

APPENDIX A

Market Study Standards and Requirements

Section 42(m)(1)(A)(iii) of the IRS Code and Section IV(A)(2) of the 2012 Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) require market studies for all low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) allocations. In addition to the requirements of those provisions, applicants and analysts must follow the procedures and rules described in this Appendix.

I. Market Study Process

- A. **Bid:** Agency will accept bids from market analysts to perform third party market studies for the 2012 tax credit round between November 14 and December 5, 2011.
- B. **Market Study Fee:** A fee for the market study will be paid by applicant at the time of submission of the preliminary tax credit application.
- C. **Assigning Projects:** Upon receipt of the preliminary applications the Agency will contract with market analysts. The Agency will make its assignments by January 27, 2012. The number of projects assigned will be based upon the following: stated capacity, experience with studies in the LIHTC program, number of preliminary applications submitted, conflicts of interest and the Agency's evaluation of the analyst's capacity based on prior studies submitted.
- D. **PMA Designation:** Analysts must provide the Agency with a proposed Primary Market Area (PMA) for review as soon as possible but no later than February 10, 2012. Each site must include a map of the PMA **clearly depicting the census tracts** on the map that make up the PMA. The analyst must use a conservative, market supported PMA delineation and conduct local interviews to determine cultural nuances, geographic factors or other relevant factors. The analyst must describe the methodology and reasoning used to define the PMA. The Agency will respond to the analyst via e-mail within 48 hours of receipt.
- E. **Analyst Contact with Applicants:** Once the PMA designation is complete, market analysts may contact the applicant to ensure they have all the information necessary to complete the market analysis. Analysts **must not discuss PMA delineations** with the applicant until the study is complete.
- F. **Schedule:**
 - after PMA is designated- analyst may contact applicant regarding general information
 - March 5 - deadline for the Agency and applicant to receive a 3-hole punch hard copy of the market study
 - Synopsis letters are required for projects within the same PMA (DO NOT include project preference)
 - March 26 - deadline for analyst and Agency to receive any revisions from the applicant
 - April 2 - deadline for the Agency and applicant to receive a brief addendum or revised market study, if applicable
- G. **Process for Revisions to Proposals:** The initial market study must be based solely on information contained in the preliminary application. The revised market study may only vary based on revisions from the Agency or applicant. The following alterations will be permitted: rent structure, project size, targeting and bedroom mix. The following alterations will not be permitted: change in location and/or project type (i.e. switching from a family proposal to elderly).

II. Market Study Requirements

A completed market study must include the following information:

A. Executive Summary

1. A brief summary of the proposed project including the population to be served.

2. The average vacancy rates for all comparable properties in the PMA and the average vacancy rate for the LIHTC projects among those comparable properties. See Section H.
3. A table outlining the capture rates determined in Section G(5)(b).
4. Absorption rate for the proposed project to reach stabilized occupancy.
5. Conclusions about the strength/depth of the market for the project as proposed, including suggested changes.
6. Any recommendations for altering the proposal. The analyst should provide a table that reflects what would be the new capture rate and absorption rate for the recommendation(s). The analyst may not act as income driven consultants performing such actions as recommending increase rents or unit mix changes for increasing cash flow.
7. A brief discussion of the long term impact of the proposed project on existing or upcoming LIHTC projects in the PMA.

B. Project Description

1. Project location
2. Construction type (new construction/rehab/adaptive reuse)
3. Occupancy type (family, elderly)
4. Target income group (LIHTC and market rate, if applicable)
5. Special population target (if applicable)
6. Number of units by unit type
7. Unit size
8. Structure type (i.e. townhouse, garden apartment)
9. Proposed rents, utility allowances and tenant paid utilities.
10. Existing or proposed project based rental assistance
11. Proposed project amenities (i.e. community building, playground, laundry)
12. Proposed unit amenities (i.e. washer/dryer hookups, dishwasher, etc.)
13. If project is a rehab, include current rental rates, occupancy levels, and proposed scope of work including a dollar amount of investment, if included.

C. Site Evaluation

1. The market analyst **must** physically visit each site and the PMA.
2. Describe physical features of the site and adjacent parcels. Negative attributes of the site must be described in relation to their possible impact on overall project feasibility. This discussion must reflect any negative curb appeal, any problematic surrounding land uses in relation to marketability, lack of transportation, poor amenities, etc. Only include site related pictures, not the surrounding amenities (e.g. grocery stores, etc.), with a description of vantage points.
3. Include a map clearly identifying the location of the proposed project, identifying the closest shopping areas, schools (not applicable for elderly projects), employment centers, medical facilities and other amenities that would be important to the targeted population. Indicate proximity in miles to the proposed project.
4. Include a map identifying existing subsidized low-income rental housing (LIHTC, Rural Development, public housing, HUD 202, project-based Section 8) within the PMA. Also include projects “in the pipeline” that have received funding but are not yet complete. Indicate proximity in miles of these properties to the proposed project.

D. **Primary Market Area:** Include a map of the PMA, the description of method(s) used and other relevant information listed in Section I(D) above. Secondary market areas are not permitted for purposes of calculating demand.

E. **Market Area Employment Trends**

1. Employment by industry--numbers and percentages (i.e. manufacturing: 150,000 (20%)).
2. Major employers and anticipated expansions, contractions in their workforces, as well as newly planned employers and their impact on employment in the market area.
3. Employment and unemployment trends for the PMA since 2000 and, where possible, the county-total workforce figures and number and percentage on both. Provide annualized figures on these trends (i.e. average annual increase of employment of 1.2%).
4. A narrative analysis of data provided, including discussing the cause for the trend and the overall conclusions. Relate data to the impact on rental housing demand.
5. Analysts should use recent data sources (less than one year old) at the county level (or smaller) where available. Non-traditional data sources are acceptable if identified as such and linked to housing demand.

F. **Community Demographic Data:** Information on population and household trends from 2000 to 2011 projected to 2014. Projections must be prepared by a reputable source such as Claritas, ESRI, NC State Demographic Unit or the State Data Center. U.S. Census data prior to the 2000 Census is only acceptable as historical data. The market analyst should provide the reasoning for any disagreements with these projections, along with substitute projections. Both numbers and percentages must be shown for the data below, including annualized growth figures. Please include a narrative description of the data including significant changes and overall conclusions.

1. **Population Trends**

- a. Total Population
- b. Population by age group
- c. Number of elderly and non-elderly (elderly projects only)

2. **Household Trends**

- a. Total number of households, average household size and group quarters
- b. Household by tenure; that is, the number of owner and renter households; if appropriate, breakout by elderly and non-elderly
- c. Households by income and by tenure (elderly proposals should reflect the income distribution of elderly households only)
- d. Renter households by number of persons in the household

G. **Project-Specific Demand Analysis:** Market analysts must use the most recent rent and income limits effective at the time market studies (or preliminary applications) are assigned from the Agency's website:

<http://www.nchfa.com/Rental/Mincomelimits.aspx>

1. **Income Restrictions:** Market studies must evaluate the proposed project based on the occupancy restrictions indicated in the preliminary application. Analysts should be aware of specific income restrictions in the QAP, such as 25% of qualified units affordable to and occupied by those at 30% of area median income.

The study must include data for each income group targeted by the proposed project as described in the application. For example, if the proposed project targets households between 40% to 50% of the median income and households between 50% to 60% of the median income, demand projections using the methodology below must be provided **for each income group and bedroom size**. Additional data deemed by the analyst to provide further explanation should be referenced in an appendix.

2. **Affordability:** Analysts are required to assume no family households are able to pay more than 35% of gross income towards total housing expenses and that no elderly households are able to pay more than 40% of gross income towards total housing expenses. The demand analysis must clearly indicate the minimum

income and maximum income range for each targeted group.

For the maximum household income for one bedroom units the analyst must use the average of one and two person households. For three bedroom units the analyst must use the average of four and five person households. Note: For elderly projects, the analyst must use a maximum income based on two person households.

Applications proposing federal project-based rental assistance may only include one demand calculation. The demand analyses must be without the rental assistance. Analysts are required to use the lesser of maximum allowable tax credit rents or the proposed project rents based on income targeting designated in the application.

For proposed projects with market rate units, the analyst must make some reasonable determination of a maximum income level beyond which a household would not likely be a participant in the rental market. The analyst must clearly state the assumptions used in making this determination.

3. **Demand:** Demand must be derived from the following sources below using data from a reputable source such as Claritas, ESRI, NC State Demographic Unit or the State Data Center.
 - a. **Demand from New Renter Households:** Determine **new** units in the PMA based on the projected renter household growth. This must be determined by using the current base year of 2011 projected to 2014.

The population projected must be limited to the age and income cohort. The demand for each income group targeted (e.g. 50% of median income) must be shown separately.

- Proposed projects targeting elderly households age 55+ must pull data for age 55 and older. Proposed projects targeting elderly households age 62+ or utilizing the RD/HUD elderly designation must pull data for age 65 and older. (The latter corresponds to Census data breaks; interpolation to age 62 is not acceptable).
- In instances where a significant number (more than 20%) of proposed units are comprised of three- and four-bedroom units, the analyst must refine the analysis by factoring in the number of large households (generally 4+ persons).

- b. **Demand from Existing Households:** This source of demand must be derived from the 2000 census.
 - **Rent over-burdened households**, if any, within the age group, income cohorts and tenure (renters) targeted for the proposed project. In order to achieve consistency in methodology, analysts must assume the rent-overburdened analysis includes households paying greater than 35% or, in the case of elderly, 40% of their incomes toward gross rent.
 - **Households living in substandard housing** (units that lack complete plumbing or are overcrowded) must be adjusted for applicable age, income bands and tenure. The analyst must use a conservative, market supported estimate of demand from both households that are rent-overburdened or living in substandard housing.
 - **Income eligible elderly homeowners likely to convert to renting** must not add more than 20% of total demand. For migration purposes in urban markets analysts may add up to 2% of income eligible senior homeowners in demand calculations and up to 5% for rural markets. Data from the Annual Housing Survey and interviews with property managers of active projects regarding renters who have come from homeownership must be used to refine the analysis. Include a narrative of the steps taken in arriving at this demand figure.
 - Analysts may not use household turnover rates other than for elderly projects.

4. Method

- a. **Demand:** The two overall demand components added together 3(a) and 3(b) above represent demand for the project.
- b. **Supply:** Comparable units (vacant or occupied) funded, under construction or placed in service in 2011 must be subtracted to calculate net demand. Vacancies in projects placed in service prior to 2011 which have not reached stabilized occupancy (i.e. at least 90% occupied) must also be considered as part of the supply. Do not subtract units in existing, stabilized LIHTC properties.

- c. **Capture rate:** calculated by dividing the number of units in the proposed project by net demand. Capture rate analysis must be completed for each targeted income group and bedroom size proposed. The analyst must include a narrative on what the capture rate means for the project proposal (e.g. given the market area, is this the average capture rate or is it one that should cause concern?).

5. Example of Method:

a. **Demand and Net Demand**

	HH at 50% Median Income (min. income to max. income)	HH at 60% of Median Income (min. income to max. income)
Demand from New Households (age and income appropriate)		
+		
Demand from Existing Households Rent-Overburdened		
+		
Demand from Existing Households Renters in Substandard Housing		
+		
Demand from Existing Households Elderly Homeowner Turnover (if applicable)		
=		
Total Demand		
-		
Supply (As indicated in Section II(G)(4)(b))		
=		
Net Demand		

b. **Net Demand and Capture Rates**

Bedrooms	Total Demand	Supply	Net Demand	Units Proposed	Capture Rate
1 Bedroom at % AMI					
2 Bedroom at % AMI					
3 Bedroom at % AMI					
4 Bedroom at % AMI					
Market Rate					
Overall					

- 6. **Absorption rate** is the estimated time needed to reach 90% occupancy. The absorption rate determination should take into consideration the overall estimate of new household growth, the available supply of competitive units, observed trends in absorption of comparable units, and the availability of subsidies and rent specials. The absorption period starts as soon as the first units are released for occupancy. If a comparable project’s absorption rate is unusually rapid, the analyst must research and state the reason.

H. Supply Analysis (Comparable Rental Projects)**

- 1. The analyst must determine which properties in the PMA are most comparable to the proposed project (Comps). Elderly projects cannot be included as Comps for family (open occupancy) projects. When including family projects as Comps, only use “like” units that are directly comparable to the subject. This applies to the calculation of the capture rate (exclude any units in the family project that aren’t directly comparable to the proposed subject project, i.e. second+ floor units in a walk-up building, 3-bedroom or larger units, different AMHI units, etc.). Representative sample/survey of the PMA rental

stock should be included in an appendix. Provide the overall average vacancy rates for all Comps in the PMA. In the case of proposed rural projects where a sufficient number of Comps do not exist, include data on at least three (3) projects in adjacent markets with similar characteristics.

- b. Separate out the LIHTC properties among the Comps in the PMA and provide the overall vacancy rates for such properties. Do not provide average vacancies for assisted properties (RHS, Section 8) if the proposed is not receiving rental assistance.
- c. Other information about vacancies should be separated from the data above.
- d. Analysts should provide an explanation of vacancy rates that he or she feels are not indicative of the market. For example a Comp may have occupancy problems due to poor management.

The analyst must contact all Comps and indicate the date, the person they made contact with, and how contact was made with each. Indicate all Comps on a map of the PMA.

2. Specifically describe the proposed project's long term impact on existing or awarded LIHTC properties. For example, the analyst may conclude that lower rents and/or better amenities will likely lead some tenants to relocate to the proposed project. In this example, the analyst should also indicate what the vacancy rate might increase to at the existing project(s) due to the proposed project. Vague comments such as "may have a limited effect" do not meet this requirement.

** Comparable being defined as properties that are similar to the proposed in terms of rents, amenities, unit size and unit mix in the PMA. This can include both market rate and LIHTC properties.

3. The following information must be included for each Comp:
 - a. Name, address and phone number of the comparable property
 - b. Photograph
 - c. Breakdown of unit sizes by bedroom count
 - d. Square footage for each comparable unit type
 - e. Monthly rents and what utilities are included in the rent
 - f. Year built
 - g. Description of amenities
 - h. Concessions given, if any
 - i. Current vacancy rates by bedroom size
 - j. Type of affordable housing program, if applicable (i.e. LIHTC, Rural Development, etc.)
 - k. Number of units receiving project based rental assistance
 - l. In rural areas lacking sufficient three or four bedroom rental comparables, provide data on three and four bedroom single-family rentals, or provide information on rental trailer homes and single family homes in an attempt to identify where potential tenants are currently living.

The above information must be provided in a comparative framework with the proposed project. For example, in addition to providing a page of information along with a picture for each comparable, the analyst must also provide comparative charts or tables that show such factors as the proposed project's rents, square footages, amenities, etc. as compared to the other projects.

4. If the proposed project represents an additional phase of an existing project, include a tenant profile as well as additional information related to households on a waiting list of the existing phase.
5. The analyst must also provide a description of any multi-family projects in the PMA currently under construction, or scheduled to begin construction within the year. The following information must be included:
 - a. address/location,
 - b. name of owner,
 - c. number of units,
 - d. unit configuration,
 - e. rent structure,
 - f. estimated date of market entry, and
 - g. any other relevant market analysis information.

I. Interviews

Analysts must interview property managers, town planning officials and others with information relating to the demand for the proposed project. The results of these interviews should appear in an appendix at the end of the market study.

J. Recommendations

Analysts must provide any suggested alterations to optimize the proposed project's fit to the market. If recommended alterations affect demand, include a table reflecting the new capture rate and absorption rate, preferably in tabular format. (Refer to Section I (G) for restricted alterations/recommendations)

K. Analyst Qualifications

The market analyst must have an undergraduate degree in Economics, Business, City and Regional Planning, or other relevant course of study. Additionally, the analyst must have at least two (2) years experience as the primary author of market studies for LIHTC projects.

L. Signed Statement Requirements

The signed statement must include the following language:

I affirm the following:

- I have made a physical inspection of the site and market area and that information has been used in the study.
- I have followed Agency's market study requirements.
- The information included is accurate and that the report can be relied upon by the Agency to present a true assessment of the market.
- I understand that any misrepresentation of this statement may result in the denial of further participation in the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency's rental housing programs.
- I have no interest in the project or relationship with the applicant, developer, ownership entity or application preparer.