



# Choice Neighborhoods e-Newsletter

Issue 21 • December 2013



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **FY13 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grantees Announced**

On November 22, 2013, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan announced the communities that will receive Choice Neighborhoods Planning grants. The total grant allocation of \$4.37 million awarded will help these communities develop comprehensive neighborhood-driven transformation plans that revitalize and transform public or HUD-assisted housing developments and their surrounding neighborhoods. Congratulations to the nine new grantees that were selected from 52 applications! The grantees are from the cities of:

- Baton Rouge, LA
- Denver, CO
- Los Angeles, CA
- Meriden, CT
- New Bern, NC
- Philadelphia, PA
- Sacramento, CA
- Wellston, MO
- Winston-Salem, NC

Click [here](#) to read the press release. Click [here](#) to learn more about the nine local planning efforts.

### **Planning Grant Awards for Youth Homelessness Interventions**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently announced the recipients of their FY 2013 Children's Bureau Discretionary grant awards, including planning grants to Develop a Model Intervention for Youth/Young Adults with Child Welfare Involvement At-Risk of Homelessness. The grants offer a unique opportunity to the various agencies and organizations within the child welfare system to collaborate and coordinate on an agenda that can make a greater collective impact on at-risk youth and young adults. Congratulations to the five Choice Neighborhoods cities that were awarded HHS FY 2013 Children's Bureau Discretionary

grant funding: Baltimore, MD; Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Philadelphia, PA; San Antonio, TX; and Seattle, WA. Click [here](#) to read the full list of award winners. Click [here](#) to read the original funding announcement and learn more about this grant program.

### **Location Affordability Portal**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) have partnered to develop the Location Affordability Portal. The site provides the public with reliable, user-friendly data and resources on combined housing and transportation costs to help consumers, policymakers, and developers make more informed decisions about where to live, work, and invest. DOT and HUD are offering two webinars to provide an overview of housing and transportation costs and to demonstrate how the Location Affordability Index and My Transportation Cost Calculator can be used to support location-based decision making. For more information contact [locationaffordability@hud.gov](mailto:locationaffordability@hud.gov)

#### **December 17, 2013 1:00 -2:00pm EST**

Registration Link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7639930512296326146>

#### **December 20, 2013 2:00 -3:00pm EST**

Registration Link:

[www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/resources/webconference/web\\_conf\\_learner\\_reg.aspx?webconfid=27028](http://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/resources/webconference/web_conf_learner_reg.aspx?webconfid=27028)

### **President's Remarks on Promise Zones**

On December 4, 2013, the President spoke on economic mobility. Below is an excerpt. Read the full remarks [here](#).

“Number four, as I alluded to earlier, we still need targeted programs for the communities and workers that have been hit hardest by economic change and the Great Recession. These communities are no longer limited to the inner city. They’re found in neighborhoods hammered by the housing crisis, manufacturing towns hit hard by years of plants packing up, landlocked rural areas where young folks oftentimes feel like they've got to leave just to find a job. There are communities that just aren’t generating enough jobs anymore.

So we’ve put forward new plans to help these communities and their residents, because we’ve watched cities like Pittsburgh or my hometown of Chicago revamp themselves. And if we give more cities the tools to do it -- not handouts, but a hand up -- cities like Detroit can do it, too. So in a few weeks, we’ll announce the first of these Promise Zones, urban and rural communities where we’re going to support local efforts focused on a national goal -- and that is a child’s course in life should not be determined by the zip code he’s born in, but by the strength of his work ethic and the scope of his dreams.”

### **Woonsocket, RI Choice Neighborhoods Team Visits Boston**

The Woonsocket, RI Choice Neighborhoods planning team recently traveled to Boston to tour two completed HOPE VI/mixed-finance redevelopment projects and a Choice Neighborhoods site that is in the process of being redeveloped. The Woonsocket planning team consisted of 9 residents and 15 stakeholders from the project’s Steering Committee. The trip, organized by project leads NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley (NWBRV) and the Woonsocket Housing Authority (WHA), aimed to provide the Woonsocket planning team with a shared reference point to be able to compare and contrast various approaches to neighborhood transformation and to build social capital. At each of the three sites, the planning team met with lead partners,

residents, and project developers. At Harbor Point, the team toured the site including model units, recreational facilities, and the leasing office. In addition, tenants and management talked about the ways they share in decision making. At Orchard Gardens, the team toured the site and visited typical units. Tenants talked about the transformation of the site from pre-redevelopment to the present. The team also met with the tenant services coordinator who described tenants' needs, services, and management; the coordinator also described the role and responsibilities of the development staff. At the Quincy Corridor Transformation site, the planning team was particularly interested in the incorporation of the Bornstein & Pearl Food Production Center, formerly the Pearl Meats factory, into the neighborhood economic development strategy; the history of building local partnerships was also of interest while visiting the site.

All of the participants on the site visit were received warmly by their hosts and welcomed into a community of colleagues working together to transform neighborhoods. The Woonsocket planning team also gained insights into the many ways strategic transformation alliances were established and are maintained. A special thank you to both the representatives from the Choice Neighborhoods Boston, MA Implementation grant team for being accommodating hosts, and to the Woonsocket planning team for sharing their story and lessons learned.



## **RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

### **Public Housing Authority Guidebook to Ending Homelessness**

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness has developed a guidebook to provide direction and best practices that public housing authorities (PHAs) can use to strengthen their collaborative efforts. The guidebook, for example, suggests partnering with a [Continuum of Care](#), the local entity responsible for soliciting HUD's Homelessness Assistance Grants and with a [Funders Collaborative](#) to align resources and develop supportive and affordable housing. Click [here](#) to view the guidebook. Click [here](#) to view the recent HUD webinar on Continuums of Care and opportunities for partnerships.

### **Location Affordability Cost Calculator**

HUD and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) have launched a cost calculation tool that will allow users to estimate housing and transportation costs for neighborhoods across the country. The Location Affordability Portal (LAP) was launched on November 12<sup>th</sup> to help consumers and communities better understand the combined costs of housing and transportation for a given street, neighborhood, or region; it also aims to assist consumers in making more informed decisions about where to live, work, and invest. Click [here](#) to read the press release. Click [here](#) to access the portal.

### **Policylink Webinar on Expanding Healthy Food Access**

On October 24<sup>th</sup>, in honor of [National Food Day](#), Policylink's Healthy Food Access Portal held a webinar offering strategies for improving access to healthy foods. The speakers discussed ways to leverage community members to advance policy reform at the local, state, and federal levels. In addition, the webinar addressed a range of topics including the importance of healthy food access; the role that food policy councils, community leaders, and local government can play in creating access to healthy food; and how to increase community support for improving consistent access to healthy food. Click [here](#) to view the archived webinar.

**Please give us your feedback!**

**We work diligently to make this e-newsletter relevant to your work. Please submit Grantee feature articles, constructive feedback, story ideas, and funding announcements to: [choicetaenewsletter@bctpartners.com](mailto:choicetaenewsletter@bctpartners.com).**



## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Rural Health Network Development Planning Program**

The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has begun soliciting applications for their Rural Health Network Development Planning (RHNDP) grants program. RHNDP seeks to promote the planning and development of healthcare networks in order to achieve efficiencies; expand access to, coordinate, and improve the quality of essential health care services; and strengthen the rural health care system as a whole. The applicant organization must be a rural, nonprofit, or public entity that represents a consortium/network of three or more health related entities that need assistance to plan, organize, and develop a health care network. Grants support one year of planning with a primary goal of helping networks create a foundation for their infrastructure to address important local or regional community health needs. Planning activities may include, but are not limited to: identifying ways to foster cross-organizational collaboration and leadership commitment; assessing network sustainability and viability; and identifying opportunities for the network to better address regional and/or local population health needs. Applications must be received by January 14, 2014. Click [here](#) for more information.

### **Funding for Programs Promoting Education and Equity for Women and Girls**

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Community Action Grants program provides funds to individuals, AAUW organizations, and local community-based nonprofit organizations for innovative programs or non-degree research projects that promote education and equity for women and girls. Special consideration will be given to projects benefitting K-12

and community college girls' and women's achievement in science, technology, engineering, or math. One year grants ranging from \$2,000-\$7,000 can be used for community-based projects that include a clearly defined activity that promotes education and equality for women and girls. Two year grants of \$5,000 to \$10,000 can be used as start-up funding for new projects that address the particular needs of the community and develop girls' sense of efficacy through leadership or advocacy opportunities. Applications must be received by January 15, 2014. Click [here](#) for more information.

### **Lowe's Charitable and Education Foundation 2014 Toolbox for Education Grant Program**

The Lowe's Charitable and Education Foundation has launched their 2014 Toolbox for Education grant cycle. The Toolbox for Education grant program supports programs that encourage parental involvement in local schools and that cultivate a stronger community spirit. Grants of up to \$5,000 will be awarded to support projects that have a permanent impact on a school community. Only projects that can be completed within a year of receipt of the grant will be considered for funding. Applicants must be a public K-12 school or nonprofit parent group associated with a school. Applications must be received by February 14, 2014. Click [here](#) for more information.

### **Environmental Justice Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreements**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is now accepting applications from eligible nonprofit and Native American organizations for funding to understand and address exposure to local environmental harms and risks. An estimated \$1,200,000 is available for individual awards of up to \$120,000 for a two year project period. Applications must be received by February 18, 2014. Click [here](#) to learn more about the EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Program model. Click [here](#) to read the funding announcement.



## **NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION**

### **INITIATIVE CORNER**

#### **Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative is Finalist for Innovations in American Government Award**

Last week, The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, announced the finalists for the [Innovations in American Government Award](#). From a pool of more than 600 applicants, the [White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative](#) is one of five finalists being recognized for the positive impact it is having on neighborhoods – and people – across the nation.

Read the full blog by Jane Hodgdon from the Department of Education [here](#).

**Do you have a Technical Assistance (TA) Question, Request, or Suggestion?**

**Grantees with TA questions or requests, or a suggestion for an upcoming TA activity, are invited to submit them to BCT and HUD at [hud.gov/choiceta](http://hud.gov/choiceta).**



## **RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS**

### **New Market Tax Credit Program Evaluation**

The Urban Institute has published the first formal evaluation of the New Market Tax Credit Program (NMTC). NMTC encourages private investment in low-income communities by allowing institutions or individuals to receive federal income tax credits for making equity investments in specialized financial institutions known as Community Development Entities (CDEs). The Urban Institute's evaluation focuses on the program design, execution, outputs, and outcomes for both accountability and program improvement purposes. Researchers identified and documented actual project outputs and outcomes from a sample of NMTC projects that used tax credits between 2002 and 2006, and that were initiated as of December 2007. Early-year projects were selected to allow sufficient time for them to be completed and for outputs and outcomes to be measured. Click [here](#) to access the report.



## **GRANTEE FEATURE**

### **New Mix: Rockford Housing Authority**

Art builds communities; art saves lives. Realizing that quite often neighborhoods are defined by their negative aspects, and that a neighborhood's greatest asset, people, is frequently overlooked, New Mix Rockford (New Mix) was formed. New Mix began in spring 2013 as a forum for Ellis Heights residents who understand the importance of an asset-based approach to community revitalization to discuss their ideas. In May 2013, New Mix held its' first community event, a Community Treasure Hunt, through which it uncovered artists and entrepreneur-minded people living within the neighborhood. The treasure hunt centered on a door-to-door survey seeking residents with talent; the survey resulted in discovering residents who were photographers, jewelry makers, painters, singers, dancers, rappers, and musicians.

During this time, the Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) was also working with the City to finalize a partnership with [Etsy](#), an online marketplace for artisanal vendors. The partnership was designed to teach public housing residents to turn their craft interests into a business. Participants would then be able to sell their handmade goods on the Etsy website. Etsy recently completed their [first business class](#); there were nine graduates—seven who are Rockford Housing Authority residents. The graduates are now Etsy business owners.

In addition to the Etsy business class, artists have also participated in the Creating the Creative business class that focuses on developing the skills necessary to become a successful entrepreneur. More than 60 residents have taken the course this year. Similarly, in an effort to leverage existing assets, New Mix participants have also sold their wares at the ever-popular Friday night Rockford City Market. This seasonal market is attended weekly by thousands of community residents and includes local food, arts, and crafts. New Mix also had a presence at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Cider and Cinnamon Arts and Craft Festival held in early October 2013, which was a two-day event featuring over 50 local artists showing and selling their unique hand made goods.

New Mix continues to teach, mentor, and support Rockford Housing Authority and Ellis Heights residents as they work to build a creative and entrepreneurial community. Residents are currently preparing for a neighborhood art expo which will feature craftsmen, artisans, as well as performance artists. In order to help residents prepare for the event, “Creative Champions” will mentor and pair New Mix artists with other local artists and entrepreneurs. For example, New Mix is working with Maleek Yousef, a five time Grammy winner who has worked with artists such as Kanye West, Justin Bieber, and Beyonce, to mentor local performance artists. This winter, New Mix will be holding open mic events to give residents exposure and to build on the momentum in the neighborhood.

RHA’s New Mix has received national attention regarding the Etsy initiative, including a mention at the Clinton Global Initiative held in June 2013. Click [here](#) to read more about RHA’s partnership with Etsy. Click [here](#) to view an interview of an RHA Etsy entrepreneur.