



ABOUT LEADINGAGE DC

LeadingAge DC is an organization of not-for-profit, mission-driven senior service providers throughout the District committed to expanding the world of possibilities for aging in the nation's capital. LeadingAge DC members serve thousands of the District's seniors in affordable housing, assisted living, skilled nursing, adult day, and home and community based services. Our members provide person-centered care through quality programs, shared values and the desire to work collectively to share best practices to help improve the field.

LEADINGAGE DC'S UNDERLYING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NHTF:

- Although the NHTF statute allows up to 10% of NHTF resources to be used for homeownership, the shortage of affordable rental housing is so severe in DC that LeadingAge DC recommends all of DC's NHTF resources, at least in the first year, be dedicated to rental housing.
- The factors should not be considered equally. LeadingAge DC recommends weighting the six factors in order to address the city's most pressing affordable housing needs.
- The NHTF funds should be used to expand affordable housing resources for the lowest income DC residents, not to supplant other resources.
- DCHD's NHTF resources should strive to achieve units with the greatest and longest affordability. Thus, dispersing NHTF resources by grants or no interest loans is preferred.

LEADINGAGE DC'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE SIX FACTORS:

1. Priority Housing Needs. (Weight: 30 out of 100 points)

Addressing the affordable housing needs of extremely low-income seniors should be a priority housing need for the District. The District's Allocation Plan should give great weight to projects that meet the city's Priority Housing Needs.

- In the FY2011-2015 Consolidated Plan, elderly households with incomes below 30% of area median and paying more than 50% of their incomes on rental housing are characterized as having a "Priority Need" and represent a population that DHCD will "Plan to Fund."
- According to the FY2011-2015 ConPlan, 46.5% of DC elderly renter households with incomes below 30% of area median, precisely the target population of the NHTF program, pay more than 50% of their incomes on housing costs. These are households likely on fixed incomes with no way out from the rising rents of the District.
- A 2014 report by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University found that households aged 50 or older who are in the bottom expenditure quintile and pay more than 50% of their incomes on housing spend 43% less on food and 59% less on healthcare compared to their affordably housed peers.



- Indeed, low incomes and high housing costs are increasing the number of elderly households who are homeless nationally. The number and percentage of elderly persons (aged 62 and older) in shelters continues to increase. In 2007, 4.1% of all individuals in shelters were elderly; in 2013, this figure rose to 5.4%. According to the Way Home Campaign, In the District, approximately half of single homeless adults are over the age of 50. Chronically homeless individuals have an average life expectancy of 62.
- The need for affordable senior housing must be addressed. LeadingAge DC's affordable senior housing members experience, on average, a 300-person waitlist.

2. Project-based Rental Assistance. (Weight 30 out of 100 points).

From the HUD Notice: "In the case of rental housing projects, the HTF allocation plan must include a funding priority that considers the extent to which the project has Federal, State, or local project-based rental assistance *so that rents are affordable to extremely low-income families.*"

LeadingAge DC recommends the District's Allocation Plan give great weight to projects with rents that are affordable to extremely-low income households. Without affordability, that is, households paying no more than 30% of their adjusted household income for their housing costs, the entire point of having a National Housing Trust Fund is lost.

Thankfully, project-based rental assistance can be achieved in a variety of ways including by the project-basing of housing choice vouchers, operating subsidy from the NHTF itself or otherwise, or by cross-subsidization of rents. For project-based housing choice vouchers, these could include federal rental assistance vouchers and/or DC rental assistance subsidies. The creative use of federal housing block grants like the HOME program could also help subsidize the long-term operation of NHTF properties.

3. Eligibility Requirements for Sub-Grantees. (Weight 10 of 100 points).

LeadingAge supports a preference for nonprofit grantees and for nonprofit/for-profit partnership grantees. Over the last decades, a new generation of sophisticated and financially hard-nosed nonprofit organizations has emerged to lead the mission-driven sector of housing development and preservation. LeadingAge firmly believes that nonprofits are best positioned to meet residents' needs, build high quality housing, and preserve their housing well into the future.

4. Geographic Diversity. (0 points of 100).

LeadingAge DC supports the use of NHTF funds in high-impact projects, as opposed to metering out the city's NHTF resources to so many projects that its impact cannot add value or be measured.

5. Leveraging. (Weight 15 of 100 points).

LeadingAge DC supports an Allocation Plan that rewards projects that leverage non-federal funding sources for the development, operation, and provision of necessary service enrichment at properties. LeadingAge DC urges the city's Allocation Plan to count resources to provide service enrichment



activities from non-HUD resources toward the leveraging factor. LeadingAge DC also urges the definition of leveraging resources to include land provided for the project.

The provision of quality affordable senior housing means homes with service enrichment to allow seniors to age well, age in the community, and age in environments dedicated to prevention and remediation of health problems.

6. Duration of Affordability. (Weight 15 of 100 points).

The minimum affordability period for an NHTF-funded project is 30 years. LeadingAge DC supports a preference for NHTF applicants that commit to additional years of affordability, up to a maximum of 15 points for points of 100 for projects that commit to perpetual affordability terms.

CONTACT INFORMATION

LeadingAge DC looks forward to answering any questions and furthering the conversation on affordable senior housing. Please contact Christy Kramer, Director, LeadingAge DC, ckramer@leadingage.org