



COG Housing Affordability Planning Program (HAPP) FAQs

Updated September 24, 2025

1. **Should applicants submit general letters of support from partners for the proposed scope of work?**
 - No, general letters of support from partner organizations should not be included in the application materials, as they will not increase the likelihood of being selected for funding. Please note that non-governmental organizations are required to submit a letter of endorsement, specifically referencing the HAPP grant, from a COG member government official. See questions #2 and #3 below.
2. **For non-governmental or indirect applicants, who within a local government should sign the letter of support?**
 - The letter of support is not needed until the application is submitted. A one-page support letter from a local ([COG member government](#)) Director of Housing and Community Development and addressed to COG Executive Director Clark Mercer is sufficient. A support letter from an elected official, such as a City or County Councilmember or Board of Supervisors, is also sufficient but would not carry any additional value or weight during the application review process. Members of the COG Board of Directors is online [here](#).
 - Note, a letter of support is due at the time of application submission and is not required to submit an abstract.
3. **Could you please clarify what is meant by a non-profit developer (with written support from a local jurisdiction)?**
 - Non-profit organizations (with a 501c3 designation from the IRS) which are involved in creating housing are eligible to apply, along with COG member local governments. For organizations which are not local governments, applicants must obtain a letter of support signed by the COG member local government Director of Housing and Community Development from the relevant jurisdiction's government. Please refer to the COG website for a [list of COG member governments](#).
4. **Can HAPP grant funds be used to cover expenses incurred prior to an application submittal or award?**
 - HAPP grant funds are intended to be used to catalyze future planning or development efforts that increase affordable housing near transit. Therefore, expenses incurred prior to an application for HAPP funds are not eligible for reimbursement.
5. **Is there a preferred template for the abstract?**

- A summary of about 1 to 2 paragraphs that describe the proposed project, study area, and goals is sufficient. The abstract must be less than one page in length. COG staff will provide feedback within approximately two weeks' time.

6. How do we submit an abstract for consideration?

- Abstracts should be submitted via email to HAPP@mwkog.org

7. Is this grant like the TLC (Transportation Land Use Connections) program where COG brings on the consultant to lead a study for the awarded applicant? Or does the applicant receive the money to hire their own technical support?

- The HAPP is a grant program that awards direct financial assistance to selected recipients. Grantees are responsible for identifying and hiring any consultant(s) as applicable.

8. After decisions are made for awards, when would funds be available for grantees?

- After the COG Board of Directors takes action to approve grantees, we anticipate that awards will be processed and awarded within 60 days. The most important task to facilitate receipt of funds through the grant agreement process is to review the Terms and Conditions (available on the HAPP webpage) and provide feedback.

9. What is the timeline to spend down the full award?

- Grant recipients will have 12 months to spend down the funds and document their work.

10. Does this grant request need to be around a specific property we already own, or can the funding include planning for a future purchase?

- The request can be for either existing property or for a future acquisition.

11. Do you have a definition for what is specifically meant by: "near high-capacity transit (HCT) station areas"?

- Here is a link to COG's [interactive mapping tool](#) that shows the HCT boundaries. Proposals will be scored on a sliding scale based on proximity to HCTs. Those within a half-mile of an HCT will be scored more competitively than those which are further away.

12. Must a project be located within a [High-Capacity Transit \(HCT\) Station Area](#) to be eligible?

- It is not necessary to be within a half-mile of a High-Capacity Transit (HCT) station to be eligible; the application only asks you to state the distance from the proposed study area or development site to the nearest HCT station (current or proposed). However, extra points will be given to those proposals which do meet this criterion.

13. If there is a process to get people to a nearby HCT station, by a system in place, would that be eligible? (For example, if it is a mom with four children on a rainy day, even a walking distance to a metro station could be too far)

- Yes. Alternative transportation systems that regularly and reliably serve a specific property such as a shuttle service to take people to a nearby HCT station, would be considered eligible. Applications should provide a description to include additional details, such as, *“This project is located just outside the XXX HCT station area and is on/near YYY avenue which has frequent ZZZ bus service to the XXX station.”*

14. Can condominiums or co-ops that are financially constrained apply for the HAPP grant to address structural or other deficiencies that make the condominiums possibly unsafe?

- No. Eligible applicants for HAPP funds include local (COG member) governments and non-profit development organizations creating new committed affordable housing. Projects that do not create the potential for net new affordable units through planning studies or development proposals (i.e., preservation only projects) or projects that are for data collection only will not be considered for funding.