

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updated October 22, 2018

Q1. What is The Sustainable Communities Innovation Challenge (The Challenge)?

Fannie Mae launched The Challenge to generate innovative ideas that will help us address the affordable housing crisis in America and further support our broad mission to create housing opportunities that are safe, sustainable, and affordable, while managing risk to protect lenders, homeowners, and taxpayers.

Specifically, The Challenge is a \$10 million commitment by Fannie Mae to generate affordable housing solutions that will help Fannie Mae advance sustainable communities—those providing residents opportunities for employment, health and wellness, and education. For more information, please visit www.fanniemae.com/thechallenge.

Q2. How does Fannie Mae define sustainable communities?

Sustainable communities are safe, stable, thriving, vibrant communities that are resilient to shocks and stresses, and that offer residents integrated access to quality affordable housing and quality economic, health, and educational opportunities. Fannie Mae also uses the terms “high-opportunity communities” or “high-opportunity markets” to describe sustainable communities.

Q3. When is The Challenge?

The submission window for The Challenge: Healthy Affordable Housing opens on September 26 and we are seeking proposals through November 1, 2018.

[Three contract awardees](#) for the first phase of The Challenge, which focused on housing and employment, were selected and announced on June 20, 2018. Timing for Phase Three will be announced in 2019.

Visit www.fanniemae.com/thechallenge for more information.

Q4. Who was selected for a contract award for Phase One?

Fannie Mae selected three contract awardees for Phase One, focused on the intersection of affordable housing and economic and job opportunity: [Florida Housing Coalition](#), [Nationwide Children's Hospital](#), and [West Denver Renaissance Collaborative](#).

Visit www.fanniemae.com/thechallenge to learn more about the awardees, including videos highlighting their projects.

Q5. Does Fannie Mae have any geographic preferences for ideas selected through The Challenge?

NEW

No. Fannie Mae does not have any geographic preferences for the proposed work, beyond the requirement that projects take place within the United States or its territories. Applicants are welcome to submit national, regional, state-level, city-level, and neighborhood-level projects. Applicants are also welcome to submit projects that will take place in the same geographic areas as projects that were awarded funding in Phase One of The Challenge.

Q6. Is Fannie Mae making grants or debt or equity investments through The Challenge?

No. Fannie Mae is not making grants or debt or equity investments through The Challenge. All Challenge awards will be deliverable-based contracts.

Q7. Why has Fannie Mae launched The Challenge?

Approximately one-third of U.S. households are considered to be cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing. Challenges including rising rents and stagnant wages, price people out of certain markets and can force them to live farther away from their jobs.

Fannie Mae launched The Challenge to seek new ideas to help us increase access to affordable housing by focusing on the advancement of sustainable communities – those that provide residents with access to quality healthcare, education, and job opportunities.

Q8. Who can submit proposals for The Challenge?

Please refer to the Eligibility Section above.



Q9. What kinds of deliverables will Fannie Mae accept under The Challenge contract awards? NEW

For each phase of The Challenge, Fannie Mae will award selected applicants with **deliverable-based contracts**. This means that Fannie Mae will make payments to contract awardees on the basis of receipt of specific deliverables. Projects at the Research and Design stage may, for example, produce deliverables in the form of applied research; planning or feasibility studies; or the design of prototypes, processes, model policies, or pilots. Projects at the Idea Development stage may, for example, produce deliverables in the form of slightly later-stage technology prototypes; model policies, processes, or practices; or pilot programs that are ready for testing, initial implementation, and/or refinement.

Q10. What is Fannie Mae's policy on indirect costs? NEW

Contract award funding may not be used to subsidize ongoing operational costs, which include any costs incurred to run the day to day operations of a business, such as rent/leases, utilities, phone, internet, salaries, benefits, maintenance, or travel. However, the percentage of resources and time, including associated salaries and indirect costs, dedicated to the research and design of Challenge deliverables would qualify as an approved use of funds.

Q11. How will projects be selected?

For each phase, The Challenge review committee will first screen all proposals for eligibility and then review eligible proposals for competitiveness against pre-established selection criteria. For ideas that advance, the review committee, with input from the Expert Advisory Panel, will conduct video interviews with applicants. Applicants that advance past the Virtual Interviews stage will be asked to submit a complete proposal for The Challenge. Finally, selected applicants will be invited to an in-person Pitch Day on March 26 – 27, 2019 in Washington, DC. Fannie Mae will make the final decision to select contract awardees based on Pitch Day.

For more information about the selection criteria, please see Selection Process & Criteria above.

Q12. Who is on the Expert Advisory Panel that will review ideas?

The Challenge: Healthy Affordable Housing panel is comprised of experts in affordable housing, health, and innovation, and represents the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Their role is to

provide impartial reviews of submitted ideas and proposals and guidance to The Challenge review committee. All final contract award decisions will be made by Fannie Mae.

Biographies of the panelists are available on The Challenge website at www.fanniemae.com/thechallenge.

Complete details including eligibility requirements, projects, and eligible use of funds, are available in the Call for Ideas at sustainablecommunities.skild.com.

Q13. Where can I get more information and submit an idea?

For more information about The Challenge and Phase Two, and to find out about upcoming informational webinars, please visit: www.fanniemae.com/thechallenge.

If you're ready to register and submit your idea for The Challenge, please visit: www.fanniemae.com/thechallenge.

Q14. Who is Fannie Mae?

Fannie Mae helps make the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage and affordable rental housing possible for millions of Americans. We partner with lenders to create housing opportunities for families across the country. We are driving positive changes in housing finance to make the home buying process easier, while reducing costs and risk.

To learn more, visit fanniemae.com and follow us on twitter.com/fanniemae.