

Choice Neighborhoods

monthly news about transforming housing, people, & neighborhoods

Issue 90 | April 2020

Special Message for Choice Neighborhoods Grantees

We hope that you are staying safe, and we thank you for your unwavering commitment to protecting the health and safety of HUD-assisted households across the country. We want to make sure that you are aware of the following COVID-19 information and resources:

- **COVID-19 Letter and FAQs from HUD’s Office of Public and Indian Housing and Office of Multifamily Housing**
 - If you have Public Housing and Voucher program questions that are not answered by the FAQs, please e-mail PIH-COVID@hud.gov.
 - If you have Multifamily Housing program questions that are not answered by the FAQs, please e-mail MFCcommunications@hud.gov.
- **COVID-19 Information and Resources across HUD programs**
- **“Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act” or the “CARES Act”(Public Law No: 116-136)**
 - HUD provisions start on **page 321**.

For questions or concerns specific to your Choice Neighborhoods grant, please do not hesitate to reach out to your HUD Choice Neighborhoods team coordinator and Mindy Turbov, the Director of Choice Neighborhoods. We will continue to share important information as it becomes available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Income Exclusion Under Temporary Census Employment and Census Access

- Public Housing Authorities may take advantage of HUD’s earned income exclusion for temporary Census employment to encourage resident access to Census jobs. Persons with criminal histories are encouraged to apply. A background check will determine if a person is eligible.

- States and local governments are also encouraged to disregard census income when determining eligibility for public assistance benefits. The National Conference of State Legislatures and a White House memo outline several options to consider.

2020 Jobs Plus Grantees Announced

HUD Secretary, Ben Carson, announced a \$20 million investment in nine public housing agencies (PHA) – Los Angeles, Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Chicago, Lowell, Durham, Elizabeth, NJ, Akron and Portsmouth, to help public housing families increase their income.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Request for Proposals for Building Healthcare Partnerships

Proposals are due April 3, 2020 for the Community Innovations grant program for non-profits that engage with healthcare partners to support neighborhood revitalization work, in low-income communities and with people of color. Selected organizations will receive up to \$40,000 to support staff/a consultant to lead healthcare engagement, \$60,000 of in-kind technical support to facilitate sustainable partnerships.

Individual and Family Grants from ModestNeeds.org

Public housing residents and households who, because they are working and live just above the poverty level, are eligible to apply for an annual grant of up to \$1,250 to cover unexpected/emergency expenses and monthly bills unpaid due to extenuating circumstances within the past year. Special consideration is given to persons living alone (single persons with no dependent children), public school teachers, and first responders.

EVENTS & TOOLS

Advancing Our Communities During COVID-19 Crisis NDC Webinar

On Wed., Apr. 1, from 3-4 pm EST, learn about the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) and how our industry is helping to find solutions and craft programs to meet the immediate and long term economic development needs of communities around the country.

Online Education Tools for Parents, Students, and Teachers

TechforLearners.org is a searchable online database of education technology tools that facilitate online classrooms and teaching, allowing educators to search for free and discounted tools and services by grade level, product type, and subject matter. The site will be continually updated and will soon include additional resources geared towards parents and students.

PHA Moving On: How-To-Guide

HUD created this guide to help Public Housing Agencies understand how to get involved with Moving On efforts. The guide may be helpful to administrative planning updates and work with coordinating care between Continuum of Care providers, PHAs, and multifamily housing owners.

Midwest Fair Housing Leadership Retreat

Registration is open for the Midwest Fair Housing Leadership Retreat and National Fair Housing Training Academy Opening Ceremony happening April 22-23. HUD and the

University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) John Marshall Law School invite nationwide FHIP and FHAP leadership to attend. West and East Coast Leadership Retreats are planned for this summer with locations and dates TBD.

Healthy Food Access Webinar/Tools

The Food Trust maintains the Healthy Food Access Portal which hosts research, best practices, resources, training and policy information for those communities and individuals committed to ensuring equitable access to healthy, quality, affordable food.

HUD Announces Free HOME Program Online Training Course

HUD's Office of Affordable Housing Program is offering a free foundational online training for individuals to learn the basics of HOME, including the regulations and an overview of other federal regulations that apply to HOME.

RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

Minneapolis Affordable Housing Transformation Case Study

HUD published a case study featuring how the Hawthorne EcoVillage Apartments, in north Minneapolis (MN) is transforming a long-declining neighborhood hit by the foreclosure crisis and recession through a resident-driven ecological strategy.

Urban Institute Publishes Two Reports on Trends in Housing, Education and Transportation

- Incorporating Two-Generation Approaches into Community Change looks at the FCCC initiatives in Buffalo, Columbus, and San Antonio and the results of their "two-generation" – parents and children approach to breaking the intergenerational poverty.
- Fostering Racial and Ethnic Equity and Inclusion looks at how FCCC partners have used the Foundation's strategies and resources for advancing racial and ethnic equity and inclusion to strengthen approaches for families.

How Racial and Regional Inequality Affect Economic Opportunity

Informed by economic research by the Hamilton Project, The Brookings Institute examined how spatial distribution of the black population has evolved over time and how it has interacted with economic mobility and U.S. public policy.

Annie E. Casey Promotes Participation in the U.S. Census

This article may help PHAs explain why the U.S. census matters to historically marginalized communities and why everyone should be encouraged to participate in their developments and in the wider-neighborhood.

GRANTEES IN THE NEWS

Ken Burns Presents a Documentary about Atlanta Housing Authority's East Lake Meadows

The Atlanta Housing Authority's East Lake Meadows – an early HOPE VI project – was featured on PBS on March 24. Told through the stories of former residents, East Lake

Meadows: A Public Housing Story describes the site's history and impact of government and philanthropic investment in creating a now thriving community.

District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) EnVision Center Job Fair

More than 600 job-seeking D.C. residents attended a recent hiring information event at DCHA's Southwest Family Enhancement and Career Center/EnVision Center. The D.C. Dept. of Employment Services Workforce Opportunity helped attendees with resumes and registration with the jobs bank, while others were linked to a pre-apprenticeship training organization.

SPOTLIGHT: The Importance of Integrated, Neighborhood Driven Design in the Pittsburgh Larimer Neighborhood



Launched in the summer of 2014 following the receipt of a \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant, the Pittsburgh Housing Authority (HACP), City of Pittsburgh, and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), continued revitalization of the Larimer and East Liberty neighborhoods. The focus of this project was to turn Larimer/East Liberty into a “21st Century Green Neighborhood that Works.” The Choice Plan relied on the large private investment already taking place along the edges of the target neighborhood in East Liberty, spurred by the emerging tech. industry, Google facility and proximity to Carnegie Mellon, and attraction for young professionals.

The historic Larimer neighborhood reflected a 50-year decline in population and economic disinvestment. However, it also benefitted from the existence of the Larimer Consensus Group (LCG). LCG is a well-organized and long-standing collaboration of Larimer residents, community organizations, and stakeholders. LCG's existing structure and history of community engagement provided a strong resident/neighborhood driven vision of both the Choice Neighborhood Plan and the overall future design of the Larimer project.

Site Control and Selection

The Choice Housing Plan is made up of four phases (three of which are new construction, multi-bedroom sizes, one substantial rehabilitation primarily 1-bedroom units): Phase I - 85 units in 18 buildings; Phase 2 - 150 units; Phase IIIA – 49 units; and Phase IIIB – 35 units. All phases are mixed-income projects. Approximately one-third of the units are market rate, one-third are project-based voucher units and one-third are affordable to households earning less than 60 percent of median income.

Some of the key drivers behind the housing plan were the following:

- Anchored in sustainable technology;
- Higher density/mixed-income development, while reflective of the single-family nature of neighborhood; and,
- Walking distance to retail, social services, religious institution, educational facilities, amenities and public transportation.



The housing plan benefitted significantly from the fact that the City and Urban Redevelopment Authority owned nearly 60% of the neighborhood’s vacant or distressed parcels. HACP, the City, and the URA were therefore able to choose the best sites for the redevelopment and more easily accommodate the increased number of units and desire for mixed-income development. City ownership also enabled the URA to combine the new development with the renovation of single-family homes for the homebuyer program. Currently occupied homes also benefitted from this project.

Meeting the Goal of Sustainability While Addressing Site Engineering Challenges and Adding Site Aesthetic Appeal



Phase I and Phase 2 of the Larimer project include 25 acres of urban park. The development of Liberty Green Park will provide recreational opportunities and green space in addition to creating critical green storm water infrastructure. This natural greenway complements the woods, historic stream valley and steep slope at the edge of the neighborhood and will link a regional

park system through a network of multi-use trails. This actual physical green space will also help tie to the overall goal of sustainability for the neighborhood, while addressing the challenge of vacant lots.

The architect and the designers carried this park feel into the housing developments themselves by including a lot of landscaping and yards utilizing native species. This design reflected curb appeal and personal safety while aiding the storm water control, decreasing water consumption and increasing drought tolerance.

The leadership of the Urban Redevelopment Authority helped enable the neighborhood to capitalize on the Redevelopment Authority’s expertise in developing green space and its access to additional funding. Through a targeted Choice Neighborhood Homeowner Assistance Program, the Urban Redevelopment Authority also provided financial assistance and architectural consultation to homeowners in Larimer to make exterior and in some cases “green” improvements to their homes.

Local Architects “Localize” the Developer’s Process

HACP procured McCormack Baron Salazar as co-developer to implement the mixed-income Housing Plan for the target neighborhood. It is McCormack Baron Salazar's practice to engage designers and ultimately the primary architect from the community in which they are working so they bring that knowledge and understanding of both local codes and the history and nature of the neighborhoods to their design. According to McCormack Baron Salazar staff, the design process began by looking at the community as it stood – its history, its identity and its flow to and from the neighborhood. They looked at the residents' vision for the neighborhood and listened to their hopes and their concerns. These conversations enabled them to lay out what is practical, so that "what the community wants" begins from a position of reality.



During the course of the neighborhood resident charettes, the developers shared numerous visual options from other similar cities and communities. Participating residents also viewed old images of Larimer and other Pittsburgh neighborhoods and went on walking tours with the designers to better appreciate its history, and evolution. Given that McCormick Baron Salazar already developed and managed a property near Larimer, one of the first directions from the community was that "they didn't want Larimer to look like Fairfield Court."

The community wanted the properties to look unique just like the rest of the neighborhood. They also wanted each phase to be distinct from the other phases. As a result, the architect produced nearly 13 prototypes for a total of 85 units across 18 buildings. The prototypes ranged from more conventional looking row houses to more modern smaller apartment buildings that blended into the design of the adjacent burgeoning "tech. neighborhood." The developer noted that the neighborhood needed to appeal to potential residents considering a move into this neighborhood, without alienating those who already resided there.

Architectural Nuances That Bring the Feel of Luxury Without the Cost

The architect addressed the sustainability elements of the housing design through the use of green materials; Energy Star equipment; insulation and airtight sealing for windows and doors; utilities sized for the unit so as not to "over-power" unnecessarily; energy efficient lighting; and elements required for LEED compliance. In addition to these sustainability components, she strove for ways to economically increase the feel of luxury. The architect incorporated wider and more grand staircases, glass enclosures and more open common spaces. To create a more luxurious feel, the architect used less utilitarian light fixtures, and incorporated cove lighting to provide more indirect light, which is warmer, while still meeting safety standards. The use of a wide palette of colors and materials on the exterior, added brightness to the neighborhood and created



the appearance of light. Using a combination of brick, siding and colored panels and metal siding, a modern façade was created with little extra expense.



Design elements included floor joists that create a small bay window to add texture to the units, thereby taking advantage of the views of the park and direction of the sun. Stationary windows that cost less than those needed for ventilation also increased the sense of luxury. Vinyl windows are generally used in affordable housing due to cost; however, several brands offer different color trims, which add an element of flair with no cost increase. Extending these

trim colors to non-rusting porch awnings and railings, provided charming details, as well as long life.

The Larimer community's vision drove the design decisions throughout the process. Everything from the housing exterior, interior, roads, landscaping, parks and businesses were tied to the community vision and the impact each element has on the other. These connections were kept in mind and interwoven throughout the process to create a neighborhood that is vibrant, sustainable, while respectful of both its past and its future.
