

Attachment A

Public Meeting Recap: Addressing the Housing Crisis in Erie County

On August 15, 2024, Erie County Health Department, the City of Sandusky, Greater Sandusky Partnership and other relevant community stakeholders held a public meeting focused on the affordable housing issue facing our community. The event was co-sponsored by Serving Our Seniors and the Sandusky Register; nearly 200 residents attended.

Throughout the forum, attendees expressed deep concerns and frustrations about the rising cost of housing and the difficulty of finding affordable options, particularly for seniors on fixed incomes. Many voiced fears of becoming homeless or relying on shelters due to financial strains.

While panelists offered varying perspectives on how to address the housing crisis, there was a general consensus that the situation had reached a critical point.

As the forum concluded, it became clear that addressing the housing crisis in Erie County would require a collaborative effort involving local governments, community organizations, and residents working together to find innovative solutions. When made award of the FY24 HUD PRO Housing application window, ECHD, the City of Sandusky, Greater Sandusky Partnership, and Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority began developing this proposal.

A public hearing on the application will be held upon award of funding and prior to any expenditure of funding.

Upon Notice of Award, the application narratives will be available for comment on the ECHD website. The commenting period will remain open for a period of 15 calendar days to ensure the public has adequate time to respond. Application elements will remain available on the ECHD website throughout the project period to ensure public access to project materials.

Attachment B

The Erie County Health Department (ECHD) certifies that it has complied with all public participation requirements outlined in Section VI.E of the NOFO for the Affordable Senior Housing Development Project application.

Reasonable Notice of Public Hearing:

A public hearing regarding this application is scheduled for December 17, 2024. Public notice is:

- Posted on the Erie County Health Department's website, www.eriecohealthohio.com
- Advertised in local newspapers, including the Sandusky Register, see certification below
- Shared through social media platforms and local community bulletin boards.

Public Hearing and Availability of Application for Public Comment:

The relevant application elements are currently available on ECHD's website. As of December 3, 2024, no public comments have been made. A copy of the application remains accessible for public viewing via ECHD's website, and ECHD will leave the public comment window open through December 17, 2024. That that time, any new comments will be submitted to HUD for review.

Ongoing Public Access and Feedback Opportunity:

The application, supporting documents, and any updates or revisions will remain available for public review throughout the entire grant period, and further public hearings or community meetings will be scheduled as necessary. ECHD will continue to ensure compliance with HUD's public participation requirements, including keeping the comment period open through the specified deadline and addressing any public input.

Attachment C

Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities

The Erie County Health Department (ECHD) has utilized data from the Ohio Health Improvement Zones mapping tool and the 2020 Census to assess the racial composition of the population expected to benefit from the proposed Affordable Senior Housing Development Project. The project aims to serve low-income families and seniors, with a focus on minority populations, including African American, Hispanic/Latino, and other underserved communities residing in Sandusky and surrounding areas. Based on demographic analysis, we anticipate that a significant portion of beneficiaries will be low-income individuals and persons of color, as these groups are disproportionately represented in areas of concentrated poverty and inadequate housing.

We identified several **barriers that could potentially impede equitable access** to our proposed activities: 1) Historical Segregation and Housing Discrimination: Patterns of residential segregation and a lack of affordable housing have historically limited access to well-resourced neighborhoods for communities of color; 2) Language Barriers: Non-English-speaking residents, particularly those from Hispanic or Latino backgrounds, may face challenges in understanding available resources and navigating the housing application process; 3) Limited Access to Information and Resources: Many marginalized communities may lack access to the information and resources necessary to benefit from affordable housing programs; 4) Systemic Trust Issues: Historical mistreatment and systemic discrimination within public programs may result in a lack of trust in government initiatives among minority populations.

To **address these barriers**, ECHD has developed targeted strategies to ensure equitable access:

- **Inclusive Outreach and Communication:** We will continue our existing practice of distributing marketing and outreach materials in both English and Spanish. Additionally, we will collaborate with trusted community leaders and organizations to reach underserved populations directly.
- **Cultural Competency Training:** All staff involved in the project will undergo mandatory cultural competency training within the first 90 days of hire, with annual refreshers.
- **Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations:** We will partner with local organizations that have established relationships with minority communities to enhance outreach efforts and create a more inclusive process.
- **Language Access Services:** Bilingual staff and translation services will be made available for all aspects of the housing program to mitigate language barriers for non-English-speaking applicants.

To evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts to advance racial equity, we will collect and analyze demographic data on applicants and beneficiaries to monitor the diversity of those benefitting from the housing program. We will conduct regular surveys to gauge the experiences of program participants, to ensure this program continues to meet community needs.

Attachment D

Affirmative Marketing and Outreach

The Erie County Health Department (ECHD) is committed to ensuring **inclusive access to HUD-funded programs** by implementing a robust affirmative marketing and outreach strategy. Our approach will focus on reaching underserved populations, including Black and Brown communities, individuals with limited English proficiency, persons with disabilities, and families with children.

We will utilize a variety of platforms, including local media outlets, social media channels, and community-based organizations, to ensure that all eligible individuals are informed about program opportunities. Special attention will be paid to areas identified as having high concentrations of low-income and minority populations using tools like the Ohio Health Improvement Zones mapping tool.

Bilingual marketing materials, primarily in English and Spanish, will be developed to reduce language barriers, and all outreach efforts will reflect the diversity of the community by incorporating culturally relevant messaging. Additionally, we will collaborate with local partners, such as community centers and service providers, to extend our reach and build trust within marginalized groups.

This strategy is designed to create equitable access to program benefits, ensuring that no eligible resident is left behind due to a lack of awareness or access.

Attachment E

Experience Promoting Racial Equity

The Erie County Health Department (ECHD) has a demonstrated **commitment to promoting racial equity and effectively addressing the needs of underserved communities**, particularly Black and Brown populations. Our long-standing initiatives, such as the lead abatement program, have been designed with a focus on reducing health disparities that disproportionately affect marginalized groups.

Our experience includes actively engaging with community stakeholders to obtain input when developing programs. We have **partnered with** local organizations serving **minority populations** to ensure that our initiatives are culturally relevant and effectively address the unique challenges faced by these communities. For instance, in our Community Health Improvement Plans and biannual Community Health Assessments, we seek feedback directly from residents, ensuring that their voices inform program design and implementation.

Additionally, ECHD has implemented **staff training on cultural competency** to enhance our team's ability to serve diverse populations. This training equips staff to better understand and navigate the systemic barriers faced by underserved communities, fostering trust and improving service delivery.

Our outreach efforts are further strengthened through **collaboration with community-based organizations that work directly with underserved groups**. By leveraging these partnerships, we can effectively mobilize resources and tailor our programs to meet specific needs.

ECHD is committed to advancing racial equity by designing and operating programs that not only equitably benefit Black and Brown communities but also empower them through active participation in the decision-making process. This commitment ensures that our efforts are impactful, sustainable, and aligned with federal equity mandates.