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1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOCUS GROUP
2
3 SPONSORED BY MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
4 2021-2022 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN AND
5 2019-2020 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN AMENDMENT
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10 TRANSCRIPT OF THE PROCEEDINGS
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14 Taylor Crowl, Facilitator
15
16 Via Zoom
17
18 June 22nd, 2021
19 11:00 a.m.
20
21 **REPORTED BY: LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR**
22 **LESOFSKI COURT REPORTING**
23 **7 WEST SIXTH AVENUE, Suite 2C**
24
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1 PARTICIPANTS
2
3 Panelists:
4 Taylor Crowell
5 Julie Flynn
6 Janelle Egli
7 Julianna Crowley
8 Becky Anseth
9 Sara Loewen
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11 Participants:
12 Erin Kautz
13 Andrew Chanania
14 Julie Stiteler
15 Ruth Burke
16 Ashleigh Byers
17 Heather McMilin
18 Annie Zimmerman
19 Jim Morton
20 Sindie Kennedy
21 Sherrie Arey
22 Shyla Patera
23 Katie Batterbee
24
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1 WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were
2 had and testimony taken, to-wit:
3 * * * * *
4 **MS. CROWELL:** I wanted to start out by
5 thanking everybody for joining us today for the
6 public hearing for the 2021-2022 Annual Action
7 Plan, and 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan Amendment.
8 As you'll probably notice, this webinar is being
9 recorded, so go ahead and accept that on your
10 screen if that pops up.
11 We would love everybody to use the
12 question and answer feature. If you have any
13 technical issues that pop up during the webinar
14 for you, such as having trouble hearing us, need
15 someone to speak louder, something like that.
16 That way we can keep track of those and make sure
17 that we're answering everybody's questions that
18 pop up.
19 And then before we get started, it would
20 be great to have all of the attendees just pop
21 their name and the organization that you're
22 connected to in the chat, just so we can have a
23 sense of who is in the room. I'll pause there so
24 everybody has a chance to do that.
25 Great. Thank you guys so much. It is

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1 just helpful for us to have a sense of who we're
2 speaking with, and so you guys all have a sense of
3 who else is on the webinar. Okay.
4 And just so you know, we'll accept
5 comments and questions at the end of the
6 presentation, and so everybody should be muted
7 until then, but there will certainly be an
8 opportunity for you to unmute yourself at the end.
9 But again, in the interim, if there's any
10 questions that come up that need to be immediately
11 answered, feel free to pop them in the question
12 and answer.
13 So before diving into the specifics of
14 both of the Annual Action Plans, we wanted to
15 provide some context on the Consolidated Plan
16 process, which this is a part of.
17 So the State of Montana, through the
18 Departments of Commerce and Public Health and
19 Human Services, develop a five year plan to guide
20 policy investment for housing, economic, and other
21 community development activities throughout the
22 state. This five year plan, also known as the
23 Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community
24 Development, is required by the US Department of
25 Housing and Urban Development to assess Montana's

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1 needs and current conditions, as well as to
2 determine priorities and allocate HUD funding.
3 And so the 2021-2022 AAP and the
4 2019-2020 AAP Amendment are pieces of this kind of
5 broader Consolidated Plan process. And this
6 public hearing plays a critical role in developing
7 each Annual Action Plan. The perspectives and
8 opinions shared by participants of this public
9 hearing will help Commerce and DPHHS to edit and
10 finalize the draft 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan
11 which falls under the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan,
12 and then also the draft 2019-2020 Annual Action
13 Plan Amendment, which falls under the 2015-2019
14 Consolidated Plan.
15 We hope that with your input we can
16 ensure housing and community development needs
17 across Montana are both identified and addressed.
18 So first we're going to turn to the
19 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan, which as I
20 mentioned, lives underneath the 2020-2024
21 Consolidated Plan, so we'll provide some context
22 on its goals and objectives.
23 And the 2019-2020 AAP lives under the
24 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan, but many of these
25 goals and objectives are similar between the two.

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1 So for the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan,
2 the objectives include providing decent housing,
3 providing a suitable living environment, and
4 expanding economic opportunities.
5 And in order to achieve these
6 objectives, the State of Montana will fund
7 projects that fall within five goals. The first
8 goal is preserving and constructing affordable
9 housing; the second goal is planning for
10 communities; the third goal is improving and
11 sustaining public infrastructure; and the fourth
12 goal is revitalizing local economies; and the
13 fifth goal is reducing homelessness.
14 And both of these Annual Action Plans
15 guide a number of HUD funded programs within the
16 State of Montana, the first being the Community
17 Development Block Grant, known as CDBG, which
18 funds a variety of activities to strengthen
19 communities, primarily for low and moderate income
20 Montanans.
21 This is housed within the Department of
22 Commerce, and split up into four different
23 programs: CDBG Housing, CDBG public and community
24 facilities, CDBG planning, and CDBG economic
25 development.

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1 The second HUD funded program is the
2 Emergency Solution Grant, known as ESG, which is
3 housed within the Department of Public Health and
4 Human Services, and assists people to regain
5 permanent housing after experiencing housing
6 crises and/or homelessness.
7 The third program is the Home Investment
8 Partnership Program, known as HOME, which is
9 housed within the Department of Commerce, and
10 funds a range of activities to address affordable
11 housing. It's split into rental development,
12 single family development, rental rehabilitation,
13 and then also home buyer assistance.
14 The fourth program is the Housing Trust
15 Fund, known as HTF, which is housed within the
16 Department of Commerce, and aims to produce and
17 preserve affordable housing for extremely low and
18 very low income households, and it lives within
19 HUD1 Program that focuses on rental development,
20 single family development, and rental
21 rehabilitation.
22 And there's a fifth program that in
23 certain states can be funded as part of the CPD,
24 HUD CPD formula block grant program, and that's
25 HOPWA; but within the State of Montana, Montana

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1 receives a competitive HOPWA grant, so it's not
2 enumerated and explained in the AAP's. So if
3 anybody needs further information on Montana's
4 competitive HOPWA grant, they can contact Julianna
5 Crowley at jcrowley@mt.gov.
6 So as I mentioned earlier, both of these
7 AAP's are part of this larger Consolidated Plan
8 process, and there are a variety of documents that
9 make up this Consolidated Plan process.
10 First, there's the Five Year
11 Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community
12 Development, and these Consolidated Plans are done
13 every five years, and are strategic plans that
14 guide housing and community investments.
15 Currently the State of Montana is operating under
16 the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan.
17 Then there are the Annual Action Plans,
18 known as AAP's, which is what we're discussing
19 today, and the AAP's are prepared each year of the
20 Consolidated Plan, and outline specific
21 activities, goals, objectives, etc., for the given
22 program year.
23 And Montana's 2021-2022 AAP outlined
24 activities that are planned for program year two
25 of the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan, and this

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1 program year to run from April 1st, 2021 to March
2 31st, 2022.
3 And then the third type of document is
4 the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation
5 Report, known as the CAPER. CAPER's are annual
6 reports that contain use of funds and progress
7 towards meeting goals and objectives for AAP's.
8 We won't be discussing CAPER's today,
9 but we do have another public hearing on our CAPER
10 tomorrow, so hope to see some of you there.
11 So both the 2021-2022 AAP and the
12 2019-2020 AAP have various components. The three
13 major components are the setup, the process, and
14 the Annual Action Plan. So the setup details
15 various administrative details. The process has
16 public participation elements, and then the Annual
17 Action Plan itself is kind of the meat of the
18 document. That's where we explain expected
19 resources, goals, priorities, and how funds will
20 be distributed by program.
21 So now diving into the 2021-2022 Annual
22 Action Plan, the State of Montana receives the
23 following allocations from HUD by program. So for
24 CDBG, the State of Montana receives \$6,982,827;
25 for HOME, the State of Montana received

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1 \$3,590,456; for ESG, the State of Montana received
2 \$743,529; and for Housing Trust Fund, the State of
3 Montana receives \$3,401,884.
4 With these federal allocations, the
5 State of Montana will tackle the five goals that
6 are explained in our Consolidated Plan. And so
7 for the first goal, which is preserving and
8 constructing affordable housing, the State of
9 Montana is proposing to allocate \$750,000 in
10 CDBG's; \$2,131,411 in HOME; and \$2,041,696 in HTF
11 towards this goal to preserve and construct
12 affordable housing.
13 And through these various programs, we
14 anticipate that this will help construct 12 rental
15 units, rehab 26 rental units, add two homeowner
16 housing units, rehabilitate three homeowner
17 housing units, and provide direct financial
18 assistance to 50 households.
19 The State of Montana is proposing to
20 allocate \$500,000 in CDBG to goal two, which is
21 plan for communities, and through this program we
22 anticipate assistance to 15 local governments.
23 The State of Montana is proposing to
24 allocate \$2,787,190 in CDBG funds onto the third
25 goal, which is improving and sustaining public

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1 infrastructure. Through this program we
2 anticipate that 1,000 persons will be assisted and
3 20 households will be assisted.
4 The State of Montana is proposing to
5 allocate \$2 million in CDBG to goal four, which is
6 revitalizing local economies, and through this
7 program, we anticipate that 80 jobs will be
8 created or retained, and three businesses will be
9 assisted.
10 The State of Montana is proposing to
11 allocate \$450,000 in CDBG; \$650,000 in HOME;
12 \$750,000 in HTF; and \$677,159 in ESG to the fifth
13 goal, which is reducing homelessness; and through
14 these programs we anticipate that 200 households
15 will be assisted with tenant based rental
16 assistance or rapid rehousing; 80 persons will be
17 assisted with homeless persons overnight shelter;
18 480 persons will be assisted with homeless
19 prevention; and 20 households or housing units
20 will be added for the homeless.
21 This table provides some of the same
22 information that was on the previous slides, but
23 breaks it down by program as well. So you can
24 see, if you read across the table left to right,
25 for CDBG, we're allocating 11 percent of our CDBG

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1 funds to goal one, which is preserving and
2 constructing affordable housing; 7 percent of our
3 funds to goal two, which is plan for communities;
4 41 percent of our funds to goal three, which is
5 improve and sustain vital public infrastructure;
6 29 percent of our funds to goal four, revitalize
7 local economies; 7 percent of our funds to goal
8 five, reduce homelessness; and four percent of our
9 funds will be retained for admin.
10 For HOME, 69 percent of our funds will
11 go to towards goal one, preserve and construct
12 affordable housing; and then 21 percent of our
13 funds will go towards goal five, reduce
14 homelessness; and 10 percent will be retained for
15 admin.
16 For ESG, 93 percent of the funds will go
17 towards goal five, which is reduce homelessness;
18 and 7 percent of the funds will be retained for
19 admin.
20 For Housing Trust Fund, 66 percent of
21 the funds will go towards goal one, preserve and
22 construct affordable housing; and 24 percent will
23 go towards goal five, reduce homelessness; and 10
24 percent will be retained for admin.
25 And then now we're going to turn our

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1 attention to the 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan
2 Amendment. So the 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan
3 was previously drafted, and we had a separate
4 public hearing for that document; and then it was
5 also previously amended for ESG CARES. And so if
6 anybody is looking for further information on
7 either of those previous public hearings, that can
8 be found on our website. So really our discussion
9 today is limited to the 2019-2020 AAP amendment as
10 it relates to CDBG CARES.
11 So CDBG CARES funds must be used for
12 CDBG eligible activities to prevent, prepare for,
13 and respond to COVID-19. CDBG CARES funds must
14 primarily benefit low and moderate income
15 Montanans. And then Montana's allocation for CDBG
16 CARES, which came in three allocations --
17 CDBG-CV1, CDBG-CV2, and CDBG-CV3 -- is
18 \$10,174,175.
19 Montana is proposing to use CDBG CARES
20 funds to fund projects within these Consolidated
21 Plan goals, so we're proposing to use 20 percent
22 of these CDBG CARES dollars to go towards
23 preserving and constructing affordable housing; 50
24 percent towards improving and sustaining public
25 facilities; 10 percent towards reducing

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1 homelessness; and then the remaining funds will go
2 towards state and local government administration
3 costs and technical assistance.
4 For CDBG CARES, eligible applications
5 are town, cities, and counties, and eligible uses
6 include public facility projects, so this could be
7 improvements to HVAC systems for ventilation,
8 expansion to allow for social distancing in these
9 types of public facilities. It could be public
10 service projects, support including equipment for
11 senior centers, Head Start centers, shelters, and
12 health clinics; or it could be housing or
13 homelessness projects, which could include
14 acquiring or developing non-congregate shelters.
15 And for CDBG CARES, it's really
16 important to ensure that these funds do not
17 duplicate benefits of other funding sources.
18 So both of these documents -- the
19 2021-2022 AAP and 2019-2020 AAP Amendment -- are
20 available on Commerce's website, which is
21 commerce.mt.gov/consolidatedplan/documents. There
22 are also several depositories throughout the
23 state. We have a list on our website for all of
24 these depositories, and we can certainly get that
25 to anybody on request, and we can also get the

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1 documents to anybody on request as well.
2 So if there is any questions about any
3 of these programs, the programs housed within
4 Commerce again are CDBG, HTF, and HOME, and
5 Commerce can be reached at 301 South Park Avenue,
6 in Helena, Montana 59601. That's our physical
7 address. And then for mail, it's P.O. Box 200523,
8 Helena, Montana 59620-0523.
9 Our Interim Administrator for the
10 Community Development Division is Cheryl Cohen;
11 and our Interim Operations Manager is Becky
12 Anseth. Our phone is 406-841-2770, and our fax is
13 406-841-2771. Our email is DOCConPlan@mt.gov; and
14 again, our website is
15 commerce.mt.gov/consolidatedplans.
16 If there are further questions about
17 ESG, DPHHS can be reached at their physical
18 location at 1400 Carter Drive, Helena, Montana
19 59601; or by mail at P.O. Box 202956, Helena,
20 Montana 59620-2956. The Interim Administrator is
21 Morgan Taylor; the Bureau Chief is Sara Loewen.
22 Their phone is 406-447-4265; the fax is
23 406-447-4287; and their website is dphhs.mt.gov.
24 So with that, we're going to turn to the
25 comment section or portion of our presentation

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1 public hearing. So Commerce and DPHHS will
2 consider and provide written responses to all
3 comments received, and all comments received and
4 responses provided will be documented in the final
5 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan, and then in the
6 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan Amendment.
7 Commerce and DPHHS may respond verbally
8 to comments received in order to provide
9 clarification or further information.
10 So with that, we're going to open up
11 comments regarding both the draft 2021-2022 AAP,
12 and draft 2019-2020 AAP Amendment. So if you have
13 a comment and are joining via webinar, please
14 raise your hand so we can unmute you. If you're
15 joining via phone, please press star nine to
16 indicate you have a comment, and then press star
17 six to unmute and remute yourself.
18 And then when providing a public
19 comment, it would be helpful for us if you please
20 state and spell your name, and then please state
21 the organization you represent, if applicable.
22 And right before we get started, I just wanted to
23 note that written comments can be addressed to the
24 address or email below, and will be accepted from
25 5:00 p.m. on June 24th, 2021 -- Excuse me. My

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1 slides are old -- all of the comments will be
2 accepted until 5:00 p.m. on July 8th, 2021, so
3 both the draft 2021-2022 AAP and the draft
4 2019-2020 AAP.
5 In previous deliveries and other
6 information that we sent out, we had June 24th,
7 2021 listed for the 2019-2020 AAP Amendment, and
8 that was a mistake on our behalf. So again, we're
9 accepting comments until July 8th, 2021 at 5:00
10 p.m.
11 So with that --
12 **MS. EGLI:** Taylor, just one quick thing.
13 Andrew has his hand raised, and I just wanted to
14 bring that to your attention.
15 **MS. CROWELL:** Perfect. Thanks, Janelle.
16 **MS. EGLI:** You're welcome.
17 **MS. CROWELL:** Andrew, do you mind
18 unmuting, Andrew?
19 **MR. CHANANIA:** Good afternoon. How are
20 you today?
21 **MS. CROWELL:** Good.
22 **MR. CHANANIA:** This is Andrew Chanania,
23 the last name is spelled C-H-A-N-A-N-I-A, and I
24 represent North Fork Development.
25 First I just want to say thank you to

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1 all of the staff who have had quite a year in
2 putting all of this together, and many other
3 things. You do so much for the states, and I
4 cannot thank you enough for all of that.
5 I also just want to indicate that I
6 certainly support especially the changes to the
7 rehab standards that are proposed to be part of
8 the 2021-2022 AAP. I think that those will
9 definitely make it easier to administer the HTF
10 funds as we look at all of the various
11 requirements that we have for various funding
12 sources, building officials and others. So
13 definitely thank you for that.
14 With regard to the 2019-2020 Amendment,
15 certainly there are lots of specific rules that
16 aren't typical, that we don't typically see
17 because of the nature of this. I would like to
18 just put out there and encourage Commerce to think
19 about housing as certainly a critical component of
20 meeting needs in general in Montana, and I would
21 say on par with public infrastructure and economic
22 development and homelessness.
23 So I would encourage the State to think
24 about allocating funding equally to housing as it
25 does public infrastructure.

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1 And then thinking about the
2 homelessness. I think keeping that level of
3 investment where it is is appropriate, especially
4 in light of the HOME AAP funds that we expect to
5 come out here hopefully later this year.
6 One more consideration for the 2019-2020
7 AAP is allowing a single local government to have
8 more than one open CDBG CARES application at a
9 time, seeing as local governments and everybody
10 else is facing just a myriad of challenges. I
11 think for CDBG CARES funds, lifting that
12 limitation of one grant per local government would
13 best help Montanans meet our needs.
14 With regard to the 2021-2022 AAP, a
15 couple of comments, thinking about funding
16 allocations; again, encouraging the State to think
17 of housing on par as far as priority with public
18 infrastructure, and balancing that investment a
19 little bit more equally.
20 One item also, thinking about upcoming
21 grant applications and funding rounds, a lot of
22 fantastic projects were funded last year, and due
23 to circumstances beyond our control, practitioners
24 are facing -- many are facing some significant
25 budget shortfalls, given the costs of some

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1 materials and labor just going through the roof.
2 I would encourage the State to consider
3 prioritizing last, credits that were awarded last
4 year, making sure that those projects are whole
5 and able to move forward in a successful manner,
6 perhaps with a truncated and expedited application
7 and award process. A lot of projects would be
8 ready to go this summer or this fall but for some
9 of these budget shortfalls that certainly were not
10 predictable.
11 And one more item I guess is to consider
12 communication and collaboration with the Montana
13 housing folks who are in charge of the significant
14 rewrite of the Qualified Allocation Plan for low
15 income housing tax credits. They're certainly
16 undergoing a significant effort, and I would
17 encourage folks who are in charge of the CDBG,
18 HTF, and HOME funds, to openly and often
19 communicate with the tax credit folks over there,
20 just to help facilitate successful projects, and
21 all of the various competing requirements.
22 One more item, thinking about the CDBG
23 funds in particular for 2021-2022 AAP, I would
24 encourage the State to lift the \$450,000 per
25 project cap, like HOME did several years ago. We

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1 certainly, I think as part of that as a result of
2 that, saw an increased use in HOME funds, and a
3 more effective series of projects that were able
4 to meet housing needs, and I guess additionally
5 more investment in housing with the regular CDBG
6 funds.
7 And so those are the comments that I
8 have. I will also be submitting written comments.
9 I appreciate everybody's time and all your
10 efforts. Thank you so much.
11 **MS. CROWELL:** Thank you so much for
12 those comments, Andrew. I'll pause right there,
13 just in case any of the panelists want to jump in.
14 But we really appreciate all of that.
15 **MS. EGLI:** I think that Heather McMilin
16 was the next to have her hand raised.
17 **MS. McMILIN:** This is Heather McMilin
18 with Homeward, last name is spelled M-C-M-I-L-I-N.
19 I'm assuming you guys can hear me all right.
20 **MS. CROWELL:** We can hear you well,
21 Heather. Thank you.
22 **MS. McMILIN:** Excellent. I just hit the
23 unmute indication four times. I didn't know if I
24 was turning things on and off. So thank you.
25 Again, Heather McMilin with Homeward,

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1 and I want to echo a lot of what Andrew testified
2 to. There's been nothing simple about the last 16
3 months, and all the work that you all have done
4 and we have done on our end to implement projects,
5 and so thank you for coming to the point we are
6 today, and working with us, and taking testimony,
7 and basically surviving the last year.
8 One of the things I'd also like to echo
9 is considering housing infrastructure with any of
10 these funds. The even distribution to housing
11 across the board with infrastructure is important,
12 but also considering, if you are allocating to
13 jurisdictions for infrastructure expansion, that
14 certainly helps promote housing development.
15 And maybe there's a way to give priority
16 points for infrastructure projects that are
17 helping to promote the construction, and
18 preservation, and rehabilitation of housing as
19 infrastructure, because we certainly have always
20 had an issue, and there's been a need, but I would
21 say over the last year we've had more impacts and
22 will have decades worth of impacts from the COVID,
23 people moving here, and buying our housing stock,
24 and driving up prices.
25 And so any way we can support proper

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1 infrastructure development and housing
2 development, whether it be market rate or
3 affordably bound would be great.
4 Specifically we thank -- We are working
5 on projects that have been funded by some of the
6 funds discussed today, and for funds moving
7 forward. So an area of need, I think, and very
8 specifically with the Housing Trust Fund, one
9 thing may be not allowed currently but we should
10 consider allowing, is the Housing Trust Funds to
11 be used for operational support.
12 And I say that because in a project in
13 the nature of permanent supportive housing, we
14 have one, a project we're constructing now, and
15 hope to close the financing package here in
16 Missoula. We are also working with Neighborworks
17 Montana in Great Falls in a permanent supportive
18 housing project serve the chronically homeless
19 with wrap around services.
20 The one that is critical on both those
21 projects is setting up a service reserve within
22 the project to ensure those wrap around services
23 that are so critical for those types of projects,
24 have a back stop with a loan and tax credit
25 investor. We have to have all the risks taken

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1 care of. And these projects operate, they're just
2 more expensive to operate because of those
3 services, and having that reserve, being able to
4 back stop operations will be critical.
5 So if we could open up any and all
6 funding sources, not just the Housing Trust Fund,
7 but CDBG and HOME, and these COVID assistance
8 dollars coming in, to allow the maximum. I don't
9 have all of the rules on the federal funds, but as
10 soon as they come out, we keep them as flexible as
11 possible, and at the federal level of kind of the
12 rules, so that we can get creative and fund
13 projects like the Neighborworks Great Falls
14 project in Great Falls, and other needs around the
15 communities in Montana, because I just don't know
16 what we don't know yet. And so maximum
17 flexibility within those funding sources would be
18 good.
19 I do support also multiple applications
20 for different jurisdictions. There's definitely
21 different needs in communities, and having
22 multiple applications open would help us,
23 especially with the amount of funds coming in that
24 are above normal, and getting those allocated in
25 the projects right away would be important.

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1 I also echo the participating with
2 Montana Housing in their very much needed rewrite
3 of the QAP in the process we're going through this
4 year on that, and pairing these funds with the
5 loan for housing tax credits, in the variety of
6 projects that could be funded by that program. If
7 we're all in concert together, we can simply get
8 more done, and meet more need.
9 The other piece would be around the
10 cost. We've all, as we've developed and tried to
11 put homes over people's heads, roofs over people's
12 heads, we have survived cost impacts and timing
13 impacts that are also cost impacts to projects at
14 an unprecedented level. We're facing tax credit
15 pricing that's worse than it was when the IRS
16 basically bought the credits back and paid the
17 states their credits to be sold for equity. They
18 were just paid and used as funds during that
19 2008-2009.
20 Really just talking to developers as a
21 way to do a truncated kind of correction or
22 addition to contracts, anything. Just consider
23 having those conversations. We're all very
24 creative, and we have survived the projects, at
25 least we're trying to at this point, but any way

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1 we can be creative to help support these one time
2 various impacts that we've seen due to the global
3 pandemic would be helpful.
4 I think pretty much that's all I have
5 for today. Thank you, Andrew, for setting the
6 stage for at length testimony.
7 **MS. CROWELL:** Thank you so much,
8 Heather. It looks like I don't see any other
9 hands raised. I think, Shyla, you've had your --
10 Okay. We have some more. Okay. I saw Jim at the
11 top of my list.
12 **MR. MORTON:** Good morning. Can you hear
13 me?
14 **MS. CROWELL:** Yes, we can hear you, Jim.
15 **MR. MORTON:** So I want to echo what
16 others have said in terms of appreciation for all
17 the work that staff has put into the documents we
18 have before us.
19 Just quickly, I wanted to support
20 allowing applications, more than one application
21 from a local government for CDBG. As it has been
22 said, it's been a tough two years. Also with
23 support of allowing the services component of CDBG
24 to include multiple applications from
25 jurisdictions.

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1 I think the entitlement cities, and
2 entitlement areas, and the code is reasonable. So
3 by allowing multiple applications, both for
4 services and for CDBG, should not disadvantage the
5 non-entitlement areas.
6 And I just echo what both Heather and
7 Andrew have said in terms of the housing component
8 being much in need of consideration, in terms of
9 coordination with other services and expanded
10 amounts allocated. And we will provide from Human
11 Resource Council written comments.
12 **MS. CROWELL:** Thank you so much, Jim.
13 Next I have Sindie on my list.
14 **MS. KENNEDY:** Hi, this is Sindie
15 Kennedy. Can you hear me?
16 **MS. CROWELL:** Yes, I can hear you,
17 Sindie. Thanks so much.
18 **MS. KENNEDY:** Thank you. It's Sindie,
19 S-I-N-D-I-E, Kennedy, K-E-N-N-E-D-Y, with Missoula
20 County.
21 I, too, would like to echo what has
22 already been said, and express my gratitude for
23 all of the work that Commerce has done to make
24 this all happen. It has been a challenging year
25 for all of us.

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1 I also want to reinforce some of the
2 things that have been said. Definitely would
3 really appreciate an open CDBG application
4 process, so it's similar to HOME, so that we're
5 not tied down to a deadline. Projects just kind
6 of land in our laps throughout the entire year,
7 and we've had to say no to many that were really
8 good eligible projects because, one, we already
9 had an application or project underway; and two,
10 the timing wasn't right. So that would be really
11 beneficial.
12 Being able to increase the amount of
13 award above \$450,000 would also be very
14 beneficial; and balancing the housing with public
15 infrastructure would be helpful. And I will be
16 providing some written comments as well. Thank
17 you.
18 **MS. CROWELL:** Thank you so much, Sindie.
19 Next I have Sherrie.
20 **MS. AREY:** This is Sherrie Arey from
21 Neighborworks, Great Falls. I'm going to just hit
22 on a few topics that have already been hit on,
23 just to double down on them.
24 The multiple applications allowed for
25 the local governments is critical to the success

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1 for those. The Housing Trust Fund dollars being
2 allowed to use for operational support. In order
3 to use all of the tools in our tool box to help
4 with the homelessness issue, that could become a
5 make or break for a project, and so strongly
6 advocate for that.

7 And as Heather McMilin said, housing is
8 infrastructure. The more ability to tie those two
9 things together and help with the infrastructure
10 needs in our community is essential to being able
11 to provide affordable housing.

12 Thank you all for everything that you
13 do, and all the information you provided, and best
14 of luck. Thank you.

15 **MS. CROWELL:** Thank you so much,
16 Sherrie. Next on my list is Shyla. I'm going to
17 unmute you.

18 **MS. PATERA:** Good morning, MBOH and
19 Community Development Division staff. For the
20 record, my name is Shyla Patera, spelled S-H-Y-L-A
21 P-A-T-E-R-A, with North Central Independent Living
22 Services in Black Eagle, and the Montana Community
23 Living Task Force.

24 I'm really happy to participate in this
25 hearing today, and I am really supportive of

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1 Montana's QAP efforts are moving forward, and
2 looking at the different funding sources, such as
3 the Housing Trust Fund and different things being
4 utilized for operation and different points,
5 different points of work, as some of the
6 developers and other housers have talked about.

7 Some of the things that again, NCILS and
8 the Independent Living Community for Montanans
9 with Disabilities espouse is making sure that we
10 have accessible access to both services in
11 sidewalk and infrastructure, but also in Home and
12 Housing Trust Fund.

13 Some of the things that have impacted us
14 through COVID are making sure that we also can
15 house our homeless, and some of the things that
16 I've thought of are looking at like accessible
17 tiny homes -- one in particular is based out of
18 Emmett, Idaho that I've been beginning to research
19 -- and hopefully will look at our zoning
20 opportunities, both for single family and
21 multi-family, and different things as well.

22 Just making sure that our people with
23 disabilities have access to HOME, Mainstream, and
24 811 if needed, and working with HUD and others to
25 make sure that people with disabilities aren't

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1 moving from one house to another, but making sure
2 that they have stable opportunities that deal with
3 their funding sources that they are using.

4 I'd also like to encourage some funding
5 for accessible rehabbing of housing. We
6 encourage, of course, visible and accessible new
7 construction, and the universal design options,
8 but a lot of calls that we get are also, "How do I
9 rehab my house to make it so that I can age in
10 place?" "How do I, as a long term homeowner, get
11 to stay in our community as well, and with my
12 house that I already are owning, or paying on, or
13 working with?" And that's a big thing.

14 And infrastructure, we also encourage
15 communities to work on accessible pathways,
16 pedestrian crosses, contiguous sidewalks, timing
17 of things, development of accessible pathways for
18 walking, rolling, parking, biking, anything a
19 person with a disability needs.

20 And I will be submitting written
21 comments to follow my disjointed verbal ones.
22 Everyone have a great day. Thank you for all your
23 hard work.

24 **MS. CROWELL:** Thank you so much, Shyla.
25 They were not disjointed. We understood it all.

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1 It looks like Heather had her hand up again, so
2 I'm going to unmute you.

3 **MS. McMILIN:** Thank you. I will amend
4 my previous testimony. Again, Heather McMilin,
5 Homeward, Missoula, Montana, M-C-M-I-L-I-N.

6 I would be remiss if I did not comment,
7 and appropriate or not. If there's any way this
8 department and the individuals on this call can
9 support the work that will go into the next round
10 of the state housing credit work at the
11 legislative level. It's something that made it
12 off the floor and to the Governor's desk, and
13 unfortunately was not signed. And that would
14 help, probably double the production of homes,
15 rehabilitations, preservation, within the state.

16 And so I wanted to go on the record to
17 say if there's a way to support or participate,
18 let us know. That would be great. Thanks.

19 **MS. CROWELL:** Thank you so much,
20 Heather. If there's any further comments, just
21 feel free to raise your hand. Again, if you're
22 joining us via phone, you can do that by pressing
23 star nine to indicate that you have a comment, and
24 then star six to unmute or remute yourself.

25 (No response)

1 **MS. CROWELL:** It doesn't look like we
2 have any other comments, so we will keep this
3 screen up for a couple of more seconds, just in
4 case anybody needs to jot down where written
5 comments can be sent. Again, it's at the bottom
6 of this screen. It's the Montana Department of
7 Commerce, Community Development Division,
8 Attention: Con Plan, P.O. Box 200523, Helena,
9 Montana, 59620-0523, or DOCConplan@mt.gov.

10 And with that, we just wanted to say
11 thank you guys. You have had a lot of really
12 great, in depth, and insightful comments today,
13 and we will take all of those to heart. We really
14 appreciate you taking time out of your I'm sure
15 busy days to spend 45 minutes with us.
16 These documents and our programs are
17 just as strong, or only as strong as all of us
18 working together to get things done for Montanans.
19 So thank you all. And I'll pause there just in
20 case there's anybody else from Commerce or DPHHS
21 that has anything else to add.

22 (No response)
23 **MS. CROWELL:** Okay. Thank you guys.
24 (The proceedings were concluded
25 at 11:47 a.m.)

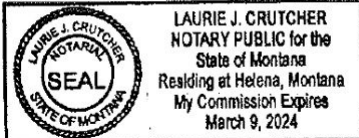
1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 STATE OF MONTANA)
3 : SS.
4 COUNTY OF LEWIS & CLARK)

5 I, LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR, Court Reporter,
6 Notary Public in and for the County of Lewis &
7 Clark, State of Montana, do hereby certify:

8 That the proceedings were taken before me at
9 the time and place herein named; that the
10 proceedings were reported by me in shorthand and
11 transcribed using computer-aided transcription,
12 and that the foregoing - 33 - pages contain a true
13 record of the proceedings to the best of my
14 ability.

15 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
16 hand and affixed my notarial seal this 28th day of
17 June, 2021.

18
19 *Laurie J. Crutcher*
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