

Project/Program Core Purpose

Addressing Unmet Housing Needs in Wyoming

Problem:

Housing is in short supply in Wyoming.

Community and business leaders, hospitals, and educators statewide are challenged to recruit and retain a workforce due to housing shortages; workforce shortages lead to the erosion of revenue and service quality.

According to the Wyoming Community Development's 2018 Housing Needs Forecast, by 2025 approximately 56,000 Wyoming households will be facing unmet housing needs. Unmet housing needs include households facing homelessness, overcrowding, unsuitable housing related to health/disability issues, and also households sharing accommodation, households with affordability/payment problems and problems of poor physical housing conditions.

Rapidly rising inflation and low inventory have stressed housing affordability to the point that many working families struggle to attain affordable and suitable housing.

According to a 2021 report by the NLIHC:

- *Housing has become so expensive that the typical minimum wage worker cannot afford rent*
- *A housing wage is the amount a worker would need to earn to afford a home without spending more than 30% of their income on rent, and utilities*
- *Wyoming households need to earn \$17.07 or work a minimum of 76 hrs/week to afford a 2-bedroom*
- *17,020 (25%) of WY renter households are at or below 30% AMI, and 29,429 (43%) are below 50% AMI*

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than half (190,000+ workers) of Wyoming's workforce earns a median wage of \$18.72/hour or an annual salary of \$38,935. Freddie Mac estimated the median household income for Wyoming in 2021 is \$71,052. These statistics reveal that more than 50% of Wyoming's workforce earns less than the 65% median household income threshold.

Proposed Solution:

The Unmet Housing Needs Project will meet federal ARPA requirements and target:

- *Wyoming workers with a total income that does not exceed 65% of HUD's area median income (AMI). (AMI is the midpoint of a region's income distribution – half of families in a region earn more than the median and half earn less than the median.)*
- *Multiple-wage-earner households working in low-wage and/or low-skilled occupations are typically designated as "essential workers". Treasury guidance supports ARPA funds to be used for the housing and/or housing counseling needs of those disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Low to Moderate Income (LMI) households should be presumed disproportionately affected.*
- *The project will include multiple housing options—new construction of rental and ownership housing; substantial or moderate rehabilitation to preserve rental or ownership housing, referred to as housing units.*

Project Design:

The project incorporates shovel-ready projects in multiple communities across Wyoming.

2022 Round 2 Project/Program Proposal: Unmet Housing Needs in WY

Using the current program guidelines for federal housing programs administered by the WCDA, such as the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) and Low-Income Housing Credit program (LIHTC),

Programmatic functions

Eligible Applicants:

- *Eligibility to access Unmet Housing Needs Project funds is limited to for-profit and nonprofit entities, Native American tribes, Housing Authorities, and agencies of local and state government.*
- *Funding is available to organizations/business entities only, not for individuals.*
- *Local housing trust funds, as may be created.*
- *Preference points will be awarded to Wyoming entities and partnerships with Wyoming non-profit organizations.*

Eligible Activities:

- *New construction of rental or ownership housing.*
- *Substantial or moderate rehabilitation to preserve rental or ownership housing, including modifications required to make homes more accessible to individuals with disabilities.*
- *Predevelopment activities.*
- *Housing Counseling and homeless prevention activities.*

Income Targeting / Target Populations:

- *Household income does not exceed 65% of AMI based on HUD's annual AMI calculation.*
- *Head(s) of household is a United States citizen who has lived in Wyoming for at least one year.*

Distribution of Funds:

- *Funds will be awarded through a competitive process. Applications will be evaluated and scored based on criteria established by WCDA. Applicants will be encouraged to leverage SLFRF Unmet Housing Needs funds with other resources including but not limited to land donations, reduction of City/County development fees, and other forms of local match.*

Evaluation Criteria:

- *Proposals will be evaluated based on objective review criteria and a point system established by the WCDA.*
- *Preference will be given to projects in communities where housing has been identified as a critical need*
- *Preference will be given to projects that include matching funds of 10% or more.*

Resources: What is needed for this project/program?

	2023	2024	2025	2026
ARPA funding request	\$15,000,000			

2022 Round 2 Project/Program Proposal: Unmet Housing Needs in WY

Staffing request	< 10% of TC			
Matching funding (note if private, state or other federal)	Project dependent.			
Program Cost Notes				
<p>List major expenditure areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction hard and soft costs 2. Infrastructure costs (water, sewer, etc.) 3. Land acquisition 4. Administrative costs 				

Activities: What are the major activities performed through this project/program?
Please see the subheading Project Design beginning on page 2.

Program Metrics: How will you track success?				
<i>(describe program metrics and how they will lead to accomplishing the goal)</i>				
Success of the program will be measured by the funding and construction of housing units for Wyoming households that are at 65% AMI or lower.				
Proposed Outputs (people served, jobs created, etc)				
Metric	SFY2024 Target	SFY 2025	SFY2026	SFY2027 (ARPA ends halfway through)
Low-income housing units (includes (65% AMI\geq))	60 (based on an estimated cost of \$250,000 per unit for single-family homes. Projects			
Proposed Outcomes (Decrease in suicide rate, decrease in unemployment, etc)				
Metric	SFY2024 Target	SFY 2025	SFY2026	SFY2027
Low-income housing units	200 or more Wyomingites are			

2022 Round 2 Project/Program Proposal: Unmet Housing Needs in WY

(including properties for rent and home ownership) (65% AMI≥)	placed in safe, healthy, affordable housing unit.			
Wyoming municipalities address workforce shortages	A minimum of 2 Wyoming communities will receive housing units (may include single-family ownership and rental units) to address workforce housing shortages for households earning less than 65% AMI.			

Additional Proposal Required Information

ARPA Eligibility:

One of the primary intents of ARPA funding is to provide safe housing and other services for vulnerable populations who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been documented that Wyoming residents have suffered from a shortage of suitable housing for a number of years. The pandemic exacerbated this problem and resulted in households sharing the same spaces that once were occupied by single families, for example, along with an increase in homeless citizens.

ARPA prescribes those funds to be used to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. The income limitations of the program support households with wage earners across a wide variety of vocations to benefit. The pandemic has negatively impacted all of the described vocations and industries intended to benefit from the proposed Unmet Housing Need program.

Housing is a social determinant of health that ARPA funding is designed to address. Utilizing the ARPA funding to mitigate financial hardship to Wyoming residents caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; reduce homelessness; improve health safety among residents by permitting occupants of homes to be more safely spaced, and permit them to maintain housing. The compatibility of the proposed Unmet Housing Need program with ARPA funding is clear, it focuses on: new construction

2022 Round 2 Project/Program Proposal: Unmet Housing Needs in WY

of rental and ownership housing; substantial or moderate rehabilitation to preserve rental or ownership housing; accessibility improvements to accommodate disabilities; housing counseling activities; homeless prevention activities; and pre-development activities

Include information on what the plan is beyond ARPA (end of 2026), specifically if you have a plan to continue this program or how it will be completed.