

# Public Hearing for 2020 HOME and HTF Method of Distribution and Application Guidelines Meeting Minutes

Location: Webinar

Date: July 7, 2020

Start Time: 10:30 a.m.

## **Julie Flynn, Montana Department of Commerce, Community Development Division**

Explained the purpose of the public hearing and the HUD waiver for the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan and reviewed a brief PowerPoint presentation.

- Brief overview of HUD Programs
- Brief overview of the Consolidated Plan
- HUD waiver regarding submission of Consolidated Plan and its implications for Montana HOME and HTF Programs
- Proposed Method of Distribution
- Proposed application deadline
- Draft HOME and HTF application guidelines
- Public comments
- Next steps

## **Public Comment**

### **Shyla Patera, North Central Independent Living Services in Black Eagle**

- I represent North Central Independent Living Services in Black Eagle, Montana, which serves Montanans with disabilities of all types and various disabilities throughout Montana. I assist in housing finding and often send people to NeighborWorks for housing counseling and loan assistance through a lot of your programs. We are really excited that you are having this hearing today. One of the things that we would like to recommend is that a lot of the applicants for newer construction really utilize universal design and visitability standards for new construction because those homes help Montanans with disabilities and all of us age in place. We also hope that we can work on some ADA funds for rehab like we had several years ago for the small consolidated projects that we work with because a lot of older homes and mod rehab need homes do need to meet ADA and fair housing standards. We really appreciate those comments and for the Housing Trust Fund, we just hope that the same qualifications are followed in the hopes that communities can build more inclusive and accessible communities. I will be submitting written comments at the address as well. Thank you for your time.

### **Andrew Chanania, North Fork Development**

- Just a quick note to say that over the last few years you all have certainly worked hard to reduce some barriers to entry as far as the applications go, what you're asking, and how you're asking it and that certainly, I appreciate the efforts that you and your staff have made to make it easier for us to apply for these programs and put these funds to use. Along those lines, I wanted to

make a comment about the requirement that a preliminary architectural report be submitted with the application if you're doing new construction and CNAs completed as part of the application for rehabilitation projects. These are often lengthy, large documents that require a lot of time as well as capital to produce and it seems like there are some overlaps between what is being asked in the PAR and what's being asked in the application, and I was wondering if Commerce would consider either delaying that preliminary architectural report requirement after award or perhaps finding another way to get all of that information that you need in a different way to make it a little bit easier to apply as well as reducing the financial barrier associated with those reports. Thank You.

**Heather McMillin, HomeWord in Missoula**

- I wanted to testify today, one, to echo comments previously made. I appreciate Shyla's comments and very specifically Andrew's comments in regard to some of the components. You guys have done an incredible job of trying to synthesize, clean up, and make this process easier, and we greatly appreciate it, and that's worth saying in full again. We know there's been a lot of work done and we appreciate that greatly. My team and I have discussed and we will be submitting in writing some components. I agree with Andrew's testimony in regards to the PAR and the CNA., They do cost a lot and at the preliminary application phase; that can be a challenge and the information is certainly needed to consider applications and compare and contrast, but is there a way we can look to do that the way other funding sources may already require? An additional comment would be that there are some design requirements within the Housing Trust Fund, requirements that differ from the HOME Program, or CDBG, or other sources, and will write specifically some of those components in a written format, but what it's doing on a specific project we're working on in Whitefish right now, Alpenglow, it's just, they're different enough that it's costing additional dollars, unnecessary dollars, and cost to the project. We feel we're meeting the intent of most of them, and that's a small example because we only have three, maybe four units that are affected, apartments and homes, but on larger projects, I've heard others have some considerable cost when there's a larger percentage spread across all of the homes being developed. I'm being a bit vague, but I will make sure that we follow up in writing with very specific design pieces in hopes that HTF, and maybe they're sourced from something else that we're not seeing, but they don't duplicate or in addition to building code, tax credit standards, to even HOME standards. We just want to make sure there's a little more consistency there and still meet the intent of why those design parameters are built into the program. There's a few other things in regard to the admin manual and a few forms, but we'll make sure that we follow up in writing and appreciate your guys' hard work and continued due diligence on making this, what is complicated, as simple as it can be. Thank you again for your time.