



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

WASHINGTON, DC 20410-0050

Program Policy Guidance

Date: September 10, 2014

Subject: Promise Zone Preference points or priority/special consideration

Status: Current

Applicability: Promise Zone Designees

Dear Promise Zone Designees:

The Promise Zone designation provides your entity access to preference points or priority/special consideration for selected federal grant programs, technical assistance, and other capacity building opportunities that will strengthen the revitalization efforts in your community. It can also provide partner organizations within your geography access to preference points or priority/special consideration for select grant programs.

For specified grant programs, partner organizations submitting requests for projects within your communities will have the opportunity to qualify for preference points or priority/special consideration as a consequence of you holding this status. The relevant geography is as follows:

- the proposed project is solely within Promise Zone boundaries
- the proposed project includes the entire Promise Zone boundary and other communities
- the proposed project includes a portion of the Promise Zone boundary
- the proposed project is outside of the Promise Zone boundaries, but includes specific and definable services or benefits will be delivered within the Promise Zone or to Promise Zone residents

As a Promise Zone designee, your primary contact within the Lead Organization (not the Federal staff stationed in your community) can certify applicants for Promise Zone preference points or priority/special consideration. Please note that projects which substantially and directly benefit Promise Zone residents but which are not within the boundaries of the Promise Zone may be considered. Agencies will make clear the acceptable definition of substantially and directly beneficial in the program's award and funding announcement.

What This Means for You

The Promise Zone designation enables the Federal government to partner with local leaders who are addressing multiple community revitalization challenges in a collaborative way and have demonstrated a commitment to results. Your role in certifying qualifying projects for Promise Zone preference points or priority/special consideration virtually guarantees that numerous entities will approach you during the balance of this fiscal year seeking endorsement of their projects. We recognize that this will mean some staff time commitments for you in processing these forms, but we believe the potential benefit is significant.

HUD has tried to make the process as streamlined as possible. We stand ready to support you as you undertake this responsibility, and we trust that you will exercise prudent judgment in determining whether a project has the potential to advance revitalization strategies in your community and help further the goals of the Promise Zone Initiative.

The process to certify an application for Promise Zone preference points or priority/special consideration is simple:

1) Partner organizations in your geography who wish to access preference points or priority/special consideration for select grant programs will contact your organization to pursue potential partnership in order to develop a project that meets the following criteria:

- a) *The applicant is engaged in activities, that in consultation with the Promise Zone lead organization further the purposes of the initiative; and*
- b) *The applicant's proposed activities either directly reflect the goals of the Promise Zone or will result in the delivery of services that are consistent with the goals of Promise Zone; and*
- c) *The applicant has committed to maintain an on-going relationship with the Promise Zone lead organization for the purposes of coordinating with other Promise Zone activities, reporting on milestones and outcomes, and collaborating with the lead organization and other Promise Zone organizations in securing additional resources and partnerships, as necessary.*

2) If you determine that a proposed project meets these criteria, fill in a copy of HUD **Form:XX**.

This form is available on the HUD website.

3) **The applicant is responsible for including the form in its applications.** Promise Zone staff will review all certifications and confirm qualifying projects for program offices. While the certification is the driving document in this process, HUD retains the right to do additional diligence to confirm that the points are merited, and to determine whether to award the preference points or priority/special consideration.

4) **If your organization wants to apply** for a program where preference points or priority/special consideration are offered, the Promise Zone designee primary contact may also self-certify by filling in the form on behalf of the Promise Zone designee. The individual completing and signing the certification must be authorized to make commitments on behalf of and legally bind the lead organization, otherwise the certification may not be considered valid by the federal agency making the awards.

Promise Zone preference points or priority/special consideration checklist

We recommend that Promise Zone designees considering requests for certification for Promise Zone preference points or priority/special consideration review at least a detailed summary of the application, including a summary of the proposed project and the location of the project. You may want to request a short description from the applicant explaining why the proposed project aligns with the goals of Promise Zones. At a minimum, you should consider the following questions when deciding whether to certify an application for preference points or priority/special consideration:

- 1) Does the proposed project align with goals of Promise Zone? For your reference, they can be found at <https://www.hud.gov/promisezones>.
- 2) Does the proposed project align with and further your community's Promise Zone strategies?
- 3) Is the applicant committed to maintaining an on-going relationship with your project?

Current List of Eligible Programs (as of May 9, 2014)

Promise Zones will not receive grant funding, but will benefit from technical assistance, coordinated federal staff support, and preferential access to certain existing federal funding streams. Should Congress enact proposed Promise Zone tax credits, private businesses would receive tax incentives for hiring and investing in Promise Zones.

All federal resources are subject to statutory requirements and appropriations and therefore will change throughout the Promise Zone designation period. The current list of opportunities includes:

Federal Agency	Program
Department of Housing and Urban Development	Choice Neighborhoods The Indian Community Development Block Grant Program
Small Business Administration	Micro Entrepreneurship Initiative HUB Zone Program Women's Business Center counseling/training Office of Native American Affairs TA
Department of Justice	Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program COPS Hiring Program
Department of Labor	Opportunity Youth Demonstration Project YouthBuild Reintegration of Ex-Offenders
Department of Health and Human Services	Community Health Centers Community Services Block Grant Healthy Start Assets for Independence
Department of Agriculture	Community Facilities Grant Program Self-Help Section 523 TA Grants Housing Preservation Grant Rural Community Development Initiative
Department of Commerce	Economic Development Assistance Program
Department of Education	School Climate Transformation Grants Project Prevent Grants GEAR UP Charter Schools Program-Replication & Expansion Grant Full Service Community Schools Grant
Corporation for National and Community Service	Americorps VISTA Social Innovation Fund