



# Choice Neighborhoods e-Newsletter

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Chicago Implementation Grantee Convening Recap

On May 22-23, 2013, representatives from the eight Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grantees met at the University of Chicago in Chicago, IL for the first Choice Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Convening. The convening focused on strategies to connect Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan target areas to their broader surrounding community. During the two-day gathering, participants heard from leading professionals in the field of neighborhood revitalization, engaged in facilitated and non-facilitated peer exchanges, and participated in a site visit of the Chicago Implementation Grant target area. Discussion during the convening included determining viable options for effective use of Critical Community Improvement (CCI) funds, implementing strategies for regional economic development, and best practices for engaging the surrounding neighborhood. Some takeaways from the convening include:

- **Focus on outcomes:** Target efforts to achieve measurable outcomes rather than crafting the perfect vision or mission statement.
- **Build neighborhood confidence:** Make sure that visible, tangible, revitalization activities are among the early goals – regardless of scale or size.
- **Think creatively about how to use Critical Community Improvement funds:** Maintain a dialogue with your team coordinator about potential options for these funds, and be open to constructive feedback. CCI funds should be used for non-infrastructure projects that will benefit the neighborhood surrounding the target area. This portion of Choice funding is ideal for leveraging city involvement and contributions, or soliciting participation from local universities, hospitals, or other anchor institutions.
- **Facilitate social connections beyond a neighborhood association:** Activities such as a ‘Most Improved Porch’ contest or getting residents to all use the same contractor to obtain a discounted rate for home improvements help build a sense of community and neighborhood confidence.
- **Economic development efforts should be on a regional scale:** Neighborhoods are nested in regional economies. Identify high growth areas and leverage assets.

During the closing session of the convening, [Ozie Davis, Executive Director of the Avondale Comprehensive Development Corporation in Cincinnati, OH](#), aptly summarized one of the main objectives of the convening: community-building. Mr. Davis stated: *“Before getting on the plane*

*[to come] here – I couldn't name the other seven cities [that have Choice Neighborhood Implementation grants]. Now I feel even more responsibility to Choice Neighborhoods. We are the 'Chosen Eight'- the 'Great Eight'. From now on I am not going to see a city – I am going to see a name. It's such a great feeling – a greater accountability and responsibility to be successful. I really feel like it was a family reunion. It's not family without scrapes and bruises....but it still feels like family."*

Materials from the convening, including the PowerPoint presentations used for each panel, will be uploaded to the [Choice Technical Assistance website](#) in the next few weeks.

### **Planning Grantee Convening**

HUD will host a full-day convening for Choice Neighborhoods Planning grantees in Washington, D.C., on *Wednesday, June 26, 2013*, the day before the United Neighborhood Centers of America (UNCA) Neighborhood Revitalization Conference. Space at the convening is limited to three people from each grant team; additional individuals will be placed on a waitlist and will be permitted to attend if space allows. Both planning and implementation grantees are invited to attend. Attendees will receive the agenda and speaker bios in the week before the convening.

### **Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference**

The Center for Community Progress has announced the agenda and program for their upcoming Reclaiming Vacant Properties conference. The conference will take place on September 9-11, 2013 in Philadelphia, PA and feature 33 concurrent sessions, seven mobile sessions, and seven in-depth training seminars designed to teach participants how to capitalize on the opportunities that lie in vacant properties. Some of the topics that will be discussed include land banking, community gardens, code enforcement, and tax foreclosure reform. Participants will also be able to attend site visits of successful revitalization efforts in Philadelphia and the surrounding area. Scholarships are available, but applications must be received by July 2<sup>nd</sup>. [Click here](#) for more information.



## **RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

### **Resources for Programming Focused on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care**

On May 6, 2013, The Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative (JCYO) launched a national campaign aimed at improving outcomes for young people transitioning from foster care to adulthood. The *Success Beyond 18* campaign includes resources and economic research to help guide efforts to extend supportive foster care services for youth beyond age 18. For example, the campaign [press release](#) indicates that investing in older youth in foster care can yield a \$300,000 cost savings over that young person's lifetime. [Click here](#) to read more and access the full list of resources.

## **Grocery Store Development in Low-Income Communities**

As part of their ongoing research into food access and the “[grocery gap](#),” PolicyLink, a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity, interviewed actor Wendell Pierce, of the critically acclaimed HBO series *The Wire*, about the grocery store he recently opened in his hometown of New Orleans, LA. Pierce speaks candidly about his motivations for giving back to his community and some of the obstacles he faced along the way. [Click here](#) to read the interview.

## **Campaign to Change Perceptions of Public Housing**

Housing Authority Insurance, Inc. has launched a new online resource to help improve the way that residents of public housing are perceived. The *ReThink Why Housing Matters* initiative highlights stories of public housing residents who, as a result of a stable place to live, have been able to succeed professionally or in school. [Click here](#) to access the ReThink website and learn more about the initiative.

**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).**



## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Best Buy Youth Technology Grants**

The Best Buy Children’s Foundation has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for \$2 million in Community Grants for local and regional nonprofit organizations that offer technology programming for teenagers. The programming should provide teens age 13 – 18 with a place and opportunity to develop technology skills that will inspire their future education and career choices. Individual grants will not exceed \$10,000. In order to be eligible an applicant must have 501(c)(3) tax designation, be located within 50 miles of a Best Buy Store or distribution center, and provide direct services to teens that build their skills in technology. Applications must be received by July 1, 2013. [Click here](#) for more information.

### **Microgrants for Youth Engaged in Social Change**

The World We Want Foundation is now accepting applications from organizations on behalf of youth making positive social change in their communities. Grants of up to \$5,000 will be awarded to youth between the ages of 13-25 to implement “Social Action Projects” such as community service projects, service-learning projects, and social ventures. Applicants must have a project team of one or more youths, a sponsoring partner organization, and a project mentor to guide and advise the team. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. [Click here](#) for more information, including examples of previous Social Action Projects.

## **Drucker Institute 2013 Award for Nonprofit Innovation**

The Drucker Institute at Claremont Graduate University is now accepting applications for the 2013 Peter F. Drucker award for Nonprofit Innovation. This award is given annually to the organization that best demonstrates Drucker's definition of innovation, "change that creates a new dimension of performance," such as highly effective programs that have made tangible difference in the lives of the people they serve. An applicant must have a 501(c)(3) tax designation in order to be eligible. The winning applicant will receive a \$100,000 prize. Applications must be received no later than 3 pm PDT on July 1, 2013. [Click here](#) for more information, including a list of Frequently Asked Questions and answers.

**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).**



## **NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE CORNER**

**On hiatus – please check back next month!**



## **RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS**

### **Community Gardens as a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy**

In a Featured Article in *The Edge*, the online magazine of HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research, architect Jill Stoner discusses community gardens as a neighborhood revitalization strategy for vacant or abandoned land. Stoner uses the city of Lawrence, KS as a case study of how a community garden can elicit resident engagement and potentially improve access to healthy foods. [Click here](#) to access the article and helpful resources, including an instructive webinar: "*Community Gardens: Turning Vacant Lots into Urban Assets.*"

### **Housing as a Platform for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals**

Successfully reintegrating into the community where they once lived can be a challenge for formerly incarcerated individuals. Moreover, it is argued, that unsuccessful reintegration leads to recidivism and reincarceration for many of these individuals, along with significant fiscal

costs. The Urban Institute, an organization focused on investigating and analyzing U.S. social and economic problems and issues, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children and their families living in the U.S., have released a research brief outlining many of the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated persons once they are released. The brief also outlines several strategies for providing support to individuals during the reentry process. [Click here](#) to access the article and to learn more about how housing can lead to better reintegration outcomes for the formerly incarcerated.



## GRANTEE FEATURE

### **Implementation Grantee: Chicago, IL**

#### *Overview*

[Preservation of Affordable Housing](#) (POAH) and the City of Chicago, a Choice Neighborhoods 2010-2011 Fiscal Year grantee, have partnered with a strong coalition of community-based organizations and stakeholders to transform Woodlawn into a neighborhood of choice – a transformation centered on the redevelopment of three city blocks along South Cottage Grove Avenue between East 60th and 63rd Streets. The activities can be grouped into the following categories:

#### *Housing*

The Woodlawn Choice Neighborhood plan is rooted in the revitalization of the distressed Section 8 Grove Parc Plaza Apartments, located on a 12-acre, three-block-long site at the heart of the Woodlawn community. The site was historically a barrier to investment in the surrounding blocks, but today it is being rebuilt as a vibrant, healthy and attractive mixed-use/mixed-income urban community. This new community will feature homes for households at all income levels and stages of life, including affordable and moderate-income rental apartments, as well as homeownership units for moderate-income and market-rate buyers. The transformation plan also calls for new spaces for commercial, retail, and community facilities. Beyond the Grove Parc site, the Choice housing plan calls for major investments to return Woodlawn's nearby abandoned buildings and vacant land to productive use. These investments will include an estimated 355 rental apartments and 45 new homeownership units, as well as a new Woodlawn Housing Loan Fund to support the efforts of homeowners, homebuyers, and smaller local developers to reinvest in the community's historic buildings. As of May 2013, POAH has built or renovated 325 mixed-income units, with another 98 units either currently in construction or soon to be under way. POAH is also working to develop commercial properties at the north and south ends of its primary development site.

#### *Neighborhood*

The Choice program builds on the major housing redevelopment efforts to promote coordinated investments in the broader Woodlawn neighborhood, which aims to create the necessary conditions for the community's resurgence. POAH's goal for neighborhood investment builds on the community "Quality of Life" plan developed through an inclusive process coordinated by the Woodlawn New Communities Program (now [Network of Woodlawn](#)), which is the

neighborhood partner for this effort. The plan provides new funding for public safety, helping to address a critical neighborhood need. It supports improved economic opportunities both by creating new permanent jobs targeted to Woodlawn residents and by providing employment programs through a new satellite of the [Center for Working Families based at Kennedy-King College](#). It deploys flexible resources to help meet other needs for improved infrastructure and amenities within the community such as walkable streets, more accessible public transportation, and broadband internet access.

### ***People***

The Choice plan for Woodlawn recognizes that the neighborhood's people are its most important asset. The plan makes a very significant investment in programs and services to help former Grove Parc families and their Woodlawn neighbors reach their full potential. These "people" programs are based at a new Woodlawn Resource Center built on the redeveloped Grove Parc site and operated under contract to POAH by [Metropolitan Family Services](#) (MFS). This Center will house the satellite Center for Working Families, including a family Internet center, a homework help room staffed by the [Woodlawn Children's Promise Community](#), and staff from MFS available to help connect Grove Parc families to the other resources they need to succeed. The Woodlawn Resource Center is open to the entire community, and will also link residents to a robust network of organizations serving the residents of Woodlawn.

### ***Community Engagement***

Finally, community engagement is a critical element of the Woodlawn Choice Neighborhood effort. POAH's involvement in Woodlawn was brought about by the action of engaged Grove Parc residents and community members. The plan for the site's redevelopment was developed through intensive review by community stakeholders and the Choice plan for the neighborhood is derived from the community's Quality of Life Plan. As the effort moves ahead, there are ongoing opportunities for neighborhood residents to become involved – through community-wide town hall meetings, recurring working group sessions on key neighborhood issues like public safety and infrastructure, and more. [Click here](#) to read more about the Choice Neighborhoods activities occurring in Chicago.