NJDCA AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND (AHTF)
FY 2027 RFP GUIDE

On **September 28, 2026**, NJDCA released the FY2027 AHTF RFP. The total amount of available funding is **$30,000,000** and the Department anticipates funding approximately **10-12** affordable housing projects with the allocated funds. The maximum amount of AHTF per project that can be applied for is **$3,000,000**. Applicants will have until **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2026,** to complete the application process. No applications will be accepted after **11:59 PM on 11/19/2026**. It is anticipated that funding awards will be announced on **January 5, 2027.**

As part of this RFP, a link is provided to upload all required application documents electronically: HPU Document Submission Portal. The form does not have a SAVE function so you must upload and submit all documents at one time. Please do not email documents to program staff or mail hard copy documents. A list of required application documents can be found under **Exhibit I** of this guide. **All SAGE applications and required application documents must be received by 11:59 PM ON 11/19/2026**. Please disregard the NJ Affordable Housing Trust Fund Guidelines pdf that appears under the FY27 application as they do not apply to this RFP.

AHTF provides funding for 100% affordable housing projects at 25 units or less and must meet Uniform Housing Affordability Controls N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1 et seq.

Projects applying as 100% senior or supportive housing must meet the following criteria:

- Senior projects are designated for **tenants aged 62+**
- Supportive housing projects must serve **one** of the following special needs populations:
  - Households with serious mental illness diagnoses
  - Victims and survivors of domestic violence
  - Homeless Individuals & Families
  - Disabled and/or Homeless Veterans
  - Households with Physical or Developmental Disabilities
  - Youth aging out of foster care, runaway or homeless youth
  - Households who are re-entering after incarceration in a correctional facility

All projects must utilize New Jersey Housing Affordability Service (HAS) as the Administrative Agent for the lease up or sale of units.

The State is unable to answer specific questions about projects while the RFP is open. Applicants can submit general questions via email at AHTF@dca.nj.gov and answers to questions will be posted on the DCA Affordable Housing Trust Fund website in the form of FAQs.

All applications will undergo a threshold review process (**STEP 1**). The projects that satisfy the threshold review will then proceed to a scored review (**STEP 2**). A final list of projects ranked by score will be submitted to the Commissioner who will have final determination of which projects will receive AHTF funding.

Applications will not be accepted and reviewed if they do not meet the following:

- A complete and submitted SAGE application **by the RFP deadline. Please note that the application should be submitted under the Ownership Entity of the project.**
- A complete application includes the submission of the application in the DCA SAGE Grant Application Portal **<u>and</u>** required application documents in the HPU Document Submission Portal.
- Required project proforma must be submitted in **Excel format**; a proforma submitted in any other format will not be reviewed.
- All required application Certifications are complete, signed and uploaded in SAGE and as part of the required application documents through the document portal (Schedule G, Schedule H, Schedule I, and Application Cover Sheet).
- Applicant/Owner Entity has a Vendor ID number through NJStart (NJSTART) and a SAM.gov number (SAM.gov) as part of the Agency Information in the SAGE application and uploaded as part of the required application documents through the document portal. Please ensure the Agency Information screen has a valid expiration date.

STEP 1: THRESOLD REVIEW

All applications will undergo the following threshold review. A total of **9 points** can be earned, and the project must score at least **7 points** to move forward.

Threshold Requirements	**Yes= 1**	**No= 0**
The project has received municipal support as documented by a letter or resolution		
The project has documented site control		
The project as designed is allowed as of right or has obtained the required planning and zoning approvals		
The project leverages other non-AHTF funding sources with at least soft commitments for other non-AHTF funding		
The project has no funding gap beyond the request for AHTF funding		
The project has preliminary architectural/design plans		
The project has a third-party market study or sufficiently detailed market analysis that demonstrates the need for the project		
The project operating costs can be supported over the restricted period of affordability.		
The developer has previously received NJDCA affordable housing production funds and projects are in compliance with program requirements or is partnered with an entity who has previous experience with NJDCA and/or HMFA.		
Total		

STEP 2: SCORED REVIEW

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Application Scoring Guide

I. Financial Feasibility and Project Readiness (maximum 25 points)

1. AHTF Pro Forma (maximum 10 points)
   - **10 points:** The AHTF Pro Forma contains a realistic set of funding sources and uses, development budget, and operating budget based on reasonable assumptions with **all** line items **falling within expected parameters** as outlined in **EXHIBIT II.**
   - **5 points:** The AHTF Pro Forma contains a realistic set of funding sources and uses, development budget, and operating budget based on reasonable assumptions with **most** line items **falling within expected parameters** as outlined in **EXHIBIT II**.
   - **0 points:** The AHTF Pro Forma contains an unrealistic set of funding sources and uses, development budget, and operating budget based on reasonable assumptions with **most** line items falling **outside expected parameters** as outlined in **EXHIBIT II**.

2. Financing Commitments (maximum 5 points)
   - **5 points:** Firm letters of commitment from all other funding sources have been finalized and lenders are ready to close in conjunction with AHTF funding.
   - **3 points:** Firm letters of commitment are finalized by some, but not all other public and private funding sources.
   - **1 point:** Financing commitments are substantiated with Letters of Interest that include terms of financing.
   - **0 point:** Financing letters of interest are missing from most identified sources of financing.

3. Planning & Zoning Approvals (maximum 5 points)
   - **5 points:** Project is zoned as of right OR obtained the necessary zoning board approval <u>and</u> received final planning board approval.
   - **3 points:** Project has obtained the necessary zoning board approval and received preliminary planning board approval.
   - **1 point:** Project has applied for planning board and/or zoning board approvals.
   - **0 points:** Project has not applied for planning board and/or zoning board approvals.

4. Project Timeline (maximum 3 points)
   - **3 points:** There is a strong likelihood that the project will proceed into construction within the next 12 months and the project will be completed within 4 years from the date of funding based on the project narrative, estimated timeline, and other supporting documentation.
   - **2 points:** There is a strong likelihood that the project will proceed into construction within the next 12 to 18 months and the project will be completed more than 4 years from the date of funding based on the project narrative, estimated timeline, and other supporting documentation.
   - **0 points:** The project does not have a complete or realistic timeline.

5. Architectural Plans (maximum 2 points)
    - **2 points:** Architectural plans are permit-ready and the construction budget is aligned with the plans. The plans reflect all design characteristics represented in the AHTF application.
    - **1 point:** Architectural plans are not yet permit-ready but have been developed beyond the schematic design phase. The plans reflect all design characteristics represented in the AHTF application.
    - **0 points:** Architectural plans are in the schematic design phase.

II. Leveraging (maximum 5 points)

1. Leveraging (maximum 5 points): Affordable Housing Trust Funds are not intended to be the sole source of project funding. To the extent that Affordable Housing Trust funds are used to leverage other sources of funding, the following points will be awarded:
    - **5 points:** Affordable Housing Trust Funds are no greater than 30% of the total project funding sources.
    - **3 points:** Affordable Housing Trust Funds are no greater than 40% of the total project funding sources.
    - **1 point:** Affordable Housing Trust Funds are no greater than 50% of the total project funding sources.
    - **0 points:** Affordable Housing Trust Funds are greater than 50% of the total project funding sources.

III. Construction and Operating Cost Reasonableness (maximum 15 points)

1. Construction Cost Guidelines (maximum 10 points)

Housing Type	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom
Single Family Detached/Semi-Detached	$304.74	$282.97	$264.76	$238.67	$224.92
Row House (1-4 Family)	$267.98	$251.34	$238.20	$219.77	$209.02
Walkup (5+ units)	$235.34	$228.67	$224.84	$221.96	$219.80
Elevator (5+ units)	$263.88	$263.88	$263.88	$263.88	$263.88
Parking Deck (Per Space)	$25,000.00				

- **10 points:** Construction costs do not exceed the per square foot maximum cost.
- **5 points:** Construction costs are equal to or less than 5% greater than the per square foot maximum cost and there are reasonable justifications for the higher cost.
- **3 points:** Construction costs are equal to or less than 10% greater than the per square foot maximum cost and there are reasonable justifications for the higher cost.
- **1 point:** Construction costs are equal to or less than 15% greater than the per square foot maximum cost and there are reasonable justifications for the higher cost.
- **0 points:** Construction costs exceed 15% greater than the per square foot maximum cost and there is no reasonable justification for the higher cost.

2. Annual Per Unit Operating Expenses Guidelines (maximum 5 points)
    - **5 points:** Annual Per Unit Operating Expenses in the AHTF Pro Forma are between 40% and 60% of Total Effective Income (rents minus vacancies).
    - **3 points:** Annual Per Unit Operating Expenses in the AHTF Pro Forma fall 5% or less outside the expected range 40% to 60% of Total Effective Income (rents minus vacancies).
    - **2 points:** Annual Per Unit Operating Expenses in the AHTF Pro Forma fall 10% or less outside the expected range 40% to 60% of Total Effective Income (rents minus vacancies).
    - **1 point:** Annual Per Unit Operating Expenses in the AHTF Pro Forma fall 15% or less outside the expected range 40% to 60% of Total Effective Income (rents minus vacancies).
    - **0 points:** Annual Per Unit Operating Expenses in the AHTF Pro Forma fall greater than 15% outside the expected range 40% to 60% if Total Effective Income (rents minus vacancies).

IV. Development Team Capacity & Experience (maximum 20 points)

1. Developer/Owner Capacity & Experience (maximum 5 points)
    - **5 points:** The Developer/Owner has financial capacity to undertake the project. The Developer/Owner demonstrates a track record in successfully completing multiple projects of similar size, scale, type, and complexity to the proposed project.
    - **2 points:** The Developer/Owner has successfully completed at least one project of similar size, scale, type, and complexity to the project.
    - **0 points:** The Developer/Owner has never completed a project of similar size, scale, type, and complexity to the project **OR** the Developer/Owner has a documented history of performance issues or non-compliance with projects currently in operation.

2. General Contractor Capacity & Experience (maximum 5 points)
    - **5 points:** The selected General Contractor demonstrates a track record (four (4) or more) in successfully completing projects of similar size, scale, type, and complexity to the proposed project. The General Contractor resume shows they are able to deliver the proposed project on time and within budget.
    - **2 points:** The selected General Contractor demonstrates a successful but has a limited track record (three (3) or less) in successfully completing projects of similar size, scale, type, and complexity to the proposed project. There are some concerns based on the General Contractor's resume that they are able to deliver the proposed project on time and within budget.
    - **0 points:** A General Contractor has not been selected; or the selected General Contractor has minimal experience in successfully completing projects of similar size, scale, type, and complexity to the proposed project.

3. Architect Capacity & Experience (maximum 5 points)
    - **5 points:** The selected Architect demonstrates a successful track record (four (4) or more) in designing projects of similar size, scale, type, and complexity to the proposed project. Based in their resume, the Architect has the capacity and experience to

ensure the proposed design is compliant with all state and local building codes, construction standards, and accessibility requirements. The Architect has the capacity and experience to provide project oversight during the construction phase to ensure the project is delivered on time and within budget.

- **2 points:** The selected Architect demonstrates a successful, but limited track record (3 or less) in designing projects of similar size, scale, type, and complexity to the proposed project. Based in their resume, there are some concerns that the Architect can ensure the proposed design is compliant with all state and local building codes, construction standards, and accessibility requirements and they have the capacity and experience to provide project oversight during the construction phase to ensure the project is delivered on time and within budget.
- **0 points:** The selected Architect has no experience in projects of similar size, scale, type, and complexity to the proposed project. Based in their resume, they cannot show they have previously executed projects that are compliant with all state and local building codes, construction standards, accessibility requirements or that they have provided project oversight during the construction phase that ensured the project is delivered on time and within budget.

4. Developer Project Capacity (maximum 5 points)
    - **5 points:** The developer has no open projects in any of NJDCA HPU's funding programs.
    - **3 points:** The developer has two (2) or less open projects in any of NJDCA HPU's funding programs.
    - **1 point:** the developer has three (3) open projects in any of NJDCA's HPU funding programs.
    - **0 points:** The developer has four (4) or more open projects in any of NJDCA HPU's funding programs.

V. Site Selection and Design Characteristics (maximum 5 points):

1. Site Selection & Design Characteristics (maximum 5 points): The proposed project site location is accessible to social, recreational, educational, commercial, and health facilities as well as municipal facilities and services. The project design is consistent with the neighborhood character.
    - **5 points:** Site selection is appropriate for use and accessible- walking or public transportation that is walkable- to community resources. The project design is consistent with neighborhood character.
    - **3 points:** Site selection is generally appropriate for use however accessibility to community resources is limited- would require public or private transportation. Project design has some differences from the neighborhood character.
    - **0 points:** Site selection is inappropriate for use and is not accessible to community resources. Project design does not fit into the neighborhood character.

VI. Market Analysis (maximum 5 points): Project application contains a narrative market analysis or recent market study that includes information about the number of likely renters and homebuyers, analysis of comparable area rents or sales prices for both affordable and market rate projects of similar size, and an explanation of how the market analysis supports the need for the proposed project; homeownership projects should include recent sales data.

- **5 points:** The market analysis and/or market study fully supports the need for the proposed project.
- **3 points:** The market analysis and/or market study support the need for the proposed project, but more information is needed.
- **0 points:** The market analysis and/or market study was not included in the project application or does not support the need for the proposed project.

VII. Priority Points (maximum 7 points)

1. **Family Sized Units:** The project has a greater number of units with 3+ bedrooms than the minimum requirement for the bedroom distribution required by Uniform Housing Affordability Controls: **2 points**

2. **Difficult to Develop Area:** The project is located in a HUD designated 2026 Difficult to Develop Area Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) and Difficult Development Areas (DDAs) Lookup | HUD USER: **2 points**

3. **Non-profit Developer:** The applicant is a non-profit developer. **3 points**

AHTF Score Summary

I. Financial Feasibility & Project Readiness (maximum 25 points)	Maximum Points
1. AHTF Pro Forma	10
2. Financing Commitments	5
4. Planning & Zoning Approvals	5
5. Project Timeline	3
6. Architectural Plans	2
II. Leveraging (maximum 5 points)	5
III. Construction & Operating Cost Reasonableness (maximum 15 points)	
1. Construction Cost Guidelines	10
2. Annual Per Unit Operating Expenses Guidelines (Rental Projects)	5
IV. Development Team Capacity & Experience (maximum 20 points)	
1. Developer/Owner Capacity & Experience	5
2. General Contractor Capacity & Experience	5
3. Architect Capacity & Experience	5
4. Developer Project Capacity	5
V. Site Selection & Design Characteristics (maximum 5 points)	
1. Site Selection & Design Characteristics	5
VI. Market Analysis (maximum 5 points)	5
Total Available Points Section I-VI	**75**
VII. Priority Points (maximum 5 points)	
1. Family Sized Units	2
2. Difficult to Develop Area	2
3. Non-profit Developer	3
Total Available Points Section VII	**7**
TOTAL AVAILABLE POINTS ALL SECTIONS	**82**

EXHIBIT I

1. Municipal Support Documents

Mayor Letter of Support or Municipal Resolution of Support	
Settlement Agreement & Judgment of Repose (if project is part of a Fair Share Plan)	
Municipal AHTF Confirmation & Spending Plan (if project is receiving local AHTF funds)	

2. Developer/Owner Entity Documents

Articles of Incorporation	
Organizational By-Laws	
LLC Formation Documentation (if applicable)	
Partnership Agreement (if applicable)	
Board of Directors List	
Organization Chart (listing full names of all principals in organization/entity & roles)	
Certificate of Good Standing (dated with the last 90 days)	
Most Recent Audit or Most Recent Financial Statements (when entity has no audit)	
Non-Profit Only: IRS Determination Letter	

3. Development Team

Project Developer/Owner Entity Experience	
Development Consultant Resume & Experience (if applicable)	
Engineer Resume & Experience	
Attorney Resume & Experience	
Accountant Resume & Experience	
Architect Resume & Experience	
Architect License	
Builder/Contractor Resume & Experience	
Builder/Contractor State Residential Builder's License	
Property Manager Experience	
Energy Star Consultant Experience	
Service Provider Resume & Experience (if applicable- required for Supportive Housing)	

4. Site Control Documents

Must provide one of the following: • Deed; • Contract for Purchase- Executed; • Ground Lease- Executed; • Resolution/Developer Agreement for Purchase of Municipal Property	
As-Is Appraisal (if seeking reimbursement for acquisition)	

5. Project Design Documents and Environmental Review

Drawings/Plans (at least a basic set of project plans with unit layout)	
Project Design Requirement Developer Certification Form	
Phase I (Required) and Phase II (if indicated)	

6. Planning & Zoning

Planning Confirmation Letter	
Zoning Confirmation Letter	
Evidence of Planning Board Approval (if available)	
Evidence Zoning Board Approval (if available)	
Zoning Map (with project site marked)	
Community Map (site marked and identified surrounding community resources)	

7. Utilities

Utility Service Availability Letters (for all project utilities)	
Water Rate & Connection Fee Documentation	
Sewer Rate & Connection Fee Documentation	

8. Financing

Construction Loan Documentation (Term Sheet, Commitment Letter, Loan Docs, etc.)	
Permanent Loan Documentation (Term Sheet, Commitment Letter, Loan Docs, etc.)	
Other Funding Sources Documentation (Term Sheet, Commitment Letter, etc.)	
PILOT/Tax Abatement Agreement or Non-Profit Property Tax Exemption	
Property Tax Documentation	

9. Market Analysis, Marketing Plan, Property Management Plan

Market Analysis	
Property Management Plan	
Service Provider MOU (if applicable- required for Supportive Housing)	
Special Needs Service Plan (if applicable- required for Supportive Housing)	

EXHIBIT II

Underwriting Guidelines

Line Item	Expected Standard
Construction Contingency	Minimum 2%, Maximum 5%
Professional Services and Carrying & Financing Contingencies	Minimum 2%, Maximum 5% (combined)
Developer Fee	Maximum 8%
Profit, Overhead & General Requirements	Maximum 14% combined
Soft Costs	Maximum 28%
Annual Per Unit Operating Costs	Between 40% and 60% of effective income (rents minus vacancies)
Percentage Change in Net Income	Minimum 1%, Maximum 3%
Percentage Change in Annual Operating Expenses	Minimum1%, Maximum 3%
Debt Service Coverage Ratio	Minimum 1.20
Vacancy Rate	Maximum 7%
Annual Management Fee	No greater than $80 per unit per month
Annual Reserve Contribution per Unit	Minimum $450 per unit