

Choice Neighborhoods

monthly news about transforming housing, people, & neighborhoods

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants Application Posted

HUD posted the FY 2021 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) on November 17, 2021. Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants support communities that have undertaken a comprehensive local planning process and are ready to implement it. HUD is making available approximately \$218,000,000 for Implementation Grants. The maximum grant award has increased this year to \$50 million. Applications are due on February 15, 2022.

Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Awards Announced

HUD recently [awarded](#) \$3.6 million to eight communities in Annapolis, Maryland; Augusta, Georgia; Brownsville, Texas; Jackson, Michigan; Las Vegas, Nevada; Los Angeles, California; McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania; and Richmond, Virginia. These grants will help local leaders craft comprehensive, homegrown plans to redevelop severely distressed HUD-assisted housing and transform neighborhoods. Read the [grantee project summaries](#).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Economic Adjustment Assistance

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) [notice of funding opportunity](#) is to assist communities and regions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, including historically underserved communities. The funding is for construction and non-construction economic recovery strategies, including water and sewer system improvements, business incubators and accelerators, brownfield redevelopment, workforce training facilities, and telecommunications infrastructure (e.g., broadband). Any eligible applicant from any EDA Region may apply. State and local governments, and public or private non-profits in cooperation with any political subdivision of a State are eligible. Application deadline: March 1, 2022 (there is no formal deadline, but applicants are encouraged to submit as early as possible). Award ceiling/floor: \$10,000,000/\$100,000. Expected number of awards: 300.

National Endowment for the Humanities

The [Public Humanities Program](#) funds planning and implementation for exhibitions, historic places, and humanities discussions. Eligible applicants include small and mid-sized organizations. For more details see this [website](#). Application deadline: January 12, 2022. Award ceiling: planning, \$75,000; implementation \$2,735,000. Expected number of awards: 17.

YouthBuild, Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

The purpose of the YouthBuild program is to [fund organizations](#) to provide a pre-apprenticeship program model that includes education, occupational skills training, leadership development, and post-program placement opportunities to disadvantaged youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who left high school prior to graduation. Eligible applicants include public or private non-profit agencies. Application deadline: January 21, 2022. Award ceiling/floor: \$1,500,000/\$700,000. Expected number of awards: 75.

EVENTS & TOOLS

Positive Youth Development

Child Trends used the [qualitative research method of photovoice](#) to develop five profiles of young adult participants in a job training program partnership that highlights youth-focused experiences with positive youth development (PYD) supports (see this [PILOT tool](#) for more details).

RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

Community Land Trusts & the American Rescue Plan Act

A [community land trust](#) (CLT) is a nonprofit, community-based organization that acquires, owns and stewards land permanently. CLTs are best known for providing affordable homeownership opportunities by retaining ownership of a plot of land and selling the housing on that land to lower-income households.

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT



This year marks the tenth anniversary of Choice Neighborhoods. Over the next several issues, we will highlight three successful grantees who recently completed their Choice Neighborhoods projects: Norwalk, Pittsburgh, and Columbus. We hope these stories will inspire you and reveal what's possible through engaging public housing residents and community members in revitalization efforts.

"Smooth Sailing" in Norwalk, Connecticut as Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Reaches Completion

The final phase of South Norwalk's Choice Neighborhood grant officially opened on September 20, 2021, which marked the conclusion of their Choice Neighborhoods journey that began in 2011.

The Norwalk Housing Authority and the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency led the development of 273 new mixed-income rental units. This includes a one-for-one replacement of the original 136 public housing units. "It was very exciting when people started coming back", said Tom Ivers, CNI Director at the Norwalk Housing Authority. "It's such a transformation. People were very excited on the impact in a part of the city that had no development occur in years". The \$185 million transformation of South Norwalk's "Soundview Landing" community, named for the city's maritime history, is now complete and features neighborhood amenities such as affordable, mixed-income housing close to nearby transit, a commitment to climate change and environmental sustainability with flood mitigation improvements and a revitalized brownfield site, homeowner façade enhancements and improved overall well-being of residents.



HUD awarded a \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant (CNI) for South Norwalk in 2014. The undertaking was based on the community-driven Transformation Plan created through a \$250,000 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant awarded in 2011. Both grants helped to revitalize Washington Village, the oldest public housing site in the state of Connecticut. The site and surrounding neighborhood experienced significant damage and flooding during Superstorm Sandy in 2012. To address flooding - housing, streets, and infrastructure were redesigned to be energy efficient, climate resilient and meet community needs. The redevelopment included raising the primary intersection, buildings, and roadways up six feet above existing grade. In addition, all newly constructed housing is Enterprise Green Communities and LEED-ND certified. Another key project was the renovation of the neighborhood's only significant public open space, the 2.2 acre Ryan Park. Due to the site's industrial past, a brownfield cleanup was completed in 2018 and saw the removal of over 10,000 tons of contaminants. Three abandoned storage tanks were also discovered. Remediation and site improvements included the construction of a clean soil cap and raising the elevation to provide dry egress for the neighborhood during storms. Ryan Park has now reopened to the public and has been improved with new playground structures, art installations, basketball court, splash pad, walking paths, and sustainable landscaping.

The above investments successfully leveraged over \$155 million in key funding from the City, State and federal resources including Superstorm Sandy Disaster Recovery funds allocated by the Connecticut Department of Housing, brownfield redevelopment funding from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and a community-wide assessment grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



A hallmark of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is its focus on not only housing and neighborhoods – but people. Choice Neighborhoods' aim to improve educational outcomes and intergenerational mobility for youth and supports delivered directly to youth and their families. For Washington Village residents, children eligible for kindergarten programs and early learning programs increased from 46% to 78%. A total of 72 original Washington Village families (60%) returned to their improved community after rebuilding. Other achievements include: 42 residents receiving either a certificate or advanced college degree, 12 residents receiving U.S. citizenship, partnering with the Harvard Business School Alumni Club to recruit volunteers to work one-on-one with students, and establishing a \$2,000,000 Endowment Trust for continued supportive services for up to seven years after the grant.

While the transformation of South Norwalk was a success, it was not without its challenges. Construction delays and local restrictions on public gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic sought to impede the process. As a result, many grand opening and community events were postponed or had to be held virtually. Today, Soundview Landing, which sits adjacent to the Norwalk River, is just the beginning of revitalization efforts already underway

in the neighborhood. “An additional 200 apartments have since been constructed and the neighborhood is now a thriving pedestrian center”, said Mr. Ivers.

The South Norwalk Choice Neighborhood highlights residents’ and stakeholders’ commitment to affordability, climate resiliency, education, self-sufficiency, and the importance of implementing comprehensive revitalization strategies that produce positive people, neighborhood, and housing outcomes.

For more information on the South Norwalk Choice Neighborhood, [click here](#).



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