

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) FOR THE RADON TESTING AND MITIGATION DEMONSTRATION FOR PUBLIC HOUSING GRANT PROGRAM

(Radon Demonstration Grant)

INTRODUCTION

HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes administers this program, which is aligned with HUD's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan includes a provision to broaden the focus of environmental interventions in homes to address other non-lead poisoning concerns such as radon exposure.

1. What is radon?

Radon is an odorless, colorless radioactive gas that is a decay product of elements in soil and rock and is present in every part of the country. However, radon can move through the soil and enter buildings through small openings in the foundation or basement and become concentrated in the indoor air environment, e.g., in our homes.

2. Why is radon a health concern?

When radon is inhaled, it can damage DNA in lung tissue, which can lead to lung cancer. Radon exposure is the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers and the second leading cause among smokers.

In the U.S., it is estimated that radon exposure results in approximately 21,000 deaths annually.

3. What is the radon demonstration grant NOFO?

The purpose of this NOFO is to provide funds to public housing agencies (PHAs) to conduct testing and as-needed, mitigation of radon in the units where testing shows levels at or above the EPA's radon in air action level of 4 pCi/L. For additional information on testing and mitigation, please refer to <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/radon/>

4. Who can apply for funding under the radon demonstration grant?

This NOFO is for Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) with the legal authority to develop, own, modernize, and operate a public housing project in accordance with the United States Housing Act of 1937.

PHAs that are troubled are eligible for funding if the agency is in compliance with any current Memorandum of Agreement or Recovery Agreements.

5. Can PHAs that manage Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) developments apply for funding under the radon demonstration grant for work in such developments?

No. Funding under this grant program is for Section 9 public housing only and not RAD Section 8 Project-Based Voucher (PBV) or Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) housing.

Properties that are slated for conversion to other rental assistance programs must complete all work prior to the conversion. Funds awarded may only be used at developments included in the application.

6. Can PHAs with a signed Commitment to enter into a Housing Assistance Payment (CHAP) agreement, receive funding under the radon demonstration grant for work in the CHAP development?

Once the property is under a CHAP it is not eligible for funding. [If the CHAP only covers a portion of the development, work may proceed in areas not covered by the CHAP.] However, **any radon demonstration grant funds remaining after the RAD conversion could not be drawn down by the PHA.**

7. How does HUD administer the radon demonstration grant program?

HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH) administers this program. Following the evaluation process, OLHCHH will notify successful applicants of their selection for funding and will also notify unsuccessful applicants so they can request a debriefing. Notifications will be sent by email to the person listed as the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) in item 21 of the SF424.

For successful applicants: Upon notification that they were selected to receive funding from the radon demonstration grant program, a welcome package would be sent to the grantee containing the terms and conditions of the grant and other award documents. Once the award has been executed, the OLHCHH will negotiate workplans, track progress, provide technical assistance, and review quarterly reports and final reports received from the grantee.

Payments to grantees will be issued through a reimbursement system based upon the OLHCHH's review and approval of vouchers submitted by grantees.

The period of performance for radon demonstration grants is a maximum of 36 months.

8. Where can I find more information on the radon demonstration grant NOFO?

To learn more about this grant program and access the application, visit the Grants.gov website below, and type in “radon testing” (including the quotation marks) for the keywords.

<https://www.grants.gov/>

Applicants can also access the NOFO on the HUD’s website at:

<https://www.hud.gov/grants>

9. How are applications evaluated?

Applicants should address **all** of the following four rating factors: (i) Capacity of Applicant and Relevant Organizational Experience (ii) Demonstrated Need, (iii) Soundness of Approach and Cost Estimate and (iv) Project Management and the Sharing of Results. More specifically, successful applicants must effectively and efficiently demonstrate how their proposed project will achieve health risk reductions including their plans to: identify and address properties for testing and as needed mitigation, successfully perform and manage the project, and evaluate and share the project results.

10. What are the matching requirements?

This grant program does NOT require cost sharing or matching. Moreover, no extra points will be given for cost sharing or matching.

11. What activities can be conducted with funds from the radon demonstration grant NOFO?

Project activities will be limited to radon testing and/or mitigation for properties located in EPA radon Zones 1 or 2.

NOTE: For properties located in Zone 3, an exception will be given if an applicant can provide information that shows a high level of risk:

(i) radon testing was conducted by a radon professional in at least 20 units in one or more properties AND elevated radon levels (i.e., at or above the EPA’s action level of 4 pCi/L) were confirmed in 10% or more of the tested units;

(ii) documentation from the CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, demonstrating that the mean pre-mitigation radon testing level (based on data from 2008-2017) for the county in which the property is located is 2 pCi/L or greater; or

(iii) a radon map created by an agency in your state showing that the radon risk in the geographic area in which your property is located is equivalent or greater than the risk in EPA Zone 2.

NOTE: Radon mitigation is limited to units with levels of 4 pCi/L or greater.

12. Is it possible to apply for funding to cover costs incurred from previous testing and mitigation activities?

No. Funds from the radon demonstration grant program must not be used to replace or reimburse existing resources dedicated to any ongoing project.

Grant funds may be used to **perform mitigation in units previously tested** in accordance with the requirements in the NOFO.

13. Are pre-award costs allowable under the radon demonstration grant program?

No. Funds from this grant program can NOT be used to cover pre-award costs.

14. Can funds from the radon demonstration grant program be used to train staff to conduct radon testing and mitigation?

No. The grant funds can NOT be used for training or credentialing or securing licenses for PHA staff for these activities.

The Program requires that the professional(s) engaged in radon testing/mitigation activities under this grant program be credentialed at the time of their work by the National Radon Proficiency Program (NRPP) or the National Radon Safety Board (NRSB). Additionally, the individual must also be licensed/certified in the state in which the work is being conducted if the state has this requirement.

15. What are the standards used for conducting radon testing and mitigation?

This grant program requires that all radon testing and mitigation be conducted in accordance with the protocols developed by the American National Standards Institute and the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (ANSI/AARST). For additional information on these protocols, which are voluntary consensus standards, please refer to <https://standards.aarst.org>.

16. What are typical costs for radon testing and mitigation?

Costs for radon testing and mitigation vary for single and multifamily housing and depend on building characteristics, the nature and extent of the radon intrusion pathway, and building location. Current industry estimates include radon testing costs (including labor, detector(s), and laboratory costs) of \$100 to \$275 per unit for single family housing and \$50 to \$80 per unit for multifamily housing (Hoylman, 2021). Estimates for per unit mitigation costs range from \$1,500 to \$3,000 for single family housing and \$2,500 to \$4,000 for multifamily housing. Average mitigation costs for multifamily units would be lower when collateral mitigation is considered (i.e., when mitigation of radon in one unit is also demonstrated to be effective in mitigating radon in other units). These mitigation costs include initial diagnostic testing and the creation of a final report with an operations and maintenance plan. Operation (e.g., electricity use by a fan) and maintenance costs also vary but are estimated at approximately \$168/year for operation and an average of \$110/year for maintenance.”