



The Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships

Housing and Community Development in Action



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For more information go to https://www.huduser.gov/portal/about/Pub_Phil_Intro.html

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Housing and Community Development in Action

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in partnership with the Council on Foundations, announces the 2025 Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships. This annual award recognizes outstanding partnerships between philanthropic organizations and the public sector that have led to measurable benefits in housing and community development. Examples of such benefits include economic and workforce development; improvements in health, safety, and education; disaster recovery and resilience; and expanding housing access for low- and moderate-income families.

In 2023, charitable giving in the United States totaled approximately \$577.16 billion, including \$103.53 billion given by foundations (Giving USA, 2023). Not only do foundations provide valuable financial resources for nonprofit organizations, but they also are guided by boards of trustees and staff who provide expert knowledge of the challenges and opportunities faced by the communities they serve. These human resources facilitate the capacity of foundations to lead on issues like housing and community development. By strengthening the connection between HUD and philanthropy, the Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships highlights the power of collective impact that can be achieved through partnerships between government entities and foundations.



Nature of the Award

This award recognizes outstanding partnerships between the philanthropic and public sectors. The award specifically emphasizes the partnership process and its impact as a community strategy to increase the quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents across all American geographies—urban, suburban, and rural. The award will recognize foundations that have navigated cross-sector relationships and built a stronger effort than either partner could have produced alone.

Recognizing that foundations of all sizes partner with the public sector, examples of competitive applications may include projects focused on achieving improvements in areas such as housing, neighborhood amenities, education, health, recreation, transportation, community participation, arts and culture, safety, disaster recovery and resilience, regional coordination, and economic development. The jury will take asset and staff size into consideration to ensure that the award recipients reflect a diversity of foundations.

Other details include:

- The award will be given to between five and ten foundations for completed or ongoing initiatives that are executed in partnership with any local, regional, or federal government entities. Recognizing the unique challenges, opportunities, and promise present in rural America, at least two awards will be given to rural initiatives. **The initiative submitted should have been either (a) completed between January 2024 and January 2025, or (b) if ongoing, in effect since at least January 2024.**

Eligibility

The competition is open to all charitable foundations, including Council members and nonmembers. Award winners from 2024 are ineligible to apply for one year following their award. To be eligible for this award, a foundation must qualify as either:

- a community foundation or community trust under IRC §§ 501(c)(3), 509(a)(2) and Sec. 1.170A-9(f) of the Treasury Regulations;
- a private foundation under IRC §§ 501(c)(3) and 509(a) including private operating foundations under 170(b)(1)(F); or
- a corporate giving program.

In addition, the foundation must have a primary purpose of:

- supporting charitable activities by making grants to unrelated organizations or institutions or to individuals for scientific, educational, cultural, religious, or other charitable purposes; and/or
- engaging in direct charitable activities or programs.

Further, the foundation must be properly organized in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States. (Foreign citizens may participate as employees of an entity that is properly organized in the United States and maintains a primary place of business in the country.)

Finally, eligibility for an award is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements set forth in the application form. HUD will not give this award to an individual or entity that has an active exclusion in the System for Award Management (www.sam.gov) or that has taken actions that are in tension with HUD's mission.

Criteria for Judging

Six key criteria will drive the review process. Specific questions for each can be found on the application form.

I. Strength of the Cross-Sector Partnership (35 points). The submission should demonstrate that the project utilized a cross-sector partnership to implement a successful initiative and must provide a detailed account of how partners were involved in each stage of the initiative. The most competitive submissions are able to show proof of formal public-philanthropic partnership efforts.

II. Locally Driven Outcomes (20 points). The submission should discuss the place-based nature of the project, the project's results, and the connection between the project's inputs and community outcomes, including how these outcomes have been or will be measured. In particular, the submission should emphasize solutions driven by local needs and active community engagement.

III. Partnerships that Advance HUD's Mission (15 points). The submission should illustrate how partnerships assist in the strategic creation of strong, sustainable, and quality affordable homes for all.

IV. Lasting Impact (10 points). The submission should show how the effort has created and will maintain a lasting impact in the community.

V. Evidence-Based Approach and/or Innovations (10 points). Some successful projects utilize an evidence-based, tried-and-true approach to address community needs, while other initiatives develop a creative and innovative strategy to tackle problems in new ways. The submission should discuss how the partnership relied on evidence and/or innovative thinking to develop the project.

VI. Transferability (10 points). The submission should suggest how the project can provide useful, prescriptive measures for other communities similarly situated to replicate or adapt.

Availability of Bonus Points

Bonus points are available for meeting the following additional criteria:

- Council on Foundations members in good standing in 2024 will receive 5 bonus points.
- Community foundations in good standing with the National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations® will receive 3 bonus points.
- Foundations with proof of current compliance with any accrediting body related to organizational performance or excellence will receive a maximum of 3 bonus points.



Judging and Award Ceremony

Judging for the Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships will take place in February 2025 by a panel of judges. The award ceremony will occur at the Council on Foundations' Leading Locally Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota on June 10-12, 2025. Each winning initiative will be highlighted in the award presentation from the stage and prominently featured in publications by HUD and the Council.

Submission Information and Requirements

All entries must be completed using the fillable PDF form and submitted by an eligible foundation via email to HUDaward@cof.org. The fillable PDF form will be available at <https://www.cof.org/page/hud-secretarys-award-public-philanthropic-partnerships> and https://www.huduser.gov/portal/about/Pub_Phil_Intro.html. The deadline for completing submission is 11:59 p.m. PT, Friday, February 14, 2025.

The electronic submission should include the following components:

I. The Official Application Form. A 2025 Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships application form that includes the title of the project, name and contact information of the person from the foundation submitting the application and who serves as the point of contact for the award application, and information about the project and the foundation.

II. An Executive Summary of the Project. A brief summary of the initiative (100 to 150 words) that can be used for publication and that includes information about the project such as its objectives, public and philanthropic partners, approach taken, and results, as applicable.

III. A Project Description. An explanation (600 to 900 words) of how the applicant meets the six award criteria described above.

IV. Support Letter or Statement. One letter or statement in support of the initiative, attesting to the value of the project. The letter may not be written by the foundation under consideration. Comments from partners (including the public-sector partner(s)), residents, donors, and/or other local stakeholders familiar with or knowledgeable about the project are encouraged. The letter must accompany the application via email and can be addressed to the applicant or the panel of judges.

V. Images. Applicants should submit three to five high-resolution digital images, as well as an image of the foundation's logo (in .jpg or .png format). All images should be at least 2 MB to be suitable for printing on posters. Images should supplement the content in the application. Applicants should also submit (as a Word document or PDF) a file containing a caption of between 15 and 25 words for each image. Digital images must not be copyrighted and must be able to be reproduced by the Council on Foundations or HUD without a fee, charge, or copyright infringement.

VI. Optional Supplemental Item. One additional item (not to exceed five pages) may be included as an attachment. The supporting item must be emailed with the application. The supporting item could take the form of a review of the implementation effort, analysis of the results, newspaper clipping, editorial/op-ed, etc. (The supplemental item must be submitted via email with the fillable PDF application form as a Word document, PDF file, or Web link.)

Additional Information

The award committee's procedures prohibit any communication with judges on behalf of an entrant. Such communication is cause for disqualification. All applications become the property of the Council on Foundations.

No registration fee is required to submit an entry. Additional information about applying for the 2025 Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships, along with the fillable PDF application form, is available on the HUD and the Council on Foundations websites https://www.huduser.gov/portal/about/Pub_Phil_Intro.html and <https://www.cof.org/page/hud-secretarys-award-public-philanthropic-partnerships>. If you have questions or need additional information, contact the Council at HUDaward@cof.org.

Please submit application forms (as PDF files) and all additional application materials via email to HUDaward@cof.org.

Deadline

The Council must receive the completed PDF application and any accompanying materials via email by 11:59 p.m. ET, Friday, February 14, 2025. Any entries submitted after this date will not be eligible.



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