

**USDA**

**2024 Housing Preservation Grant**

**Statement of Activities**

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### **Attachment A – USDA Housing Preservation Program Feasibility Checklist**

## **USDA**

### **2024 Housing Preservation Grant**

#### **Statement of Activities**

##### **Type and Conditions for Financial Assistance for Housing Preservation**

The St. Charles Parish Department of Community Services (DCS) is requesting USDA Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) funding to continue to provide grants to low and very low-income homeowners to assist in the repair and rehabilitation of their homes. DCS has an existing, locally funded Health and Safety Home Rehabilitation Program (HSHRP) that targets elderly (age 62 and older); low-income; and disabled homeowners throughout St. Charles Parish who need assistance with home repairs due to health and safety concerns. The HSHRP meets the critical need of providing up to \$5,000 in repairs on a case-by-case basis through a need-based approach that addresses critical issues and disability adaptations.

In 2017, St. Charles Parish received HPG funding that allowed for the creation and implementation of the St. Charles Parish Housing Preservation Grant Program. In 2018 - 2020, and 2021 the Parish was awarded additional HPG funding which allowed for the continuation of the program. The Parish utilized the HPG funding in combination with the HSHRP funds and in doing so, DCS was able to fund larger scale projects for 62 low and very low-income households to date. The Parish is currently awaiting the agreement for the 2023 award that will allow DCS to assist additional eligible applicants.

A 2024 HPG award to St. Charles Parish will allow DCS to continue the program by allocating up to \$10,000.00 in HPG funds per home for health and safety related repairs. This program proposes to identify low and very low-income homeowners that have a scope of work that

exceeds the current \$5,000 repair limit to make these homes safer, healthier, and more accessible. Low-income applicants who qualify for assistance through this program have a monthly-adjusted income that falls at or below 80% of the median income guidelines for federal housing repair assistance, with very-low-income applicants falling at or below 50%, making completing these repairs on their own unfeasible.

Although DCS has been able to address many of the requests received for home repairs from the applicants through previous HPG awards, there were applicants that applied for the Parish's Housing Preservation Grant Program that were unable to be served due to funding constraints. Continued USDA Rural Development funding will support the continuation of the Housing Preservation Program in St. Charles Parish; this will allow DCS to target the low to very-low-income population to complete vital health and safety home repairs.

### **Process for Selecting Recipients for HPG Assistance**

DCS will post Public Notices informing residents of the availability of funding assistance through the HPG Program. Other outreach activities are described in the Outreach Efforts section of this application. During the advertised application period, applications will be accepted from homeowners on a first come, first serve basis and will be date and time stamped. Following the application period, the applications will be reviewed by the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist. The applications must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Applicant must be the owner of the individual dwelling at least 1 year prior to the time of assistance and maintain insurance for the property;
- Applicant must be the intended occupant of the dwelling subsequent to the time of assistance (no rental properties will be assisted with HPG funds);

- The dwelling must be located in a rural area and be in need of housing preservation assistance; and
- Household income is at or below the low-income limits according to USDA Rural Development, with an emphasis on household income at or below the very low-income limits.

Homeowners with incomplete applications will be notified in writing as to the reason the application is incomplete and given the opportunity to complete their application, including the submission of new or additional information, in an effort to achieve eligibility. Once it has been determined that the requirements have been met for each eligible application, funding assistance will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis to qualified applicants.

Determination letters will be sent to applicants within 30 days. Persons with eligible applications will be notified as to whether the applicant was selected for the program, placed on a waiting list, or disqualified based on the criteria established for the program. An applicant not selected for assistance will be given the specific reason(s) for rejection and given the opportunity to have their determination reviewed by DCS.

### **Determining Housing Preservation Needs of the Dwelling**

Preliminary inspections will be performed by the DCS's Housing Rehabilitation Specialist and a contracted inspector on each of the homes selected for the HPG Program to determine the rehabilitation needs of the home. Eligible repairs include but are not limited to: installation and/or repair of sanitary water and waste disposal systems; energy conservation measures; repair or replacement of heating systems; electrical wiring; repair of, or provision for, structural supports and foundations; repair or replacement of roofs; replacement of severely deteriorated

siding, porches or stoops; and alterations of the unit's interior to provide greater accessibility for any handicap person.

DCS will use a tablet computer to complete the Department's USDA Housing Preservation Program Feasibility Checklist (Attachment A) during the inspection. The checklist will be accompanied by photographs of the existing deficiencies and/or conditions. The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will develop a scope of work outlining, in detail, the rehabilitation project for the home. Applicants with homes that need repairs and rehabilitation beyond the scope of the combined HPG and Health and Safety maximum program budget of \$15,000 and are not selected for additional assistance through other community partners will be referred to the HUD HOME program. Applicants that need repairs that exceed the limits of the available programs, based on the level and scope of projects, will be denied.

### **Performing the Necessary Work**

The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will meet with the homeowner to discuss the project. A copy of the scope of work will be given to the homeowner for their review, approval, and signature. DCS maintains a list of contractors that have been pre-qualified to perform work under the Health and Safety Home Rehabilitation Program. The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist will adhere to the St. Charles Parish Procurement Policy when soliciting quotes from the list of approved contractors. Quotes will be reviewed by the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist to confirm the contractor's proposal aligns with the scope of work. An agreement listing the scope of work and project specifications will be signed with the selected contractor prior to the start of the job. The Director of Community Services oversees the program and is required to review and approve invoices for work completed prior to payment processing.

### **Monitoring/Inspecting Work Performed**

The contractor's work will be reviewed and inspected by the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist and the third-party inspector. This process includes a pre-project walk through, progress monitoring and a final inspection by the contracted inspector. The Housing Rehabilitation Specialist or other designated staff will monitor and inspect the work performed through on-site inspections and take photographs of work in progress for documentation purposes.

### **Process for Identifying Potential Environmental Impacts**

DCS will adhere to the environmental guidelines set forth in RD Instruction 1944-N 1944.672 Environmental requirements, 1944.673 Historic preservation and replacement housing requirements and procedures, and 1944.674 Public participation and intergovernmental review. Once the qualified applicants are selected and prior to beginning work, DCS will provide environmental information on each property to be served by the HPG Program on Form RD 1970-B. Additionally, DCS will work with Planning and Zoning to identify whether each property is located in a floodplain or wetland area. An environmental review will be conducted by Planning and Zoning.

If awarded the grant, DCS will contact the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to gain a determination on whether the dwelling is of historical, architectural, or archaeological value. If the dwelling is identified by the SHPO as a historic property, DCS will work closely with the SHPO and perform the rehabilitation of the dwelling according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

DCS has no knowledge of any potential hazardous or negative impact that implementation of this program will have on the environment. All general contractors utilized by the Department of



Community Services are licensed residential contractors by the State of Louisiana Board of Contractors. In addition, general contractors working on properties constructed prior to 1978 will be trained in lead safe work practices.

### Development Standards

DCS will comply with all building codes adopted by St. Charles Parish when repairing and rehabilitating all dwellings through the HPG Program. Copies of the ordinance(s) approved by the St. Charles Parish Council adopting the building codes will be provided upon request.

### Tentative Time Schedule

The tentative time schedule for completing the program is as follows:

<b>Task</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Month	2 <sup>nd</sup> Month	3 <sup>rd</sup> Month	4 <sup>th</sup> Month	5 <sup>th</sup> Month	6 <sup>th</sup> Month	7 <sup>th</sup> Month	8 <sup>th</sup> Month	9 <sup>th</sup> Month	10 <sup>th</sup> Month	11 <sup>th</sup> Month	12 <sup>th</sup> Month
Notify Public and partners of award	X											
Accept/screen/select applications		X	X									
Preliminary inspections/Contact SHPO & determine if RD Environmental Assessment is required			X	X								
Complete Scopes of Work/Obtain & review quotes				X	X	X						
Secure permits, if applicable				X	X	X						
Repairs/rehab of homes/Conduct inspections					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Submit quarterly performance reports			X			X			X			X
Close program												X

**Staffing**

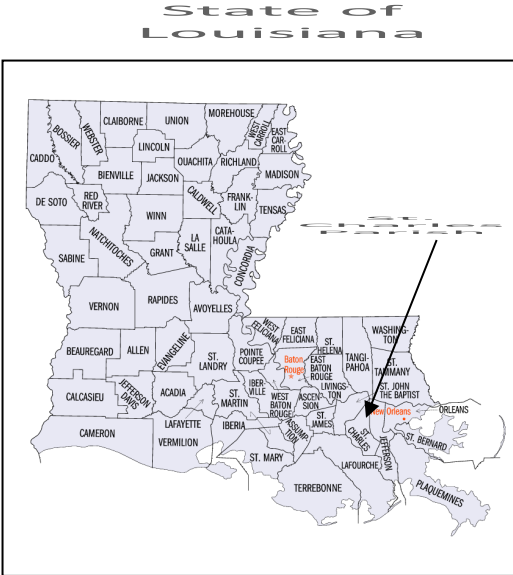
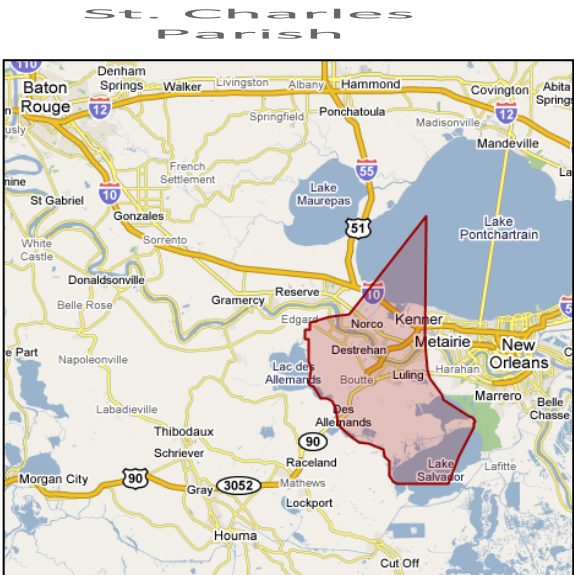
Title	Responsibilities	Minimum Qualifications	% of Time on Project
Housing Rehabilitation Specialist	Pre-screen applicants; Inspect homes for feasibility; Develop scope of work; Evaluate environmental considerations, solicit quotes from qualified contractors; Coordinate with the third-party project inspector; Supervise project staff; Review quotes; Prepare requisitions; Process invoices for payment	Extensive experience managing home rehabilitation programs	25%
Director of Community Services	Oversee the program; Monitor financial transactions	Program rehabilitation management experience; Administrative experience; experience advocating for low and very low-income applicants; home rehabilitation experience	15%
Clerk	Coordinate application process; Collect documentation; Compile grant reports; Maintain files	Excellent clerical experience; organizational skills; experience advocating for low and very low-income applicants	25%
Grant Writer	Prepare reimbursement requests; Verify supporting documentation; Prepare the quarterly Federal Financial Report; Complete A-133 Audit reporting; Request closeout	Experienced grant writer	5%

**Estimation of Type of Persons to be Served**

All of the homeowners served through the HPG Program will be screened for participation based on the income guidelines established for selecting low and very low-income homeowners by the USDA Rural Development program grant. The Public Notice will be broadly disseminated to include rural and isolated communities in St. Charles Parish with the likelihood of low and very low-income homeowners. It is estimated that the 2024 HPG Program will serve eight (8) low and four (4) very low-income homeowners.

### Geographical Area to be Served

Low and very low-income residents live throughout St. Charles Parish, a rural community located in southeastern Louisiana, approximately 25 miles west of New Orleans. The maps below illustrate the location of the geographical area to be served. Additionally, St. Charles Parish is designated as an eligible rural area on the USDA Income and Property Eligibility Site.



**Annual Estimated Program Budget**

Budget Line Item	Rate	Qty	In Kind Funding (HSHRP)	HPG Funding	Total HPG Program Costs
<b>Program Costs</b>					
Contractual Services					
Licensed Contractor (Labor & Materials @ \$12,000/dwelling; \$2,000 In Kind/dwelling; \$10,000 HPG/dwelling)	\$12,000.00	12	\$24,000.00	\$120,000.00	\$144,000.00
Contract Inspector	\$375.00	12		\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
<b>Total Program Costs</b>			<b>\$24,000.00</b>	<b>\$124,500.00</b>	<b>\$148,500.00</b>
<b>Total Housing Preservation Program Costs</b>			<b>\$24,000.00</b>	<b>\$124,500.00</b>	<b>\$148,500.00</b>

Note: Total percentage of HPG funding budgeted for administrative costs is 0% of the total grant funding.  
Percentage of HPG funding (excluding administrative costs) to total funds budgeted is 83.84%.

<b>Schedule of Draws</b>		
Month	Frequency of Draws	Estimated Amount
1	0	\$ -
2	0	\$ -
3	0	\$ -
4	0	\$ -
5	0	\$ -
6	0	\$ -
7	0	\$62,250.00
8	0	\$ -
9	0	\$ -
10	0	\$ -
11	0	\$62,250.00
12	1	\$ -
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$124,500.00</b>

**Indirect Cost Proposal**

Not applicable

## **Accounting System**

The St. Charles Parish Department of Finance collaborates with DCS to prepare and execute department and program budgets. The Department of Finance is responsible for the collection and disbursement of all funds, the preparation of general financial reports, and maintaining financial records. Appropriate internal controls have been established to safeguard assets. The Department of Finance utilizes an accounting system, which allows for the HPG Program revenue and expenditures to be accounted for separately from other Parish funds. Reports can be generated from the accounting system for any period of each year. Additionally, DCS maintains accurate, current, and complete records of revenues and expenditures pertaining to each dwelling repaired and rehabilitated through the HPG Program.

## **Method of Evaluation**

An evaluation form will be completed for each dwelling repaired and rehabilitated through the HPG Program. The evaluation form will help determine the success of the program through the monitoring of the achievement of project milestones. The success of the program will also be evaluated based on feedback obtained from program participants via a survey upon completion of the residential rehab project. The data collected from the evaluation forms and survey will be reviewed by the DCS staff and compiled into the required quarterly reports to Rural Development in accordance with 1944.683 (b) to ensure best practices.

## **Other Financial Resources**

DCS proposes to contribute in-kind funds from the Health and Safety Home Rehabilitation Program to supplement repairs exceeding the \$10,000 in HPG funds to be dedicated per property for eligible projects. Funding for the Health and Safety Home Rehabilitation program is derived from ad valorem and local sales taxes. The in-kind funding is a line itemized in the budget shown

on page 9. Collaborating agencies may contribute additional in-kind services and/or materials that are unconfirmed at this time.

### **Program Income**

The St. Charles Parish Housing Preservation Grant Program is operated on a reimbursement basis; therefore, no program income will be received.

### **Plan for Disposition of Security Instruments**

No security instruments will be held by St. Charles Parish as a result of its HPG Program activities.

### **Other Information**

St. Charles Parish will adhere to all applicable local, State, and Federal regulations during the implementation of the HPG Program.

In the event that there is a cost underrun on completed projects the Parish will utilize the remaining HPG funding to assist additional qualified homeowners.

### **Outreach Efforts**

DCS's main outreach effort will be to advertise the HPG Program via a Public Notice in the local newspaper reaching the entire service area. Other advertisement outlets include the parish website and social media accounts. Additional outreach efforts will include posting the Public Notice at the DCS office as well as other Parish agencies that provide services to the public. Lastly, an email announcement that contains the Public Notice will be sent to DCS' Community Partners, mostly comprised of non-profits who provide other support services within St. Charles Parish.