



Choice Neighborhoods e-Newsletter

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Midwest Grantee Convening Recap

On September 16-17, 2013, the Choice Neighborhoods technical assistance team held a Midwest Grantee Convening, *Economic Place-Making: How to Develop a 'Neighborhood Business Plan,'* at the HUD Field Office in Cleveland, OH; eleven grantees attended. The Convening focused on the premise that successful strategies for neighborhood economic development are directly tied to their regional economy. In addition to presentations delivered by Robert Weissbourd and his team from RW Ventures, LLC, the convening featured breakout sessions where grantees were able to share challenges and successes. Some of the topics discussed during the convening included:

- Understanding your assets in relationship to the areas of economic growth in your region.
- Understanding the barriers impeding the connection between regional employers and the particular skill sets of residents.
- Accessing data sources on labor and regional economic growth trends.

Stay tuned to the Choice Neighborhoods technical assistance website [here](#), where forum presentations and other materials will be posted.

Save the Date: Webinar for Choice and Promise grantees on the NEA

On November 20th at 3PM EST, the National Endowment for the Arts, along with HUD and the Department of Education, is hosting a webinar on how arts can play a role in neighborhood revitalization. The webinar will provide information on the NEA and resources that may be available to assist communities with arts-focused projects. Stay tuned for more details and registration information.



RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Promise Zones Webinar

PolicyLink has created an informational webinar on the Obama Administration's Promise Zones initiative. High-poverty communities across the country will be designated as Promise Zones. The federal government will partner with these communities and invest to create jobs, leverage private investment, increase economic vitality, expand educational opportunities, and enhance public safety. The informational webinar provides an overview of the Promise Zones initiative, explores its potential for addressing complex community development challenges, and discusses eligibility criteria. Click [here](#) to view the webinar.

Construction Careers Handbook

The Partnership for Working Families (PWF) has developed a guide for establishing construction careers programs that can leverage public investment in construction projects and create employment opportunities in low-income communities. The PWF model uses strong job quality standards, including training and safety requirements and responsible contractor provisions, in order to ensure that public funds are used to create a high quality construction industry. The strategies articulated in the guide have been used successfully in cities such as Portland, OR and Los Angeles, CA. Click [here](#) to read the handbook.

Using Technology to Achieve Success at the Daytona Housing Authority

The Daytona Housing Authority (DHA) has been able to help its residents improve their quality of life through the use of innovative resource centers. The Daytona Neighborhood Networks Centers (NNC) are part of a program created through a partnership between DHA and the Daytona Beach Housing Development Corporation; the partnership has helped students excel in school, residents obtain jobs, and seniors receive services. NNCs were developed at three convenient locations to provide free Internet connectivity and an array of other services. However, NNCs are more than computer labs; they include staff who build personal relationships with residents in order to help track resident's improved quality of life. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Neighborhood Networks Centers. Click [here](#) to read about how NNCs are being used to promote academic achievement among students.

The Role of Philanthropy in Reducing Violence and Violent Death Among African American Men and Boys

On Friday, November 8, 2013 from 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM EST, Cities United, an initiative to reduce violence and violent deaths of African American men and boys in cities across America, will be hosting a webinar called, *The Role of Philanthropy in Reducing Violence and Violent Death Among African American Men and Boys*. The Cities United initiative is led by Mayor Michael Nutter of Philadelphia, PA; Mayor Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans, LA; Casey Family Programs; Open Society Foundations; and The National League of Cities. Approximately 50 mayors from diverse cities across the U.S. have already committed to Cities United's vision that

city leaders from across the country will form partnerships with other local government officials, community leaders, families, youth, philanthropies, and other stakeholders within their respective cities dedicated to reducing violence and violence related deaths among African American men and boys. Click [here](#) to learn more about Cities United. To register for the webinar please email Jerrilyn Black, Senior Program Associate, National League of Cities: black@nlc.org.

An Early Intervention Guide to Help Improve Graduation Success

United Way Worldwide, Civic Enterprises, and the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University, have collaborated to develop a guide to help communities identify middle and elementary schools that “feed” into the lowest-performing high schools; the guide also includes strategies for how to use that data in order to boost graduation rates. *Solving the High School Graduation Crisis: Identifying and Using School Feeder Patterns in Your Community*, aims to help stakeholders determine how to access key data; understand their community’s education landscape; know how graduation rates are calculated and determine their community’s graduation rate; and use school feeder pattern data to create a greater impact in their community. Click [here](#) to download the guide.

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.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grants

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has announced guidelines and application materials for Our Town, the agency’s primary creative placemaking grants program. Pending availability of funding, grants will range from \$25,000 to \$200,000. All applications must include partnerships that involve two primary partners: a nonprofit organization and a local governmental entity. One of the two primary partners must be a cultural (arts or design) organization. Our Town will invest in creative and innovative projects in communities seeking to improve their quality of life, encourage greater creative activity, foster stronger community identity and sense of place, and revitalize economic development. Applications are due by January 13, 2014. Click [here](#) to read the Our Town application guidelines. Click [here](#) to access a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Sample application narratives can be found [here](#). Finally,

click [here](#) to register for an informative webinar that will be held on November 4, 2013 at 2:00 PM EST.

Funding to Improve Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education

The National Science Foundation has announced approximately \$50,000,000 in funding to enhance the learning and teaching of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) by Pre-k-12 students and teachers through research and development of innovative models, resources, and tools. Nonprofit and for-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, individuals, and federal, state, local, and tribal governments are eligible to apply. Between 35-35 grants of up to \$3,000,000 will be allocated. Proposals must be received by December 6, 2013. Click [here](#) to read the funding announcement.

AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competitions

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is seeking letters of intent for their FY 2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grants. This program provides support to engage AmeriCorps members in interventions that will strengthen communities. In FY 2014, CNCS will focus grant making in six areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families. Nonprofit organizations, including faith based and community organizations; institutions of higher education; and state, local, and tribal governments are eligible to apply. Letters of intent must be received by Wednesday, December 11, 2013. Click [here](#) to read the draft funding announcement.

ArtPlace America 2014 Innovation Grants

ArtPlace America is now accepting applications for its 2014 Innovation Grants Program. Grants will be awarded to projects that involve arts organizations, artists, and designers partnering with local and national entities for place-based strategies that can transform communities. Awards range from \$50,000 to \$500,000. Nonprofit organizations and local governing bodies are eligible to apply; however, individual artists, designers, or for-profit organizations can apply for a grant using a nonprofit fiscal agent. Letters of inquiry must be submitted by December 13, 2013. Click [here](#) for more information, including descriptions of previous ArtPlace America grant recipients. Click [here](#) to access the Invitation for Letters of Inquiry and list of frequently asked questions.

Mini-grants for Public School Programming

The Ezra Jack Keats Foundation is accepting applications from public schools and public libraries for mini-grants of up to \$500 to support projects that foster creative expression, collaboration, and interaction with a diverse community. This funding program offers an opportunity for educators, whose efforts are often inadequately funded, to develop special activities outside of the standard curriculum. Projects previously funded include murals, pen pal groups, quilts, theater productions, newspapers and other publications, intergenerational activities, and programs that bring diverse communities together. Public schools, public libraries, and preschool head start programs are eligible to apply. Applications are due by March 15, 2014. Click [here](#) to view the program guidelines, a video tutorial for applicants, and access the application form.

RGK Foundation Resources to Support Education and Community

The RGK Foundation awards grants in the broad areas of education, community, and health/medicine on a rolling basis throughout the year. Nonprofit organizations certified as tax exempt, including hospitals, educational institutions, and government entities meeting this requirement are eligible to apply. The Foundation's primary interest in the field of education includes programs that focus on formal K-12 education (with an emphasis on mathematics, science, and reading), teacher development, literacy, and higher education. Under the rubric of community, the foundation supports a broad range of human services, community improvement, abuse prevention, and youth development programs. With regard to health and medicine, the Foundation seeks programs that promote the health and well-being of children, and access to health services. The average Foundation grant is \$25,000. Click [here](#) for more information.



NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

INITIATIVE CORNER

Health Center New Access Point Awards

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has announced awards of approximately \$67 million, including \$19 million made available by the Affordable Care Act, to establish 32 new health center delivery sites. These new sites will expand access to preventive and primary health care for more than 130,000 additional people. In addition, \$48 million will be awarded to the nearly 1,200 existing health centers to support ongoing operations and quality improvement activities. All applicants under the FY 2013 New Access Point competition will receive notification within approximately one month providing them with their score and a summary of their application's strengths and weaknesses as identified by an Objective Review Committee. Click [here](#) to read the press release.

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.



RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

The Impact of Parenting on Childhood Achievement

How much does parenting matter? This question is the focus of a new study by the Brookings Institution's Center on Children and Families called *The Parenting Gap*. Their findings indicate that parenting has a measurable outcome on a child's achievement. For example, by the end of adolescence, three out of four children with the "strongest" parents graduated high school with at least a 2.5 GPA, had not been convicted of a crime, and had not become a teen parent. Conversely, only 30% of children with the "weakest" parents achieved these same outcomes.

The study found that if the weakest parents were turned into "average" parents, while all other factors (e.g., income, family structure) remained the same, 9% more of their children would graduate from high school. There would be a 9% increase in graduation rates as a result of improving parenting. The study also lists several evidenced-based early intervention programs that have improved parenting and later life outcomes. Click [here](#) to read the study and list of effective programs.

Solutions for Preserving Affordable Rental Housing

The latest issue of HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research's quarterly magazine, *Evidence Matters*, offers three articles focused on the growing need, current threats, and innovative solutions to preserve affordable rental housing. The first article, *Preserving Affordable Rental Housing*, provides an overview of the current state of affordable housing preservation in the U.S. The second article, *How Research Tools are Assisting Communities to Preserve and Plan Affordable Housing*, provides strategies for using data to inform preservation efforts. Finally, *Models for Affordable Housing Preservation*, showcases best practices in affordable housing preservation used in cities across the country. Click [here](#) to read the current issue of *Evidence Matters*.

Restoring Teen and Young Adult Connections to Opportunity

Grantees seeking innovative ways to connect youth in their Choice Neighborhood to employment opportunities may want to read a report published last year by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF). In their KIDS COUNT policy report, *Youth and Work: Restoring Teen and Young Adult Connections to Opportunity*, the AECF found that nearly 6.5 million U.S. teens and young adults are neither in school or in the workforce. Furthermore, argued in the report, with unemployment among young people at the lowest level since the 1950s, disconnected youth are likely headed toward chronic unemployment as adults as a result of not acquiring the basic technological and higher order thinking skills necessary for employment in the 21st century. The report offers national and state data on the issue, as well as recommendations for supporting youth in gaining a foothold in the economy. Click [here](#) to read the report.