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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**Board of Public Utilities**  
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[www.nj.gov/bpu/](http://www.nj.gov/bpu/)

## **Notice of Availability of Grant**

### **New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Availability of Grant**

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("BPU" or "Board") hereby announces this Notice of Availability of a Grant (Notice) as authorized under L. 2009, C. 207.

**Name of program:** Temporary Relief for Utility Expenses (TRUE) Program

**Purpose:** To engage a Grantee to administer the TRUE Program which provides emergency assistance to eligible Limited Income Households seeking temporary assistance towards payment of electric and/or natural gas public utility bills. Limited Income Households eligible to receive temporary assistance are defined as:

- 1) A customer of a New Jersey regulated utility company;
- 2) New Jersey residents of low and moderate income;
- 3) Not enrolled in, or eligible for, either the BPU's Universal Service Fund (USF) program or the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP);
- 4) Demonstrating a documented notice of overdue payment for gas and/or electric service; and
- 5) Demonstrating a past history of regularly making payments toward the utility bill for which payment assistance is being sought.

The Grantee administering the TRUE Program shall be a nonprofit organization demonstrating clear evidence and experience of its ability to coordinate, process, distribute and track temporary assistance to eligible Limited Income Households and is designated by the Commissioners of the BPU.

The Grantee shall provide documentation of: 1) all federal and state government funding; 2) any funding approved by the Board; 3) a complete accounting of all actual or anticipated expenses and disbursements; and 4) a comprehensive plan to disburse any funds received pursuant to

this program. The Grantee shall also conform to reporting requirements mandated by the State Legislature in L. 2009, c. 207. The Board will consider funding any local, regional, or statewide grant program.

**Goal:** To provide temporary assistance to eligible Limited Income Households towards the payment of gas and/or electric bills in order to avoid disconnection of service and its related hardships.

The TRUE Program shall be administered in a manner ensuring the integrity of the program and consistency of eligibility criteria.

**Background:** On January 15, 2010, L. 2009, c. 207 was enacted, concerning the allocation of \$25 million from the Societal Benefits Charge towards the funding of utility assistance grants for qualified households. This law directs the Board to grant the \$25 million to a nonprofit organization for use in providing grants that would help pay the gas and electric public utility bills of households seeking temporary assistance.

Following a competitive Notice of Availability of Grant bidding process, on February 22, 2011, the Board designated the Affordable Housing Alliance (AHA) as the Grantee to administer the distribution of TRUE Program funding.

When the grant agreement between the BPU and the AHA expired on March 4, 2015, approximately \$6 million was still available for use. Therefore at its May 19, 2015 agenda meeting, the Board determined that it would issue a Notice of Grant Availability informing the public of its plans to award the approximate amount of \$6 million in TRUE funds to a nonprofit energy organization that would help pay the gas and electric bills of households seeking temporary assistance.

## **GRANT NOTICE PROPOSAL PROCESS**

### **Entities which may apply for funding under the program:**

Nonprofit organizations [(501(c)(3) organizations] with a service location, or a plan to be located, in New Jersey, that demonstrate experience in administering financial assistance programs.

A proposal submitted in response to this Notice may only be submitted by the eligible agency/entity itself.

### **Qualifications needed by an applicant to be considered for the program:**

Applicants to this Notice for funding must have staff and resource capability and experience with assistance programs.

### **Proposal instructions:**

Please direct email inquiries to [board.secretary@bpu.state.nj.us](mailto:board.secretary@bpu.state.nj.us). All inquiries and questions with regard to this Notice shall be submitted by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time June 26, 2015.

Proposals must be submitted with an original marked "Original" as well as five additional copies and may be hand-delivered, delivered via US Mail, or overnight mailed to:

NJ Board of Public Utilities  
44 South Clinton Avenue, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
PO Box 350  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350  
Attn: Maureen Clerc

Proposals must also be sent via email in either MSWord or pdf format to:  
[board.secretary@bpu.state.nj.us](mailto:board.secretary@bpu.state.nj.us).

**All proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, July 15, 2015.** Applicants shall receive a Notice of Award or letter declining such award after Board approval of the Temporary Relief for Utility Expenses (TRUE) grant, on or before August 28, 2015.

### **Proposal preparation:**

This section of the Notice is designed to guide applicants in organizing their proposals in a consistent fashion so as to facilitate evaluation. Applicants should demonstrate within the relevant sections how their proposed program meets or exceeds the goals and purposes identified above. Each proposal should include the following sections:

- a) Program description and proposed scope of work;
- b) Program eligibility requirements;
- c) A description of previous experience administering financial assistance programs;
- d) Methods of advertising the grant availability to the target audience;
- e) Explanation of applicants' ability to work with the gas and electric utilities;
- f) Grant distribution methodology;
- g) Process for ensuring eligibility requirements are met;
- h) Brief explanation of how the proposed work will be managed and evaluated for effectiveness along with appropriate metrics;
- i) A copy of the applicant's most recent annual report, operating budget, and audited financial statement;
- j) Program budget, including a breakdown of estimated administrative costs, a description of the sources and schedule of all funding, and a detailed explanation of how the grant will be used;
- k) For consortium/contractual costs, provide an estimate of the individuals/organizations with whom these consortium/contractual arrangements will be made;
- l) Program staff contacts with staff time specified by title of each person to work on the task and his/her cost, based on the number of hours that he/she will work on the task multiplied by the hourly rate. All calculations must be shown;
- m) Other costs (for example, consultant, specific supplies, and travel) must also be included; and
- n) A list of all federal and any state funds received in the last five years.

**Proposal timeline:**

In order to most effectively meet the needs of TRUE program participants, the Grantee shall make all reasonable effort to distribute TRUE funds in the most expeditious manner possible.

Respondents to this Notice shall submit a “time-line” and include projected dates for the distribution of financial assistance based upon the receipt of grant funds.

**Program team:**

Proposals should include an organizational chart listing all team members, including the program manager, subcontractors, and other sponsors involved in the program, showing their roles, responsibilities, and salaries. Proposals should also state the program team’s individual and combined expertise that will enable successful implementation of the program.

**Progress reporting and metrics for evaluation:**

Quarterly progress reports, accounting for all funds received and spent, will be required, including but not limited to the number and amount of financial assistance grants distributed to Limited Income Households by electric and/or gas utility and when the grants are distributed. Quarterly reports shall also include actual program administrative costs for that quarter. Within one year of receiving the grant award, the nonprofit organization shall issue a comprehensive report to the Board which provides the number of applicants applying for household utility assistance grants, the number of households receiving utility assistance grants, the average amount of assistance provided, the average gross income of households receiving assistance, the methods and procedures used for the verification of income or hardship, and any other information as required by the Board.

**Evaluation criteria:**

Proposals will be reviewed and scored by a Grant Application Review Committee consisting of BPU Staff according to the following criteria:

- General program approach and plans to meet the requirements of the Notice of Availability of Grants;
- Detailed approach and plans to expeditiously perform the services required by the scope of work of this Notice of Availability of Grants;
- Detailed program budget and cost effectiveness relative to grant award;
- Documented experience with administration of assistance programs and their demonstrated results;
- Qualifications & experience of key personnel; and
- Ability to work with electric and gas utilities to implement a program on a statewide basis.

The State of New Jersey and the Board of Public Utilities reserve the right to conduct interviews with applicants or request additional details and clarification, if necessary.

**Grant award:**

The Grant Review Committee will recommend funding commitment decisions, as described above, to the Board. The Board may reject or accept in part or in whole the recommendations for

funding award made by the evaluation committee. Grant funds will be awarded by the Board to the program(s) deemed to be most beneficial to the State according to the application materials submitted pursuant to this Notice of Availability of Grant. The Board reserves the right to make no award if in its sole discretion no acceptable proposal is received. Applicants shall receive a Notice of Award or letter declining such award after Board approval of the Temporary Relief for Utility Expenses (TRUE) grant, on or before August 28, 2015.

The Board's decision will be communicated to applicants by the Office of the Secretary. Applicants shall designate a program manager in the proposal who shall become the point of contact with the Office of the Secretary.

After Board approval of the award, a grant agreement will be developed between the Board and the Grantee. Applicants will be required to comply with Treasury Circular Letter (07-05-OMB) which provides some but not all of the terms and conditions that will be made part of the grant agreement. To download a copy of Circular Letter 07-05-OMB and the template agreement go to [www.nj.gov/infobank/circular/cir0705b.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/infobank/circular/cir0705b.pdf).

**Audit requirement:**

This grant is covered by the audit requirements of the Department of the Treasury Circular Letter 15-08-OMB, Single Audit Policy for Recipients of Federal Grants, State Grants and State Aid which can be downloaded at [www.nj.gov/infobank/circular/cir1508\\_omb.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/infobank/circular/cir1508_omb.pdf).