



# Choice Neighborhoods

e-news about transforming housing, people and neighborhoods

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Governors to Designate Opportunity Zones as Early as March**

The recent tax legislation created the Opportunity Zones program, which is designed to attract capital to distressed communities by providing tax benefits on investments in Opportunity Funds. Several Enterprise postings explain how [Opportunity Zones](#) will work. They note that state governors have [90 days](#) as of December's enactment of the tax legislation to identify census tracts that will be eligible to receive private investment through Opportunity Zones over the next decade. Every state or territory can designate up to 25% of its census tracts that meet qualification requirements. Enterprise has created a [mapping tool](#) that depicts which census tracts meet eligibility requirements based on the two categories identified in the enacting legislation. Enterprise will also hold a [webinar](#) about Opportunity Zones on February 7, 2018.

### **Choice Neighborhoods Conference Videos and Materials**

[Session videos, presentations, and handouts](#) are available from HUD's November 2017 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grantee conference, Choice Neighborhoods: Celebrating Six Years of Revitalizing Communities. Topics include: neighborhood transformation; public safety; employment; school readiness; Critical Community Improvements; placemaking; housing development; and case management for relocated residents. Choice Neighborhoods grantees and their partners are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this exciting content by viewing the session videos and materials.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### **Funding to Reduce Substance Use Among Youth**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration is seeking applications to help establish and strengthen collaboration among communities, public and private nonprofit agencies working to reduce substance use among youth, and address factors in a community that increase the risk of substance abuse. \$15,000,000 in funding is available, with awards up to \$125,000 each. Community-based coalitions are eligible to apply. [Applications](#) are due March 29, 2018.

### **Small Grants for Arts Programs for the Underserved**

The National Endowment for the Arts program Challenge America supports projects that extend the reach of the arts to serve populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability. Local governments, non-

profits, and several other entities are eligible to apply. Matching grants of \$10,000 are available. [Applications](#) are due April 12, 2018.

## EVENTS AND TOOLS

### **Half-Day Online Workshop on Health & Housing Strategic Planning**

CLPHA will provide a facilitated four-hour workshop to aid PHAs to systematically assess their current efforts around health and guide goal-setting and action planning. PHAs are strongly encouraged to convene staff and health partners in-person for this online workshop, as much of the workshop will revolve around facilitated group discussion. The workshop will be February 21, 2018 from 12:00pm – 4:00pm ET and is free for members of CLPHA. [Click here to register](#).

### **The Power of Data – Video from the Affordable Housing and Education Summit**

CLPHA posted a video from the 2016 Summit on Affordable Housing and Education on the power of data. Dennis Culhane, of the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice, shares local examples of data sharing systems, and how data improves life outcomes for low-income children. [View video here](#).

### **Recorded Webinar Series on Health and Housing**

Neighborworks developed a free, four-part webinar series focused on topics at the intersection of health, housing, and community development. Topics covered include healthy communities, healthy homes, healthy people, and building partnerships. [Click here](#) and select “Watch past webinars” to watch the webinars.

## RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

### **Collective Impact: From Theory to Practice**

An [article](#) by the Collective Impact Forum highlights the components of a successful systems change approach, using the example of a juvenile justice initiative in Omaha, Nebraska. In this example, none of the activities taken on required large amounts of funding. Rather, continuous communication among partners drove alignment, shifted mindsets, and changed policies that contributed to school-based arrests declining by 50% from 2015-2016.

### **Building Youth Soft Skills through Employer Partnerships**

Many employers are finding that youth lack the soft skills needed to be college and career-ready. The US Chamber of Commerce Foundation has released a [brief](#) that highlights several employer-school partnerships that have increased student soft skills. The brief suggests approaches employers in your community can use—from mentoring students to helping educators integrate soft skills learning into the classroom.

### **Integrating Work-Based Learning into the Classroom**

Jobs for the Future has released a [guide and tools](#) to increase students’ career and educational advancement through integrating academic learning within the workplace. The guide showcases how several cities and school districts strengthened their work-based learning approaches and provides tools for your community.

## Engaging Kids in Designing and Building Healthy Communities

This [article](#) describes how Raising Places is engaging children and youth in the design process for developing projects that can improve children's health. [Click here](#) to follow this project's progress in six communities across the US.

## Innovative Strategies to Strengthen Father-Child Relationships

In this [brief](#) for practitioners and stakeholders, the Administration for Children and Families share innovations from the Responsible Fatherhood program. These innovations describe a cognitive behavioral workshop that builds employment skills, an approach to strengthening parenting through play, and a phone app that increases engagement and retention.

## Utilizing the Community Benefit Requirement of Hospitals to Leverage Partnerships

Enterprise and the Catholic Health Association (CHA) have released "[Housing and Community Benefit: What Counts?](#)" guidance for tax-exempt hospitals on what housing-related activities they can report as a community benefit to the IRS. The paper provides helpful examples to inform hospitals on their current activities and to identify future opportunities, such as offering home environmental assessments for patients who present to the ER with asthma and creating housing programs for formerly incarcerated individuals.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Getting to Results: Partnering, Problem Solving, and Promoting Children's Health in Cincinnati

In Cincinnati, the Choice Neighborhoods grantee, The Community Builders, and Cincinnati Children's Hospital tackled the seemingly intractable problem of high emergency room use among children living in the target housing. Using a Rapid Cycle Quality Improvement process, they assessed what was driving the problem and removed those barriers. As a result, children's emergency use declined, and the percentage of children with a primary care doctor increased by 77% within one year.



*Figure 1: One of the formerly distressed target properties, after extensive rehabilitation*

housing buildings, were using the emergency room at a high rate. Cincinnati Children's and TCB used the hospital's Rapid Cycle Quality Improvement process to tackle this

In December 2012, The Community Builders (TCB) was awarded a \$29.5 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant to rehabilitate five distressed HUD-assisted housing developments and revitalize the surrounding [Avondale neighborhood](#). TCB partnered early on with Cincinnati Children's and the Avondale Community Council to engage with residents and address health issues. As the grant was underway, Cincinnati Children's and TCB confronted a key health problem: children from the Avondale zip code, and specifically from the five target

challenge.

A team, made up of Cincinnati Children's and TCB representatives, assessed the problem and created a shared goal. They reviewed data and realized the children were coming to the emergency room for non-emergency uses. The team spoke with doctors and residents to understand why. They learned families often did not see a difference between going to the emergency room or primary care. Also, the primary care center at the hospital had no direct bus routes and could feel intimidating since it was on a large medical campus. Residents also pointed out that if they had more than one child, they were not able to schedule appointments for all their children in one visit.

Cincinnati Children's and TCB worked through these barriers. They turned to a Cincinnati Public Schools school-based health center that was close to the target housing. Many families either did not know the clinic existed or assumed it was only for children enrolled in the school. To engage and inform families, a cross-functional team from Cincinnati Children's, TCB, the Avondale CDC and Urban League's case managers knocked on doors, asking families about their needs, letting them know all their children could be seen at the school, and discussing the downsides of using the emergency room in lieu of primary care. To help families determine when they should use primary care versus the emergency room, the team also created a checklist. To address scheduling challenges, partners helped schedule simultaneous appointments for all children in a family.



*Figure 2: A child receives care at the South Avondale School-Based Health Center*

For the first six months, the team tracked their data and progress every week, adjusting strategies as needed. Partners coordinated to provide appointment reminders, follow-up appointments, and personal contacts, resulting in 50% of children making their visits. In total, over 200 children received care. As more children were connected to high-quality, accessible primary care, non-urgent emergency department use declined, and the number of children with a primary care doctor increased by 77% from 2014 to 2015.





*Figure 3: Volunteers support the distribution of safety-equipment packages*

TCB, Cincinnati Children's, and their partners continued to address Avondale's health challenges using a collaborative, problem-solving approach. For example, to reduce high rates of at-home accidents, safety-equipment packages were installed in the redeveloped housing. With the help of volunteer residents and contractor installation crews, over 200 apartments were outfitted with safety equipment including carbon monoxide detectors, baby gates, electrical outlet covers, range control guards, and non-slip tub adhesives.

Reflecting on these achievements, Sarah Soule from Cincinnati Children's explained that high emergency room use is often viewed as an insolvable problem due to personal choice. She stated, "This

success is a testament to the shared vision and trust that was built with TCB and other partners." Jeff Beam from TCB also emphasized how important it was to learn from the data as they went along. Because of this lesson, their data partner is taking on an expanded role as a coordinator among the Choice Neighborhood people partners.

As a result of their strong partnership and work, TCB and Cincinnati Children's, along with the Cincinnati Health Department, have been selected to participate in the nationwide BUILD Health Challenge. Their initiative, called [Avondale Children Thrive](#), will focus on improving maternal and child health in Avondale. The program will employ an innovative health champion model, which is drawn from the community and uses a door-to-door strategy—leveraging trust built as housing providers and neighbors.

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