



HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE  
CITY OF MILWAUKEE

**Tom Barrett**  
Mayor

**Antonio M. Perez**  
Secretary-Executive Director

**Board of Commissioners**

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
633 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1920  
Milwaukee, WI 53203

RE: Extension of Choice Neighborhoods Grant Deadlines Due To COVID-19

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for all that you are doing to protect our community from the impact of COVID-19.

As you and your Senate colleagues are working on the next COVID-19 relief bill, we would appreciate your consideration of including an extension of deadlines for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Choice Neighborhoods grants. Although Secretary Carson has the authority to grant extensions for some of HUD's programs, Congress must approve extensions to the deadlines for the Choice Neighborhoods grants.

Both HUD and Choice Neighborhoods grantees across the nation have requested that Congress include an extension in future COVID-19 bills. The House-passed HR 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Acts ("HEROES Act"), included language extending funding through September 30, 2021 for the Choice Neighborhoods grants that are due to expire this year. However, the current versions of the next relief bill being developed by the Senate include no extensions for the program.

An extension of deadlines is greatly needed for ALL Choice Neighborhoods grants. Such extensions would have no fiscal impact, but they would provide the time needed to adjust to the impacts of COVID-19 while still achieving the neighborhood transformation goals of the Choice Neighborhoods program. As negotiations continue on the next relief bill, we ask that you advocate for extensions of at least one-year for all Choice Neighborhoods grants.

The City of Milwaukee and the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) were awarded a \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation (CNI) grant on September 28, 2015 with grant obligations to be completed by September 30, 2022. The grant is the foundation of an extensive public-private partnership to transform Westlawn, Wisconsin's largest public housing development, and the surrounding neighborhood into an inclusive community of opportunity with quality housing, schools, businesses, services, and amenities where people want to live, learn, work, shop, and play. We have four components with very specific goals:

**Housing Management**  
809 N. Broadway, 3rd Floor  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
(414) 286-5824 Voice  
(414) 286-0833 Fax

**Community Services**  
650 W. Reservoir Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53212  
(414) 286-5100 Voice  
(414) 286-3169 Fax  
(414) 286-3504 TDD

**Housing Operations**  
5125 W. Lisbon Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53210  
(414) 286-2192 Voice  
(414) 286-8742 Fax

**Maintenance Operations**  
2411 N. 51st St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53210  
(414) 286-2931 Voice  
(414) 286-0208 Fax

**Modernization & Development**  
5125 W. Lisbon Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53210  
(414) 286-2951 Voice  
(414) 286-8742 Fax

**Rent Assistance**  
5011 W. Lisbon Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53210  
(414) 286-5650 Voice  
(414) 286-5094 Fax  
(414) 286-5645 TDD



809 N. Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 324, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0324

- Housing: Replace 394 public housing apartments and add 314 new affordable and market-rate rental and homeownership options;
- People: Improve health, employment, educational and self-sufficiency outcomes for Westlawn residents;
- Education (lead agency is Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)): Develop a neighborhood-based, high-quality educational pathway to take youth from cradle to college or career; and
- Neighborhood (lead agency is the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee): Using and building upon existing partnerships, the plan supports a well-connected, vibrant, mixed-income neighborhood with amenities and assets that attract individuals and families and includes support to businesses that want to expand or move into the Choice Neighborhood.

COVID-19 has created delays that are impacting our Choice Neighborhoods work in Milwaukee, just as it is impacting other Choice Neighborhoods projects across the nation.

Housing has been delayed because production facilities and supply chains have closed or slowed to protect their employees. Additionally, the impact of COVID-19 on staffing in City of Milwaukee departments has delayed the issuance of permits and certificates of occupancy.

Residents and applicants for housing have been hesitant to move because of possible exposure to the novel coronavirus. This is delaying the occupancy of new units, which is one of the metrics in the Choice Neighborhoods grant.

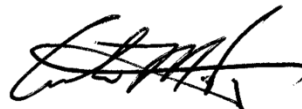
Increasing employment of residents is another metric in the CNI grant. We were showing significant gains in resident employment throughout 2019, but unemployment is increasing because of business closures, furloughs and the lack of available jobs.

Many of the resources provided through our partners, such as Milwaukee Public Schools and the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, are either not currently available or very limited because of social distancing and the focus on readjusting services to safely meet the needs of their students/constituents.

These are very challenging times for all of us, and we hope that you will be able to help us with a one-year extension of deadlines for ALL Choice Neighborhoods grants as we transition to new ways of responding to the needs of our residents and employees.

We are available to provide you with additional information as needed.

In service,



Antonio M. Pérez  
Secretary-Executive Director  
Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee