



Regional Sustainability Planning Leveraging Federal Policy and Programs

HUD is launching its second year of its Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program. It is a first of its kind program and is designed to create stronger, more sustainable communities by encouraging economic development, connecting housing to jobs, fostering local innovation, and building a clean energy economy. The six Livability Principles that undergird the program are shown below.



HUD, along with its sister agencies (Transportation and Environmental Protection), awarded \$98 million in January 2011 to 45 regions across the nation. An additional \$67 million of funding benefiting an additional 29 regions was announced by HUD in November 2011. **Building Communities is the lead planning consultant for three of the 74 regions across America.**

Recognizing that areas are in different stages of working toward long-term sustainability, HUD established two funding categories for the program. Category 1 Funds can be used to support the preparation of Regional Plans for Sustainable Development. All three of the Building Communities projects are Category 1 efforts.

Category 2 Funds can be used to support efforts: 1) to fine-tune existing regional plans so they address HUD's Livability Principles (*See figure above*), 2) to prepare more detailed execution plans for an adopted Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, 3) and to facilitate limited predevelopment planning activities for catalytic projects.

Building Communities utilizes its comprehensive, objective, expeditious approach to economic and community development strategic planning as the foundation for the broader sustainability priorities the program supports.

Building Communities *operationalizes* rural sustainability planning by surfacing key concepts, conditions, plans, and viable projects. Short of understanding and applying the full body of the Building Communities' process, communities will likely fail to fully capture their potential for achieving long-term sustainability.

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