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Lincoln County ARPA Affordable Housing Investment Process
Background and Application Form

Approved by the County Commissioners on 6/20/2023

A. Introduction:

The Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission, with the strong support of the Lincoln County Commissioners, completed the Lincoln County Housing Needs Assessment in May 2023. This Countywide housing study is a comprehensive assessment of the state of housing in Lincoln County and offers recommendations on strategies for addressing current housing needs and creating affordable housing in the County's communities.

A few key takeaways from the Assessment:

- No action is not an option as it would result in affordability worsening, fewer year-round housing units, a shrinking labor pool, and a more rapidly aging population. Affordable housing is needed to prevent this crisis from worsening.
- The workforce housing shortage is an existential threat to the County's economy. We need to ensure a sufficient labor pool to sustain the County's economic future. Affordable housing will allow in-commuters to live where they work.
- Affordable housing will support existing residents who are cost-burdened, enable older adults to age in place, and attract younger residents and families to put down roots. This, in turn, will support social cohesion and volunteerism, and stem school enrollment declines.
- Sizeable development projects are needed to 'move the needle' and all municipalities will have a role to play. Public/private partnerships will be critical for implementation.

The Assessment finds that 900 affordable units will be needed to house working families and older adults of modest means. The recommended distribution of these affordable-rate units includes approximately 250 owner-occupied workforce units, 250 renter-occupied workforce units, and 400 affordable older adult rentals.

To that end, the Lincoln County Commissioners have allocated \$1.5 million of Lincoln County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the Lincoln County Affordable Housing Investment Process to provide financial support in advancing the construction of a significant number of the needed units identified in the Lincoln County Housing Needs Assessment.

B. Funding:

Grant award is calculated at \$2,000 per each affordable unit proposed (refer to Section D for details on ‘affordable’). If all the units in the development are designated affordable, an additional \$1,000 per unit award may be granted as part of this application. The total award amount is not to exceed \$300,000 (calculated on the \$2,000 per unit basis).

Lincoln County ARPA Affordable Housing Investment Process funding may not be used for staff time, operating budgets, routine maintenance, minor repairs, debt payment, or other uses not in line with the ARPA final rules and at the determination of the Lincoln County Commissioners.

Lincoln County reserves the right to revise priorities and funding requirements, depending on the availability of state, federal, local, or private sector funds.

The County Commissioners are especially interested in projects that are leveraging other dollars - local, state, and federal funding; other ARPA funds; private donations; etc.

C. Timing of Applications

Applications are accepted on an on-going basis as long as funding is available. Lincoln County will review applications on a first-come, first-served basis. Lincoln County reserves the right to determine whether an application meets the requirements described herein.

D. Applicability:

A funding award from the Lincoln County ARPA Affordable Housing Investment Process shall only be used for the construction, or other associated site/infrastructure improvements, of those units in the development that are going to be dedicated ‘affordable’. Funding cannot be used for general site work (landscaping, parking, etc.) nor can it be used for the construction, or other associated costs, of market-rate units. To be eligible for this funding opportunity, the units must be constructed in Lincoln County.

For the purposes of this application, ‘affordable’ means:

- For rental housing, units are leased to households making no more than 80% of Area Median Income for Lincoln County and are leased at not more than 80% Area Median Income rents.
- For owned housing, units are sold to households making no more than 120% of Area Median Income for Lincoln County.

Applicants must demonstrate long-term affordability by submitting a draft or executed restrictive covenant that ensures the units will remain affordable for at least 30 years after completion of construction.

E. Eligible Applicants:

Eligible applicants include:

- Established Non-Profit Housing Groups in Lincoln County
- Community Action Agencies
- Non-Profit Housing Developers
- For-Profit Housing Developers
- Community Development Financial Institutions or other housing financing entities.
- Municipalities

Developers and members of the development team (contractors, engineers, and/or architects) shall be able to demonstrate, to Lincoln County’s satisfaction, sufficient experience in developing affordable housing units.

F. Application Requirements:

For Lincoln County to accept and process an application under this Program, the following will be required:

1. The completed application form – Attachment A.
2. IRS 501(c)3 tax-exemption determination letter (if applicable).
3. Corporate resolution demonstrating authority to undertake the project.
4. Evidence of site control (deed, purchase and sale agreement, etc.).
5. A narrative that addresses each of the following items about the applicant (*no more than 5 pages*):
 - a. History of the organization/developer; staffing levels; primary activities; prior experience with affordable housing development; and the constituency or clientele to be served.
 - b. Qualifications and experience of developer's proposed project team including any consultants, architects, site planners and/or engineer and contractors.
6. A narrative that addresses each of the following items concerning the project (*no more than 10 pages; plan sets do not count toward the 10-page maximum*):
 - a. Submit a project location map and any concept design plans (max. page size of 11" x 17", does not need to be scalable drawings) for the proposed development.
 - b. *For rehab projects*, detailed description of any existing structures, including size, design, condition, estimated age, utilities, accessibility, parking, and observable environmental concerns.
 - c. *For new construction*, detailed description of the existing project site, including any challenges to site development (ledge requiring blasting, wetlands, archeological resources, for example). Discuss infrastructure needs as part of this narrative.
 - d. The planned number of total units, as well as a breakdown of the number of affordable and market-rate (if a mix is proposed) and a breakdown by unit type (i.e., apartment, mobile home, single-family, multi-family dwelling, etc.).
 - e. Submit a copy of either draft or executed covenants establishing long-term affordability.
 - f. Describe any non-residential space.
 - g. Scope of expected rehabilitation or construction for proposed development.
 - h. Projected timeline for development.
 - i. Description of how the project complies with local zoning. If any waivers will be sought as part of an application to the municipal planning board, please describe. If you have already received planning board approval, please submit a copy of the planning board decision.
 - j. Itemization of funding requested from Lincoln County (i.e., number of affordable units × \$2,000 per unit = total)
 - k. Detailed description and itemization of how the Lincoln County ARPA Funds will be spent on the project.
 - l. Total project budget and details on funding from other sources (describe and include copies of commitment letters for all other sources required for the project).

G. Review Criteria and Process:

An advisory committee consisting of LCRPC staff, the Lincoln County Administrator, and/or a future-identified affordable housing specialist will review applications. Recommendations for this review will be forwarded to the

County Commissioners for final review and approval. **All approved funding awards are at the discretion of the Lincoln County Commissioners.**

The advisory committee will judge the merits of the applications received in accordance with the criteria described in the table below.

Scoring Criteria	Total Points Available
Criteria 1: General Information and Group Eligibility <i>(Refer to Sections E, F1, F2, F3, and F4 of this Notice)</i>	Pass/Fail
Criteria 2: Capacity, Expertise, and Previous Experience of Developer & Development Team <i>(Refer to Section F5 of this Notice)</i>	30
Criteria 3: Scope of Work <i>(Refer to Sections D and F6 of this Notice)</i>	35
Criteria 4: Impact of Project on Lincoln County’s Affordable Housing Needs <i>(Refer to Sections A and D of this Notice)</i>	15
Criteria 5: Leveraging of Other Funding Sources <i>(Refer to Sections B and F6(l) of this Notice)</i>	20
TOTAL POINTS	100

For applications that demonstrate meeting the eligibility requirements in Criteria 1, the advisory committee will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score the remaining Criteria shown above. Members of the advisory committee will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections.

H. Reporting Requirements:

If funding is awarded, an agreement between the awardee and Lincoln County will be developed that describes reporting requirements for the project funds, in compliance with federal ARPA rules. As part of the agreement, the County (County Commissioners) will be invited to any public occasion, milestone event, or ribbon-cutting ceremony, as applicable.

I. Submission and Contact Information

Please submit five (5) hard copy sets of the signed application form and supplemental materials. Please also submit an electronic submission as one complete PDF document.

Submissions must be made to:

Emily Rabbe, Lincoln County Planner
 Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission
 297 Bath Road
 Wiscasset, Maine 04578
erabbe@lcrpc.org

Any questions about the Lincoln County ARPA Affordable Housing Investment Process must be directed to Emily Rabbe (207-882-5986).

-ATTACHMENT A-

Lincoln County ARPA Affordable Housing Investment Program

APPLICATION FORM

Section 1: Applicant Information

Name of Applicant:	
Contact Name:	
Contact Title:	
Contact Email:	
Contact Phone Number:	

Section 2: Site Information

Development Name:	
Property Address:	
Tax Map Number:	
Total Acreage of Project Site:	
No. of Acres to be Developed:	
Currently Developed Property (Yes or No):	

Section 3: General Project Information

Proposed Number of <u>Affordable</u> Units:	
Total Units Proposed as Part of Development (<i>market rate + affordable, if applicable</i>):	
Total Project Budget:	
Total Funding Requested from Lincoln County (Refer to Sections B & D for details):	

I, _____, certify I have completed this application form and am submitting all materials described in Section F, *Application Requirements*. I certify that the information in this Funding Application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: _____

Date: _____