

Planning and Design Criteria

As in past years, the HUD Innovation in Affordable Housing (IAH) competition focuses on innovation. Understanding innovation provides a foundation for approaching your solution and should be a starting point for each team. Innovation has three basic definitions: a new idea, the act or process of introducing new ideas, and the process of translating an idea or invention into a good or service that increases value. In application, the starting point for innovative design is deconstructing the design program and the owner's objectives for the project: What are we attempting to accomplish? What are the performance attributes we wish to improve? How can we improve durability, reduce energy consumption, improve resource utilization, improve indoor environmental quality, reduce environmental impact, increase community integration, increase density, improve resident quality of life, all while reducing first-cost? By analyzing and deconstructing the problem statement, and by asking the insightful questions, we place ourselves in a position to uncover, develop, and deploy innovative solutions. It is this journey that constitutes innovative design and the road competitors should travel.

The HUD Innovation in Affordable Housing competition is specifically asking teams to identify and develop innovative ideas and solutions. Innovation should be highlighted in all aspects outlined below, while balancing affordability with resource efficiency, durability, and resiliency. The dwellings should be designed for accessibility and healthy living with natural daylight and indoor environmental quality, as well as defined outdoor community and appropriate recreational spaces. The integration of advanced technologies is encouraged along with renewable and renewable-ready design.

Creative and imaginative solutions are sought. Keep in mind that jurors and housing authorities will be most impressed by original thinking. Teams are encouraged to create a new narrative for affordable housing, reimagining the way we plan for, design, and build affordable housing. While teams should emphasize innovation in all aspects of their solutions, the following criteria should be investigated:

Environmental

- **Durable:** Long lasting/low maintenance requirements.
- **Healthy:** Design for occupant health, safety, and psychological well-being.
- **Energy and Water Efficient:** Design for low-energy and low-water use requirements.
- **Resource Efficient:** Efficient use of materials; rapidly renewable materials; recycled content/recyclable.
- **Low-impact:** Design that either enhances or does not significantly diminish environmental quality.
- **Resilient:** Design and construction of buildings that resist natural and man-made hazards and provide for the protection of life, safety, and security of all residents.
- **Life Cycle Assessment:** Technique to assess environmental impacts of a product over all stages of its life.

Financial

- **Funding:** Primary sources contributing to financial pro forma; understanding rules, regulations, and guidelines.
- **Leveraging:** Secondary sources making use of or combining various financial instruments, such as tax credits, to increase the potential return of an investment.
- **Cash Flow:** Explore all potential funding sources and create alternative or innovative financing plans.
- **Affordable:** Determine cost effective measures to construct and operate over the long term.
- **Initial Capital Cost:** Fixed, one-time expenses associated with development.
- **Operations and Maintenance:** Day-to-day activities required to ensure that the building, systems, and equipment perform as intended.
- **Design for Replacement:** Ease of replacing systems, equipment, or building components as they wear or fail.
- **Infrastructure Longevity:** Design to remain serviceable well beyond financing term.

Social

- **Neighborhood:** Allowing for and encouraging social interaction among residents of a distinct community and within the wider surrounding community.
- **Access to Employment and Services:** Provide or make use of existing transportation networks to link the site with commercial centers.
- **Accessible:** Readily usable by individuals with varying degrees of physical ability.
- **Sense of Community:** Emotional connections wherein residents care about the community, value their relationships to community and its members, and are invested in the future of the community.
- **Social Networking:** The ability to connect with people and places, including access to amenities, health care, and supportive services, contributes to overall well-being, helps to lower the risk of isolation, and enhances independence.
- **Sense of Place:** Creating an imageable perception of a unique or special place.
- **Sense of Control and Comfort:** Engendering individual ownership of place to promote physical and emotional well-being.

Program:

Since 1940, Fresno Housing Authority has been providing affordable housing to low-income individuals (including seniors, veterans, farm workers, individuals with disabilities, and more) through a variety of programs, services, and developments. Over the last 80 years, Fresno Housing continues to create vibrant communities, build quality affordable housing and support the success of nearly 50,000 residents (24,000 children). Giving children a safe and stable place to live has been shown to benefit them academically and support their overall development and well-being.

- Fresno Housing administers nearly 13,000 Housing Choice Vouchers- assisting more than 35,000 residents, of those approximately 17,000 are children.
- The agency provides stable, quality public and affordable housing to over 11,000 residents, of those approximately 5,500 are children.

Placemaking Vision: Creating Vibrant Communities

Fresno Housing’s mission is to create a safe and stable place to live, benefiting the entire community. Currently, Fresno Housing manages and/or owns nearly 80 multi-family housing developments and are committed to the ongoing acquisition, renovation, and construction of affordable housing throughout Fresno County.

With an entrepreneurial view to the future, Fresno Housing seeks public and private partners to develop and to renovate existing, multifamily and single-family homes and housing with the appropriate amenities and services where families are comfortably housed, children have stable school attendance, and neighborhoods can be rejuvenated.

Fresno Housing understands that creating a sense of place demands more than the development of physical design elements. It sees “sensitivity to place” as an important part of design for all projects. This practice ensures its properties include special features such as architectural adornment, art in its public spaces, community gardens, gathering areas, and other elements, enhancing not only the sites themselves but the neighborhoods of which they are a part.

Strategic Direction: Development & Empowerment

In 2010, Fresno Housing embarked on a new strategic plan that changed the trajectory for the organization. Diving head-first into real estate development and resident empowerment initiatives, while simultaneously continuing to administer traditional federal housing programs. Since 2010, Fresno Housing has developed over 2,100 quality affordable housing units. As an affordable housing developer, Fresno Housing, brings private sector principals to a public institution.

By acting as the developer on proprietary real estate projects and maintaining all necessary disciplines under one roof, Fresno Housing is not only able to incorporate resident needs and local priorities into each project, but also capture sought-after developer fees and then reinvest them back into the community.

Site Development:

Firebaugh Scattered Public Housing Sites: Located in the rural community of Firebaugh, California, Fresno Housing owns and operates a collection of five existing affordable and public housing sites (listed below). Currently, these sites are serving low-income families, seniors, and farmworkers. The properties are contiguously located; however, they are separated by unappealing fences leaving residents without the option for community connectedness in this neighborhood.

Teams should develop innovative plans that transform neighborhood, keeping residents needs and quality of life in mind. Teams are also challenged to design physical connections throughout the neighborhood. Future master planning of this community may involve the rehabilitation and/or demolition of existing sites and will potentially include two acres of vacant land.

The goal of this project is to define a plan that incorporates and boosts resident engagement and positively impacts the quality of life, housing, and community. Fresno Housing hopes to

complete a vision stitching the five properties together to create a fluid and walkable sense of community, rather than the existing fenced-off and divided place it is today.

Firebaugh Scattered Public Housing Sites:

1. La Joya Commons – 1501 Clyde Fannon Road: This property is the first to be improved, and proposed plans have been developed. (Please see La Joya’s current site plans here <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1f6iJVJEt4Pd-ATb8OrgaR-ePh2KQlqBc>). Plans include demolition of an existing 34 unit development on six acres, and building a new 68 unit development on four acres, with two acres remaining available for a new use to be determined.
2. Cardella Courts – 419 P Street: Existing Public Housing
3. Firebaugh Elderly – 1662 Thomas Conboy Avenue: Existing Senior Housing
4. Maldonado Plaza – 1779 Thomas Conboy Avenue: Existing Migrant Housing managed by third party property management company
5. Mendoza Terrace – 1613 Mendoza Drive: Existing Public Housing

Critical Considerations:

Successful projects will address the program, solve for the design criteria, and will respond to the following questions:

- What aspects of your design innovatively addresses the needs of low-income families, seniors, and farmworkers in a rural community?
- How does your solution respond to the site, zoning, and building code requirements or restrictions?
- How does your proposed design interact with the site?
 - What does your community engagement look like and how will it involve rural residents, and how does diversity, equity and inclusion play a role?
 - What is your plan to encourage development while simultaneously preventing the residential displacement of the current populations?
- What innovative approaches did you employ in developing your design relative to the restrictions or opportunities presented by the site?
- What innovative energy efficiency, water conservation, and renewable energy strategies did you incorporate into your design?
- What innovative approaches did you employ in order to integrate your design into the neighborhood and community?
- How are themes of transit-oriented development emphasized?
 - How can transportation create cohesion within the proposed site, and address connectivity among other nearby cities?
- What services and activity settings are planned and provided for to improve the quality of life for the population served?
- How are you planning to finance the project and are you making recommendations on the phasing of applications or sequencing of properties developed?
- What innovative financing solutions did you explore for leveraging and partnerships?
- Explain how your design and financial solutions innovatively integrate best practices and technology into your solution.

Financial Considerations:

While each property is unique, the overall project should concentrate on one- through four-bedroom units serving households primarily at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). Based on AMI, maximum rents will vary, as the rent structure is a sliding scale based on a percentage of net adjusted income. The developments may be financed by a variety of state and federal funding sources. None of the proposed properties have committed funding sources at this time.

Supplemental resources provided by Fresno Housing:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1HznIGV0E19yuzjdUiNsAzpn7zoRBxW8i?usp=sharing>

Accessibility Regulations:

Federal:

Fair Housing Amendments Act (FHA)

- In newly constructed non-elevator buildings containing at least 4 dwelling units, all ground floor units must comply with the FHA's seven design and construction requirements.
 - o Req 1: Accessible building entrance on an accessible route
 - o Req 2: Accessible public and common-use areas
 - o Req 3: Usable doors
 - o Req 4: Accessible route into and through the unit
 - o Req 5: Controls in accessible locations
 - o Req 6: Reinforced walls for the later installation of grab bars
 - o Req 7: Usable kitchens and bathrooms
- There are 10 HUD-approved 'safe harbors' for FHA compliance. They can be found here: <http://www.fairhousingfirst.org/faq/safeharbors.html>

Section 504 of the Rehab Act of 1973 (Section 504)

- Section 504 requires access to programs which receive HUD funding. When a newly constructed HUD-funded housing development contains at least 5 units, 'the project' is subject to Section 504. Housing developed by a Housing Authority is subject to Section 504. Among other requirements of the Section 504 regulations; no less than 5% of the total number of dwelling units in 'the project' must comply with the accessible design and construction requirements of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) or the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design; these must be disbursed throughout the building(s) and site and among the various unit types available. An additional 2% of the total number of dwelling units in 'the project' must accommodate the needs of people with hearing and visual disabilities (H&V units). The Section 504 regulations can be found here:
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/disabilities/sect504faq; UFAS can be found here: <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-aba-standards/ufas>; the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design can be found here:
https://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm

Americans with Disabilities Act Title II (ADA)

- Title II of the ADA applies to activities of states and local governments. A housing authority is considered part of a local government. As a result, Title II applies to all housing developed by a housing authority. No less than 5% of the total number of dwelling units in ‘the project’ must comply with the accessible design and construction requirements of the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design; these must be disbursed throughout the site and among the various unit types available. An additional 2% of the total number of dwelling units in ‘the project’ must accommodate the needs of people with hearing and visual disabilities. The 2010 ADA Standards can be found here: http://www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards_index.htm

NOTE: Use of the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design in lieu of UFAS will satisfy the accessible design and construction requirements of Title II of the ADA and Section 504.

State:

State regulation information will be released after registration closes, on or about November 2, 2020.

Applicable HUD Programs:

The Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)

- The Housing Authority plans to use HUD’s RAD program to help finance the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the property.
- RAD allows proven financing tools to be applied to at-risk public and assisted housing and has two components:

1st Component - Allows Public Housing and Moderate Rehabilitation (Mod Rehab) properties to convert, under a competition limited to 60,000 units, to long-term Section 8 rental assistance contracts.

2nd Component - Allows Rent Supplement (Rent Supp), Rental Assistance Payment (RAP), and Mod Rehab properties to convert tenant-based vouchers issued upon contract expiration or termination to project-based assistance.

- RAD is a central part of the Department's rental housing preservation strategy, which works to preserve the nation's stock of deeply affordable rental housing, promote efficiency within and among HUD programs, and build strong, stable communities.

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program

- FSS is a HUD program that enables families assisted through the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and Public Housing (PH) residents...to increase their earned income and reduce their dependency on welfare assistance and rental subsidies.
- Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) work in collaboration with a Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) to secure commitments of public and private resources for the operation of the FSS program, to develop the PHA’s FSS Action Plan, and to implement the program.

- FSS was established in 1990 by section 554 of the National Affordable Housing Act, which amended Title I of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 by adding Section 23 for the FSS program. It is a successor program to project self-sufficiency and operation bootstrap. It was modified by the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHRWA) of 1998.
- FSS regulations are found at 24 CFR Part 984.

Housing Choice Voucher Program Section 8

- The housing choice voucher program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments.
- The participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects.
- Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing agencies (PHAs). The PHAs receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer the voucher program.
- A family that is issued a housing voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the family's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. This unit may include the family's present residence. Rental units must meet minimum standards of health and safety, as determined by the PHA.
- A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the PHA on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. Under certain circumstances, if authorized by the PHA, a family may use its voucher to purchase a modest home.

Other Applicable Federal Programs:

LIHTC

- The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program uses tax policy to help develop affordable rental housing for low and very low-income families. Originally part of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the LIHTC program leverages private capital and investor equity to support the development of new and rehabilitated affordable rental housing.
- In general, state governments can adapt the LIHTC program to meet their housing needs under broad federal guidelines.
- The private sector carries all development and marketing risk and enforces strong oversight and accountability. Investors only get to claim and keep the tax credits if their units are built, leased and maintained as affordable housing throughout a 15-year compliance period.
- Many states enforce a 15-year extended-use period to require that properties stay affordable beyond the first 15 years.
- States use a competitive process to award developers with credits.