



Choice Neighborhoods

e-news about transforming housing, people and neighborhoods

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Web-Based Training Course for the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (URA)

This 8-part web-based modular training course “URA the HUD Way” provides basic information and resources to HUD grantees and funding recipients on URA requirements for HUD funded projects. URA is a federal law which provides important protections and assistance for people and businesses affected by the acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of real property for federal or federally funded projects. [Module 1 – URA Overview](#) is now available.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Funds for Skateparks in Low-Income Communities

The Tony Hawk Foundation is accepting applications through the Skatepark Grant program to promote high-quality, public skateparks in low-income areas throughout the United States. Grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000 are available to support the design, development, and construction of quality new skateparks on public property that will be available for free. Housing authorities and nonprofits are eligible to apply. [Applications](#) are due January 14, 2019, and June 13, 2019.

Safe Places to Play Grant

The U.S. Soccer Foundation announced upcoming grant cycles for the Safe Places to Play Grant program to support soccer field-building initiatives nationwide. Funds are available for field space that will be used for soccer a majority of the time. Funds may support irrigation, lighting, AstroTurf, and modular athletic flooring material costs. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, city governments, schools, churches, and other nonprofit entities. The 2019 [Letter of Interest \(LOI\)](#) are due January 25, 2019; May 24, 2019; and September 27, 2019.

Environmental Justice Small Grant Program

The EPA’s Environmental Justice Small Grant Program is accepting applications to support community-driven projects that will engage, educate, and empower communities to better understand and address local environmental and public health issues. Eligible lead applicants are nonprofit organizations, tribes, and tribal organizations; however, other entities such as quasi-governmental entities and state and local governments and their entities are eligible to be included as partners in an application and receive technical assistance. Grants will be made for up to \$30,000. [Applications](#) are due by February 15, 2019.

EVENTS AND TOOLS

Information Center for Developing Charter Schools

LISC's [SchoolBuild](#) is an initiative that provides tools and guidance to support the development of charter schools. The guidance offers a centralized, step-by-step resource and is aimed at non-profits interested in developing charter schools. SchoolBuild provides information for all aspects of the process, from assessing readiness to start, to securing financing.

2019 People & Places Conference

The National Alliance of Community and Economic Development Associations (NACEDA) is hosting their annual event April 15-17, 2019 in Arlington, VA. Save the date and stay tuned for more information about the agenda. [Registration](#) is now open, and the first 100 registrants save \$100 through December 10. [Presentation materials](#) from the 2018 event are free and available online (scroll to the bottom).

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Guidance for Affordable Housing Advocates

The Framework Institute in partnership with Enterprise Community Partners developed [a playbook](#) for framing messaging around affordable housing. The playbook offers practical suggestions for language to use, how and when to introduce potentially controversial topics, how to avoid placing blame, and how to create a sense of communal empowerment. The playbook includes practical examples and samples for practitioners and advocates.

EcoDistricts Protocol

EcoDistricts offers a free online copy of their [protocol](#), a comprehensive framework to guide urban and community development from planning to implementation. It's a powerful tool to support community-led neighborhood development focused on equity, resiliency and climate protection. Neighborhoods using the protocol can apply to become a [certified EcoDistrict](#).

GRANTEES IN THE NEWS

Redeveloping Historic School into Affordable Housing

Pittsburgh Housing Authority is using its Choice Neighborhoods funding to [redevelop a school building that sat empty for decades](#). The school is one of the last undeveloped historic sites in the Larimer neighborhood, and residents were concerned about preserving the neighborhood's character. The school will become a 35-unit mixed-income housing project.

SPOTLIGHT: Food Resource Guide in Boston

The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) and City of Boston were awarded a \$30.0 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant (FY2016) for the Whittier neighborhood in Roxbury. Despite its location in the geographic center of Boston, Whittier struggles with a legacy of disinvestment, high crime, and poverty. In addition to replacing obsolete public housing, the Choice Neighborhoods team is working on improving the health of residents, including improving access to healthy, affordable food. To support this goal, BHA's Center for Community Engagement and Civil Rights partnered with the Boston Public Health Commission to obtain a grant called Boston REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health). This grant provided funds to facilitate the [Food Resource Group \(FRG\)](#), a program to engage Whittier Street residents on the topic of healthy food.



Figure 1: The Food Resource Group visits the Dudley Greenhouse to learn about growing vegetables.

The Food Resource Group met one Saturday per month between January and June 2018, hosting community partners such as The Food Project, Daily Table, Fresh Truck, Mattapan Food & Fitness, and others. Each session was held simultaneously in English and in Spanish, using headsets and real-time translation. The group also went on neighborhood tours, played interactive learning games, watched videos and took field trips to partnering organizations and local community gardens. Through these discussions and activities, the group developed a Community Action Plan intended to guide community members and stakeholders during and after the redevelopment efforts, with the goal of building a food system where healthy food is assessable and affordable to everyone. Through this process, residents were able to influence the developer, Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), to include a community garden on-site.

The Food Resource Group and BHA staff identified ten goals in their Community Action Plan: 1) Fresh Truck (a mobile fresh food distributor) regularly visits Whittier St. development, 2) nutrition and cooking classes in the new community room, 3) farmers market within walking distance, 4) on-site community garden, 5) transportation for seniors to get groceries, 6) food access programs are

available, 7) food pantry in the new community room, 8) more local stores accept EBT, 9) discounts for residents for local grocery stores, and 10) improved quality of food access products.

The residents shared about how much they enjoyed participating in the Food Resource Group. Robert Juitt remarked, “It was a wonderful thing to get out and meet your neighbors and do some of the wonderful things we did together. We traveled to different green houses where they grow stuff and all the wonderful vegetables we had the chance to get from the 10-dollar voucher. People really made it work for them. They got the fresh fruits and vegetables that they normally would not get and they found out how to get fruits and vegetables for cheaper prices.” Several residents reported that their involvement made a difference in their personal nutrition and inspired them to eat more fruits and vegetables. The residents also appreciated the opportunity to get to know their neighbors better.

Building on the work of the Food Resource Group, Boston REACH produced the [Food Access Community Resource Guide](#). The guide serves as a resource for practitioners interested in engaging residents to improve healthy food access. The guide includes eight sections – healthy food access, community needs assessment, asset mapping, food retail, food access initiatives, building partnerships, local food partners, and community planning. This tool offers straight-forward and easy-to-digest information that can make the topic more approachable to residents, community development professionals and City leaders.

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