

LEED for Neighborhood Development and HUD

[LEED for Neighborhood Development \(LEED-ND\)](#) is a rating system that incorporates the principles of smart growth, New Urbanism and green building into a voluntary framework for sustainable neighborhood planning and design. As practitioners start to use LEED-ND to drive sustainable change in their communities, federal entities too are recognizing its value. These agencies have found that LEED-ND supports their strategic priorities and they are directing funding to localities that use the system as a framework or tool. The [Partnership for Sustainable Communities](#), formed by HUD, EPA DOT, laid out six [Livability Principles](#) that would guide their coordinated investment efforts. At the 2010 Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) conference, Secretary Shaun Donovan announced HUD's intention to employ LEED-ND in its effort to use location-efficiency to score grant applications. Donovan declared, "it's time that federal dollars stopped encouraging sprawl and started lowering the barriers to the kind of sustainable development our country needs and our communities want." HUD recently referenced LEED-ND in its 2010 General Section and used LEED-ND to help score Choice Neighborhoods grant applications. Meanwhile, several recipients of various HUD grants have promoted their use of LEED-ND.

[2010 HUD GENERAL SECTION](#)

The 2010 HUD General Section, which provides common guidelines for agency grants, asks applicants to undertake projects that align with HUD's Strategic Plan. Sustainability is one of six policy priorities in the Strategic Plan. The General Section references LEED-ND 2009 as a way to demonstrate the impact of a project and its alignment with this policy priority:

To receive points for this policy priority, applicants must produce activities that exceed requirements of the NOFA to which they are applying, detailing how they will achieve outcomes in areas such as: (a) [Neighborhood Sustainability Standards](#). Identify projects or activities consistent with adoption of LEED 2009 for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) Rating System or a similar neighborhood sustainability standard. (Docket No. FR-5415-N-01, Page 10)

[CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE](#)

Choice Neighborhoods promotes "a comprehensive approach to transforming distressed areas of concentrated poverty into viable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods." In June 2010, HUD released the [Round 1 Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\)](#) for Choice Neighborhoods, announcing \$65 million available through separate planning and implementation grants.

Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants

In March 2011, HUD announced 17 planning awards totaling \$4 million.

Buffalo, NY

The Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA) received \$250,000 to help plan the Commodore Perry Homes neighborhood and the Woodson Gardens and the Commodore Perry Homes housing developments. Major planning activities will include engaging private and public partners and residents, completing a housing marketing and inventory study, and **broadening the community's knowledge related to sustainable community and LEED-ND.**

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Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants

HUD chose six finalists for the implementation grants and issued a [Round 2 NOFA](#); the agency expects to announce two to four awardees by September 2011. The Round 2 NOFA rates projects using up to 120 points based on how they meet criteria in four categories: Housing, People, Neighborhood, and Soundness of Approach. **Projects that satisfy the basic requirements consistent with achieving LEED-ND at the Certified level will receive two out of 34 points available in the Neighborhood category.**

[SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES REGIONAL PLANNING GRANTS](#)

In June 2010, HUD issued a [NOFA](#) announcing awards of up to \$100 million to improve regional planning efforts that integrate housing and transportation decisions, and increase the capacity to improve land use and zoning.

Salt Lake County, UT, as part of a consortium of organizations in the Wasatch Front metropolitan region, [received \\$5 million](#). Part of this amount will fund an open-access, open-source community sustainability model called [Envision Tomorrow Plus \(ET+\)](#), which will work as a plug-in to ESRI's ArcGIS software. ET+ seeks to evaluate **how potential development project characteristics—such as land use, density or use of LEED-ND—would affect the community's environmental and economic priorities.**

[COMMUNITY CHALLENGE – TIGER II – PLANNING GRANTS](#)

In June 2010, HUD and the U.S. Department of Transportation announced a joint grant program to fund planning activities that reduce barriers to achieving affordable, economically vital, and sustainable communities with a variety of transportation choices. HUD offered \$40 million as **Community Challenge** grants and DOT invested \$35 million as **TIGER II Planning Assistance** grants. The [NOFA](#) for these grants did not specifically reference LEED-ND, yet at least four awardees ([complete list here](#)) noted in their applications their **intent to follow LEED-ND principles or incorporate LEED-ND criteria.**

The City of **Cincinnati, OH**, will receive \$2.4 million. It will use these funds to develop a Unified Development Code (UDC) to replace outdated and disjointed regulations and to reflect the goals of its Comprehensive Plan (under development). **The UDC will incorporate criteria from LEED for Neighborhood Development.**

In **Jersey City, NJ**, the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency will receive almost \$2.3 million, which will fund the Canal Crossing project. This project seeks to convert 18 industrial blocks (111 acres) into a mixed-use, transit-oriented development with affordable housing and access to open space amenities. The project will address infrastructure modifications, subdivision of properties, zoning changes, and connections to the light rail stop and bike paths in an area predominated by minority households and suffering from high unemployment and poverty rates. The funds will support recent master planning efforts and **help the agency use LEED for Neighborhood Development principles to create a more livable community.**

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The City of **Warrensburg, MO**, will receive \$134,900, which will pay for a study to analyze land use and economic development opportunities along a rural Missouri corridor. The Highway 13/Maguire Street Corridor Study will seek opportunities for new urban infill housing and mixed-use development and **will consider the potential application of LEED for Neighborhood Development standards throughout the corridor.**

University City, MO, will receive almost \$316,000 to pursue improvements to the Parkview Gardens neighborhood. **Neighborhood planners intend to use LEED-ND principles to improve housing in Parkview Gardens.**

HOPE VI

Housing authorities seeking to revive aging public housing will find that the LEED-ND rating system often reflects their redevelopment goals. HOPE VI seeks to revitalize severely distressed public housing through physical and management improvements and social and community services. At least two recipients of [FY2010 HOPE VI Revitalization](#) funds are using ND to guide their projects:

In **Memphis, TN**, [University Place](#) is a 473-unit mixed-income housing development, situated on the site of the former Lamar Terrace public housing project. In June 2004, Memphis Housing Authority was awarded \$22.5 million in HOPE VI funding for the project. Working closely with MHA, the project is a joint venture between McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc. and Community Capital. **The project achieved Stage 3 certification, Certified level, in the Pilot of LEED-ND.**

In **St. Louis, MO**, McCormack Baron Salazar has helped the housing authority reinvent the Arthur Blumeyer development as [Renaissance Place at Grand](#). Using Hope VI FY2010 funds, developers created a mixed-income, mixed-use community to replace the original set of buildings from 1968. **The project team incorporated rating system principles into the development and achieved Stage 3 certification, Certified level, in the Pilot of LEED-ND.**

In **Boston, MA**, the Boston Housing Authority charged Beacon Community Services with redeveloping the [Old Colony Public Housing](#) complex. With federal and state tax credits and over \$22 million in Hope VI FY2010 funds, the developer set out to reconnect the Old Colony site to its neighborhood and make it as close to net zero energy as possible. **The project team is pursuing Stage 1 certification (Conditionally Approved Plan) under LEED-ND 2009.**

HUD has contributed greatly to the burgeoning sustainable development movement by encouraging the adoption of LEED for Neighborhood Development standards, and projects that pair federal investments with LEED-ND measures are just beginning to reveal their full extent of their positive impact on the environment and our quality of life. Federal and local use of LEED-ND will help transform how we build communities and lead to places that are green, healthy, and economically strong for years to come.

Please email Neighborhoods@usgbc.org with your questions or comments.

More information is available at www.usgbc.org/nd.