

**HOME American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) Investment Partnership Program
Notice of Funding Availability***

The City of Lowell, Department of Planning and Development (DPD) is soliciting proposals for the use of HOME-ARP funds. The HOME-ARP program provides grants or loans for activities that construct, acquire and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent for occupancy by households of individuals and families that meet the definition of the HOME-ARP qualifying populations.

HOME-ARP is a one-time, time-limited funding source that must be fully drawn by September 30, 2030. Due to time-constraints of the funding, the City of Lowell highly encourages developers with projects near closing to apply.

Projects receiving funds must ensure that HOME-ARP funded housing units remain affordable for a specific length of time (a minimum of 15 years for all HOME-ARP assisted rental housing projects irrespective of whether the units are acquired, rehabilitated and/or newly constructed).

Funds will be awarded to eligible projects that demonstrate a readiness to proceed, meet the strict minimum requirements as described in this notice, and score well on the evaluation criteria.

**The City will accept applications for the use of HOME-ARP funds on a rolling basis.
HOME-ARP funds under this notice will be available beginning October 1, 2024.**

One (1) signed original and five (5) copies of an application form and applicable attachments is required and may be mailed or hand delivered to:

City of Lowell, Department of Planning and Development
Attn: Phil Ferreira
JFK Civic Center, 50 Arcand Drive
Lowell, MA 01852

**Applicants are encouraged to discuss their proposed projects with DPD staff.
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:**

Phil Ferreira, Housing Program Manager
Phone: (978) 674-4252
Email: pferreira@lowellma.gov

* Note: HOME-ARP funds are special one-time funds made available by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

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General Information

Eligible Activities

Eligible HOME-ARP activities are described in the Community Planning and Development (CPD) Notice [CPD-21-10](#). HOME-ARP funds may be used for the development of housing as defined at [24 CFR 92.2](#), including but not limited to permanent and transitional housing. The following activities are eligible for HOME-ARP assistance:

- * Real property acquisition[†]
- * New Construction
- * Reconstruction or Rehabilitation

Eligible project costs could include development hard costs, acquisition costs, and related soft costs.

HOME-ARP may pay up to 100 percent of the eligible and reasonable HOME-ARP costs allocated to a HOME-ARP unit. All costs paid by HOME-ARP funds must comply with the requirements of Notice CPD-21-10 and the Cost Principles at 2 CFR part 200, subpart E of the Uniform Administrative Requirements.

Qualifying Populations

Rental units assisted with HOME-ARP Funds must be made available to households who meet one of the qualifying populations.

1. Homeless (QP1) as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 24 CFR 91.5 “Homeless” paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) only.
2. At risk of homelessness (QP2) as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 24 CFR 91.5 “At risk of homelessness”
3. Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking (defined by the Violence Against Women Act, 24 CFR 5.2033), and/or or human trafficking (defined by Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000) (QP3).
4. Other Populations (QP4) as defined by Section IV of Notice CPD-21-10.
 - a) Other families requiring services or housing assistance to prevent homelessness: where assistance would prevent the individuals or family’s homelessness, such as household who were previously met the definition of “Homeless” as defined by 24 CFR 91.5, are currently housed due to temporary or emergency assistance, and who need additional housing assistance or supportive services to avoid a return to homelessness or serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability.

OR
 - b) At Greatest Risk of Housing Instability: where a household has an annual income less than or equal to 30% of the area median income and is experiencing severe cost burden (paying more than 50% of the monthly household income towards housing costs)

OR

where a household has an annual income less than or equal to 50% of the area median income and meets one of the conditions in paragraph (iii) of “At risk of homelessness” definition at 24 CFR 91.5.

For full qualifying population definitions see Section IV of Notice [CPD-21-10](#).

For qualifying population definitions that include an income limit (QP2 and QP4) the Area Median Income level must be used. The current HUD income limits are effective May 15, 2023:

[†] Acquisition of vacant land or demolition may be undertaken only with respect to a HOME-ARP project for which construction is expected to start within 12 months of commitment.

% of Median	Income Limit per Number of Persons in Household							
	1 person	2 person	3 person	4 person	5 person	6 person	7 person	8 person
0% - 30%	\$28,900	\$33,000	\$37,150	\$41,250	\$44,550	\$47,850	\$51,150	\$54,450
31% - 50%	\$48,150	\$55,000	\$61,900	\$68,750	\$74,250	\$79,750	\$85,250	\$90,250

Preferences

The City of Lowell did not establish preferences for HOME-ARP rental projects. All four qualifying populations must have access to any HOME-ARP assisted units. Applicants must consider this in their unit composition and design, site location, and tenant selection plan.

Referral Methods

Applicants must accept applications for HOME-ARP rental units from all four qualifying populations and must be placed on a project specific waiting list in chronological order of receipt. The waiting list must be held by the project owner.

Affordability Restriction

Units assisted with HOME-ARP funds will be required to meet the minimum period of affordability of at least fifteen (15) years. The affordability of units will be enforced through a Land Use Restrictive Covenant (LURC).

Property Standards

HOME-ARP rental units must comply with all property standards applicable to rental projects required in 24 CFR 92.251 paragraphs (a) new construction, (b) rehabilitation projects, (c)(1) and (2) acquisition of standard housing, (e) manufactured housing, and (f) on-going property condition standards.

The units must comply with the ongoing property condition standards of 24 CFR 92.251(f) throughout the compliance period as demonstrated by an on-site inspection within 12 months of project completion and an on-site inspection at least once every three years thereafter as required by 24 CFR 92.504.

General Administrative Structure

The selected agency shall be responsible for the following, but not limited to:

- Marketing program to potential applicants
- Tenant Selection and Determination of Eligibility
- Annual Certification of Eligibility, if applicable
- Unit Inspection consistent with property standards required in 24 CFR 92.251
- Maintaining required records
- Proving all required information for reports

DPD shall be responsible for executing IDIS draw downs, monitoring and evaluating program performance, and reporting accomplishments to HUD.

Monitoring Performance

The City of Lowell will monitor progress and implementation of the program to ensure that the regulatory and statutory requirements are met and to assess program outcomes. Further discussion about performance monitoring is included in the City’s HOME-ARP Policies and Procedures.

Lowell Housing Priorities

The City of Lowell will follow HUD’s standard format for housing-related goals and specific objectives to help guide the use of federal funds. These goals are listed in the table below.

HUD Consolidated Plan Goals and Objectives

GOAL: RENTAL HOUSING

Objectives:

1. Increase the supply of affordable rental housing (particularly for households earning <50% AMI)
2. Improve the quality of affordable rental housing
3. Improve access to affordable rental housing
4. Improve access to affordable rental housing for minorities

In addition to meeting one of HUD’s standard objectives, proposed projects should address at least one of the City’s Housing Priorities described below.

City of Lowell HOME Housing Priorities

- **Support projects that are consistent with the housing goals of the City’s Lowell Forward Plan**
- **Expand housing opportunities in Lowell’s Downtown**
- **Redevelop vacant and abandoned properties for affordable housing**
- **Implement the goals of the City’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness**

Proposal Submission Process

Eligible Applicants

Funds are available to for-profit and non-profit corporations and organizations, including Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) and Community Development Corporations.

Eligible applicants should complete the HOME Application and supply all required attachments.

As of April 4, 2022, the federal government stopped using the Dun & Bradstreet data universal numbering system (DUNS) number to uniquely identify entities. Now, entities doing business with the federal government use the Unique Entity ID (UEI) created in the System for Award Management (SAM). If you are registered in SAM.gov (active or not), you already have a UEI. It is viewable at SAM.gov. If you are new to SAM.gov and will be registering for the first time, you will get your UEI during registration. To find information on how to obtain a UEI number and register in SAM please visit the following website: <https://sam.gov/content/home>

Submittal Requirements:

One (1) signed original and five (5) copies of each proposal are required. Complete applications must be received (via mail or hand-delivered) and time-stamped at the DPD offices and addressed to:

City of Lowell, Department of Planning and Development
Attn: Phil Ferreira
JFK Civic Center, 50 Arcand Drive
Lowell, MA 01852

A separate proposal should be submitted for each project address. There is no limit on the number of projects receiving assistance through this notice.

Timeline

Each grant awarded is subject to the execution of a final agreement between the City and the applicant. The grant amount and the project description are subject to modification by the City. No expenditure of funds can be incurred until an agreement has been fully executed and the City has issued an approved purchase order. Selected developers will draw down funds based on documented expenses.

Applicants should keep in mind that other federal regulations will apply that may impact the schedule and cost of projects receiving HOME-ARP funds including the federal environmental review process, Davis Bacon Wage requirements, Section 3 requirements and lead-based paint rules. (This list is not inclusive.)

Please Note – HOME-ARP Applicants must agree to meet with the staff of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) for review and approval of all proposed site work, exterior elevations of any proposed buildings, and approval of all final plans. The DPD will review the site development plans for their compatibility with the existing neighborhood character as well as conformance with applicable zoning regulations and must grant approval prior to the commence of any construction. The City will not issue a building permit until the Department of Planning and Development has signed off on the final plans.

Proposal Evaluation

Requirements for Consideration

Funds available through this notice will be allowed for project soft costs and/or hard costs.

Rental units assisted with HOME-ARP funds must be reserved for households meeting one of the HOME-ARP qualifying populations at the time of initial occupancy. The household's contribution toward rent during this period must be affordable based on a determination of the household's income. In no case can the HOME-ARP rents exceed 30% of the adjusted income of a household whose annual income is equal to or less than 50% of the median income for the area, as determined by HUD, with adjustments for the number of bedrooms in the unit. HUD will publish the HOME-ARP rental limits on an annual basis. The rent limits for HOME-ARP units for qualifying households include the rent plus the utility allowance. In some cases, households may have zero income.

A household that met the definition of one of the HOME-ARP qualifying populations at initial income and whose annual income at the time of income re-certification is above 50% of median income for the area but below 80% of median income for the area must pay rent specified in 24 CFR 92.252(a).

Projects must be completed within 4 years of project commitment and all HOME-ARP funds must be expended by September 30, 2030. HOME-ARP assisted units must be occupied by eligible qualifying populations within 6 months following project completion.

The affordability period of these units will be a minimum of 15 years.

HOME-ARP Projects must comply with the Underwriting & Subsidy Layering guidelines established in Section VI.B.10 of the HUD HOME-ARP Notice CPD-21-10.

Please also note that applicants are highly encouraged to speak with staff in the City's planning department to review neighborhood design guidelines when developing their plans.

Minimum Evaluation Criteria

The City of Lowell will be evaluating all Proposals to qualify them as being responsible and responsive to the requirements of the RFP. All Proposals must include the following elements to be considered valid for HOME-ARP funds.

1. Complete Proposal – A complete HOME-ARP Application along with required attachments. Note applicants may submit a current DHCD One-Stop Application in lieu of the City's HOME-ARP Application, but must ensure all HOME-ARP requirements are clearly stated in the One-Stop Application.
2. HOME-ARP Eligible – Proposed projects must be eligible under the HUD HOME-ARP Investment Partnerships federal Notice at CPD-21-10.
3. Site Control – Evidence of site control in the form of recorded deeds, purchase or option agreements, or other acceptable documentation.
4. Evidence of Financial Ability – The proposal must include information that will demonstrate to the city that the proposed developer has the financial ability to purchase and/or develop and manage the proposed development. All potential sources of funds to complete the project must be identified and explained in detail. (See comparative criteria for additional information.)

Comparative Criteria

Only proposals that meet the minimum criteria will be reviewed for eligibility under the comparative criteria. Applicants who meet all minimum criteria and score highly advantageous on all comparative criteria will be considered eligible for HOME-ARP funds and are likely to be awarded funding on a rolling basis in amounts consistent with requests supported by reasonable budgets that accompany applications. Awards will be made to highly advantageous proposals subject to the availability of HOME-ARP funds. Proposals that meet the minimum criteria but fail to meet the highly advantageous criteria may be considered in the absence of eligible highly advantageous applications. These applicants may be asked to revise their applications in a manner which would make them highly advantageous. At its discretion, the City may also choose to delay action in anticipation of more highly advantageous applications. The City will not consider applications that fall into the Unacceptable criteria.

	<i>Highly Advantageous</i>	<i>Advantageous</i>	<i>Not Advantageous</i>	<i>Unacceptable</i>
1. Proposed Use (rental housing)	Proposed development is a compatible use in terms of zoning and neighborhood character.	N/A	Insufficient information with respect to use.	Use is incompatible with current zoning and neighborhood character.
2. Site Development Proposal The proposer must supply a site plan with drawings that clearly illustrate the intended development scheme of the property.	<p>Site development proposal includes detailed conceptual site plan information showing building location, floor plans, building elevations, landscaping and parking accommodations, landscape design plan, and will make all units Energy Start Certified</p> <p>Proposed development is compatible with existing neighborhood character and the proposed buildings and site improvements would be of benefit to the surrounding properties.</p> <p>A list of all proposed improvements including structural and functional interior and exterior improvements</p>	<p>Site development proposal includes detailed conceptual site plan information showing building location, floor plans, building elevations, landscaping and parking accommodations, landscape design plan, and will make all units Energy Start Certified</p> <p>A list of all proposed improvements including structural and functional interior and exterior improvements</p>	<p>Incomplete development proposal, which does not clearly depict building location, floor plans, building elevations, landscape design plan. OR</p> <p>Proposed development is incompatible with existing neighborhood character and the architectural character of the proposed buildings would be detrimental to surrounding properties</p>	No site development proposal included.
3. Site Development Schedule	Estimated completion schedule for improvements less than 12 months. Schedule includes a realistic and detailed timetable for all phases of construction	Estimated completion schedule for improvements less than 18 months. Limited detail provided regarding construction schedule and phasing	Estimated completion schedule for improvements greater than 18 months	No estimated completion schedule provided
4. Site Development Budget	Site development budget includes a complete list of improvements with realistic and accurate cost estimates for all line items and phases of construction as well as an operating budget	Site development budget provides realistic but general cost information for the proposed project	Incomplete development budget and/or cost estimates. Includes questionable and/or unrealistic cost estimates for improvements	No estimated site development budget provided

<p>5. Energy Efficiency</p>	<p>Proposed development complies with energy star standards, as well as applicable local and state housing code.</p>	<p>Proposed development complies with energy star standards, as well as applicable local and state housing code.</p>	<p>Proposed development will comply with applicable local and state housing code.</p>	<p>No evidence to demonstrate that proposed development will comply with applicable local and state housing code.</p>
<p>6. Financial Status/ Evidence of Financial Ability</p>	<p>Evidence includes binding bank pre-qualification letters, and lender references showing the source of all funds for acquisition, construction, and site development. Proposer clearly identifies all sources of funds to complete the project and has identified all funds including the amount of HOME-ARP and other state/federal funds or tax credits needed to make the project financially feasible.</p>	<p>Evidence includes bank pre-qualification letters, and lender references showing the source of funds for acquisition, construction, and site development. Proposer clearly identifies all sources of funds including the amount of HOME-ARP and other state/federal funds or tax credits needed to make the project financially feasible.</p>	<p>No letters of interest from lenders, lender references showing the source of funds for acquisition, construction, site development.</p>	<p>Meets requirements of minimum criteria only.</p>
<p>7. Experience of Development Team with Similar Projects</p>	<p>The team clearly identifies three or more projects that it has completed that are similar in size and scope to the project being proposed</p>	<p>The team clearly identifies two or more projects that it has completed that are similar in size and scope to the project being proposed</p>	<p>The team clearly identifies two or more projects that is has completed that are of a smaller size and scope to the project being proposed</p>	<p>Not enough information on past experience to determine eligibility</p>
<p>8. Prior Experience Managing and Maintaining Affordable Housing Projects</p>	<p>Proposal describes in detail how the Proposer will manage and maintain affordable units and explain how the Proposer will use its resources to insure that the units remain affordable for a period of time not less than the minimum affordability restriction as outlined in the funding notice and in compliance with the example affordable housing deed rider/restriction and grant agreement attached to this notice or as otherwise required by the City of Lowell. Explain in full how you're past experiences with affordable housing projects, including a complete list of rental properties owned and managed.</p>	<p>The proposal includes some minor details on how the proposed development will be managed. Include a complete list of rental properties owned and managed.</p>	<p>Proposal includes little or no information on how the Proposer will use its resources to ensure that the units remain affordable for a period of time not less than the minimum affordability restriction outlined in this funding notice and in compliance with the example affordable housing deed rider/restriction and grant agreement as attached to this notice or as otherwise required by the City of Lowell. No information on experience with affordable housing or no experience with affordable housing. Does not include a complete list of rental properties owned and managed.</p>	<p>No information on experience dealing with affordable housing and enforcement of affordable housing restrictions.</p>

HOME American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) Investment Partnership Program

COMPLETE THE MULTI-FAMILY RENTAL HOUSING APPLICATION AS APPLICABLE AND ATTACH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

1. **Executive Summary** that provides a **detailed scope of work**. Include name of current owner and terms of sale. Include square footage of project site, number of buildings and detail the present use and proposed use of the project site. Describe whether the project consists of new construction or acquisition/additions and/or renovations to existing building(s). Describe in detail the plan for construction or renovation, including projected number of units. Detail the project's benefit to the neighboring community and the city as a whole. Include the HOME-ARP amount requested and the number of HOME-ARP units created.
2. Provide the **name of any related organization(s)** (more than 20% common ownership or control) and describe the relationship with the proposed project owner and/or applicant whether it is as a subsidiary, or direct or indirect affiliation(s). List all owners, managing members, and partners of applicant. List all stockholders/members having 20% or more interest in applicant. If the applicant is a publicly held corporation, please provide the latest proxy statement indicating stock ownership.
3. Describe **applicant's development experience** including type and number of units developed, years in business, and any prior experience with the City of Lowell. List three (3) most recent projects completed by name, location and number of units, and a reference name and phone number for each project. Describe your familiarity with HOME regulations and knowledge of HOME Rental Housing programs.
4. Describe the **property manager's experience** and number of units currently managed. Include any experience working with households who qualify under the HOME-ARP qualifying populations.
5. Provide letters from financial institutions and other funders indicating **conditional commitment of funds**.
6. Provide an **Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing plan**, HUD form 935.2 is acceptable. Please describe how your organization will conduct outreach to ensure eligible qualifying populations are informed of the availability of HOME-ARP assisted rental units and encouraged to apply. Explain how individuals hardest to reach will be made aware and given the opportunity to apply for assistance, including individuals who may not typically apply for assistance, those with limited English-proficiency, those with visual or hearing impairment, illiterate, etc
7. Provide the last three (3) years of **audited financial statements** of the "Owner".
8. **Waiting List:** Please describe how you will develop and maintain a waiting list that is consistent with the City's HOME-ARP Policies and Procedures and ensures that applicants are selected for assistance in a fair and equitable manner.
9. Please describe the process your organization will implement to meet the reporting requirements of this program including staff dedicated to this step, and policies and procedures to ensure timeliness and quality of data.

Projects are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Additional documentation may be required.

