

Unified Funding 2010 FAQs for Green Building Capital Projects

In response to inquiries concerning the 2010 Unified Funding Application, the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), with corresponding answers, were developed to assist applicants preparing their application.

1. *The proposed language in the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) for the Low-Income Housing Credit Program (and the New York State Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program) requires all tax credit funded projects to meet a base energy efficiency standard. Section III. A. of the Request for Proposals (RFP) identifies the HUD Energy Improvements Checklist as this standard. Where do I include this document in the application?*

The Division has identified the HUD Energy Efficiency Checklist as the minimum required standard for all projects funded with federal or state credits. This document applies to all buildings in a project; to the degree the items in the Checklist will be included in the proposed project. Because this document is a base standard applicable to all funded projects and needs to be developed as the design of the project progresses, submission of the Checklist will be required as part of the construction documents submission prior to the commencement of construction, but need not be included in the application.

2. *The RFP lists several Energy Efficiency standards in section VII. D. 4. vi.(page 26) How do these apply to my proposed project?*

For HTF and HOME site-specific projects, this Energy Efficiency section of the RFP outlines strategies to earn scoring points by meeting a higher energy efficiency standard and to qualify for the Energy Efficiency Initiative. Points for HTF & HOME site-specific projects will be allocated as listed in the RFP. For more information on the Energy Efficiency Initiative, see section III. E. 2. of the RFP.

For projects seeking federal or state credits, this section outlines the standards used to evaluate scoring points for meeting a higher level of energy efficiency than the base standard. Please note, however, that the point structure for projects seeking federal or state credits is in accordance with the proposed language in the QAP (see pages 21 and 22 of the RFP).

3. *I have three questions concerning the first grouping of standards listed under Energy Efficiency, section VII. D. 4. vi. (page 26) of the RFP.*

The first standard listed is the NYSERDA Multifamily Building Performance Program. I heard that this program has been suspended. How do I include this program in my application?

Since it appears unlikely that the NYSERDA Multifamily Building Performance Program will be available at the time applications must be submitted, we may not be able to recognize the NYSERDA Multifamily Building Performance Program as an existing energy efficiency strategy. However, we will allow applicants to base their contract with their energy consultant on one of the other strategies listed in the RFP and reference the NYSERDA Multifamily Building Performance Program as an option, should it be available in the future.

There are two LEED programs listed in the Energy Efficiency standards. Does this mean I need to develop a certified LEED project to qualify, if I choose one of these two standards?

No. With the suspension of the NYSERDA Multifamily Performance Program, other energy efficiency standards were sought that could substitute for the NYSERDA program. The two LEED standards listed were chosen because they provide for a high degree of energy efficiency. The intent was to allow developers to meet the energy efficiency requirements of these standards, but not to require full LEED certification. Full LEED certification is beyond the limits of DHCR/HTFC programs, but full LEED certification for any project, as long as it correlates to and complements other program requirements, would be welcome.

Please note that this methodology will be utilized for “Qualifying Units in Multifamily Buildings in the Energy Star for New Homes Program” as well..

I am proposing a multifamily building type that is not recognized by any of the options listed in the RFP. Will you allow another option to enable my project to meet your Energy Efficiency standards?

Yes. To supplement the standards listed in the RFP (page 26), the Division has decided to allow an additional option to all multifamily buildings. Projects meeting the standard outlined below, will also qualify under this section of the RFP:

Applicants may propose to achieve a 14% reduction in energy usage as compared to the ASHRAE 90.1-2004 standard. In the contract with the energy consultant submitted with the application in Attachment B7, applicants must reference that they are utilizing this option and list the components and strategies they plan to utilize to meet this standard, should the project be funded.

If funded, applicants will be required to provide energy modeling completed by an energy consultant certified as a Multi-Family Analyst by the Building Performance Institute, or by an approved

Performance Partner under the NYSERDA Multifamily Performance Program. In addition to energy modeling, the energy consultant must address the following:

- Document the energy efficiency strategies used in the project design.
- Provide field verification documenting that energy efficiency strategies were achieved in the following areas:
 - The building envelope thermal insulation.
 - Air sealing of the building envelope.
 - Heating and ventilation systems for the dwelling units and common areas.
 - Domestic hot water heating.
 - Electrical lighting.
 - Energy efficiency of miscellaneous items that consume energy, such as pumps, motors, fans, etc.

Field verification and building modeling standards are to be in accordance with any of the other methodologies used by the other energy efficiency standards referenced in the RFP that are appropriate for the building type, or the applicant may propose an equal standard or methodology for consideration by the Division.

4. *Section VII. D. 4. Vi. of the RFP lists the option of meeting the Energy Efficiency standards in moderate rehab, preservation projects, by reducing overall energy consumption by 20%. Can I meet this criterion by reducing energy costs by 20%?*

The Division will recognize that this standard is met by reducing energy costs, provided that a holistic approach to energy efficiency is utilized that addresses all building components that consume energy, or affect energy consumption. For example, if one strategy provides the basis for meeting a 20% reduction in costs but the applicant fails to address the merits of other energy reduction strategies, the Division will not recognize this as meeting the standard.

5. *In past years, the Division allowed the submission of a REScheck analysis for projects that were not located in a System Benefits Charge area in order to meet your energy efficiency standards. I do not see this option referenced in the RFP. Is it still available?*

No. The inclusion of a REScheck analysis as an energy efficiency standard was to allow an alternative methodology of energy efficiency for projects that did not qualify for NYSEDA programs because they were not located within a Systems Benefit Charge area. Since the additional energy efficiency

strategies listed in the RFP are not restricted to locations within System Benefit Charge areas, there is no longer a need to offer this option.

6. *Can you please confirm what the most recent versions of the DHCR Design Handbook and the Green Building Criteria Reference Manual are?*

The current edition of the DHCR Design Handbook is dated November 2008.

The current edition of the Green Building Criteria Reference Manual is dated December 2008.

7. *The Application Instructions for Exhibit 1 E (page 9) seem to indicate that applications seeking federal or state credits only (i.e. not also requesting HOME or Housing Trust Fund Assistance) may not apply for the Green Building Initiative (GBI). Elsewhere in the Instructions and Request for Proposals, it is clear that such stand-alone projects would be eligible for additional points. Can you clarify this?*

The term “initiative” in this context is only used when HTFC funding is being used. Projects seeking HTF and HOME awards may be eligible to receive additional funding by complying with this, or another one of the initiatives. See sections III. B, III. C, and III. E. of the RFP.

Projects that seek federal or state tax credits without HOME or HTF may, by achieving Green Building standards, receive additional scoring points per the Qualified Allocation Plan. See section VII.D. 4 of the RFP.