



# Choice Neighborhoods

e-news about transforming housing, people and neighborhoods

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **New Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grantees Announced**

On February 27, 2018, HUD [awarded](#) nearly \$5 million in Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant funds to six communities in: Chicago Heights, IL; Cleveland, OH; Huntington, WV; Lewiston, ME; Los Angeles, CA; and Philadelphia, PA. These grants will help local leaders craft comprehensive, homegrown plans to redevelop severely distressed HUD assisted housing and transform their neighborhoods. Three of the awardees will receive an additional \$950,000 for Action Activities. Communities in Lewiston, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia will use these Action Activities funds to build momentum and attract additional investment through activities such as homeowner façade improvements, fresh food initiatives, and economic development projects. Read the grantee project summaries [here](#).

### **Upcoming Choice Neighborhoods Position**

The HUD Choice Neighborhoods Office will be seeking a qualified candidate to join our team. Candidates should have experience in either large scale neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing development, and/or supportive services. The eventual hire will be expected to conduct grant management and other activities in support of the program. The position will be listed as “Neighborhood and Community Investment Specialist” and is anticipated to be posted in Spring, if not sooner, on <https://www.usajobs.gov/>. Please feel free to share this announcement with potential candidates.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### **Opportunity Zones: Updated Mapping Tool with Choice Neighborhoods Filter**

State governors have until [March 21](#) to identify census tracts that will be eligible to receive private investment through the new Opportunity Zones program over the next decade. Enterprise has updated their [eligibility mapping tool](#), which now includes filters for Choice Neighborhoods and depicts which census tracts meet eligibility requirements. Several Enterprise postings explain how the [Opportunity Zones](#) program will work.

### **Technical Assistance Available for Re-Entry Programs**

The Vera Institute of Justice is seeking applications from housing authorities for 14 months of technical assistance to help implement re-entry programs that increase access

to housing for people with prior convictions while also improving public safety outcomes. [Applications](#) are due May 2, 2018.

### **AmeriCorps VISTAs for Public Health, Child Wellness, and Infrastructure Projects**

The Corporation for National and Community Service is seeking applications for targeted priority projects in the following three areas: Healthy Futures - Reducing and/or Preventing Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse; Child Wellness; and Infrastructure. Nonprofits and local governments are eligible to apply. CNCS strongly encourages interested entities to submit an [Intent to Apply](#) by April 2, 2018. The deadline to [apply](#) is May 2, 2018 at 5:00 pm EST.

### **Funding for School-Based Efforts to Reduce Adolescent Risk Behaviors**

The Center for Disease Control issued a new funding opportunity to improve the health of youth through reducing HIV, STDs, teen pregnancy and related risk behaviors among middle and high school students. [Applications](#) are due by April 13, 2018.

## **EVENTS AND TOOLS**

### **Webinar on Data Sharing to Improve Housing and Education Partnerships**

HUD and the Department of Education will host a webinar on March 8 at 3:00 pm EST on improving student outcomes through data-sharing partnerships between public housing authorities, multifamily housing providers, and school districts. The session will introduce attendees to the [Data Sharing Road Map](#), a new resource from HUD and ED, and explore the potential benefits of a data-driven partnership between housing and education organizations. [Click here](#) to register.

### **CLPHA 'Housing Is' Summit**

On May 3-4 in Washington, DC, PHA executives and leadership from partnering organizations will come together for a summit focused on cross-sector collaboration. Highlighting the ways that they can transform systems to better serve low-income people, the Summit will contain two days of plenary speakers/panels, breakout sessions, and caucus discussions. [Register now](#).

### **New App Helps Parents Create Everyday Teachable Moments**

Developed by the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, [Vroom](#) is a free, evidence-based phone application that provides parents with children ages 0-5 specific suggestions on how to engage their child during everyday activities, to help with their brain development. These activities have positive effects on children's development and educational outcomes. For example, parents can talk to children about shapes of food at mealtime, practice counting in the checkout line, or practice colors by playing I-Spy.

## **RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS**

### **Homewise model reduces barriers to homeownership**

An [article](#) by the Urban Institute describes an innovative model for financing a mortgage that allows low and moderate homebuyers to pay only a 2 percent down payment while still eliminating the need for mortgage insurance. By offering financial counseling, homebuyer education, and other services, Homewise clients have lower delinquency rates compared to similar households outside of the program.

## **GRANTEES IN THE NEWS**

### **Milwaukee Builds Upon HOPE VI to Revitalize Westlawn Gardens**

The Milwaukee Housing Authority's Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant builds upon their successful redevelopment of a portion of Westlawn Gardens into mixed-income housing under HOPE IV. Now, Milwaukee Housing Authority and their partners are undertaking efforts to increase access to health care and job training, improve the surrounding neighborhood, and revitalize the remainder of Westlawn. Featured in Milwaukee Magazine, [this article](#) includes an overview of the Milwaukee Choice Neighborhoods initiative and delves into the personal experiences of several residents.

### **Philadelphia Partnership with Temple University to Revitalize Norris Homes**

[This article](#) describes Philadelphia's Choice Neighborhoods initiative, with a focus on Temple University's active role in the grant. The article describes how the Housing Authority, Norris residents, and Temple University shaped expectations for the partnership and neighborhood revitalization.

## **SPOTLIGHT: In Pittsburgh's Approach, Housing Stability is a Central Component of Case Management**

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) and the City of Pittsburgh received a \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant in 2014 for the Larimer/East Liberty neighborhood. Since that time a great deal of progress has been achieved, including completing Phase 1 of the housing and starting construction on Phase 2. Throughout the Choice Neighborhoods redevelopment and relocation process, the Pittsburgh People Team, led by Urban Strategies with the Kingsley Association as the local service provider, has integrated housing stability strategies as a central component of their case management. Through their experience with Pittsburgh and other Choice Neighborhoods, Urban Strategies has found that ensuring residents maintain stable housing takes an intensive, proactive approach, and that improving higher order outcomes in employment, education, and health is predicated on families first achieving housing stability.

Based on data from Pittsburgh and several other Choice Neighborhoods, Urban Strategies found that about one third of residents experiencing relocation require an intensive level of support to help them make the transition. Relocation can be a difficult and sometimes destabilizing process. A focus on housing stability as part of case management is critical to help at-risk residents avoid adverse outcomes such as eviction. While some residents were able to navigate the process mostly independently, others required hands-on assistance and frequent communication to stay on track during the process. To ensure a successful transition, case managers in Pittsburgh reached out to their highest need residents on a daily basis or at least every couple of days, accompanied residents on appointments and meetings with the Housing Authority and their new landlords, became directly involved in problem solving on behalf of the resident with the landlord or Housing Authority when needed, and sometimes were required to provide intensive support to help the household get into good standing with the Housing Authority (such as finding assistance to pay down outstanding rent, addressing household members living onsite who are not on the lease, etc.).

The Pittsburgh People Team also found that it was more effective to proactively check in with residents and see how they can help. While looking for housing, case management staff helped residents expunge criminal records, replace lost documentation needed to

apply for housing, and assist with transportation to see prospective housing options. Some residents are less comfortable asking for help, so case managers also developed close relationships with landlords who could identify red flags indicating a family needed a higher level of support. Missed or late rent payment, utility shut-offs, or other concerns that landlords observe during a routine inspection may indicate that a family needs support. Pittsburgh's People Team approached landlords with Section 8 units through their own research or by referral from the PHA. When residents went to view apartments, the People Team sent staff along to introduce themselves to landlords to help establish a working relationship. Staff explained the Choice Neighborhoods project and their role, offering to be considered a resource if challenges arose. Staff found that landlords can be a crucial partner to maintain housing stability, especially if a relationship is built early on and the focus is on preventing circumstances that would lead to eviction.

During and after relocation, the case managers continue to work with residents on creating and implementing individual and family development plans, focused on topics such as child educational improvement, adult educational advancement, family health improvement, etc. Maintaining stable housing is a key factor for residents to be able to complete their development plans. Housing stability also has a critical impact on child development, as evidenced by a number of [research studies](#).

So far, the Pittsburgh People Team's approach has been successful in supporting residents' housing stability. During Phase 1 relocation, not a single family was forcibly evicted, and each family received customized support to find a unit they can afford that is located conveniently for school and work commutes. Families with children who wanted to stay in the same school were accommodated through a partnership with the school system. With construction complete, thirty-four target housing families have moved into the newly finished development at Cornerstone Village, including Ms. Jumay W. In describing her feelings on moving to Cornerstone Village, she shared that it's a new beginning, stating *"I'm not stuck anymore! I go to church now, I quit smoking... My kids love their home!"*



Figure 1: Ms. Jumay is a proud resident of Cornerstone Village in Pittsburgh.

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