



Choice Neighborhoods

e-news about transforming housing, people and neighborhoods

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Choice Neighborhoods FY2018 Implementation Grant Applications Due September 17

HUD recently posted the [FY18 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants NOFA](#). The NOFA makes available approximately \$145 million to award grants of up to \$30 million each. Applications are due by Monday, September 17, 2018. 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 NOFA and application package must be downloaded from the www.grants.gov site. Potential applicants may submit questions to ChoiceNeighborhoods@hud.gov.

Reminder: Choice Neighborhoods FY2018 Planning Grant Applications Due June 12

The [FY18 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants NOFA](#) makes available up to \$5,000,000 for Planning Grants, including Planning and Action Grants. Applications are due on Tuesday, June 12, 2018. The NOFA and application package must be downloaded from the www.grants.gov site. Potential applicants may submit questions to ChoiceNeighborhoods@hud.gov.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

ConnectHomeUSA Applications Due June 15

HUD has begun accepting applications for ConnectHomeUSA – a HUD designation for PHAs and tribes that seek to expand internet access, computers, and training for low-income families. ConnectHomeUSA sites receive technical assistance from HUD, EveryoneOn, and Enterprise, as well as support and resources from HUD partners, such as BestBuy, Kano, and GitHub. HUD expects to add 35 ConnectHomeUSA sites during this round. PHAs and tribes who wish to apply must fill out a short [application](#) by June 15, 2018.

Registration of Interest for HUD-VASH Vouchers

HUD recently released Notice PIH 2018-07 (HA), which describes how PHAs can register their interest in receiving a portion of the FY2018 HUD-VASH voucher allocation. Interested PHAs must include a letter of support from each partnering VA facility as part of their registration. In order to be considered for an allocation, PHAs must [register their interest](#) by July 2, 2018.

Funding for Placemaking Projects

The National Endowment for the Arts is seeking applications for Our Town, which supports projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes. Local governments and nonprofits are eligible to apply and awards range from \$25,000 to \$200,000. [Applications](#) are due August 9, 2018.

EVENTS AND TOOLS

Webinar and Toolkit to Promote Child Physical and Mental Health

On June 27 from 3:00-4:00 pm EST, the Center for Health and Health Care in Schools will be hosting a webinar featuring their online toolkit, [Partner Build Grow: An Action Guide for Sustaining Child Development and Prevention Approaches](#). The Action Guide provides community and school leaders with tools to develop and sustain school-connected initiatives that promote students' physical and mental health, social-emotional development, and educational success. To register for the webinar, [click here](#).

New Index Measures Inclusion in America's Cities

The Urban Institute released a [new report](#) on inclusive economic recovery in American cities, and implications for anyone working with impoverished communities. Recommendations include adopting a shared vision, inspiring and sustaining bold public leadership, and building on community strengths. The report also includes a [map and explanation](#) of their data analysis methodology to measure inclusion.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Between Public and Private Action: Neighborhood Organizations and Local Governance

An [article](#) from the Nonprofit Quarterly shares lessons learned through the New Communities Program. The program seeks to revitalize urban neighborhoods in Chicago by building the capacity of local organizations and interorganizational networks to plan for and implement community change strategies.

Study on Urban Blight Remediation Finds Linkage to Safer Communities

A [study](#) from the American Public Health Association found conclusive evidence that investment in blight remediation for both abandoned buildings and vacant lots results in decreased gun violence, and yielded significant taxpayer return on investment. Authors conclude that blighted structures create physical opportunities for violence by sheltering illegal activity, and thus, investment to remediate urban blight results in safer neighborhoods.

SPOTLIGHT: Action Activities Build Momentum in Louisville, KY

Early neighborhood activities implemented during and immediately following the Planning Grant process can boost confidence in the neighborhood, respond to community concerns in real time, and help convince skeptical stakeholders that positive change is possible. Through [Choice Neighborhoods Action Activities](#), the Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA), Louisville Metro Government (LMG), and their partners are doing just that. Following on the heels of a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant, LMHA was awarded \$1,000,000 in Choice Neighborhoods Action Activities funding to create physical neighborhood improvements in West Louisville's Russell

neighborhood. These relatively small investments are meeting community needs and signaling that change is happening in Russell.

From the start, LMHA, LMG, and their partners were committed to identifying Action Activities through a community-driven process. Upon receiving the Action Activities award, LMHA held a community meeting to solicit ideas for the activities and build upon the priorities identified in their community-driven [Vision Russell](#) Transformation Plan. To vet these ideas with the broader community, LMHA contracted with the Center for Neighborhoods to conduct neighborhood-wide polling. Neighborhood outreach workers met residents where they were at, conducting the poll at barber shops, at schools when parents were picking up their children, at restaurants, and at other places in the community. The poll helped to identify the highest priorities among residents for neighborhood improvements.

In addition to meeting community priorities, LMHA, LMG, and their partners wanted to ensure that activities had a strong, visible impact, so that people inside and outside of the neighborhood would perceive Russell as changing for the better. Apart from selecting visually impactful activities, they also increased visibility by making sure projects were geographically concentrated, often within physical sightlines of each other. Since the neighborhood is rather large, they targeted activities to a smaller subsection that was near the target housing development and several new

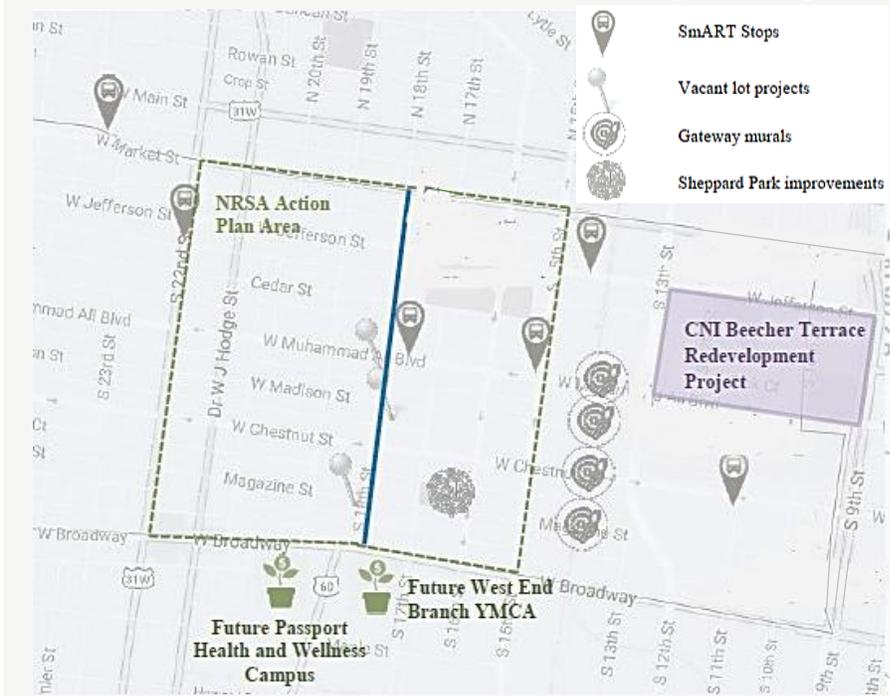


Figure 1: Map of Action Activity locations, targeted in one area of the neighborhood

investments that were underway, including a health campus and YMCA. This area was also adjacent to Louisville's thriving downtown, allowing Action Activities to help breakdown the perceived dividing line between West Louisville and the rest of the City. Using these and other criteria, a committee that included three residents, and representatives from LMHA and Louisville Metro Government (LMG) selected four Action Activities that were proposed to and ultimately approved by HUD.

All of the selected Action Activities improve social cohesion in Russell and establish a shared neighborhood identity through creative projects. One of the Action Activities, Lots of Possibilities, aimed to repurpose four vacant lots in highly visible areas and solicited proposals for ideas from stakeholders and community members. One of the winning proposals creates new spaces for the community by transforming two vacant lots into a public meeting space and pop-up market with repurposed shipping containers surrounded by a community garden and orchard. Another project turns a park with limited, outworn equipment into a neighborhood destination. Using LMG

leverage and Action Activities funds, the park will now include a splash-pad, a tuned drum play area, walking path markers, interpretative signage, new landscaping, and much more.

The third Action Activity, artistic bus shelters known as “SmART Stops”, creates an eye-catching solution to meet some of the transportation needs residents expressed while also representing community values. The Louisville Metro Government paid for the standard cost of a bus shelter, while Choice Neighborhoods funds were used to pay for creative enhancements. One of the five SmART Stops, located in front of Catholic Charities, welcomes people to the area in several languages that reflects the diverse clientele that Catholic Charities serves. A second stop in front of Central High School highlights the school’s academic focus of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).



Figure 2: Mayor Greg Fischer (third person from left) at the ribbon cutting for the new SmART Stop (left). Close-up of SmART Stop design including 'Welcome' in multiple languages (right).

New placekeeping art will also be created in the community in the form of four large-scale murals decorating railroad overpasses. The overpasses in their current state were perceived as dark, unsafe, and unwelcoming, and previously acted to isolate the community from other parts of the city. The murals, which will be featured underneath and on both sides of the overpass, will create welcoming gateways that indicate neighborhood change and celebrate Russell’s history as a center of African American business and professional and social life. For example, the mural on 14th and Magazine Street will showcase Russell historical figures and culture, including images of Harvey Clarence Russell, Sr., the neighborhood’s namesake and a prominent African American educator.

LMHA and LMG have made [great progress](#) on implementing Action Activities so far. Two of the five SmART stops have been completed, one of the four vacant lot projects was completed last year, and improvements to the neighborhood park are substantially complete. LMHA staff report they are already seeing the impact of the Action Activities, sharing that “residents are feeling optimistic and a part of the transformation process.” Neighborhood meetings have been well attended, and community members have actively participated in meet-the-artist activities to provide input on the designs for the murals and SmART stops. LMHA attributes this success to early community engagement efforts – the public meeting, polling, and public solicitation for projects helped to ensure that the Action Activities selected have the full support of the community.

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