

§13056-J. Housing Opportunity Program

1. Program established; administration. The Housing Opportunity Program, referred to in this section as "the program," is established within the department to encourage and support the development of additional housing units in the State, including housing units that are affordable for low-income and moderate-income individuals and housing units targeted to community workforce housing needs. The department shall administer the program and provide technical and financial assistance to support communities implementing zoning and land use-related policies necessary to support increased housing development. The program must support regional approaches and municipal model ordinance development and encourage policies that support increased housing density, where feasible, to protect working lands and natural lands.

[PL 2021, c. 635, Pt. U, §1 (NEW).]

2. Housing Opportunity Fund. The Housing Opportunity Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established as a fund within the department for the purpose of providing funds for the program. The fund consists of money appropriated to the fund by the Legislature and any funds received by the department for the purposes of the program.

A. The department shall solicit applications for grants from the fund through a competitive application process. Grants may be awarded to experienced service providers to support municipal ordinance development, provide technical assistance and encourage public participation and community engagement in the process of increasing housing opportunities. Programs receiving grants under this paragraph may encourage regional coordination between municipalities. [PL 2021, c. 635, Pt. U, §1 (NEW).]

B. The department shall solicit applications for and shall award through a competitive application process grants for the following:

(1) Community housing planning services to municipalities to support the creation of housing development plans, including municipal ordinances, and policy amendments to support those plans. Grants awarded must be for a period of up to 3 years, with required progress reports each year; and

(2) Community housing implementation services. [PL 2021, c. 635, Pt. U, §1 (NEW).]

C. The department shall provide technical assistance, housing policy development and guidance directly to regional groups, municipalities and other housing stakeholders, to the extent feasible with available resources. This may include, but is not limited to, assisting municipalities with information about available grant opportunities, sharing best practices from jurisdictions inside and outside of the State, providing model language for local ordinances and policies and providing information to the general public, which may support local and statewide policy changes meant to increase the supply of housing. [PL 2021, c. 635, Pt. U, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2021, c. 635, Pt. U, §1 (NEW).]

3. Program evaluation. A recipient of grant funds through the program shall cooperate with the department in performing evaluations and specific reporting requirements.

[PL 2021, c. 635, Pt. U, §1 (NEW).]

4. Rulemaking. The department shall establish by rule the criteria for eligibility for grants from the program and the process of application. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2021, c. 635, Pt. U, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2021, c. 635, Pt. U, §1 (NEW).

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