



Choice Neighborhoods

e-news about transforming housing, people and neighborhoods

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Choice Neighborhoods Grants FY2019 Implementation Grant Applications Due Nov. 4

The [FY19 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants NOFA](#) makes available approximately \$164 million to award grants of up to \$30 million each. Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants support the implementation of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans that are expected to: replace distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing; improve resident outcomes; and create the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods. [The application package can be found here](#) and are due November 4th. Potential applicants may submit questions to ChoiceNeighborhoods@hud.gov.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program-Renewal Program

\$80 million has been made available for FSS program renewals. Eligible applicants for the program are PHAs, including Moving-to-Work PHAs, that have been administering the program for the past 2 to 3 consecutive years either through direct funding, transfer or consolidation. The applicant must also have at least one person who will have completed the mandatory FSS training in FY2018 or FY2019 and be on the list of individuals who received credits for the training. Eligibility must be received no later than 20 calendar days prior to the due date of this NOFA. [The application deadline is October 28 and available here.](#)

AmeriCorps State and National Grants FY2020

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is seeking applications from local governments and organizations seeking to strengthen their community through working with AmeriCorps service members. CNCS has prioritized the investment of national service resources to organizations focusing on the following areas: economic opportunity, education, healthy futures, veteran and military families, rural intermediaries, and faith-based organizations. [Applications are due January 8 and available here.](#)

Minority Education, Workforce, and Training (MEWT) Program

The MEWT program has made available \$4 million in financial assistance awards to help foster collaboration amongst MSIs, DOE program offices, industry, state and local government agencies, and other federal agencies to increase engagement and capabilities of underserved communities with STEM and energy related fields. Topic areas of interest include: STEM education; capacity building; technical assistance; training; and workforce/pipeline analysis. [Applications are due October 18 and available here.](#)

EVENTS AND TOOLS

Service Coordinators in Multifamily Housing Program Online Learning Tool

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Program (MFHP) has produced a self-directed interactive online learning tool for new and experienced service coordinators in the SCMF program. This tool may be useful for grantees that own or operate PBRA/RAD properties or are getting into PBRA and the Office of Multifamily through their redevelopment. [These online tools](#) are designed to help individuals better understand how the SCMF program can benefit their organizations and residents.

Affordable Housing Investment: A Guide for Nonprofit Hospitals and Health Systems

This Urban Institute technical paper offers key concepts and strategies for designing housing development projects in collaboration with nonprofit hospitals and health systems. Using these organizations financial position to lower borrower risk, enhance credit, provide land and staff time to support community affordable housing development. The guide includes [toolkits, guides, checklists, and innovative success stories to help non-profit hospitals leverage their assets to solve local housing issues.](#)

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

PHA Impediments and Solutions HUD Report

HUD published a report on the [Impediments to PHA Reimbursement for Surveys and Solutions to Address Delays in HUD's Annual Calculation of Fair Market Rents](#). The [report](#) provides an overview of HUD's FMR calculations, including recent changes, options for upcoming improvements, and possible solutions for the reimbursement of local market rent surveys.

Mobilizing Youth: Engaging Young People in Making Community Change

The [National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership](#) is a group of community organizations, in more than 30 cities across the country, who are introducing youth to the power of data and ways to leverage information to advocate for the change they want in their communities. The skills developed through this program will empower young people to pursue careers in data science and change making. [Discover more here.](#)

Jobs Plus Study: Helping Public Housing Residents Find Jobs and Build Careers

The multifaceted Job Plus Initiative program was created to increase earnings and advance employment outcomes for residents of public housing. [This study](#) finds there were significant positive effects on employment and earnings for people who received the program's services.

GRANTEES IN THE NEWS

Foote Homes Reopen in Memphis

The Memphis Housing Authority and City of Memphis celebrated the grand opening of the revitalized [Foote Park Development](#) at South City in Memphis. The project is a result of a FY2015 \$30 million Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant and includes the demolition

of 420 public housing units with a mixed-income community. A commercial business façade improvement and homeowner repair program are already underway as well.

Innovation and Opportunity Center Opens its Doors in Newport News, VA

The Brooks Crossing Innovation and Opportunity Center (BCIOC) hosted a [ribbon cutting](#) ceremony in August. The development is the result of a partnership between the City of Newport News, Newport News Shipbuilding and Old Dominion University to create a STEM innovation and fabrication lab as well as a job and career training center.

Camden, NJ Breaks Ground

The Housing Authority of the City of Camden (HACC) recently [broke ground](#) on Branch Village Townhomes II - Phase II of their 2016 Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant project. In addition to the \$1.5 million in Choice grant funds, this project includes \$16.2 million in LIHTCs, \$16.1 million in a construction loan and \$5.14 million in a permanent loan.

Two Developments Break Ground in Brownsville, TX

Ground was broken on two Brownsville Housing Authority developments: Poinsettia Gardens at Boca Chica and Trail Village. Poinsettia Gardens was awarded a \$500,000 [Choice Neighborhood planning grant](#) in 2016. The planning grant served as a catalyst for a \$30 million-dollar investment in tax credits from the State of Texas used to drive the construction of these two developments.

Two Choice Grantees Among Those Awarded Additional FSS

The Trenton Housing Authority and the Housing Authority of New Orleans were among the [18 new authorities awarded FSS funding](#) totaling \$1.2 million. This was in addition to the \$74 million already awarded to the FSS program earlier this year. This was the first time since 2012 that HUD awarded FSS funding to new housing authorities.

SPOTLIGHT: Transforming Lives Through Job Training and Life Skills in Philadelphia

The North Central Philadelphia Choice Neighborhood recently broke ground on the new Philabundance Community Kitchen (PCK) vocational training and food production. This innovative project will be operated by Philabundance, a local hunger relief group, whose previous training programs have boasted a 75% job placement rate among graduates. Leveraging over \$125 million in public and private funds through the CNI grant and Critical Community Improvements (CCI) plan, the project will transform a vacant plot of land previously owned by the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (PRA) into a safe community space.



Philabundance Community Kitchen

In this new facility, PCK will expand its vocational training program into a 16-week course for low to no income individuals interested in the culinary industry. The program will serve an additional 220 students and produce up to 2 million meals for homebound seniors and children during the summer months. Students who are accepted into the 500-hour program earn their ServSafe certificate; earn an externship opportunity; prepare meals for those in need; and receive supportive services. The ongoing support is focused on retention, by PCK staff, for two years after graduation to ensure that students maximize their training and succeed in the culinary industry.



With a twenty-year track record in community empowerment and professional development, PCK was an early addition to the Choice Neighborhood's team who looked to secure partners with proven development models and shared outcomes. Echoed throughout the PCK program is the need to meet students where they are and provide them with a supportive environment that encourages program completion and long-term stability. This holistic development model prioritizes student growth over the number of graduates and institutes a relationship-based instructional model with experienced staff who are trained in cultural competency and crisis management. Each cohort

is made up of approximately 30 students who receive advisory support and one on one life coaching to address barriers to their success within the program – such as childcare needs, transportation, adult literacy, and behavioral health challenges. To date, 886 students have completed the program and gone on to secure permanent employment following graduation.

Through their participation in Choice Neighborhoods, PCK is assisting the City of Philadelphia achieve its commitment to prioritizing job training opportunities for city and public housing residents, as well as, gaining additional resources for the long-term tracking of their support services across an increased area of impact. With the ability to capture and isolate their findings, PCK can continue to build on their existing work without compromising the services provided to participants.

A key component that continues to attract new partners to the PCK program is the live environment provided to students to easily transition them into the local workforce. To cultivate their employer pipeline, the PCK team approached restaurateurs and food management companies with two separate opportunities – 1) to provide internship and employment opportunities for students and 2) to contribute advisory support, curriculum development, or donations that improve the overall program. As the team continues to adjust their job placement strategy, staff are committed to ensuring upward mobility and self-sufficiency by attracting opportunities that offer compensation at a minimum of \$12 an hour.

Funding a Capital Campaign

Due to the way in which PCK came about the land, and additional timing constraints that would require facilitation by the City of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (PRA), government funding was an early contributor to the overall financing opportunity. Key seed funders would include the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Honorable Governor Tom Wolf, the City of Philadelphia, and the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. Within the next 18 months, PCK led an intensive capital campaign that would secure an additional \$10 million in public and private funds. A part of this strategy would enlist a team of external consultants whose specific responsibility was to build and cultivate donors from Philabundance's historical base, any individuals or groups who had ever indicated interest in the PCK program, as well as coordinating cultivation visits and fundraising receptions around the vision for increased impact through physical expansion.

Peter Slattery, Director Business Process Improvement at Philabundance, accounts their incredible fundraising success to collaborating with the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority who not only lent their development, communications, and finance teams to the fundraising effort, but also coordinated public participation with local residents. Moving into the construction process was met with unanimous support based on relationships developed through the zoning board, as well as, the coordination of government systems and processes led by key PCK board members.

Breaking Ground



It would take a significant amount of communication and collaboration to push the initiative into the physical construction process. As defined in the Critical Community Improvement Plan, PRA would commit to serve as the lender of the Choice Neighborhoods and CDBG funds and would monitor construction to ensure completion and timeliness of the overall project. With a proven development model, PRA was pivotal to the creation of a modular facility that met PCK's exact needs within a timeline that focused on intentional quality growth and a flexible building design. As the project progressed, PCK recognized the need to hire an owner's representative who continued to maintain a productive and proactive relationship with the lenders involved, familiarizing PCK staff with the necessary documents and procedures that would move the initiative towards the finish line.

When asked about the key elements to their success, PCK reiterated their decision to partner with proven programs and the ability to remain flexible to the needs of their community members. “When you’re doing things [this way,] it may take more patience or longer... but it has proven results. Commit to actions that do the community right and then pursue funding that aligns with that goal,” said Candace Matthews, Deputy Director of Workforce and Community Development at PCK. The ongoing commitment may be resource intensive, however the lasting impact projects like the Philadelphia Community Kitchen have on everyday residents is impactful for generations to come. As the new facility expects to be completed by the spring of 2020, the neighboring community is fully supportive, already raising \$11 million of a \$12 million campaign goal.

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