



Environmental Review Information Sheet: Environmental Assessment [24 CFR 58.36]

Explanation

Activities that are not exempt or categorically excluded require the preparation of an *Environmental Assessment*. These activities differ from exempt and categorically excluded actions in scope and scale, and have the potential to significantly affect the environment. To evaluate possible environmental impacts, an environmental assessment includes two analytical checklists: the Statutory Checklist and the Environmental Assessment Checklist. The Statutory Checklist contains all of the Federal environmental laws and authorities listed at 24 CFR 58.5, and guides grantees through the compliance process. The Environmental Assessment Checklist organizes environmental issues into specific impact areas, and directs the preparer to consider possible effects in a cumulative, holistic way. Together, these checklists focus environmental assessment efforts and ensure that all regulatory requirements are met. Completion of these two checklists constitutes the core of the environmental review process for an environmental assessment, and all decisions must be clearly annotated with supporting documentation and an explanatory narrative.

Activities

The regulation at **24 CFR 58.36** provides a description of Environmental Assessment activities:

If a project is not exempt or categorically excluded under §§ 58.34 and 58.35, the responsible entity must prepare an environmental assessment in accordance with subpart E of 24 CFR Part 58.

Examples of activities that require an Environmental Assessment include (but are not limited to):

- New construction of five or more residential units on a single site;
- New construction of five or more single-family units on scattered sites that are less than 2,000 feet apart;
- New construction of a commercial or industrial building;
- Major rehabilitation or reconstruction of residential units that increases or decreases the unit density more than 20 percent;
- Expanding the footprint of a single-family unit into a floodplain or wetland area;
- Conversion of a non-residential structure to create a residential use;
- Acquisition of land for development of a housing subdivision; and
- Construction of new public infrastructure, including roads, waterlines, storm sewer, or sanitary sewer.

Publication Requirements

Grantees must publish a Combined Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds (NOI/RROF) for Environmental Assessment activities. This notice informs the public that a proposed activity will have no significant impact on the environment, and invites individuals to examine the completed environmental review record

(ERR) during a 15-day public comment period. The ERR must be readily available for public inspection within the jurisdiction of the grantee on the first day of the comment period.

The notice must also specify an additional 15-calendar day period during which persons may object to the release of funds. There must be a minimum of 3 calendar days between the last date of the local comment period and the first date of the objection period. During this time, the grantee mails a copy of a **Request for Release of Funds and Certification** (RROF) to the Ohio Department of Development Office of Housing and Community Partnerships (OHCP). Prior to submitting a RROF, the Responsible Entity must consider all comments received during the published local comment period and, if necessary, make final revisions to the environmental review record.

Release of Funds Procedures

To obtain a Release of Funds for an Environmental Assessment activity, grantees must submit a **Request for Release of Funds and Certification** form – including a copy of the published Combined FONSI and NOI/RROF - to OHCP. For a 15-calendar day period following the receipt of the RROF, OHCP is required to receive and consider any objections to the release of funds. Any objections will be resolved in coordination with the responsible entity. Upon resolution of objections (or, if OHCP did not receive any objections, following the 15-day comment period), OHCP will issue a **Release of Funds** (ROF) to the Responsible Entity. Upon receipt of the ROF, the Responsible Entity may commit funds to the project and proceed with project work. Please note that no portion of an aggregated project may begin, and no funds (federal or non-federal) may be committed until the Responsible Entity receives a Release of Funds from OHCP.

Flowchart

