Greetings,

The time has come to submit **THDA Technical Assistance Grant applications** for 2019-20, which will be due by the close of business **June 17, 2019**.

Here are the key deadlines to keep in mind as we work to set up the coming year and close out the current.

* 2019-20 fully executed contract- **June 30, 2019**
* 2019-2020 Housing Technical Assistance Plan finalized – **June 30, 2019**
* Year-end invoice submittal – **July 9, 2019**

You will find the 2019-2020 Technical Assistance Grant Application attached to this email.

**General Guidance in Preparing the 2019-2020 Housing Technical Assistance Plan**

As a reminder, we ask for you to describe your proposed activities for the year in Housing Technical Assistance Plan that is incorporated into your contract as ‘Schedule A’. The structure of the Housing Technical Assistance Plan remains generally the same as in recent years, divided between pre-determined required “routine” activities and more regionally responsive discretionary “non-routine” activities designed by the respective Development District. As you design your Development District’s Housing Technical Assistance Plan, please keep in mind that these activities, once approved, will define your eligible expenses for the discretionary portion of the grant. If activities in the approved Plan need to be revised during the contract year, reach out to me so we can discuss amending the housing plan prior to incurring expenditures on anything not contained in the approved Housing Technical Assistance Plan. Refer to the checklist under item five of the Grant Application as to how the plan should be structured.

**2019-20 Updates and Changes to the TA Grant**

* A Four-Factor Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Analysis for your district will be required to assist your county and local governments, non-profits serving the area and others on what language accommodations must be made in affordable housing programs, based on the Civil Rights Act of 1964. More information on the expectations of this requirement is in the attached application document. Please note this will be required once every five years.
* The required activities portion of the grant is now $7,500, up from $5,000. This increase is to cover the associated costs with the above-mentioned four factor LEP analysis. This change also results in $12,500 to remain for the discretionary capacity building activities (non-routine). The maximum liability for the grant remains at $20,000.
* The Tennessee Affordable Housing Coalition and the regional Coalitions are great resources for the Development Districts. However, time spent with and for the coalition can be considered part of housing related customer service, one of the required activities of the contract, rather than a discretionary capacity building activity. We have increased the housing related customer serviced required activity by $250, changing the yearly total from $2,000 to $2,250. This is recognition that we are supportive of the Coalition and your involvement improves the ability to provide housing related customer service. In addition, if district staff are asked to present at a Coalition meeting and this type of education is in your plan, attendance at a Coalition meeting may be an eligible expenditure under the discretionary activities.
* Due to the increase in customer service mentioned above, there is a corresponding reduction in the Tennessee Housing Conference line item, moving the amount for Conference attendance from $1,000 to $750.
* Section A.4. of the Technical Assistance Contract references providing for and encouraging citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan(and the reports and plans that are companions to the ConPlan). This year, we will be conducting the Analysis of Impediments on behalf of the Department of Economic and Community Development. THDA will be asking for assistance in hosting focus groups to update the State’s Analysis of Impediments. A separate email will be sent out as THDA will rely on the Development Districts for use of your facilities and help organizing the focus group with local city and county officials in your service areas.
* Public Notice and Website revised language will be changed in the TA Agreement to require that they are placed in an easily viewed location on your website. Going forward, we require that the announcement (as a link or full text) be no more than 2 clicks from your homepage. As a reminder, these notices should be removed from your websites after the end date in the notice.

**Unallowable Costs**

We continue to get invoices for costs that cannot be billed to the TA grant. Particularly, invoices include costs that must be billed to other program grants that the District also receives. Please remember:

* Expenses otherwise contracted for by THDA or other entities may not be billed to this grant. This prohibition is found in C.11 of the grant agreement. This happens most frequently through billing for the administration of the HOME and Emergency Repair Program.
* Beginning last contract year, planning and administration of CDBG grants is no longer an eligible expense of the TA contract.

Because of the need for revisions, billing for these ineligible items can significantly slow down the reimbursement process. While TA grants do not cover administrative costs, costs associated with the preparation of HOME applications are permissible.

Additionally, we ask that you provide details and documentation that reference the amount being billed in the invoice. If you are billing for attending a meeting related to a discretionary activity, make sure you explain which activity in the Housing Technical Assistance Plan it is addressing and how.

**Suggestions for Discretionary (Non-Routine) Activities**

For Development Districts who are looking for ways to utilize the TA funds, we encourage your consideration of the following ideas for activities in your region. Each addresses a need identified by the agency or other stakeholders and would serve to further the capacity and technical assistance roles funded through these grants. Additional details are found in the attached grant application form.

1. **Building non-profit capacity to meet the Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) qualifications.** Recently, THDA needed to host more than one competition per year for HOME funds set aside for CHDOs. This is because there are fewer non-profits that meet the new (2013) qualifying standards for CHDOs. Development Districts could improve their regional capacity for housing if they provided technical assistance to non-profits on how a non-profit can position themselves to better meet these CHDO qualifications.
2. If you are a Development District that administers the Emergency Repair Program, you may consider offering a **post-repair counseling/maintenance reminder program** to help a homeowner maintain the repairs that were made. There are two Development Districts who offer this outreach to beneficiaries of the ERP program. We encourage you to consider offering this as an extension to the program. We also encourage data collection that may show the impact of this follow-up on homeowner maintenance and housing quality.
3. A gap exists in the number and capacity of administrators to assist local governments to meet the housing rehabilitation needs of communities across the Tennessee. As the role of local public housing authorities continues to shift beyond traditional public housing management, these local entities could be a natural administrator of HOME funds for their community.  PHAs are knowledgeable of federal regulations, including procurement, fair housing, affirmative marketing, Section 3, income qualification, and waiting list maintenance.  THDA’s HOME program provides an opportunity for a local PHA to expand their role by administering a homeowner rehabilitation program for their community. Districts could provide training and outreach to **encourage PHA participation in the HOME program**.
4. Local Continua of Care (CoC) are required, for receipt of HUD funding, to implement a Coordinated Intake process for the initial comprehensive assessment of individuals and families who are homeless that matches the household to the appropriate, available resources in the community. Tennessee’s ten CoCs are at different stages of Coordinated Intake implementation. The Development District may be able to play a role by including an activity to **create a work plan to assist in coordinated intake implementation.**
5. Local Continua of Care (CoC) are also required, as a recipient of HUD funding, to implement a Homeless Management and Information System (HMIS) which records service delivery to homeless individuals and families in their service area.  However, many barriers exist to implementing this mandate among both HUD funded organizations as well as those which do not receive HUD funding. Your role in filling these gaps would to **create a work plan for services for the CoC in their HMIS implementation.**

We are continuing to work on a brief policies and procedures document that seeks to further clarify the expectations that THDA has for the Development Districts in managing this Technical Assistance grant. We look forward to working with you again in the coming year. If you have questions on the items covered in this letter, please do not hesitate to call me.

Thank you,

Ceagus Clark

Research Analyst

Cc: Don Watt, Director, Community Programs, THDA  
 Bettie Teasley, Director, Research and Planning, THDA