

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY FOR COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS - SINGLE FAMILY HOMEOWNERSHIP



DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Release Date: June 26, 2020 Comment Submission Deadline: July 15, 2020 COMMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED IN WRITING ONLY AND MUST BE SUBMITTED TO: dhcd.ahtfcomments@baltimorecity.gov

> Michael Braverman Commissioner

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1. SCHEDULE

NOFA Guidelines & Application Available	
Pre-Proposal Conference	
Submission of Written Questions	
Answers to Written Questions Posted on DHCD's website	
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Notification of Award	

2. INTRODUCTION

Through this Notice of Funding Availability (the NOFA), The Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) is making up to \$2 million available from its Affordable Housing Trust Fund to support single family homeownership projects sponsored by Community Land Trusts (CLTs). DHCD anticipates releasing a second NOFA, which is expected to include rental projects later in 2020. Applicants who do not receive funding for a project through this NOFA can apply for the second NOFA provided that their proposed project meets eligibility and submission criteria. Applicants awarded funds through this NOFA can still apply for funding for the same project or a different project in the second NOFA provided that their proposed project meets eligibility and submission criteria.

Qualified applicants can request up to \$750,000 per project. Qualified applicants who work in more than one community can submit more than one project for funding and will not be penalized, however, DHCD reserves the right to ensure that projects funded include geographic representation and support a range of eligible organizations.

DHCD is seeking impactful projects that will leverage additional investment and can demonstrate that local residents and stakeholders are leading and managing revitalization efforts. Applicants must be able to show that they: meet all State and established national standards associated with community land trusts as further described in this NOFA; have the capacity to undertake and complete projects in no more than two (2) years from executing a Funding Agreement, including site control; have committed sources of funding; and have established infrastructure to support residents and manage the financing and post-purchase stewardship associated with land trust properties.

Projects supported through this NOFA should also support DHCD's community development goals outlined in its Framework for Community Development, to meet the demand for affordable housing, and to integrate land trust homes as part of broader mixed-income housing strategies.

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund was established to support the housing needs of the City's low and verylow income households. Article I, Section 14 of the City's Charter establishes the Trust Fund and requires that all funds be spent on housing and housing-related activities for households earning 50 percent or less of the Area Median Income (the "AMI") as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and that at least half of available funds be spent on households earning 30 percent or less of the AMI. Learn more about the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the 2020 Area Median Income Limits on DHCD's website.

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To be considered for an award of funds, applicants are required to meet Threshold Requirements and must receive a minimum score of 92 out of a possible 115 points. Applications will be scored and ranked based on project feasibility, community engagement, and achieving equity with additional opportunities to qualify for up to 20 bonus points. Applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel comprised of City agency representatives. Recommendations for awards will be provided to the Housing Commissioner for the final decision.

Further information and guidance regarding eligible applicants, application requirements and scoring is included in these Guidelines. Prospective applicants are encouraged to read this document thoroughly, attend the Pre-Proposal conference, and submit follow-up questions.

3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This NOFA is limited to Community Land Trusts, which are defined as nonprofit, 501 (c)(3) organizations developed by communities or public entities with a mission of providing perpetually affordable (99-year) homes and stewardship of the land. Eligible applicants should be able to demonstrate the following:

- Registration as an Affordable Housing Land Trust with the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation and compliance with the State's Affordable Housing Land Trust Laws found in Section 14 of the Annotated Code of the Maryland Real Property Article.
- Articles of Incorporation expressly documenting the primary purpose of the organization as a land trust and By-Laws that, at a minimum, establish terms for the board of directors, officers, stewardship, conflicts of interest, ownership and resale limitations, and dissolution.
- A tri-partite board of directors comprised of one-third community members, one-third land trust residents (when available), and one-third local stakeholders and experts – or an equivalent structure that balances community control with additional expertise.
- Established Stewardship Standards that include an administrative manual, electronic information tracking and management system for program data, sales and loan closings, maintenance and repair funds, and resale value.
- Ground Lease based on accepted national standards or comparable.
- Sample Warranty Deed or comparable.

Eligible applicants are encouraged to partner with experienced developers and other partners to successfully complete their projects. Multiple land trusts can submit a collaborative or joint application for the same project. Teams should have the experience, financial, and technical capacity to produce and support units as perpetually affordable housing. Applicants are encouraged to include architects, general contractors, property managers, homeownership counselors, lender and investors, and any other member necessary to finance, construct or operate the project.



In the event funds are awarded, DHCD will require an executed Memorandum of Understanding or Partnership Agreement between all partners prior to executing a Funding Agreement with the City.

It is the Department's policy to promote equitable community development by directing funds to communities that suffer from long-term and historical disinvestment resulting in significant disinvestment. At the Housing Commissioner's discretion, the Department may prioritize funds for these communities and organizations demonstrating strong local leadership and a broad, inclusive approach to neighborhood revitalizations approaches and strategies.

4. FUNDING LIMITS

Eligible applicants can request a maximum of \$750,000 per project. Applicants that consistently work in more than one neighborhood/community can submit more than one project for funding and will not be penalized, however, DHCD reserves the right to ensure that funded projects include geographic representation and support a broad range of eligible organizations. Such applicants will also need to demonstrate the organizational capacity to implement projects. Applicants that request funds for multiple projects in the same community will be required to demonstrate how these projects support a community plan or other strategic revitalization initiative, along with market data supporting the need for perpetual affordability.

Additionally:

- Funds are limited to households earning 50 percent of AMI or below.
- Funds can be used to fund up to 50 percent of a project's Total Development Cost (TDC) for housing units that are restricted to persons with incomes at or below 50 percent of AMI, or up to 66 percent of a project's Total Development Costs for housing units that are restricted to persons with incomes at or below 30% of AMI.
- The maximum request per unit is \$50,000 for housing units that are restricted to persons with incomes at or below 50 percent of AMI, and \$100,000 per unit for housing units that are restricted to persons with incomes at or below 30 percent of AMI.
- Up to 20 percent of the total request can be requested as a predevelopment loan.
- Up to 20 percent of the total request can be used for operating costs directly related to the project's implementation.

ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

Funds can be requested to support operating, predevelopment and construction costs, provided that the request does not exceed the maximum limits stated in this NOFA. Eligible uses of funds include:

- Acquisition and stabilization of non-City-owned properties
- Architectural and Engineering
- Environmental assessment and testing
- Market and Financial Feasibility Analysis
- Construction
- Carrying Costs
- Financing and Lender Fees
- Legal Fees associated with closing, financing, and drafting CLT-required documents necessary for development,
- Consultant Fees directly associated with the implementation of the project
- Project management staff
- Customary Landscaping
- Infrastructure and utilities

5. INELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

Funds cannot be used for the following:

- Acquisition of City-Owned properties
- Staff that are not directly related to predevelopment, construction, or maintenance of the project
- General organizational operating costs such as rent, utilities, or operating supplies
- Relocation
- Repayment of existing loans or liens
- Community gardens or urban agriculture uses
- Projects that support a specific religious or other affiliation
- Commercial or economic development
- Costs associated with the preparation of this NOFA submission

6. HOW TO APPLY

Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Applicants must submit one (1) complete electronic copy of their application, using the Application Checklist as the Table of Contents, including all attachments and Threshold Requirements in a PDF format, and one (1) copy of their development budget as an Excel Spreadsheet.

Applications are due BY

DHCD.AHTFNOFA@BALTIMORECITY.COV

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

7. PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE & ADDDITIONAL QUESTIONS

DHCD will hold a pre-proposal conference on	_ from		_EST. The
meeting can be accessed using the link below or the call-in	number provid	ed below.	

THE ABOVE LINK CAN BE ACCESSED BY SIMULTANEOUSLY HOLDING DOWN THE CONTROL KEY AND A LEFT CLICK WITH THE COMPUTER MOUSE. To access by phone, call the number below and enter the access code:

The purpose of the pre-proposal conference is to review the NOFA, application requirements, evaluation and award process, and to answer questions. Please be advised that questions must be limited to the NOFA and application requirements and that DHCD staff are unable to answer questions regarding a specific project or their likelihood of receiving an award of funds. Not all questions may be able to be answered at the pre-proposal conference. All questions and responses from the pre-proposal conference will be posted on DHCD's website at ______ within seven (7) business days. DHCD will post a list of all attendees following the pre-proposal conference.

Additional questions regarding the NOFA can be submitted in writing only through ______ to: _______. Please be advised that DHCD is unable to respond to questions that are not submitted electronically. Responses will be posted on DHCD's website only within ten (10) business days of the submission deadline. Responses will not be provided by phone, US Mail, or to individual email addresses.

8. APPLICATION, SCORING AND BONUS POINTS

The application consists of four (4) parts: Threshold requirements, financial review, scored criteria, and signed certifications and authorizations.

Following the submission deadline, DHCD staff will provide a summary of all submissions that includes the following: applicant name, proposed project, location and units, project's total development cost, and amount of Trust Funds requested. This summary will be posted on DHCD's website at:



Threshold Review

Threshold review includes organizational, financial and compliance-related information and is used to determine whether an application is eligible for review. Applicants must include all items on the Threshold Checklist or their application will be considered incomplete and will be ineligible for review. DHCD will notify applicants electronically and in writing whether their application meets the Threshold Review requirements and will post an updated summary on its website. Flexibility in identifying alternative means of compliance may be considered on an individual basis.

Authorizations and Certifications

All applications must include the following:

- Authorization to Submit signed by a member of the lead applicant who is authorized to negotiate with the City and to sign a Funding Agreement
- Certification of Compliance
- Owned Property Disclosure
- Certification of Compliance
- □ Commitment to Comply
- Local Hire Certification

Organizational Documents

- □ Corporate Resolution/Board of Directors approval (nonprofit applicants)
- □ Articles of Incorporation & By-Laws (nonprofit applicants)
- \Box Current IRS Determination Letter indicating 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (3) status
- □ Evidence of Good Standing with the State of Maryland for all parties
- □ List of Board of Directors, titles, and affiliations (nonprofit applicants)
- □ Organizational chart indicating roles and responsibilities of all partners
- □ Copy of Cround Lease and Stewardship Standards
- □ Sample Warranty Deed or comparable
- □ Evidence of Good Standing with the State of Maryland



Financial Documents

- □ Commitment Letters, a lender's Letter of Intent or comparable
- □ Copy of the most recent 990 Tax Return (nonprofit applicants)
- □ Most recent Audited Financial Statement for applicants with annual budgets of \$500,000 or more
- □ Most recent Financial Statement as prepared by a certified accounting firm for applicants with annual budgets that are more than \$200,000 and less than \$500,000
- Most recent annual budget for applicants with annual budgets that are less than \$200,000. In the event funds are awarded, the applicant will be required to provide a Reviewed financial statement.

Local Hiring Plan

All submissions must include a Local Hiring Plan detailing how residents who live in the community where the proposed project is being built will have access to jobs and how individuals with barriers to employment will be recruited, provided training, and supported so that they can be successful. Applicants seeking a hiring-related bonus points should document how they will meet work hours related to construction and new hires from apprenticeship.

City Prevailing Wage Rates

The City's Prevailing Wage Law requires that for construction contracts in excess of \$5,000, every mechanic, laborer or apprentice shall be paid at a rate not less than the prevailing hourly wage rate established by the Board of Estimates and set forth in the City Code, Article 5, Subtitle 25, Section 25-2. No hourly employee other than an apprentice shall be paid less than the lowest classification for the project. The applicant's contractor must post the prevailing wage or face fines of \$20 per day per section 25-5 of Article 5, Subtitle 25 of the City's Code. If an employer does not pay the prevailing wage, a contractor must make restitution and pay a fine of \$50 per day that the employee was underpaid per Section 25-7 of Article 5, Subtitle 25 of the City's Code. The contractor must maintain payroll records and preserve them for three (3) years as per the Code provision and submit project payrolls for themselves and their subcontractors to DHCD and to the City's Wage Commission. Late submissions are subject to a fine of \$10 per day, per Section 25-9 of Article 5, Subtitle 25 of the City's Code. 2020 Prevailing Wage rates can be found at:

https://civilrights.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/2020%20APPROVED%20PREVAILING%20WAGE%20 RATES.pdf.

Green Building and Sustainability Requirements

Applicants are required to comply with the City's Green Building Law, which can be found at: https://dhcd. baltimorecity.gov/ce/green-building-std. If required, applicants must complete the City's Green Building Statement of Compliance when applying for Building permits.

Site Plan as described in the Project Feasibility question of the Application demonstrating that no operating parks are being displaced.

Maximum Funding Requests. Applications that exceed the maximum funding requests as described in Section 4 of these Guidelines will not be considered eligible for review or an award of funds.

Scored Criteria

Applications that meet all Threshold criteria will be scored and evaluated according to the following criteria: project feasibility; community engagement and participation; and achieving equity. Scored criteria is intended to ensure that awards are made to proposals that meet the Trust Fund's criteria and have a demonstrated impact on reducing the housing burden for the City's low and very-low income households, can leverage other sources of funds, can meet City, State, and private lenders' underwriting criteria, and can be completed within a reasonable timeframe.

Qualified applications may receive a maximum score of 115 points. To be considered for an award of funds, applicants must receive a minimum score of 92 points. Applications will be both scored and ranked.

Project Feasibility (78 maximum points)

This section enables DHCD to determine whether projects are ready to proceed and that the applicant has the experience, staff, and consultants in place to ensure a successful outcome. The requested information helps applicants demonstrate that projects are ready to proceed and can be completed within a 24 months of executing a Funding Agreement with DHCD. Applicants are asked to demonstrate that their projects are financially feasible, that the applicant has the capability of leveraging additional public and/or private funds, and that they have the capability of creating and managing a development team with sufficient experience to undertake and complete the proposed project. As part of demonstrating a project's feasibility, applicants are required to commit a development budget, list of all funding sources and uses needed to complete the proposed project, and the status of the funds (e.g. committed/approved, pending, not yet requested). Applicants must submit letters of interest or letters of commitment from all participating funding sources.

Applicants are reminded that construction budgets should include a line item for builder's profit, overhead, and construction management and that administration and reimbursable costs for architecture and engineering should be included as a separate line item. Construction costs should reflect prevailing wage rates for all anticipated employees. Submissions should also include a marketing and sales pro-forma.

Applicants should Include a site plan (can be conceptual), showing the proposed location of the project,

amenities, and sustainability features if requesting as a bonus point. The site plan should indicate current parks and green spaces.

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In the event funds are requested for personnel and/or consultants, applicants are required to submit a personnel budget as well as a list of all consultants, their role, hourly rate, and total estimated fee.

Site Control

As part of demonstrating a project's feasibility, applicants are required to show that they have site control at the time of submission and title within 12 months of executing a Funding Agreement with DHCD. For the purposes of this NOFA, site control can include: documentation that the applicant currently has a title as evidenced by the Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation, an executed contract of sale, an option-to-purchase agreement, an approved Land Disposition or Development Agreement or approved Vacants to Value application for City-owned properties, written documentation that a case has been filed for Receivership or Tax Sale Foreclosure, or other documentation determined to be sufficient by DHCD.

Entitlements and Development Review

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that their project meets all applicable Zoning and Development requirements. If variances or other approvals are required, applicants must complete the schedule in the application showing when approvals will be obtained. Applicants must also provide documentation that they have held a pre-development meeting with the Department of Planning. Meetings can be scheduled by contacting Eric Tiso at eric.tiso@baltimorecity.gov.

Community Engagement & Participation (25 maximum points)

DHCD is committed to ensuring that development projects are consistent with and can leverage local revitalization plans, support goals stated in the City's Framework for Community Development, provide multiple opportunities for a range of stakeholders to provide input, regardless of their support, along with evidence and a schedule for community ownership and control.

Achieving Equity (12 maximum points)

DHCD is committed to utilizing Trust Fund resources to reduce the financial, social and economic disparities that have affected many of the City's neighborhoods and residents over the past several decades. To that end, applications are being scored based on location, supporting blight elimination (demolition and/or rehab), providing priority to returning residents and projects supporting and building residents' ability to create equity and build wealth.

Building Equity	5
Opportunities for Returning Residents. Points will be awarded to projects that prioritize targeted marketing to and placement of tenants who were previously residents of the neighborhood in which the project will be located.	3
Supports Blight Elimination. Points will be awarded to projects that eliminate blight and/or other dangerous or unsafe hazards in the neighborhood in which the project will be located.	4

Bonus Points (20 maximum points)

Scoring criteria identifies priorities for deploying and spending funds, however, applicants can also apply for bonus points through supporting local businesses, utilizing apprenticeships, and agreeing to enhance local hiring and monitoring criteria. Bonus points may increase an applicant's total score so that they are eligible to be considered for an award of funds or can help increase an application's ranking within the overall scoring.

Supports & Grows Local Businesses (4 points) - Applicants are required to demonstrate how their project will support and sustain local businesses. Responses should specify local vendors who will be used, how efforts will be tracked and monitored and any documentation evidencing agreements to utilize local residents.

Takes Advantage of Apprenticeships and Training programs (4 points) - Applicants are required to provide a plan for utilizing training and apprenticeship programs and to include a letter of intent from the provider. As a condition for receiving funds, applicants will be required to provide an executed Memorandum of Understandings or comparable agreement with the provider.

Collaboration Across Multiple Neighborhoods (2 points) - Applicants are required to provide documentation demonstrating how their project impacts multiple neighborhoods, how this helps to achieve economies of scale, and how multiple stakeholders are working collaboratively to achieve outcomes.

Local Hiring Criteria-Select One Option Only (up to 10 points) - Applicants are required to sign and include a local hiring certification with their submission that must be approved by DHCD or its designee. Project applicants must agree to periodic reporting to and monitoring by DHCD or its designee. Project applicants must take all reasonable and necessary steps to achieve plan outcomes. Failure to achieve plan outcomes may disqualify the applicants from future funding rounds or result in other default. Applicants are required to provide a strategy detailing how they will achieve the selected goals. Strategies should detail how residents will be identified, types of jobs anticipated to be available and measures that will be taken to ensure success. The plan should affirmatively seek out individuals with barriers to employment such as a criminal record for appropriate positions.

Points will be awarded on the scale specified below to project whose plans have the following outcomes:

- □ 70 percent of hours related to construction are provided by City residents, and 51 percent of new hires are from apprenticeship programs (10 points).
- □ 50 percent of work hours related to construction are provided by City residents, and 35 percent of new hires are from apprenticeship programs (7 points).
- □ 30 percent of work hours related to construction are provided by City residents, and 20 percent of new hires are from apprenticeship programs (3 points).

9. REVIEWING AND AWARDING FUNDS

Applications will be reviewed by an interagency review panel. Applications that meet threshold criteria will be reviewed, scored and ranked by the review panel who, at their discretion, can submit written requests for additional information, meet with the applicant and/or their team members, or tour the proposed projects. As part of the review, and based on the total requests received, the Panel has the ability to recommend that applicants receive less funds than were requested.

During the review process, questions regarding announcements shall be directed in writing only to Assistant Commissioner for Development, James Majors at: jim.majors@baltimorecity.gov. Applicants are prohibited from contacting specific members of the review panel or members of the Commission; those who do will have their applications disqualified for review.

The Review Panel will provide their recommendations to DHCD's Deputy Commissioner for Development who will review and make final recommendations to the Housing Commissioner. The Housing Commissioner, at his discretion, has the ability to determine final awards.

All applicants will be notified by phone and in writing whether their submission will receive an award of funds. Applicants who did not receive an award of funds can submit a written request for a 30-minute debriefing. During the debriefing, DHCD will review the submission and panel's recommendations. Following written notification, DHCD will post a final list of applications reviewed, scores, ranking, and amount of trust funds awarded.

10. UNDERWRITING AND AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

Following written notification of an award, DHCD staff will schedule an initial meeting with the applicant to review the schedule and how funds will be made available. During this meeting, staff will review the agency's underwriting requirements and will work with the applicant to develop a schedule that includes appraisals, marketing feasibility studies, environmental assessments and other information. As part of its requirements to make funds available, DHCD takes a security interest in the project. The terms of the security interest will be included as part of the funding discussion.



Applicants will be required to provide DHCD with a copy of market studies completed for other lenders. In the event other lenders do not require a formal market study, the applicant will be required to provide a market analysis demonstrating the housing needs of low-income households who will be served by the project. The study must include proposed vacancies, rents and sales prices, how households earning 50 percent of the Area Median Income will benefit and demonstrate how the proposed market study area will benefit from perpetual affordability. Both the market study or analysis must have been completed no more than 12 months prior to executing a Funding Agreement. All funds must be committed and in-hand before DHCD issues its Commitment Letter, which will provide all the terms and conditions under which funds will be made available.

Applicants are advised that no funds shall me made available until such time the Board of Estimates has approved a Funding Agreement, and that no expenditures shall be approved for retroactive reimbursement.

MONITORING, COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING

Applicants will be required to submit monthly progress reports for projects under construction detailing the following:

- Percentages of the project that are complete
- Reasons if the project is not on schedule
- Percentages of MBE/WBE goals met
- Local Hiring Plan update and percentages of local employees and apprenticeship

Applicants are advised that failure to submit reports and information in a timely manner could result in a state of default, loss of funds, and disqualification from seeking funds in future NOFA's.

11. INSURANCE

All applicants will be required to provide evidence of insurance prior to DHCD's issuing a letter of commitment. Insurance requirements will be provided on a project basis and often include the following:

- Directors and Officers Liability Insurance
- Commercial General Liability
- Errors and Omissions (Consultants)
- Blanket Crime Coverage
- Automobile Coverage
- Payment and Performance Bonds

12. INDEMNIFICATION

All applicants, their employees, boards of directors, contractors and subcontractors will be required to indemnify and hold the City harmless from any claims, demands, lawsuits or other actions that may be brought against the project.



13. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Applicants will be required to disclose any conflicts of interest with regard to the project that they their staff, consultants, boards of directors, contractors, or subcontractors may have. DHCD reserves the right as part of the application and award process to request additional information regarding conflicts of interest.

14. ADMINISTRATIVE RIGHTS

Issue Date

The issue date of this Grant Application is _____

Submission Deadline and Requirements

The deadline for submitting all applications is ______. Applications must be submitted electronically to:

DHCD.AHTFNOFA@BALTIMORECITY.GOV

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

Obtaining the Application and Guidelines

This NOFA will be made available free of charge electronically on DHCD's website at: _____

Information Session

DHCD will host a pre-proposal conference on ______ from _____ EST. The meeting can be accessed using the link below or the call-in number provided below:

THE ABOVE LINK CAN BE ACCESSED BY SIMULTANEOUSLY HOLDING DOWN THE CONTROL KEY AND A LEFT CLICK WITH THE COMPUTER MOUSE. To access by phone, call the number below and enter the access code

Questions and Inquiries

Interested applicants can submit questions in writing only to:

no later than ______. DHCD will make its best effort to post responses on its website no later than ten (10) business days following the deadline. DHCD reserves the right to decline questions that are project specific.

Revisions and Addenda

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this Application and or Guidelines, or to provide additional information necessary to adequately interpret the provisions and requirements, an addendum shall be posted on DHCD's website. Revisions and Addenda will not be provided on an individual basis, therefore, all interested applicants are encouraged to review the Affordable Housing Trust Fund NOFA page at: https://dhcd.baltimorecity.gov/nd/affordable-housing-trust-fund.

Award Amounts

Final awards are determined by the Housing Commissioner. DHCD reserves the right to make an award of funds in an amount other than what is requested in the NOFA. All awards are subject to final underwriting by DHCD and approval of funding agreements by the City's Board of Estimates.

Incurring Expenses

Neither the City of Baltimore nor DHCD will be responsible for and will not pay for any cost incurred by any applicant in preparing and submitting an application or requested supplemental information in response to this Application.

Compliance with Law

By submitting an Application, organizations awarded funds agree that they will comply with all Federal, State, and City laws, rules, and regulations and ordinances applicable to its activities and obligations under this program.

Public Information Act Notice

DHCD commits to handling all information regarding financial assets in strictest confidence. Applicants should give specific attention to identifying any portions of their application that they deem to be confidential, proprietary, or trade secrets and provide justification why such material should not be disclosed by DHCD under the Maryland Public Information Act SS 1-601 et seq. of the State Covernment Article, Annotated Code of Maryland upon request by the public.