

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Type of and conditions for financial assistance for housing preservation: Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council (HCEOC) proposes to continue the operation of a homeowner rehabilitation program for very low and low-income homeowners. HCEOC will work with selected contractors to evaluate projects, develop costs, and perform work. The Housing Preservation Grant Rural Hawaii Program aims to provide healthy and safe living conditions for very low and low-income households in rural Hawaii. These projects may include improvements in accessibility for disabled family members, reconfiguration of rooms to alleviate overcrowding, and replacement of structural supports.

Process for selecting recipients for Housing Preservation Grant (HPG): HCEOC will use the applicants' income, occupancy, and ownership of the dwelling for at least 12 months before assistance, the precise title of the property, equity sufficient to justify the amount of the financial support, intend to occupy the home as their permanent residence and have acceptable credit and repayment ability. The applicants' income may not exceed low-income and asset limits established by USDA Rural Development (see Exhibit A: Income Limits for Very Low and Low Income) for Hawaii County.

Dwelling must be located in a rural area and have defects that pose a risk to the occupants' health and/or safety. All parts of the County of Hawaii, except the town of Hilo, are eligible. Non-conforming structures or dwellings built without local county permits are ineligible.

The housing preservation needs of the unit will be determined by site inspection utilizing HUD Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

Potential environmental effects will be identified by inspecting and examining government records (Hawaii County Planning and Public Works Departments), US Soil and Water Conservation Services, and Fish and Wildlife Service records.

Approved work will be performed by a Hawaii licensed contractor hired by applicant/HCEOC. New construction is approved only to relieve overcrowding (as defined in RD 1944-N Section 1944.656 Component for Alleviating Overcrowding), to remove a hazardous condition or to construct accessibility improvements for physically challenged family members. Applications will be rated and ranked to receive assistance on priority of health, safety and/or accessibility for family members during the first quarter.

Tentatively qualified applicants will have funds reserved pending receipt of a satisfactory bid from a Hawaii licensed contractor. Funds not spent within the specified reservation period will be made available to the next qualified applicant.

Outreach pre-application screening, qualifying applicants, developing approved list of repairs, preparing legal documents, monitoring construction, processing contractor payments, drawing down funds, writing reports and keeping accounts will be performed by HCEOC. HCEOC will solicit competitive bids, select and hire a Hawaii licensed contractor to perform construction. Privately contracted building inspectors may inspect construction. Hawaii County Building Division of Public Works will inspect whenever a building permit is required.

Description of the process for coordinating with other public and private organizations and programs: HCEOC will work with our State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO) on projects identified as historic and take into account the National historic preservation objectives set forth in 16 U.S.C 470-1(1), (4), and (5) (Attachment #1), in order that projects will specifically be designed to

encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings in a manner that realistically meets the needs of low and very low-income homeowners while preserving the historic and architectural character of such buildings.

As part of the project review process, HCEOC will work with SHPO to collect listings of current historical buildings to determine whether buildings proposed for rehabilitation are “historic properties” and whether rehabilitation may affect historic properties.

HCEOC will work with guidance from the SHPO to ensure coordination with other public and private organizations and programs that provide assistance in the rehabilitation and preservation of historic properties. Additionally, HCEOC will work with the Hawaii County Planning Department to ensure that the rehabilitation of properties include in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places is Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (G.P.O. 1983 0-416-688.)

SHPO is afforded the opportunity to comment on each such rehabilitation as part of the project approval process. HCEOC has worked to identify all necessary information and initiate the consultation with the SHPO.

Development standard(s): The applicant will use for the housing preservation work; and if not the Rural Development standards for existing dwellings, the evidence of its acceptance by the jurisdiction where the grant is implemented; HUD Section 8 Housing Quality Standards will be the primary determinant of eligible repairs. Hawaii County Codes will govern additions, ADA improvements and any new construction. Once construction begins, changes to Scope of Work must be approved by HCEOC and a written Change Order signed by both the homeowner and contractor before changes can occur.

Time schedule for completing the program: HCEOC anticipates the program can be completed in 21 months once the applicants have been selected. The program will operate for 24 months.

Staffing required to complete the program: HCEOC Housing and Energy Director will develop and carry out all HPG program needs. The Program Manager has administered the program in our previous award and will ensure that all grant requirements are met and will work with the clients and contractors to ensure full compliance with funding and legal requirements. HCEOC Program Clerk has also assisted in managing the Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) as well as the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

The HCEOC Fiscal Office will draw down funds, pay contractors, and keep accounts updated. The Fiscal Office and support staff have experience managing multiple accounts from federal funding annually. HCEOC is audited annually and meets Federal OMB A-133 audit requirements.

Positions are currently filled and expected to continue for the duration of the project.

Estimated number of very low and low-income minority and nonminority persons: HCEOC will serve a minimum of five very low or low-income households. Of the five households, an estimated 80% will be minority persons.

Geographic area(s) to be served by the HPG program: HPG will take entirely within rural areas, which comprise the entire Island of Hawaii, except for the Hilo Town area.

Other information necessary to explain the proposed HPG program: HCEOC Non-Discrimination Policy: All HCEOC programs including HPG are carried out under the strict policy of non-discrimination. This policy is expressed on each HPG application in the following statement: “This is an equal opportunity program. Discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin, sex, familial status, physical and/or mental disability, marital status, age, or HIV infection is prohibited by

federal law.” The Equal Housing Opportunity logo is prominently placed on the application cover. The Equal Housing Opportunity poster is displayed in Housing Program Manager’s and HCEOC Fiscal Office. In addition, news articles and publicity flyers stated HPG program is an equal housing opportunity program and discrimination is prohibited by federal law.

As much as possible, inquirers who do not meet qualifications for the HPG program will be provided with housing information and referral to other programs and services. For example, inquirers whose income exceed HPG limits (50% AMI) but do not exceed 80% of Area Median Income are referred to the County’s Residential Emergency Repair Program (RERP), those residing on Hawaiian Home Lands are referred to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) Native American Housing and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) rehabilitation program. Inquirers whose homes are total loss from fire or earthquake, for example, or beyond repair from extensive deterioration are referred to USDA RD 502 Direct Loan Program and Habitat for Humanity. Elderly and disabled applicants who only need a new hot water heater, refrigerator, or tent a house for termites are referred to Hawaii Island Adult Care to apply for a PINS grant.

The HPG project maximum is identical to the Hawaii County’s RERP construction maximum and is half of the NAHASDA construction maximum (\$50,000). \$25,000 reflects the increased cost of building materials, freight, and additional cost of repairing historic homes and ones built before 1978 (lead-based paint avoidance cost). RERP, NAHASDA, and HPG comprise all available low-income home repair programs in the County of Hawaii.

Outreach efforts outlined in 7 CFR 1944.671(b): Outreach will cover the entire service area and/or entire Island of Hawaii, except for the Hilo Town area, and be carried out in accordance with federal non- discrimination guidelines. Application forms and publicity will clearly acknowledge the Federal Fair Housing Non-Discrimination statement: “This is an equal opportunity program. Discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin, sex, familial status, physical and/or mental disability, marital status, age, or HIV infection is prohibited by federal law.”

HCEOC will publish a publication article announcing availability of 2023-2024 HPG funding in the Hawaii Tribune-Herald general publication, West Hawaii News, in free newspapers, as well as publicized through HCEOC island-wide programs.

In addition, HCEOC will continue networking with agencies serving at-risk families such as Neighborhood Place of Puna, Kokua Kau, North Kohala, and the Hamakua Council.

HCEOC has been associated with the HPG program for over 26 years, many agencies and social workers already turn to HCEOC for help with low-income repair and other housing assistance.