

Promise Zones

Frequently Asked Questions

April 28, 2015

SECOND ROUND SELECTION PROCESS

1. In the second round selection process, how many urban communities did HUD designate?

In total, 123 urban, rural and tribal applications were received from communities in 36 states along with Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico. Specifically, there were 97 urban, 19 rural, and 7 tribal applications.

Applications were scored according to the selection criteria and scoring rubric set forth in the final Application Guide for the appropriate category of Promise Zone (urban, rural, or tribal). Representatives from all of the twelve federal agencies participating in the Promise Zone Initiative helped to review and score applications in the selection process. The highest scoring urban applications were selected for designation.

On April 28, 2015, HUD announced the following six new urban Promise Zone designations:

<i>Promise Zone Name</i> Lead Organization (alphabetical by state)	City	State
<i>Sacramento Promise Zone</i> Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency	Sacramento	CA
<i>North Hartford Promise Zone</i> Hartford Mayor's Office	Hartford	CT
<i>IndyEast Promise Zone</i> John H. Boner Community Center	Indianapolis	IN
<i>Minneapolis Promise Zone</i> City of Minneapolis	Minneapolis	MN
<i>St. Louis Promise Zone</i> St. Louis Economic Development Partnership	St. Louis & St. Louis County	MO
<i>Camden City Promise Zone</i> Office of the Mayor of the City of Camden	Camden	NJ

2. Did HUD select finalists in the second round? If so, what benefits do finalists receive?

Yes, HUD selected the following communities as finalists:

<i>Promise Zone Finalist Community</i> Lead Organization (alphabetical by state)	State
<i>New Haven, City of New Haven</i>	CT

<i>Tampa, City of Tampa</i>	FL
<i>Westside Atlanta, City of Atlanta</i>	GA
<i>West Louisville, Louisville Metro Government</i>	KY
<i>Claiborne Corridor, City of New Orleans</i>	LA
<i>Detroit, City of Detroit</i>	MI
<i>Newark, City of Newark</i>	NJ
<i>Albuquerque Bernalillo County, Rio Grande Community Development Corporation</i>	NM
<i>City of Reading, City of Reading</i>	PA
<i>Greater Racine, Racine County</i>	WI

The purpose of selecting Promise Zones Finalists is to recognize communities whose applications reflect high-quality strategies under the criteria set forth in the *Application Guide*, but are not selected as Promise Zone designees. The participating federal agencies will seek to expand national knowledge about Promise Zones Finalist communities and will communicate regularly with Finalists about opportunities for relevant funding or technical assistance that may become available. However, no preference points or other Promise Zone designation benefits will be given to Finalists. Please note that Promise Zone Finalists are not precluded from applying for a Promise Zone designation in a future round of competition.

3. In the application guide, HUD stated that it intended to designate at least one small/medium Metropolitan Core Based Statistical Area (Metro CBSA) but all the designees are large Metro CBSAs. Why didn't HUD designate a small/medium Metro CBSA?

The application guide did two things with respect to small/medium metro CBSAs: 1) by establishing a subcategory, it recognized that regions of less than 500,000 people often have a narrower base of institutions and resources to involve in community revitalization activities, and 2) it tested demand from communities of that size for Promise Zone designations, by creating the subcategory only if we received a certain number of such applications -- a total of five or 10 percent of the total applications received, whichever was greater. HUD received 18 applications from small/medium metro CBSAs, or 18.5 percent of the total.

The response demonstrates strong interest from regions with less than 500,000 in total population. However, the overall quality of the applications was not high, even when they were scored only against one another and not compared to applications from larger metro CBSAs.

Based on the results of the application review, HUD believes that small/medium CBSA communities are doing good work, but would benefit from another year of planning with debriefing information from the second round reviewers. The Promise Zone Initiative seeks to identify and elevate the strongest examples of community revitalization work from different types of communities. It is in the interest of the initiative, as a demonstration, to designate highest quality examples possible of comprehensive community revitalization from small/medium metro CBSAs.

In the third round of selections, HUD intends to establish a small/medium metro CBSA subcategory again, if the number of such applications received is at least five, or 10 percent of total applications

received, whichever is greater. HUD encourages interested small/medium CBSA communities to continue their work and submit applications in the third round.

4. My community was not designated or named a finalist during the second round. Can I request an application debrief?

Lead Applicants have until May 13, 2015 at 5:00 pm EST to request an application debrief via promisезones@hud.gov. The Promise Zone Team will work with applicants to schedule a debrief to discuss the areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement of their application.

5. How can communities who were not designated as Promise Zones still benefit from this initiative?

There are a number of different ways that communities that did not receive a Promise Zones designation can still benefit from this initiative:

- HUD's Promise Zone website maintains a list of federal grant opportunities selected by the participating agencies as being particularly relevant for distressed communities. Communities who did not receive designations are welcome to apply for or utilize any of these grants, even though their applications will not receive Promise Zone preference points. Communities can also sign up to for the Promise Zone Listserv [here](#) to receive updates.
- Additionally, the Community Development Marketplace (CDM) is a database of the Second Round Promise Zones Initiative applicant project data from the 111 communities (86 urban, 18 rural, and 7 tribal) who consented to share their survey with the public. The CDM provides information that describes community goals, proposed activities, key supporters and implementation partners.
- HUD has made the CDM public so that internal and external stakeholders can learn about current and proposed activities to create transformation at the local level. Applicants can use this tool to connect with other communities to share expertise and foster collaboration in sustainable community development projects.

6. When will the third round of applications open?

In the summer of 2015, HUD will publish a Notice in the Federal Register requesting public comment on the proposed selection process, criteria, and submissions for the final round of the Promise Zones initiative. We anticipate that the final third round application guide will be released in Fall of 2015. All application materials will be announced via the Federal Register and the Promise Zone Listserv. Sign up for notifications [here](#).

OVERVIEW

7. What are Promise Zones and what do they aim to achieve?

Promise Zones are high poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities where the federal government will work with local leaders to accelerate local efforts create jobs, increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, reduce violent crime and address other priorities such as promoting health and wellness, improving community infrastructure and increasing civic engagement.

8. What communities are designated Promise Zones?

On January 9, 2014, President Obama announced the first urban, rural, and tribal Promise Zones in a ceremony at the White House. They are located in: San Antonio, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Southeastern Kentucky, and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

On April 28, 2015, HUD announced six new urban Promise Zone designations located in Minneapolis, Sacramento, Indianapolis, Camden, Hartford and St. Louis.

To receive a Promise Zone designation, a community must submit a high quality application that meets the eligibility criteria and demonstrates strong local commitment, a compelling strategy, and high need. A total of 20 urban, rural and tribal Promise Zone designations will be made by the end of calendar year 2016.

9. Can a new applicant view the winning applications of the five previous Promise Zone designees?

On the Promise Zone's website, there are designee fact sheets that provide summaries of each designee's partners and strategies. Applications will not be shared or posted.

BENEFITS

10. How long will Promise Zone designations last?

The Promise Zone designation will have a term of ten years and may be extended as necessary to capture the full term of availability of the Promise Zone tax incentives, if enacted by Congress.

11. Are the AmeriCorps VISTA members available to the Promise Zones for the entirety of the 10 year designation?

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) will support up to 5 AmeriCorps VISTA members in each Promise Zone for 5 years, contingent on the Promise Zone designee meeting all the AmeriCorps VISTA reporting and performance standards as designated by the relevant CNCS state office. After 5 years, CNCS state offices may continue to place AmeriCorps VISTA members in the Promise Zone if the Promise Zone demonstrates an ongoing need for anti-poverty capacity building resources, has met all relevant reporting requirements, and sufficient AmeriCorps VISTA resources are available in the relevant state.

12. What federal resources will be available to Promise Zones? Is there funding associated with becoming a Promise Zone?

The Promise Zones designation commits 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. Further, Promise Zones will be assigned Federal staff to help navigate the array of Federal assistance and programs already available to them. In addition, eligible applicants in Promise Zones will receive any available (a) preference for certain competitive Federal programs and (b) technical assistance. Subject to enactment by Congress, businesses investing in Promise Zones or hiring residents of Promise Zones will be eligible to receive tax incentives. Altogether, this package of assistance will help local leaders accelerate efforts to revitalize their communities.

The Promise Zones designation will be for a term of 10 years, and may be extended as necessary to capture the full term of availability of the Promise Zones tax incentives, if tax incentives are enacted by

Congress. All assistance provided to Promise Zones is subject to applicable regulations, statutes, and changes in Federal agency policies, appropriations, and authorizations for relevant programs. For these reasons the specific benefits made available to Promise Zones will vary from year to year and sometimes more often than annually during the term of the Promise Zone designation. As of April 28, 2015, the list of technical assistance and competitive funding opportunities with Promise Zone preferences includes:

- *Department of Agriculture:* Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program; Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program; Farm To School Grants; Farmers Market Promotion Program; Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations Nutrition Education Grant; Housing Preservation Grants; Local Food Promotion Program; Rural Community Development Initiative; Self-Help Section 523 Technical Assistance Grants; SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants
- *Department of Commerce:* Economic Development Assistance Program
- *Corporation for National and Community Service:* AmeriCorps VISTA; Operations AmeriCorps
- *Department of Education:* Charter Schools Program Replication and Expansion Grant; Native Youth Community Projects; Performance Partnership
- *Department of Health and Human Services:* Assets for Independence; Community Economic Development Program; Community Economic Development Program – Healthy Food Financing Initiative Program; Community Services Block Grants; Health Centers Program; Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program
- *Department of Housing and Urban Development:* Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant; Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant; Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) Program for Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages
- *Department of Justice:* Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program; COPS Hiring Program
- *Department of Labor:* Face Forward - Youth; Training To Work Adult; YouthBuild
- *Small Business Administration:* Clusters Initiative; HUBZone; Office of Entrepreneurship Education; Office of Native American Affairs; Program for Investment in Micro-Entrepreneurs; Women’s Business Center
- *U.S. Department of the Treasury:* New Markets Tax Credit Program

Please note that funding opportunities are open to all eligible communities. More information on each opportunity can be found at agency websites and www.grants.gov.

13. How would the proposed Promise Zones tax credits work?

If Congress enacts the Obama Administration’s Promise Zones tax incentive proposal, private businesses will receive tax incentives for employing and investing in Promise Zones, thereby attracting additional private investments. The tax incentives would be available to businesses employing Promise Zone residents or investing in a geographic area encompassing the Promise Zone as described in the Administration’s FY15 revenue proposals [here](#). The maximum population of the area in which a Promise Zones tax incentive can be claimed is two hundred thousand. Under the Administration’s proposal, the Promise Zones tax incentives would remain available to businesses for ten years.

14. Is the lead applicant the only entity that receives the benefits of Promise Zone designation, such as tax incentives, technical assistance, and future application preference points for an array of grant programs?

Partners actively working in support of the strategic plan for which the Promise Zones was competitively selected are eligible to receive Promise Zone benefits if they apply for grants. In order for a partner organization to qualify for a benefit, the lead organization of the Promise Zone will provide a certification of the partner’s contribution to the Promise Zone Plan. The certification form and guidance can be found [here](#). Funding announcements and other information regarding federal benefits targeted to Promise Zones may also provide more specific instructions regarding the documentation required to

indicate that a partner has been certified by the lead organization.

15.

- a. Will Urban Promise Zones designees have an opportunity to determine and choose the level and types of support and/or technical assistance needed to address its specific project goals?**
- b. Who will be the federal liaison responsible for supporting Promise Zone designees? How will the quality of support provided to Promise Zone designees be monitored?**

For the designated communities, agencies across the federal government will partner to help the Promise Zones access the resources and expertise they need. The Promise Zone's lead organization and its partners will determine the types and level of federal support needed to revitalize their community.

A federal community liaison will be assigned to help each Promise Zone navigate federal resources. HUD and USDA are tracking the use of federal programs and available preferences by Promise Zone designees. Current designees are also providing regular feedback to federal partners to ensure that community needs are addressed.

16. How can I verify details on which competitive grants programs provide preference points and priority consideration to Promise Zone communities and what those preferences are?

Twelve federal agencies offer benefits to Promise Zone designees. For a current list of funding and technical assistance opportunities, please click [here](#).

Please note that funding and technical assistance opportunities are open to all communities and organizations eligible for the specific grants, not just communities with Promise Zone preferences. The specific benefits made available to Promise Zones will vary from year to year, and sometimes more often than annually, due to changes in the agency policies and changes in appropriations and authorizations for relevant programs. All assistance provided to Promise Zones is subject to applicable regulations, statutes, and changes in federal agency policies, appropriations, and authorizations for relevant programs.

More information on each funding opportunity can be found at agency websites and www.grants.gov.

MISCELLANEOUS

17. Where can I get information about the application process?

The urban, rural, and tribal application guides are available at: <https://www.hud.gov/promisezones/>. Additional information regarding application webcasts and responses to public comment are also available on the website. To get the most current information, please join the Promise Zone mailing list at: <https://www.hud.gov/promisezones/>.

18. What if I have additional questions?

Additional questions on designation eligibility and the application process should be directed by email to: PromiseZones@hud.gov.