



## **Pathways to Remove Obstacles (PRO) to Housing**

**Public Hearing (Virtual via WebEx)**

**Wednesday, October 18, 2023**

**1:00PM**

The City of Gastonia held a virtual public hearing on Wednesday, October 18, 2023 at 1:00 PM in order to present a grant opportunity that the City is pursuing. The Pathways to Remove Obstacles (PRO) to Housing grant offers funding to go toward affordable housing initiatives. The slides and transcript from this public hearing follow. As well, the public hearing was recorded and the recording can be accessed by following these instructions:

Click on this link: [PUBLIC HEARING: HUD Grant NOFO-Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing-20231018 1701-1](#)

Enter this password to access recording: **Jmvarf@2**

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this information, please contact Kenny Gehrig, HUD Administrator or Danette Dye, Director of Housing & Community Engagement. Below is their contact information.

Kenny Gehrig  
HUD Administrator  
Email: [Kenny.Gehrig@GastoniaNC.gov](mailto:Kenny.Gehrig@GastoniaNC.gov)  
Phone: 704-866-6756

Danette Dye  
Director of Housing & Community Engagement  
Email: [Danette.Dye@GastoniaNC.gov](mailto:Danette.Dye@GastoniaNC.gov)  
Phone: 704-866-6758

CITY OF GASTONIA

# Pathways to Remove Obstacles (PRO) to Housing

Housing & Community Engagement

October 18, 2023



# PRO Housing

- **Purpose**

- **Identification and removal of barriers to affordable housing production and preservation**

- **Eligible Activities**

- **Activities that further develop, evaluate, and implement**
  - **housing policy plans**
  - **improve housing strategies**
  - **facilitate affordable housing production and preservation**

# PRO Housing

- **Grant Notice Funding Details**
  - **Maximum Grant Size: \$10,000,000**
  - **Minimum Grant Size: \$1,000,000**
- **Estimated Number of Awards: 20**
- **Application Deadline: October 30, 2023**

# Housing Landscape in Gastonia, NC

- **Challenges Faced by Low to Moderate Income Residences**
- **Population Increase Among 0-50% Area Median Income**
- **PRO Housing Funding Opportunity**

# Housing Preservation & Production

- **Marietta & Osceola (Census Tract 328.01)**
  - **Land Acquisition**
  - **Public Park Up-Fitting and Access**
  - **Sidewalk Improvement**
  - **Street Lighting**

# Funding Request

- **Total Request: \$4,000,000**
  - **Affordable Housing Development: \$2,250,000**
  - **Park Development/Improvement and/or Other Community Infrastructure Improvements: \$1,750,000**

# Purpose & Outcomes

- **Safer & More Vibrant Neighborhoods**
- **Increased Affordable Housing Units and/or Employment Opportunities**
- **Reduce Further Distress and Decline within the Area**



# Public Comment

Written comments will be accepted until 4PM on Saturday, October 28, 2023

Written comments should be sent to one of the following

Kenny Gehrig  
HUD Administrator  
City of Gastonia

EMAIL

Kenny.Gehrig@GastoniaNC.Gov

MAIL

PO Box 1748  
Gastonia, NC 28053-1748

Danette Dye  
Director of Housing & Community Engagement  
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PO Box 1748  
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**QUESTIONS  
COMMENTS**

# ▶ SCRIPT

Wednesday, October 18, 2023 11:07 AM

## START 1:02pm

### **\*\*Slide 1 - Welcome\*\***

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us today for this important public hearing and presentation. This presentation will be recorded. We will wait to allow time for participants to join.

My name is Kenny Gehrig and I am the HUD Administrator for the City of Gastonia. I am here with our Housing & Community Engagement Department. If you have any comments or questions throughout our time together, please put those in the comments section. We will read and respond these at the end. We look forward to sharing this opportunity with you today.

1:09pm

We will go ahead and get started. Those who join along the way can do so and we will address their comments and questions at the end.

### **\*\*Slide 2 - Purpose of the Grant Opportunity\*\***

- - Today, we are here to discuss the Pathways to Removing Obstacles (PRO) to Housing Grant. Also known as the PRO Housing Grant.
- - The purpose of this grant opportunity is to identify and remove barriers to affordable housing production and preservation.
- - Eligible activities under this grant opportunity include developing, evaluating, and implementing housing policy plans, improving housing strategies, and facilitating affordable housing production and preservation.

### **\*\*Slide 3 - Available Funding of the Grant Opportunity\*\***

- - Here are the funding details for the PRO Housing grant.
- - The Total Funding to be Allocated will be \$85,000,000 split over 20 deserving projects.
  - The maximum grant size is \$10,000,000, and the minimum grant size is \$1,000,000.
- - The application deadline is set for October 30, 2023.

### **\*\*Slide 4 - The Challenge We Face in the Community\*\***

- Now, let's get into why the City of Gastonia is pursuing this grant opportunity.
- There are clear challenges we face in our community, particularly among our low to moderate-income residents.
  - In Gaston County, incomes are not keeping pace with the housing market. The average fair market rent is \$1,333 per month,. For this to be affordable for you, you would need to have an annual income of \$53,320.
    - The target area we hope to serve within Gastonia, which we will share in a moment, has a household median income of \$40,814.
      - ◆ There are also 2 renters for every 1 homeowner with less than 130 units available out of 2600 total units. This is resulting in increased competition for affordable housing, making it challenging for low and moderate-income families to secure suitable housing
- We've also have seen a significant population increase among those with 0-50% Area Median Income.
  - Gastonia has experienced rapid population growth over the past five years, with a 15% increase from 2019 to 2023. During the same period, the number of units affordable and available to households at 80% of the HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) has only increased by 5%
  - Further, the poverty level in our target area is high, with a 19.8% poverty rate, which includes renters and homeowners. For context, Gastonia has a poverty rate of 14.2% and Gaston County is 11%.
- We believe the PRO Housing Funding Opportunity is a critical solution for addressing these challenges and

making a significant impact in Gastonia's housing dilemma.

**\*\*Slide 5 - Our Focus Area\*\***

- Our designated target area is Marietta & Osceola, situated within Census Tract 328.01 in Gastonia. The boundaries of this area are defined as follows: It spans from W. Garrison Blvd between S. York Street and Union Rd, then extends south to S. York Street and eastward to E. Hudson Blvd, finally reaching Union Rd. For a visual representation, please refer to Appendix A: Census Tract Map 328.01 Gaston County.

- Within this focus area, we will be identifying vacant lots for land acquisition for the purpose of developing affordable housing.

- The City is currently in the process of transforming a plot of land, previously used by the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club, into a public access park. This park will feature ballfields, playgrounds, and shelter facilities. These additions will provide valuable opportunities for local residents to access athletic programs and engage in community-building activities.

- o As part of our proposal, we intend to allocate a portion of the funding toward additional enhancements for this park, thereby increasing accessibility for community members.

- The City also has plans in place to upgrade street lighting throughout this target area. Currently, there are 126 low-pressure sodium streetlights that need to be converted to energy-efficient LED lighting. This transition to LED lighting will not only reduce energy consumption but also significantly improve visibility, ultimately contributing to a safer environment during the evening hours.

- In addition to these initiatives, the City is committed to implementing multiple sidewalk additions and improvements, introducing bicycle lanes to thoroughfares to accommodate multi-use paths. These improvements will enhance walkability, improve accessibility to resources, amenities, and services, and ultimately provide an even greater benefit to the community we aim to support and enhance.

This focus area represents a crucial component of our broader strategy to create positive change within the community.

**\*\*Slide 6 - Funding Amount We Are Requesting\*\***

- We're requesting a total of \$4,000,000 for our project.

- Of that total, \$2,250,000 will go towards affordable housing development, including the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing, land acquisition, and more.

- The remaining \$1,750,000 will be used for park development/improvement and other community infrastructure enhancements, benefiting out low and moderate-income residents in the target area.

**\*\*Slide 7 - Our Ultimate Goal\*\***

- Our ultimate goal is to create safer and more vibrant neighborhoods.

- We aim to increase the number of affordable housing units and employment opportunities in the area.

- By doing so, we hope to reduce further distress and decline within the greater community.

**\*\*Slide 8 - Written Comments\*\***

- We value your input and written comments. Please send your comments to Kenny Gehrig, HUD Administrator at [Kenny.Gehrig@GastoniaNC.Gov](mailto:Kenny.Gehrig@GastoniaNC.Gov) or Danette Dye, Director of Housing and Community Engagement at [Danette.Dye@GastoniaNC.Gov](mailto:Danette.Dye@GastoniaNC.Gov).

- You can also mail your comments to the address provided on this slide.

- The deadline for written comments is 4 PM on Saturday, October 28, 2023.

Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to your questions and feedback.

**END: 1:18pm**