

# 2020 Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund Frequently Asked Questions

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## Pre-Application

*Q: Should applicants only include open Housing Grants or all grants for Open Grants Information?*

R: Include all open grants for the CDBG, HOME, HTF, RWHF, and NAHTF program.

*Q: If grantee has submitted all required closeout documentation for a grant, but has not received closeout verification or documentation from DED, should this grant be included for Open Grants Information?*

R: Yes. Please include grant information and state, "waiting closeout information from DED" under status.

*Q: Can you copy and paste information from a Word document?*

R: Yes. Information can be copied and pasted from another document. Applicant should verify they have not exceeded the character limits when copying and pasting.

*Q: Should applicant use preparer's or the elected official's name under the Electronic Signature form?*

R: Applicant should use the elected official's information for all items on the Electronic Signature form.

*Q: How do I assign multiple users to one login?*

R: The Department has provided user guides and videos specific to AmpliFund. Please refer to the following link: <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/amplifund/>

*Q: How do I confirm my Pre-application has been submitted or received?*

R: The Department has provided user guides and videos specific to AmpliFund. Please refer to the following link: <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/amplifund/>

## Full Application

*Q: Which projects require Site Reviews?*

R: Any proposed project that includes new construction, acquisition, conversion, rental rehabilitation, and/or infrastructure development.

*Q: When are Site Reviews required to be submitted?*

R: If sites have been identified prior to the application being submitted, requests for a site visit must be sent to your Program Rep by Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

*Q: If applicant submitted a Site Review for 2019 NAHTF application and the site was approved, is a new request required?*

R: Yes. In the narrative of the Site Review form, applicant should identify any change of circumstances from approved Site Review.

*Q: Which website system should I use for AmpliFund?*

R: The Department recommends using AmpliFund in any internet browser (Chrome, Edge, Safari, Firefox, etc.) except for Internet Explorer. Internet Explorer is no longer supported by Microsoft, so some features of AmpliFund will not function correctly.

*Q: How are multiple applications submitted from the same user?*

R: The Department has provided user guides and videos specific to AmpliFund. Please refer to the following link: <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/amplifund/>

*Q: Where are plans and specifications for compliance of International Energy Conservation Code submitted?*

R: If the Project involves new construction, documentation must be submitted to the Nebraska Department of Environment & Energy, showing the plans and specification for the Project are in compliance with the most recent version of the International Energy Conservation Code. Plans and specification approval is not required at time of application, but if the project is selected for award, this documentation will be required as a Special Condition for receive Release of Funds. Applicants are encouraged to begin this process early and can reach out to Bruce Hauschild ([bruce.hauschild@nebraska.gov](mailto:bruce.hauschild@nebraska.gov)) for initial questions.

*Q: What are the page numbering requirements for uploads?*

R: Page numbers for uploads are not required to continue from previous uploads. Each upload should begin with its own numbering system. When referencing uploads, use the specific page number from that upload in the narrative.

*Q: If match was not included in the pre-application, can the full application include match?*

R: Yes, a full application can include match even if it was not included in the pre-application.

*Q: If all NAHTF funds are not allocated in the Housing Projects and Nonprofit Technical assistance, will the March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 pre-application requirement still apply?*

R: No. In the event an additional Funding Cycle is authorized, appropriate notification will be given and application forms and process for application will be provided to the public.

*Q: For the Leveraged Funds Table, should applicants use activity codes when entering the activity?*

R: No, activity codes are not required for the NAHTF budget and/or Leveraged Funds table. Please identify the specific activity in the activity column (ex. infrastructure, new construction, demolition, etc.).

*Q: Is the Performance Plan replacing the Implementation Schedule?*

R: The Implementation Schedule used in past NAHTF applications is not required for the 2020 NAHTF application. The Performance Plan should include milestones and goals that the applicant has identified for their project and included within the application narrative. The Performance Plan will transition to the implementation of the project if an application is selected for award.

*Q: For Nonprofit Technical Assistance applications, the character limit for the Goals and Work Plan is set at 9,900 in the application guidelines, but 13,200 in AmpliFund. Which character limit is required?*

R: Please use the 13,200 (about 4 pages) character limit set in AmpliFund.

*Q: What are the Public Hearing Requirements?*

R: With the health and safety of our partners as a top priority, the Department has made the decision to remove the requirement for a public hearing in connection with all 2020 NAHTF applications. Applicants will still be required to make the application available to the public and receive input. When completing the application, applicants will be required to provide a summary identifying how the application was made available to the public and any feedback gathered from the public. If no feedback was provided, applicants must state that in their summary. AmpliFund requires three separate uploads pertaining to the Public Hearing: Public Notice, Sign in Sheet, and Comments. Please use one document, including the summary how application was made available and public input received, to upload to each of the three required uploads.

*Q: The Electronic Signature requests information specific to the Certifying Official. If the preparer is not the Certifying Official, how should we complete the electronic signature requirement?*

R: The Certifying Official can be added as a user to complete this section.

*Q: Where does the developer fee go within the budget?*

R: It can be included in either the project costs of construction or Housing Management.

*Q: Can funds spent outside of the contract period be identified as leveraged funds? (ex: purchase of a building or rehabilitation of building)*

R: No. For consistency for all applications, the Department has determined that only funds leveraged during the contract period should be included in the leveraged funds form. This ensures consistent information and data for statutory reporting requirements of leveraged funds. Applicants are encouraged to include within their narratives any additional funds already spent or anticipated to be spent throughout the life of the project to provide the Department a full understanding of the project.

*Q: Do items listed in the Budget have to match what is entered into the development costs section of the pro-forma?*

R: For projects requiring a pro-forma, grantees should make sure that their budget information is consistent throughout the application (narratives, pro-forma, leveraged funds form, and budget).

*Q: Are Program Guidelines required to be board approved and finalized at time of application?*

R: No. Board Approved Program Guidelines are a Special Condition item for Release of Funds. At that time, they will need to meet all criteria set in the program guidelines checklist. Program Guidelines that meet all criteria items and are board approved at the time of application will demonstrate more readiness of the proposed project than draft program guidelines.

*Q: Under Project Design for Rental and Homebuyer projects, what cost number should be used to determine the cost per square foot?*

R: If the proposed project includes match and/or leveraged funds, applicants can provide the cost per square foot by: Total Development Costs/Square Feet, Total NAHTF/Square Feet, and NAHTF Hard Costs/Square Feet. This provides the applicant the ability to show a ratio of how the NAHTF funds impact the project.

*Q: Does the 65% Rent Limit include the utility allowance?*

R: Yes. For example, if the 65% Rent Limit is \$500 and the tenant is provided a \$50 utility allowance, the maximum rent to be collected from a tenant is \$450. (\$500 Rent Limit - \$50 utility allowance = \$450 maximum rent paid by tenant).

*Q: Can the COVID-19 Pandemic be used as a Disaster Recovery Project?*

R: The Department of Economic Development has determined that housing applications in the 2020 Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund application cycle designed specifically to meet the housing needs of households impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic to be considered a Disaster Recovery Housing Project. To receive the points under the Disaster Recovery Housing Projects an application must be specifically tied to a natural disaster or the COVID-19 pandemic. An application or project being located within a disaster area does not automatically qualify as a Disaster Recovery project. The project must be an eligible activity as provided by the Nebraska Affordable Housing Act and must clearly serve households impacted by a natural disaster or the COVID-19 pandemic.

As defined in the 2020 Application Guidelines Disaster Recovery Housing Projects are not intended for emergency housing needs but rather to address the long-term recovery efforts from a natural disaster (now also to include COVID-19 pandemic).

Disaster recovery efforts and how the project relates to the disaster recovery housing needs must be clearly articulated within the application narratives, including but not limited to the Project Design and Need & Impact sections of the application, along with the proposed Program Guidelines. DED applicants must identify to the Department in their application how they will document households assisted under the project were impacted by a natural disaster or the COVID-19 pandemic. During score review, DED will determine the validity of each project as a disaster recovery housing project through application narratives and design.

*Q: What is the contract period for housing project applications?*

R: Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Department has determined that all 2020 NAHTF housing projects will be provided a 36 month contract period.

*Q: How is an area designated as Extremely Blighted Area?*

R: To be declared an Extremely Blighted Area, an area must be declared through the process outlined under [Nebraska Revised Statutes §18-2101.02](#).

*Q: For county or regional-wide housing projects, can housing studies from multiple communities be uploaded?*

R: Yes, applicants may use the Applicant Specific Uploads to upload more than one Housing Study.