Washington
Watauga	Harnett	Yancey	Jones	Wilson

G. OTHER AWARDS AND RETURNED ALLOCATIONS

1. The Agency may award tax credits remaining from the geographic set-asides to the next highest scoring eligible new construction application(s) in the East, Central, and West regions and/or one or more eligible rehabilitation applications. The Agency may also carry forward any amount of tax credits to the next year.
2. An owner returning a valid allocation of 2013 tax credits between October 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015 will receive an allocation of the same amount of 2016 tax credits if:
  - the project has obtained a building permit and closed its construction loan,
  - the owner pays a fee equal to the original allocation fee amount upon the return, and
  - the project’s design is the same as approved at full application (other than changes approved by the Agency).

None of the Principals for the returned project may be part of a 2016 application.

3. The Agency may make a forward commitment of the next year’s tax credits in an amount necessary to fully fund project(s) with a partial award or to any project application that was submitted in a prior year if such application meets all the minimum requirements of the Plan. In the event that credits are returned or the state receives credits from the national pool, the Agency may elect to carry such



credits forward, make an award to any project application (subject only to the nonprofit set aside), or a combination of both.

### **III. DEADLINES, APPLICATION AND FEES**

#### **A. APPLICATION AND AWARD SCHEDULE**

The following schedule will apply to the 2016 application process for 9% Tax Credits and the first round of tax-exempt bond volume and 4% Tax Credits. The Agency will announce the application schedule for a second round of bond volume and 4% Tax Credits at a later time.

January 22	Deadline for submission of preliminary applications (12:00 noon)
March 14	Market analysts will submit studies to the Agency and Applicants
March 24	Notification of final site scores
April 4	Deadline for market-related project revisions
April 11	Deadline for the Agency and Applicant to receive the revised market study, if applicable
May 13	Deadline for full applications (12:00 noon)
August	Notification of tax credit awards

The Agency reserves the right to change the schedule to accommodate unforeseen circumstances.

#### **B. APPLICATION, ALLOCATION, MONITORING AND PENALTY FEES**

1. All Applicants are required to pay a nonrefundable fee of \$5,700 at the submission of the preliminary application. This fee covers the cost of the market study or physical needs assessment and a \$1,300 preliminary application processing fee (which will be assessed for every electronic application submitted). The Agency may charge additional fee(s) to cover the cost of direct contracting with other providers (such as appraisers).
2. All Applicants are required to pay a nonrefundable processing fee of \$1,300 upon submission of the full application.
3. Entities receiving tax credit awards, including those involving tax-exempt bond volume, are required to pay a nonrefundable allocation fee equal to 0.76% of the project's total qualified basis.
4. The allocation fee will be due at the time of either the carryover allocation or bond volume award. Failure to return the required documentation and fee by the date specified may result in cancellation of the allocation. The Agency may assess other fees for additional monitoring responsibilities.
5. Owners must pay a monitoring fee of \$840 per unit (includes all units, qualified, unrestricted and employee) prior to issuance of the project's IRS Form 8609.
6. If expenses for legal services are incurred by the Committee or Agency to correct mistakes of the Owner which jeopardize use of the tax credits, such legal costs will be paid by the Owner in the amount charged to the Committee or Agency.
7. The Agency may assess Applicants or owners a fee of up to \$2,000 for each instance of failure to comply with a written requirement, whether or not such requirement is in the Plan. The Agency will not process applications or other documentation relating to any Principal who has an outstanding balance of fees owed; such a delay in processing may result in disqualification of application(s).
8. The Agency will assess \$1,500 for a Workforce Housing Loan Program closing and \$2,000 for an RPP closing.

### C. APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

1. The Agency may require Applicants to submit any information, letter, or representation relating to Plan requirements or point scoring as part of the application process.
2. Any failure to comply with an Agency request under subsection (C)(1) above or any misrepresentation, false information or omission in any application document may result in disqualification of that application and any other involving the same owner(s), Principal(s), consultant(s) and/or application preparer(s). Any misrepresentation, false information or omission in the application document may also result in a revocation of a tax credit allocation.
3. Only one (1) application can be submitted per site (new construction or rehabilitation).
4. The Agency may elect to treat applications involving more than one site, population type (family/elderly) or activity (new/rehabilitation) as separate for purposes of the Agency's application process. Each application would require a separate initial application fee. The Agency may allow such applications to be considered as one for the full application underwriting if all sites are secured by one permanent mortgage and are not intended for separation and sale after the tax credit allocation.
5. The Agency will notify the appropriate unit of government about the project after submission of the full application.
6. For each application one individual or validly existing entity must be identified as the Applicant and execute the preliminary and full applications. An entity may be one of the following:
  - (a) corporation, including nonprofits,
  - (b) limited partnership, or
  - (c) limited liability company.

Only the identified Applicant will have the ability to make decisions with regard to that application and be considered under Section IV(D)(1). The Applicant may enter into joint venture or other agreements but the Agency will not be responsible for evaluating those documents to determine the relative rights of the parties. If the application receives an award the Applicant must become a managing member or general partner of the ownership entity.

### IV. SELECTION CRITERIA AND THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS

Applications must meet all applicable threshold requirements to be considered for award and funding. Scoring and threshold determinations made in prior years are not binding on the Agency for the 2016 cycle.

#### A. SITE AND MARKET EVALUATION

The Agency will not accept a full application where the preliminary application does not meet all site and market threshold requirements.

1. SITE EVALUATION (MAXIMUM 60 POINTS)
  - (a) General Site Requirements:
    - (i) Sites must be sized to accommodate the number and type of units proposed. The Applicant or a Principal must have site control by the preliminary application deadline as evidenced by an option, contract or deed. The documentation of site control must include a plot plan.
    - (ii) Required zoning must be in place by the full application deadline, including special/conditional use permits, and any other discretionary land use approval required (includes all legislative or quasi-judicial decisions).
    - (iii) Utilities (water, sewer and electricity) must be available with adequate capacity to serve the site. Sites should be accessed directly by existing paved, publicly maintained roads. If not, it

will be the owner’s responsibility to extend utilities and roads to the site. In such cases, the Applicant must explain and budget for such plans and document the right to perform such work.

(iv) To be eligible for RPP funds, the preliminary application must contain the Agency’s “Notice of Real Property Acquisition” form. The form must be executed by all parties before or at the same time as the option or contract.

(b) Criteria for Site Score Evaluation:

Site scores will be based on the following factors. Each will also serve as a threshold requirement; the Agency may remove an application from consideration if the site is sufficiently inadequate in one of the categories.

(i) NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS (MAXIMUM 18 POINTS)

Good: 18 points if structures within a Half Mile are well maintained or the site qualifies as a Redevelopment Project (see Section II(B)(2)(b))

Fair: 9 points if structures within a Half Mile are not well maintained and there are visible signs of deterioration

Poor: 0 points if structures within a Half Mile are Blighted or have physical security modifications (e.g. barbed wire fencing or bars on windows)

Half Mile: The half mile radius from the approximate center of the site (does not apply to Amenities below).

Blighted: A structure that is abandoned, deteriorated substantially beyond normal wear and tear, a public nuisance, or appears to violate minimum health and safety standards.

(ii) AMENITIES (MAXIMUM 27 POINTS)

Other than applications with tribally-appropriated funds or near bus/transit stops (described at the end of this subsection), points will be determined according to the matrix below. For an amenity to be eligible for points, the application must include documentation required by the Agency of meeting the applicable criteria. In all cases the establishment must be open to the general public and operating as of the preliminary application deadline.

	<u>Driving Distance in Miles</u>			
<i>Primary Amenities</i> (maximum 21 points)	≤ 1	≤ 2	≤ 3	> 3
Grocery	11 pts.	8 pts.	5 pts.	0 pts.
Shopping	5 pts.	3 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.
Pharmacy	5 pts.	3 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.
<i>Secondary Amenities</i> (maximum 6 points)	≤ 1	≤ 2	≤ 3	> 3
Other Primary Amenity	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.
Other Service	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.
Healthcare	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.
Public Facility	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.

Driving Distance in Miles, Small Town\*

<i>Primary Amenities</i> (maximum 21 points)	≤ 2	≤ 3	≤ 4	> 4
Grocery	11 pts.	8 pts.	5 pts.	0 pts.
Shopping	5 pts.	3 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.
Pharmacy	5 pts.	3 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.
<i>Secondary Amenities</i> (maximum 6 points)	≤ 2	≤ 3	≤ 4	> 4
Other Primary Amenity	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.
Other Service	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.
Healthcare	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.
Public Facility	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	0 pts.

\* A Small Town is a municipality with a population of less than 10,000 people. The list of town sizes can be found on the Office of State Budget and Management web site at [https://ncosbm.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/demog/rankedbysize-largest\\_2014.html](https://ncosbm.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/demog/rankedbysize-largest_2014.html). The Standard 2014 Estimates, Municipal Population Estimates by Size (Largest) will be used to determine a town's population.

Only one establishment will count for each row under Primary and Secondary Amenities. For example, an application for a site with a public park, middle school and community center all between one mile and two miles will receive only 2 points under Public Facility.

The driving distance will be the mileage as calculated by Google Maps and must be a drivable route as of the preliminary application deadline. The measurement will be:

- the point closest to the site entrance to or from
- the point closest to the amenity entrance.

Driveways, access easements, and other distances in excess of 500 feet between the nearest residential building of the proposed project and road shown on Google Maps will be included in the driving distance. For scattered site projects, the measurement will be from the location with the longest driving distance(s).

The following establishments qualify as a Grocery:

Aldi	Food Matters Market	Just \$ave	Save-A-Lot
Bi-Lo	Fresh Air Galaxy Food Centers	Kroger	Super Target
Bo's Food Stores	The Fresh Market	Lowes Foods	Trader Joe's
Compare Foods	Harris Teeter	Piggly Wiggly	Walmart Express
Earth Fare	Hopey & Company	Publix	Walmart Neighborhood Market
Family Foods	IGA	Red & White	Walmart Supercenter
Food Lion	Ingle's Market	Sav-Mor	Whole Foods

The following establishments qualify as Shopping:

Big Lots	Kmart	Walmart
Dollar General	Maxway	Walmart Express
Dollar Tree	Roses	Walmart Supercenter
Family Dollar	Target	
Fred's Super Dollar	Super Target	

To qualify as a Pharmacy the establishment must have general merchandise items for sale (not including pharmacies within hospitals).

To qualify as a Secondary Amenity, the establishment must meet the applicable requirement(s) below.

Other Primary Amenity: A second Grocery, Shopping or Pharmacy (not used as Primary Amenity)

Other Service: A restaurant, bank/credit union, or gas station with convenience store

Healthcare: A hospital, urgent care business, general/family practice, or dentist (not to include orthodontist); does not include medical specialists or clinics within pharmacies

Public Facility: Any of the following:

- community or senior center with scheduled activities operated by a local government
- public park owned and maintained by a local government containing, at a minimum, playground equipment and/or walking/bike trails and listed on a map, website, or other official means
- library operated by a local government open at least five days a week
- public school (elementary, middle, or high school)

A commitment of at least \$250,000 in tribally-appropriated funds (including through the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act) qualifies for 12 points, not to exceed the total for subsection (ii). The commitment must meet the requirements of Section VI(B)(6)(b).

A bus/transit stop qualifies for 6 points, not to exceed the total for subsection (ii), if it is:

- in service as of the preliminary application date,
- on a fixed location and has a covered waiting area,
- served by a public transportation system six days a week, including for 12 consecutive hours on weekdays, and
- within 0.25 miles walking distance of the proposed project site entrance using existing sidewalks and crosswalks.

A bus/transit stop qualifies for 2 points, not to exceed the total for subsection (ii), if all of the above criteria are met except for a covered waiting area.

### (iii) SITE SUITABILITY (MAXIMUM 15 POINTS)

6 points if there is no Incompatible Use, which includes the following activities, conditions, or uses within the distance ranges specified:

#### Half Mile

- airports
- chemical or hazardous materials storage/disposal
- industrial or agricultural activities with environmental concerns (such as odors or pollution)
- commercial junk or salvage yards
- landfills currently in operation
- sources of excessive noise
- wastewater treatment facilities

A parcel or right of way within 500 feet containing any of the following:

- adult entertainment establishment
- electrical utility substation, whether active or not
- distribution facility
- factory or similar operation

- jail or prison
- large swamp

Any of the following within 250 feet of a proposed project building:

- frequently used railroad tracks
- high traffic corridor
- power transmission lines and tower

- 3 points if there are no negative features, design challenges, physical barriers, or other unusual and problematic circumstances that would impede project construction or adversely affect future tenants, including but not limited to: power transmission lines and towers, flood hazards, steep slopes, large boulders, ravines, year-round streams, wetlands, and other similar features (for adaptive reuse projects: suitability for residential use and difficulties posed by the building(s), such as limited parking, environmental problems or the need for excessive demolition)
- 3 points if the project would be visible to potential tenants using normal travel patterns and is within 500 feet of a building that is currently in use for residential, commercial, educational, or governmental purposes (excluding Blighted structures or Incompatible Uses)
- 3 points if traffic controls allow for safe access to the site; for example limited sight distance (blind curve) or having to cross three or more lanes of traffic going the same direction when exiting the site would not receive points.

## 2. MARKET ANALYSIS

The Agency will administer the market study process based on this Section and the terms of **Appendix A** (incorporated herein by reference).

- (a) The Agency will contract directly with market analysts to perform studies. Applicants may interact with market analysts and will have an opportunity to revise their project (unit mix, targeting). Any revisions must be submitted in writing to both the market analyst and to the Agency, following the schedule in Section III(A), and will be binding on the Applicant for the full application.
- (b) The Agency will limit the number of projects awarded in the same application round to those that it determines can be supported in the market.
- (c) The following four criteria are threshold requirements for new construction applications:
- (i) the project's capture rate,
  - (ii) the project's absorption rate,
  - (iii) the vacancy rate at comparable properties (what qualifies as a comparable will vary based on the circumstances), and
  - (iv) the project's effect on existing or awarded properties with 9% Tax Credits or Agency loans.
- (d) Applicants may not increase the total number of units after submission of the preliminary application. After the deadline for completing market-related project revisions Applicants may not increase:
- (i) rents, irrespective of a decrease in utility allowances,
  - (ii) the number of income targeted units in any bedroom type, or
  - (iii) the number of units in any bedroom type.
- (e) The Agency is not bound by the conclusions or recommendations of the market analyst(s), and will use its discretion in evaluating the criteria listed in this subsection (A)(2).

- (f) Projects may not give preferences to potential tenants based on:
  - (i) residing in the jurisdiction of a particular local government,
  - (ii) having a particular disability, or
  - (iii) being part of a specific occupational group (e.g. artists).
- (g) Age-restricted (elderly) projects may not contain three or more bedroom units.

## B. RENT AFFORDABILITY

### 1. FEDERAL RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Applicants proposing to convert tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) to a project-based subsidy (pursuant to 24 CFR Part 983) must submit a letter from the issuing authority in a form approved by the Agency. Conversion of vouchers will be treated as a funding source under Section VI(B)(6)(d); a project will be ineligible for an allocation if it does not meet requirements set by the Agency as part of the application and award process. Such requirements may involve the public housing authority's (PHA's) Annual Plan, selection policy, and approval for advertising.

### 2. TENANT RENT LEVELS FOR AGENCY BOOST AND RPP

- (a) To qualify for the Agency-designated boost in Section II(E)(3) or an RPP loan, new construction applications must commit to one of the following:
  - If the project is in a High Income county, at least twenty percent (20%) of qualified low-income units will be affordable to and occupied by households with incomes at or below thirty percent (30%) of area median income.
  - If the project is in a Moderate Income county, at least twenty percent (20%) of qualified low-income units will be affordable to and occupied by households with incomes at or below forty percent (40%) of area median income.
  - If the project is in a Low Income county, at least twenty percent (20%) of qualified low-income units will be affordable to and occupied by households with incomes at or below fifty percent (50%) of county median income.
- (b) To qualify for an RPP loan, all applications must commit that at least forty percent (40%) of qualified low-income units in a project will be affordable to and occupied by households with incomes at or below fifty percent (50%) of median income. Targeting in subsection (a) above counts towards this requirement.

## C. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT COSTS, RPP LIMITATIONS, AND WHLP

### 1. MAXIMUM PROJECT DEVELOPMENT COSTS (NEGATIVE 10 POINTS)

- (a) The Agency will assess negative points to applications listing more than the following in lines 5 and 6 of the Project Development Cost (PDC) description, as outlined in Chart A below. The point structure in Chart B will apply to the following:
  - all units are detached single family houses or duplexes,
  - serving persons with severe mobility impairments,
  - development challenges resulting from being within or adjacent to a central business district,
  - public housing redevelopment projects, or
  - building(s) with both steel and concrete construction and at least four stories of housing.

The per-unit amount calculation includes all items covered by the construction contract, building permits, Energy Star, certifications for green programs, and any other costs not unique to the specific proposal.

<b>Chart A</b>	<b>Chart B</b>
\$66,000 -10	\$77,000 -10

- (b) Lines 5 and 6 of the PDC description must total at least \$60,000 per unit.
- (c) The Agency will review proposed costs for historic adaptive re-use projects and approve the amount during the application review process.

See Section VI(B) for other cost restrictions.

**2. RESTRICTIONS ON RPP AWARDS**

- (a) Projects requesting RPP funds must submit the Agency’s “Notice of Real Property Acquisition” form with the preliminary application and may not:
  - (i) request RPP funds in excess of the following amounts per unit- \$15,000 in High Income counties; \$20,000 in Moderate Income counties; \$25,000 in Low Income counties,
  - (ii) include market-rate units,
  - (iii) involve Principals who have entered into a workout or deferment plan within the previous year for an RPP loan awarded after January 1, 2004,
  - (iv) request less than \$150,000 or more than \$800,000 per project,
  - (v) have a commitment of funds from a local government under terms that will result in more repayment than determined under subsection (C)(2)(b) below, or
  - (vi) have a federally insured loan or one which would require the RPP loan to have a term of more than 20 years or limits repayment.

The maximum award of RPP funds to any one Principal will be a total of \$1,600,000. Requesting an RPP loan may result in an application being ineligible under Section VI(B)(6)(d) if the Agency has inadequate funds.

- (b) Projects may only request an RPP loan if the principal and interest payments for RPP and any local government financing will be equal to the anticipated net operating income divided by 1.15, less conventional debt service:

$$\text{Repayment of RPP and local government loans} = (\text{NOI} / 1.15) - \text{conventional debt service.}$$

The amount of repayment will be split between the RPP loan and local government lenders based on their relative percentage of loan amounts. For example:

RPP Loan =	\$400,000				
local government loan =	\$200,000				
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Anticipated amount available for repayment	\$10,000	\$8,000	\$6,000	\$4,000	
RPP principal and interest payments	\$6,667	\$5,333	\$4,000	\$2,667	
local government P&I payments	\$3,333	\$2,667	\$2,000	\$1,333	

- (c) Loan payments made to the Applicant, any Principal, member or partner of the ownership entity, or any affiliate thereof, will be taken out of cash flow remaining after RPP payments.
- (d) An application may be ineligible for RPP funds due to one or more of the listed parties (including but not limited to members/partners, general contractor, and management agent) having failed to comply with the Agency’s requirements on a prior loan.



3. WORKFORCE HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM

- (a) Projects with 9% Tax Credits which meet the Agency’s loan criteria are eligible for WHLP. As required under the legislation, these criteria support the financing of projects similar to those created under G.S. 105-129.42. Applications in the Metro counties may not list WHLP as a funding source. For any application outside of the Metro counties with a commitment of local funds, the combination of local funds plus WHLP requested may not exceed the initial WHLP maximum as calculated in (c) below.
- (b) A loan will not be closed until the outstanding balance on the first-tier construction financing exceeds the principal amount and the entire loan must be used to pay down a portion of the then existing construction debt.
- (c) The terms will be zero percent (0%) interest, thirty year balloon (no payments). The Agency will take all eligible sources into consideration in setting the amount. The following percent of eligible basis will be the initial limit, and in no event will the amount exceed the statutory maximum.

County Income Designation	Percent of Eligible Basis	Statutory Maximum
High	2%	\$250,000
Moderate	6%	\$750,000
Low	10%	\$1,000,000

Requesting a WHLP loan may result in an application being ineligible under Section VI(B)(6)(d) if the Agency has inadequate funds.

D. CAPABILITY OF THE PROJECT TEAM

1. DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

- (a) To be eligible for an award of 9% Tax Credits, at least one Principal must have successfully developed, operated and maintained in compliance either one (1) Tax Credit project in North Carolina or six (6) separate Tax Credit projects totaling in excess of 200 units. The project(s) must have been placed in service between January 1, 2009 and January 1, 2015. Such Principal must:
  - (i) be identified in the preliminary application as the Applicant under Section III(C)(5),
  - (ii) become a general partner or managing member of the ownership entity, and
  - (iii) remain responsible for overseeing the project and operation of the project for a period of two (2) years after placed in service. The Agency will determine what qualifies as successful and who can be considered as involved in a particular project.
- (b) All owners and Principals must disclose all previous participation in the low-income housing tax credit program. Additionally, owners and Principals that have participated in an out of state tax credit allocation may be required to complete an Authorization for Release of Information form.
- (c) The Agency reserves the right to determine that a particular development team does not meet the threshold requirement of subsection (D)(1)(a) due to differences between its prior work and the proposed project. Particularly important in this evaluation is the type of subsidy program used in the previous experience (such as tax-exempt bonds, RD).

## 2. MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

The management agent must:

- (a) have at least one similar tax credit project in their current portfolio,
- (b) be requesting Key Program assistance timely and accurately (if applicable),
- (c) be reporting in the Agency's Rental Compliance Reporting System (RCRS) timely and accurately (if applicable)
- (d) have at least one staff person in a supervisory capacity with regard to the project who has attended at least one Agency sponsored training within the past 12 months as of the full application deadline, and
- (e) have at least one staff person serving in a supervisory capacity with regard to the project who has been certified as a tax credit compliance specialist.

Such certification must be from an organization approved by the Agency (see **Appendix C**). None of the persons or entities serving as management agent may have in their portfolio a project with material or uncorrected noncompliance beyond the cure period unless there is a plan of action to address the issue(s). The management agent listed on the application must be retained by the ownership entity for at least two (2) years after project completion, unless the Agency approves a change.

## 3. PROJECT TEAM DISQUALIFICATIONS

The Agency may disqualify any owner, Principal or management agent, who:

- (a) has been debarred or received a limited denial of participation in the past ten years by any federal or state agency from participating in any development program;
- (b) within the past ten years has been in a bankruptcy, an adverse fair housing settlement, an adverse civil rights settlement, or an adverse federal or state government proceeding and settlement;
- (c) has been in a mortgage default or arrearage of three months or more within the last five years on any publicly subsidized project;
- (d) has been involved within the past ten years in a project which previously received an allocation of tax credits but failed to meet standards or requirements of the tax credit allocation or failed to fulfill one of the representations contained in an application for tax credits;
- (e) has been found to be directly or indirectly responsible for any other project within the past five years in which there is or was uncorrected noncompliance more than three months from the date of notification by the Agency or any other state allocating agency;
- (f) interferes with a tax credit application for which it is not an owner or Principal at a public hearing or other official meeting;
- (g) has outstanding flags in HUD's national 2530 National Participation system;
- (h) has been involved in any project awarded 9% Tax Credits in 2015 for which either the equity investment has not closed as of the full application deadline or the "10% test" has not been met;
- (i) has been involved in any project awarded tax credits after 2000 where there has been a change in general partners or managing members during the last five years that the Agency did not approve in writing beforehand;
- (j) would be removed from the ownership of a project that is the subject of an application under the rehabilitation set-aside in the current cycle;
- (k) requested a qualified contract for a North Carolina tax credit property; or

(l) is not in good standing with the Agency.

A disqualification under this subsection (D)(3) will result in the individual or entity involved not being allowed to participate in the 2016 cycle and removing from consideration any application where they are identified.

#### E. UNIT MIX AND PROJECT SIZE

1. Ten (-10) points will be subtracted from any full application that includes market-rate units. This penalty will not apply where either
  - the rents for all market rate units are at least five percent (5%) higher than the maximum allowed for a unit at 60% AMI and the market study indicates that such rents are feasible, or
  - there is a commitment for a grant or no-payment financing equal to at least the amount of foregone federal tax credit equity.
2. New construction 9% Tax Credit projects may not exceed the following:
  - Metro Region - one hundred and twenty (120) units
  - Central, East, and West Regions - eighty (80) units.
3. New construction tax-exempt bond projects may not exceed two hundred (200) units.
4. All projects must have at least twenty four (24) qualified low-income units.

The Agency reserves the right to waive the penalties and limitations in this Section IV(E) for proposals that reduce low-income and minority concentration, including public housing projects, and subsection (E)(2) for proposals that are within a transit station area as defined by the Charlotte Region Transit Station Area Joint Development Principles and Policy Guidelines or adaptive re-use projects where made necessary by the building(s) physical structure.

#### F. SPECIAL CRITERIA AND TIEBREAKERS

##### 1. ENERGY STAR

New construction residential buildings must comply with all Energy Star standards as defined in **Appendix B** (incorporated herein by reference). Adaptive re-use and rehabilitation projects must comply to the extent doing so is economically feasible and as allowed by historic preservation rules.

##### 2. CREDITS PER UNIT AVERAGE (MAXIMUM 3 POINTS)

The Agency will calculate the average federal tax credits per unit requested on a Geographic Region basis among new construction full applications and award points based on the following:

More than 15% below the average	3 points
Between 10% and 15% below the average	2 points
Between 5% and 10% below the average	1 point
Within 5% of the average	0 points
Between 5% and 10% above the average	-1 point
Between 10% and 15% above the average	-2 points
More than 15% above the average	-3 points

### 3. UNITS FOR THE MOBILITY IMPAIRED

Five percent (5%) of all units in new construction projects must meet the accessibility standards as defined in **Appendix B** (incorporated herein by reference). **THESE UNITS ARE IN ADDITION TO MOBILITY IMPAIRED UNITS REQUIRED BY FEDERAL AND STATE LAW (INCLUDING BUILDING CODES)**. If laws or codes do not require mobility impaired units for a project, a total of ten percent (10%) of the units must be fully accessible. Units for the mobility impaired should be available to all tenants who would benefit from their design and are not necessarily reserved under the Targeting Plan requirements of subsection (F)(4).

### 4. TARGETING PLANS

All projects will be required to target ten percent (10%) of the total units to persons with disabilities or homeless populations. Projects with federal project-based rental assistance must target at least five (5) units regardless of size. Projects that have targeting units under this subsection are not required to provide onsite supportive services or a service coordinator.

Owners must complete a Targeting Plan template provided by the Agency as well as provide any specified addenda and must submit the Targeting Plan and addenda to the Agency for review and acceptance. At a minimum, Targeting Plans must include:

- (a) A general description of the property.
- (b) A summary of tenant selection and screening criteria and an agreement to proactively make program applicants aware of their right to request a reasonable accommodation should they not meet screening criteria.
- (c) A summary of communication requirements and contact information for property management, the Agency and DHHS that addresses staff turnover and assures continuing linkages between the property, DHHS and the Agency for the duration of the compliance period.
- (d) A commitment to ensure site and compliance staff annually obtain Agency sponsored Targeting and Key training.
- (e) Certification that participation in supportive services will not be a condition of tenancy.
- (f) Agreement to use the separate waiting list for persons with disabilities maintained by DHHS and prioritize these individuals for targeted units during the initial rent-up period, and for any units that may become vacant after the initial rent-up period, up to the total number of targeted units.
- (g) Agreement that for a period of ninety (90) days after certificate of occupancy, the required number of targeted units for persons with disabilities will be held vacant other than for such population(s).
- (h) Agreement to accept Section 8 vouchers or certificates (or other rental assistance) as allowable income as part of property management income requirement guidelines for eligible tenants and not require total income for persons with rental assistance beyond that which is reasonably available to persons with disabilities currently receiving SSI and SSDI benefits.
- (i) A description of how the project will make the targeted units affordable to persons with very low incomes. **NOTE: Key program assistance is only available to persons receiving income based upon a disability. Projects must have an alternative mechanism to assure affordability if targeting units to non-disabled homeless populations or persons in recovery with only a substance abuse diagnosis. (The Social Security Administration deems people ineligible for disability benefits if substance abuse is the sole disabling condition).**

The requirements of this subsection (F)(4) may be fully or partially waived to the extent the Agency determines they are not feasible. A Targeting Plan template and other documents related to this subsection are included in **Appendix D** (incorporated herein by reference). Owners will agree to complete the requirements of this subsection (F)(4) and **Appendix D** by the earlier of July 14, 2017 or four months prior to the project's placed in service date. The Agency may set additional interim requirements.

5. OLMSTEAD SETTLEMENT INITIATIVE (MAXIMUM 4 POINTS)

(a) Projects proposing 1 bedroom units as a percentage of the total project units will be awarded points based on the following:

5% of total units	1 point
7.5% of total units	2 points
10% of total units	3 points

(b) Projects proposed in the following DHHS priority counties will be awarded 1 point.

Buncombe	Craven	Gaston	Mecklenburg	Robeson
Burke	Cumberland	Guilford	New Hanover	Rowan
Cabarrus	Durham	Iredell	Onslow	Wake
Caldwell	Forsyth	Johnston	Pitt	Wayne

6. SECTION 1602 EXCHANGE PROJECTS (NEGATIVE 40 POINTS)

The Agency may deduct up to forty (-40) points from any application if the Applicant, any owner, Principal or affiliate thereof is also involved in a Section 1602 Exchange project with uncorrected material noncompliance.

7. TIEBREAKER CRITERIA

The following will be used to award tax credits in the event that the final scores of more than one project are identical.

- (a) First Tiebreaker: The project requesting the least amount of federal tax credits per unit based on the Agency's equity needs analysis.
- (b) Second Tiebreaker: Tenants with Children: Projects that can serve tenant populations with children. Projects will qualify for this designation if at least twenty-five (25%) of the units are three or four bedrooms. This tiebreaker will only apply where the market study shows a clear demand for this population (as determined by the Agency).
- (c) Third Tiebreaker: Tenant Ownership: Projects that are intended for eventual tenant ownership. Such projects must utilize a detached single family site plan and building design and have a business plan describing how the project will convert to tenant ownership at the end of the 30-year compliance period.

In the event that a tie remains after considering the above tiebreakers, the project requesting the least amount of federal tax credits will be awarded.

## G. DESIGN STANDARDS

All proposed measures must be shown in the application to receive points.

### 1. THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS

The minimum threshold requirements for design are found in **Appendix B** (incorporated herein by reference) and must be used for all projects receiving tax credits or RPP funding.

### 2. CRITERIA FOR SCORE EVALUATION (MAXIMUM 30 POINTS)

The Agency will determine points based on the following criteria as applied to the site drawings submitted with the full application.

#### (a) Site Layout

The Agency will award up to five (5) points based on its evaluation of the site layout. The following characteristics will be considered.

- (i) The location of residential buildings in relation to parking, site amenities, community building, postal facilities and trash collection areas.
- (ii) The degree to which site layout ensures a low, controlled traffic speed through the project.

#### (b) Quality of Design and Construction

(The points in this subsection are mutually exclusive with Section IV(G)(2)(c) below.)

The Agency will award up to twenty five (25) points for new construction projects based on its evaluation of the quality of the building design, and the materials and finishes specified. The following characteristics will be considered:

- (i) The extent to which the design uses multiple roof lines, gables, dormers and similar elements to break up large roof sections.
- (ii) The extent to which the design uses multiple types, styles, and colors of siding and brick veneer to add visual appeal to the building elevations.
- (iii) The level of detail that is achieved through the use of porches, railings, and other exterior features.
- (iv) Use of brick veneer or masonry products on building exteriors.

#### (c) Adaptive Re-Use

(The points in this subsection are mutually exclusive with Section IV(G)(2)(b) above.)

The Agency will award up to twenty five (25) points based on the following characteristics:

- (i) The extent to which the building(s) fit with surrounding streetscape after adaptation or have problems with orientation, sightlines, bulk and scale.
- (ii) Aesthetics after adaptation.
- (iii) Presence of special design elements or architectural features that may not be physically or financially available if new construction was introduced on the same site.

## H. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF REHABILITATION PROJECTS

### 1. GENERAL THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for an allocation under Section II(A), a project must:

- (a) have either (i) received a tax credit allocation and be in the extended use period or (ii) federal project-based rental assistance for at least thirty percent (30%) of the total units,

- (b) have been placed in service on or before December 31, 1999,
- (c) require rehabilitation expenses in excess of \$15,000 per unit (as supported by a physical needs assessment conducted or approved by the Agency),
- (d) not have an acquisition cost in excess of sixty percent (60%) of the total replacement costs,
- (e) not be feasible using tax-exempt bonds (as determined by the Agency),
- (f) not have received an Agency loan in the last five years,
- (g) not be deteriorated to the point of requiring demolition,
- (h) not have begun or completed a full debt restructuring under the Mark to Market process (or any similar HUD program) within the last five years, and
- (i) have total replacement costs of less than \$120,000 per unit, including all Agency-required rehabilitation work.

Rehabilitation expenses include hard construction costs directly attributable to the project, excluding costs for a new community building, as calculated using lines 2 through 7 (less line 6) in the PDC description.

## 2. THRESHOLD DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the relevant sections of **Appendix B** (incorporated herein by reference), the Agency will require owners to complete the following as appropriate for their project.

- (a) Improve site amenities and common areas by upgrading or adding a freestanding community building, making repairs and additions to landscaping, adding new site amenities such as playgrounds, and repairing parking areas.
- (b) Improve building exteriors by replacing deteriorated siding, replacing aged roofing, adding gutters and downspouts, and adding new architectural features to improve appearance.
- (c) Upgrade unit interiors by replacing flooring, installing new cabinets and countertops, replacing damaged interior doors, replacing light fixtures, and repainting units.
- (d) Replace and upgrade mechanical systems and appliances including HVAC systems, water heaters and plumbing fixtures, electrical panels, refrigerators, and ranges.
- (e) Improve energy efficiency by replacing inefficient doors and windows, adding additional insulation in attics, and upgrading the efficiency of mechanical systems and appliances.
- (f) Improve site and unit accessibility for persons with disabilities by making necessary alterations at common areas, alterations at single story ground floor units, adding or improving handicapped parking areas, and repairing or replacing sidewalks along accessible routes.

## 3. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Agency will evaluate applications under Section II(A) based on the following criteria, which are listed in order of importance. Each one will serve both to determine awards and as a threshold requirement; the Agency may remove an application from consideration if the proposal is sufficiently inadequate in any of the categories. For purposes of making awards, the Agency will not consider subsections (d) through (f) below if the outcome is determined by the criteria in subsections (a) through (c).

- (a) The Agency will give the highest priority to applications proposing to rehabilitate the most distressed housing with a tax credit allocation, particularly buildings with accessibility or life, health and safety problems.

- (b) Applications will have a reduced likelihood of being awarded tax credits to the extent that the purpose is to subsidize an ownership transfer.
- (c) Shortcomings in the above criteria will be mitigated to the extent that a tax credit allocation is necessary to prevent (i) conversion of units to market rate rents or (ii) loss of government resources (including past, present and future investments).
- (d) The Agency will give priority to applications that have mortgage subsidy resources committed as part of the application.
- (e) Applications will have priority to the extent that the rehabilitation improvements are a part of a community revitalization plan or will benefit the surrounding community. However, projects in severely distressed areas will have a reduced likelihood of being awarded tax credits.
- (f) Applications will have a reduced likelihood of being awarded tax credits based on the number of tenants that would be permanently relocated (including market-rate).
- (g) While the rehabilitation set-aside is not subject to any regional set-aside, the Agency will consider the geographic distribution of this resource and will attempt to avoid a concentration of awards in any one area of the state.

## **V. ALLOCATION OF BOND CAP**

### **A. ORDER OF PRIORITY**

The Committee will allocate the multifamily portion of the state's tax-exempt bond authority in the following order of priority:

1. Projects that serve as a component of an overall public housing revitalization effort.
2. Rehabilitation of existing rent restricted housing.
3. Rehabilitation of projects consisting of entirely market-rate units.
4. Adaptive reuse projects.
5. Other new construction projects.

Applications will only be allocated bond authority if there is enough remaining after awarding all eligible applications in higher priority levels. Within each category, applications seeking the least amount of authority per low-income unit will have priority.

### **B. ELIGIBILITY FOR AWARD**

Except as otherwise indicated, owners of projects with tax-exempt bonds and 4% Tax Credits must meet all requirements of the Plan. Even with an allocation of bond authority, projects must meet the threshold requirements to be eligible for tax credits.

1. All projects must meet the requirements under Section IV(F)(4).
2. Rehabilitation applications must:
  - (a) have been placed in service on or before December 31, 1999,
  - (b) require rehabilitation expenses in excess of \$10,000 per unit,
  - (c) not have an acquisition cost in excess of sixty percent (60%) of the total replacement costs,
  - (d) not have begun or completed a full debt restructuring under the Mark to Market process (or any similar HUD program) within the last five years, and
  - (e) not be deteriorated to the point of requiring demolition.



3. The inducement resolution must be submitted with the full application.
4. To be eligible for an award of tax-exempt bond volume, at least one Principal must have successfully developed, operated and maintained in compliance either one 9% Tax Credit project in North Carolina or one tax-exempt bond project. The project(s) must have been placed in service between January 1, 2009 and January 1, 2015. Such Principal must:
  - be identified in the preliminary application as the Applicant under Section III(C)(5),
  - become a general partner or managing member of the ownership entity, and
  - remain responsible for overseeing the project and operation of the project for a period of two (2) years after placed in service.

The Agency will determine what qualifies as successful and who can be considered as involved in a particular project.

## **VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. GENERAL THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS**

#### **1. PROJECTS WITH HISTORIC TAX CREDITS**

Buildings either must be on the National Register of Historic Places or approved for the State Historic Preservation Office's study list at the time of the full application. Evidence of meeting this requirement should be provided.

#### **2. NONPROFIT SET-ASIDE**

For purposes of being considered as a nonprofit sponsored application under Section II(D)(1)(a), at least one nonprofit entity (or, where applicable, its qualified corporation) involved in a project must:

- (a) be qualified under Section 501(c)(3) or (4) of the Code,
- (b) materially participate, as defined under federal law, in the acquisition, development, ownership, and ongoing operation of the property for the entire compliance period,
- (c) have as one of its exempt purposes the fostering of low-income housing,
- (d) be a managing member or general partner of the ownership entity.

The Agency reserves the right to make a determination that the nonprofit owner is not affiliated with or controlled by a for-profit entity or entities other than a qualified corporation. There can be no identity of interest between any nonprofit owner and for-profit entity, other than a qualified corporation.

#### **3. REQUIRED REPORTS**

All projects involving use of existing structures must submit the following:

- (a) For projects built prior to 1978, a hazardous material report which provides the results of testing for asbestos containing materials, lead based paint, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), underground storage tanks, petroleum bulk storage tanks, Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), and other hazardous materials. The testing must be performed by professionals licensed to do hazardous materials testing. A report written by an architect or building contractor or developer will not suffice. A plan and projected costs for removal of hazardous materials must also be included.
- (b) A report assessing the structural integrity of the building(s) being renovated from an architect or engineer. Report must be dated no more than six (6) months from the full application deadline.
- (c) A current termite inspection report. Report must be dated no more than six (6) months from the full application deadline.

#### 4. APPRAISALS

The Agency will not allow the project budget to include more for land costs than the lesser of its appraised market value or the purchase price. Applicants must submit with the full application a real estate “as is” appraisal that is a) dated no more than six (6) months from the full application deadline, b) prepared by an independent, state certified appraiser and c) complies with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice. The Agency may order an additional appraisal with costs to be paid by the Applicant. Appraisals for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse projects must break out the land and building values from the total value.

#### 5. CONCENTRATION

Projects cannot be in areas of minority and low-income concentration (measured by comparing the percentage of minority and low-income households in the site’s census tract with the community overall). The Agency may make an exception for projects in economically distressed areas which have community revitalization plans with public funds committed to support the effort.

#### 6. DISPLACEMENT

For rehabilitation projects and in every other instance of tenant displacement, including temporary, the Applicant must supply with the full application a plan describing how displaced persons will be relocated, including a description of the costs of relocation. The owner is responsible for all relocation expenses, which must be included in the project’s development budget. Owners must also comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as revised in 49 C.F.R. Part 24.

#### 7. FEASIBILITY

The Agency will not allocate tax credits or RPP funding to applications that may have difficulty being completed or operated for the compliance period. Examples include projects that may not secure an equity investment or a Principal that has inadequate capacity to successfully carry out the development process.

#### 8. SMOKE-FREE HOUSING

Owners must prohibit smoking in all indoor common areas, individual living areas (including patios and balconies), and within 25 feet of building entries or ventilation intakes. A non-smoking clause must be included in the lease for each household.

### B. UNDERWRITING THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS

The following minimum financial underwriting requirements apply to all projects. Projects that cannot meet these minimum requirements, as determined by the Agency, will not receive tax credits or RPP funding. Any documentation required as part of the application must be dated and be within 6 months of the application deadline, unless otherwise stated.

#### 1. LOAN UNDERWRITING STANDARDS

- (a) Projects applying for tax credits only will be underwritten with rents escalating at two percent (2%) and operating expenses escalating at three percent (3%).
- (b) All projects will be underwritten assuming a constant seven percent (7%) vacancy and must reflect a 1.15 Debt Coverage Ratio (DCR) for twenty (20) years.
- (c) Applications requesting RPP funds must use current HOME rents and may be required to comply with HOME program requirements, including 42 U.S.C. 12701 et seq., 24 C.F.R. Part 92 and all relevant administrative guidance. Projects awarded RPP funds must also comply with the RPP Guidelines in **Appendix G** (incorporated herein by reference).

- (d) The Agency may determine that the interest rate on a loan must be reduced where an application shows an excessive amount accruing towards a balloon payment.

## 2. OPERATING EXPENSES

- (a) New construction (excluding adaptive reuse): minimum of \$3,600 per unit per year not including taxes, reserves and resident support services.
- (b) Renovation (includes rehabilitation and adaptive reuse): minimum of \$3,800 per unit per year not including taxes, reserves and resident support services. For projects with RD loans, the operating expenses will be based upon the current RD approved operating budget.
- (c) The proposed management agent (or management staff if there is an identity of interest) must sign a statement (to be submitted with the full application) agreeing that the operating expense projections are reasonable.

## 3. EQUITY PRICING

- (a) Projects will be underwritten using Applicants proposed equity pricing. Pricing above \$0.99 will require a commitment letter from a syndicator or investor with as much detail as is possible. At a minimum, the letter should include the equity pricing, total capital contribution amount, estimated pay-in schedule and any reserve requirements.

Should an Applicant receive an allocation of tax credits and fail to receive equity pricing at least equal to the pricing used in the awarded application, any equity shortfall will be the responsibility of the Applicant. The Agency will not approve an increase of the rents stated in the awarded application to support additional debt to cover the equity shortfall.(b) Equity should be calculated net of any syndication fees. Bridge loan interest typically incurred by the syndicator to enable an up front payment of equity should not be charged to the project directly, but be reflected in the net payment of equity. Equity should be based on tax credits to be used by the investor(s), excluding those allocated to the Principals unless these entities are making an equity contribution in exchange for the tax credits.

## 4. RESERVES

- (a) Rent-up Reserve: Required for all except tax-exempt bond projects. A reasonable amount must be established based on the projected rent-up time considering the market and target population, but in no event shall be less than \$300 per unit. These funds must be available to the management agent to pay rent-up expenses incurred in excess of rent-up expenses budgeted for in the PDC description. The funds are to be deposited in a separate bank account and evidence of such transaction provided to the Agency ninety (90) days prior to the expected placed in service date. All funds remaining in the rent-up reserve at the time the project reaches ninety-three (93%) occupancy must be transferred to the project replacement reserve account.

For those projects receiving loan funds from RD, the 2% initial operating and maintenance capital established by RD will be considered the required rent-up reserve deposit.

- (b) Operating Reserve: Required for all projects except those receiving loan funds from RD. The operating reserve will be the greater of a) \$1,500 per unit or b) six month's debt service and operating expenses (four months for tax-exempt bond projects), and must be maintained for the duration of the extended use period.

The operating reserve can be funded by deferring the developer fees of the project. If this method is utilized, the deferred amounts owed to the developer can only be repaid from cash flow if all required replacement reserve deposits have been made. For tax credit projects where no RPP loan applies, the operating reserve can be capitalized by an equity pay in up to one year after certificate of occupancy is received. This will be monitored by the Agency.

- (c) Replacement Reserve: All new construction projects must budget replacement reserves of \$250 per unit per year. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse projects must budget replacement reserves of \$350 per unit per year. The replacement reserve must be capitalized from the project's operations, escalating by four percent (4%) annually.

In both types of renovation projects mentioned above, the Agency reserves the right to increase the required amount of annual replacement reserves if the Agency determines such an increase is warranted after a detailed review of the project's physical needs assessment.

For those projects receiving RD loan funds, the required funding of the replacement reserve will be established, administered and approved by RD.

#### 5. DEFERRED DEVELOPER FEES

Developer fees can be deferred to cover a gap in funding sources as long as:

- (a) the entire amount will be paid within fifteen years and meets the standards required by the IRS to stay in basis,
- (b) the deferred portion does not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the total amount as of the full application, and
- (c) payment projections do not negatively impact the operation of the project.

Each of these will be determined by the Agency. Nonprofit organizations must include a resolution from the Board of Directors allowing such a deferred payment obligation to the project. The developer may not charge interest on the deferred amount in excess of the long term AFR.

#### 6. FINANCING COMMITMENT

- (a) For all projects proposing private permanent financing, a letter of intent is required (see **Appendix E**). This letter must clearly state the term of the permanent loan is at least fifteen (15) years, how the interest rate will be indexed and the current rate at the time of the letter, the amortization period, any prepayment penalties, anticipated security interest in the property and lien position. The interest rate must be fixed and no balloon payments may be due for fifteen years.
- (b) For all projects proposing public permanent financing, binding commitments are required to be submitted by the full application deadline (see **Appendix E**). Local governments also must identify the source of funding (e.g. HOME, trust fund). All loans must have a fixed interest rate and no balloon payments for at least fifteen (15) years after project completion. A binding commitment is defined as a letter, resolution or binding contract from a unit of government. The same terms described for the letter of intent (using the format approved by the Agency) from a private lender must be included in the commitment.
- (c) The Agency may request a letter from a construction lender documenting the loan amount, interest rate, and any origination fees.
- (d) Applications may only include one set of proposed funding sources; the Agency will not consider multiple financial scenarios. A project will be ineligible for allocation if any of the listed funding sources will not be available in an amount or under the terms described in the application. The Agency may waive this limitation if the project otherwise demonstrates financial feasibility. Project cash flow may not be used as a source of funds.

#### 7. DEVELOPER FEES

- (a) Developer fees shall be up to \$13,000 per unit for new construction projects and twenty-eight percent point five (28.5%) of PDC line item 4 for rehabilitation projects, both being set at award.

- (b) Notwithstanding the amount calculated in subsection (7)(a), the developer fee for any project shall be a maximum of \$1,300,000 (the maximum for projects with tax-exempt bonds is \$1,900,000).
- (c) Contractor general requirements shall be limited to six percent (6%) of hard costs.
- (d) Contractor profit and overhead shall be limited to ten percent (10%) (8% profit, 2% overhead) of total hard costs, including general requirements.
- (e) Where an identity of interest exists between the owner and contractor, the contractor profit and overhead shall be limited to eight percent (8%) (6% profit, 2% overhead).

#### 8. CONSULTING FEES

The total amount of any consulting fees and developer fees shall be no more than the maximum developer fee allowed to that project.

#### 9. ARCHITECTS' FEES

The architects' fees, including design and inspection fees, shall be limited to three percent (3%) of the total hard costs plus general requirements, overhead, profit and construction contingency (total of lines 2 through 10 on the PDC description). This amount does not include engineering costs.

#### 10. INVESTOR SERVICES FEES

Investor services fees must be paid from net cash flow and not be calculated into the minimum debt coverage ratio.

#### 11. PROJECT CONTINGENCY FUNDING

All new construction projects shall have a hard cost contingency line item of five percent (5%) of total hard costs, including general requirements, contractor profit and overhead. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse projects shall include a hard cost contingency line item of ten percent (10%) of total hard costs.

#### 12. PROJECT OWNERSHIP

There must be common ownership between all units and buildings within a single project for the duration of the compliance period.

#### 13. SECTION 8 PROJECT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE

For all new construction projects that propose to utilize Section 8 project-based rental assistance, the Agency will underwrite the rents according to the tax credit and HOME limits. These limits are based on data published annually by HUD. If the Section 8 contract administrator is willing to allow rents above these limits, the project may receive the additional revenue in practice, but Agency underwriting will use the lower revenue projections regardless of the length of the Section 8 contract.

Given the uncertainty of long-term federal commitment to Section 8 rental assistance, the Agency considers underwriting to the more conservative revenue levels to best serve the project's long-term financial viability.

#### 14. WATER, SEWER, AND TAP FEES

Any water, sewer, and tap fees charged to the project must be entered on a separate line item of the PDC description. Applications must provide letters from local provider(s) documenting either the amounts or if no fees will be charged.

## VII. POST-AWARD PROCESSES AND REQUIREMENTS

### A. ALLOCATION TERMS AND REVOCATION

1. At any time between award and issuance of IRS Form 8609, owners must have approval from the Agency prior to:
  - (a) changing the anticipated or final sources (amount, terms, or provider), including equity;
  - (b) increasing the anticipated or final uses by more than two percent (2%);
  - (c) altering the designs approved by
    - the Agency at full application, or
    - local building code office,including amenities, site layout, floor plans and elevations (Approved Design);
  - (d) starting construction, including sitework;
  - (e) increasing rents for low-income units (does not apply to tax-exempt bonds); or
  - (f) any other change to the awarded application.

If an increase in uses or design alteration is due to a local government requirement, owners do not need prior approval but rather must provide the Agency with prompt written notice. Failure to comply with a requirement of this subsection may result in a fine of up to \$25,000, revocation of the reservation or allocation, future disqualification under Section IV(D)(3) of any Principal involved, or other recourse available to the Agency.<sup>2</sup> Ownership entities must submit a completed carryover agreement and expend at least ten percent (10%) of the project's reasonably expected basis, both by dates to be determined by the Agency.

3. IRS Form 8609 will not be issued until:
  - (a) submission of a Final Cost Certification that complies with the Agency's requirements;
  - (b) the owner and management company document attendance at an Agency sponsored or approved tax credit compliance seminar sponsored within the previous 12 months (see **Appendix C** for list of approved seminars);
  - (c) monitoring fees have been paid;
  - (d) the project has been built according to the Approved Design;
  - (e) the Agency determines the project has adhered to all representations made in the approved application and will meet all relevant Plan requirements;
  - (f) documentation of the ownership entity having paid all applicable state and local taxes for the most recent year due; and
  - (g) submission of a listing of the name and address for all contractors and subcontractors and a statement from each representing the entity will comply with all applicable employment rules and regulations.
4. The actual tax credits allocated will be the lesser of the tax credits reserved, the applicable rate multiplied by qualified basis (as approved by the Agency), or the amount determined by the Agency pursuant to its evaluation as required under Section 42(m)(2) of the Code. Projects will be required to elect a project-based allocation. An allocation does not constitute a representation or warranty by the Agency or Committee that the ownership entity or its owners will qualify for the tax credits. The Agency's interpretation of the Code, regulations, notices, or other guidance is not binding on the federal government.

5. Owners must record a thirty (30) year Declaration of Land Use Restrictive Covenants for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (Extended Use Agreement) stating that the owner will not apply for relief under Section 42(h)(6)(E)(i)(II) of the Code and will comply with other requirements under the Code, Plan, other relevant statutes and regulations and all representations made in the approved application. The Extended Use Agreement also may contain other provisions as determined by the Agency. The owner must have good and marketable title and obtain the consent of any prior recorded lienholder (other than for construction financing) to be bound by the Extended Use Agreement terms.
6. The Agency may revoke an allocation if the owner fails to implement all representations in the approved application. In addition to the terms of Section VII(A)(1), owners will acknowledge that the following constitute conditions to their allocation:
  - (a) accuracy of all representations made to the Agency, including application uploads,
  - (b) adherence to the Plan and all applicable federal, state and local laws and ordinances, including the Code and Fair Housing Act,
  - (c) provision and maintenance of amenities for the benefit of the tenants, and
  - (d) not incurring a penalty under N.C.G.S. § 105-236 for failure to file a return, failure to pay taxes, or having a large tax deficiency (as defined under N.C.G.S. § 105-236). The Agency may request documentation demonstrating all project related taxes have been paid.

An owner's or project's failure to comply with all such conditions without written authorization from the Agency will entitle the Agency, in its discretion, to deem the allocation to be cancelled by mutual consent. After any such cancellation, the owner will acknowledge that neither it nor the project will have any right to claim tax credits pursuant to the allocation. The Agency reserves the right, in its discretion, to modify or waive any such failed condition.

## B. COMPLIANCE MONITORING

1. Owners must comply with Section 42 of the Code, IRS regulations, rulings, procedures, decisions and notices, state statutes, the Fair Housing Act, state laws, local codes, Agency loan documents, **Appendix F** (incorporated herein by reference), and any other legal requirements. The Agency may treat any failure to do so as a violation of the Plan.
2. The Agency will adopt and revise standards, policies, procedures, and other requirements in administering the tax credit program. Examples include training and on-line reporting. Owners must comply with all such requirements regardless of whether or not they expressly appear in the Plan or **Appendix F**. The Agency will have access to any project information, including physical access to the property, all financial records and tenant information.

## VIII. DEFINITIONS

The terms listed below will be defined in the Plan as indicated below regardless of capitalization, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. Terms used in the Plan but not defined below will have the same meaning as under the Code and IRS regulations.

4% Tax Credit: Low-income housing tax credits available pursuant to Section 42(h)(4) of the Code.

9% Tax Credit: Low-income housing tax credits available for allocation under the state's volume cap pursuant to Section 42(h)(3) of the Code.

Affiliate: As to any person or entity (i) any entity of which a majority of the voting interest is owned by such person or entity, (ii) any person or entity directly or indirectly controlling (10% or more) such person or entity, (iii) any person or entity under direct or indirect common control with any such person or entity, or (iv)

any officer, director, employee, manager, stockholder (10% or more), partner or member of any such person or entity or of any person or entity referred to in the preceding clauses (i), (ii) or (iii).

Applicant: The entity considered under Section III(C)(5).

Choice-Limiting Activity: Includes leasing or disposition of real property and any activity that will result in a physical change to the property, including acquisition, demolition, movement, rehabilitation, conversion, repair, or construction.

Developer: Any individual or entity responsible for initiating and controlling the development process and ensuring that all, or any material portion of all, phases of the development process are accomplished. Furthermore, the developer is the individual or entity identified as such in the Ownership Entity Agreement and any and all Development Fee Agreements.

Entity: Without limitation, any general partnership, limited partnership, limited liability company, corporation, joint venture, trust, business trust, cooperative, association, public agency or other entity, other than a human being.

Homeless Populations: People who are living in places not meant for habitation (such as streets, cars, parks), emergency shelters, or in transitional or temporary housing but originally came from places not meant for habitation or emergency shelters.

Management Agent: Individual(s) or Entity responsible for the day to day operations of the project, which may or may not be related to the Owner(s) or ownership entity.

Market-Rate Units: Units that are not subject to tax credit restrictions; does not include manager units.

Material Participation: Involvement in the development and operation of the project on a basis which is regular, continuous and substantial throughout the compliance period as defined in Code Sections 42 and 469(h) and the regulations promulgated thereunder.

Owner(s): Person(s) or entity(ies) that own an equity interest in the Ownership Entity.

Ownership Entity: The ownership entity to which tax credits and/or any RPP loan funds will be awarded.

Person: Any individual or Entity, and the heirs, executors, administrators, legal representatives, successors and assigns of such Person where the context so requires.

Person with a Disability: An adult who has a permanent physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities as further defined in North Carolina's Persons with Disabilities Protection Act (N.C.G.S. § 168A-3 (7a)).

Principal: Principal includes (1) all persons or entities who are or who will become partners or members of the ownership entity, (2) all persons or entities whose affiliates are or who will become partners or members of the ownership entity, (3) all persons or entities who directly or indirectly earn a portion of the development fee for development services with respect to a project and/or earn any compensation for development services rendered to such project, which compensation is funded directly or indirectly from the development fee of such project, and such amount earned exceeds the lesser of twenty-five percent (25%) of the development fee for such project or \$100,000, and (4) all affiliates of such persons or entities in clause (3) who directly or indirectly earn a portion of the development fee for development services with respect to any project in the current year and/or earn any compensation for development services rendered to any project in the current year, which compensation is funded directly or indirectly from the development fee of any such project, and such amount earned exceeds the lesser of twenty-five percent 25% of the development fee for such project or \$100,000. For purposes of determining Principal status the Agency may disregard multiple layers of pass-through or corporate entities. A partner or member will not be a Principal where its only involvement is that of the tax credit equity investor.



Qualified Corporation: Any corporation if, at all times such corporation is in existence, 100% of the stock of such corporation is held by a nonprofit organization that meets the requirements under Code Section 42(h)(5).

Rental Production Program (RPP): Agency loan program for multifamily affordable rental housing.