



Choice Neighborhoods

e-news about transforming housing, people and neighborhoods

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grantee Convening

On March 8-9, 2017, the eight FY15/16 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grantees convened at HUD Headquarters to discuss how to engage local partners in creating aspirational and actionable Transformation Plans. Grantee teams included a diverse set of community partners, including resident leaders and representatives from public housing authorities, city governments, non-profits and other local organizations. During the conference, prior Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grantees and community development experts shared best practices related to community engagement, neighborhood revitalization, placemaking activities and early childhood education. To see materials from the convening [click here](#). See the [spotlight](#) below for a highlight of some of the best practices presented on community engagement.

New Underwriting Guidelines Released for Section 108 Third Party Loans

The Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program provides state and local government grantees the ability to transform a small portion of their CDBG funds into a federally guaranteed loan large enough to spur economic growth. To receive a Section 108 loan guarantee, the grantee must furnish additional collateral, such as liens on real property. Another category of collateral is third party loans to another entity, such as a small business. HUD recently published [updated guidelines](#) to assist grantees in underwriting these third party loans to reduce the risk that CDBG funds will need to be used to repay the Section 108 loan.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Wells Fargo Neighborhood Planning and Implementation Grants

The Wells Fargo Regional Foundation awards [Neighborhood Planning Grants and Neighborhood Implementation Grants](#) to support long-term, community-driven neighborhood revitalization in select regions. Implementation grants range from \$100,000 to \$750,000 over 5 years, or up to \$1.25m for collaborative applications with one lead-applicant and at least two sub-grantee partners representing cross-sector services. Nonprofits are eligible to apply by April 7, 2017 for the Spring cycle or October 20, 2017 for the Fall cycle.

AmeriCorps VISTAs for Public Safety and Public Health Projects

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is [seeking applications](#) for targeted priority projects in the following two areas: Healthy Futures - Reducing and/or Preventing Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse; and Safer Communities - Strengthening Law Enforcement

and Community Relations. Nonprofits and local governments are eligible to apply. CNCS strongly encourages interested entities to submit an [Intent to Apply](#) by April 19, 2017. The deadline to [apply](#) is May 10, 2017 at 5:00 pm ET.

Kresge Foundation Funding for Placemaking and Healthy Neighborhoods

The Kresge Foundation focuses on expanding opportunities in America's Cities. Their [Arts and Culture Focus Area](#) supports Placemaking practitioners working in disinvested communities on projects that infuse creativity into comprehensive community development and urban planning practices. Their [Health Focus Area](#) supports place-based, community-driven efforts to promote health and remove barriers to opportunity for people in low-income neighborhoods. Nonprofits and government entities are eligible to apply. Proposals are reviewed on a rolling basis; there is no deadline to apply.

EVENTS AND TOOLS

Upcoming Webinars on Collective Impact and Collaboration

The Tamarack Institute is hosting three community practitioner-oriented webinars: [Collective Impact Lessons Learned](#) on April 13, 2017, 12:00 - 1:00 pm ET; [Action-Oriented Collaboration](#) on April 18, 2017 12:00 -1:00 pm ET; and [Authentic Community Engagement](#) on May 17, 2017 1:00 - 2:00 pm ET.

Webinar on the Historic Tax Credit Program

On May 4, 2017, HUD's Office of Environment and Energy will host an informative webinar to provide clarity on the Historic Tax Credit (HTC) program requirements, dispel myths about the program, and share successful case studies. Registration will open this week on [HUD Exchange](#).

Collective Impact Workshop for Community Practitioners

The Tamarack Institute is hosting [Collective Impact \(CI\) 3.0](#), a three-day intensive workshop for practitioners in early stage, mid stage and later stage community change work. The workshop will explore the latest in the practice of collective impact from experts, practitioners and early adopters of the work. The event will be held on May 9-11, 2017 in Kitchener, Ontario.

Vacant, Abandoned, and Deteriorated (VAD) Properties Training Academy

The Center for Community Progress is hosting two VAD Academies this year. Each event is a two-day "boot camp" for public, private, nonprofit, and community leaders working on tough property challenges. The first will take place in Indianapolis, IN from May 31 - June 1, 2017 and the second will take place in Hartford, CN from November 6-7, 2017. [Registration](#) is \$175, which includes tuition and meals.

New Online Platform Launched for Housing Practitioners – "Housing Is"

The Council of Large Public Housing Authorities launched a new online resource and clearinghouse for housers, researchers, practitioners and others working on housing and community development. The clearinghouse, www.housingis.org, will allow professionals to share resources, join topic-focused communities, contact experts and sign up for events.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

How to Share Data to Improve Educational Outcomes for Children in Public Housing

HUD and the U.S. Department of Education released the [Data-Sharing Road Map](#), a resource that provides practical guidance for establishing partnerships with school districts and using data-driven strategies to strengthen the educational outcomes of children living in HUD-assisted housing.

Research and Best Practices on Developing School/Parent Partnerships

The U.S. Department of Education released [Family-School Partnerships](#) to help schools develop effective strategies to increase parent engagement to better support student performance. This tool includes an overview of key research, best practices, illustrative examples, links to frameworks and supporting research and funding source information.

Report on Creating Change through Arts, Culture and Equitable Development

Policy Link released a policy and practice primer titled [Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development](#) that highlights both promising and proven practices that demonstrate equity-focused arts and culture policies, strategies and tools.

CDFIs – A Financial Partner for Neighborhood Revitalization

In a [blog post](#) from the Build Healthy Places Network, Tim Cerebe describes the revitalization efforts in Roanoke's West End neighborhood, and their partnership with the Freedom First Credit Union, a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). The Credit Union built a new branch in the community that included community meeting space, a commercial kitchen and permanent infrastructure to support a farmer's market. This multi-purpose space is now a resource hub for the neighborhood.

SPOTLIGHT: 2017 Convening – Insights on Community Engagement

On March 8-9, 2017, the eight FY15/16 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grantees convened at HUD Headquarters to discuss how to engage local partners in creating aspirational and actionable Transformation Plans. Grantee teams included a diverse set of community partners, including resident leaders and representatives from public housing authorities, city governments, non-profits and other local organizations. During the conference, prior Choice Neighborhoods planning grantees and community development experts shared best practices related to community engagement, neighborhood revitalization, placemaking activities and early childhood education.

A key theme that ran throughout the [convening](#) was the importance of actively and authentically engaging residents and community members in the planning process. Jocquelyn Marshall, a former public housing resident leader who was involved in a major redevelopment in New Orleans and has since moved out of public housing, shared insights on resident engagement best practices. To help counterbalance the "meeting-fatigue" that can discourage residents from participating, Marshall encouraged grantees to secure buy-in from community "gatekeepers" early on in the planning process. She also recommended that grantees work closely with existing community leadership, such as the Resident Council, minister associations, PTAs, neighborhood organizations and any other established groups. Finally, Marshall advised planning teams to also seek out existing meetings and request time on their agenda to discuss specific issues and get feedback.

Previous Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grantees also shared lessons learned. During a panel entitled [What Will Your Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Accomplish?](#), Sarah Galloway with the Louisville Metro Housing Authority emphasized the importance of running meetings where planning teams talk with residents, rather than at them. After a disappointing first community meeting – which included 11 speakers with PowerPoints – Galloway said the Louisville Planning Grant team adjusted course and tried out alternative meeting formats to increase resident participation. Their meetings included time for eating and socializing, followed by a *brief* talk, and then an open-house during which residents could visit various interactive stations to provide feedback on specific topics, projects or plans. Galloway and Jeana Dunlap, with the Louisville

Metro Government, noted that it's helpful to provide something that residents can see and touch and stated the most effective stations generally included a visual and tactile component.



Figure 1: Residents from Louisville, KY attend open-house style community meetings.

Giving residents the opportunity to learn about planning and enhance their community leadership skills is also critical. During the same panel, Tony Thomas from Spartanburg, SC described his experience as part of the Northside Voyagers, a community leadership group that supported the Choice Neighborhoods planning effort. Participants in the Voyagers program completed a year-long leadership training program to help them more effectively participate in the planning process and engage other residents. Due to the Spartanburg planning team's extensive community engagement, many local residents supported the final Transformation Plan because they could clearly see how their input helped shape it.

Resident and community engagement also was explored during the panel on *The Power of Place-Making Activities*. In Mukul Maholtra's [presentation](#), he encouraged grantees to bring creativity into their community outreach efforts. He emphasized that children should always be included because they see things differently and ask the most important question – "why?" Maholtra also encouraged planners to think creatively about how to solicit input and run meetings, suggesting grantees in warmer climates might try holding meetings outdoors in the very locations their plans target.

The value of residents' perspectives ran through every panel. Panelists advised new Planning Grantees to view resident engagement as a partnership and to take advantage of residents' expertise by asking them to help lead a neighborhood tour or asset mapping exercise. Spartanburg's Tammie Hoy, who is the Project Coordinator of the Northside Development Group overseeing the plan's implementation, encourages teams to be very honest about prospective timelines and anticipated challenges, being careful to under-promise and over-deliver and build momentum by carrying out small projects along the way. Everyone agreed that building community trust and soliciting community input is one of the most important factors in developing a successful neighborhood plan.



Figure 2: (Left) Planner helps a child indicate where in the community she would like to see a new playground. (Right) Planners hold a meeting outside in River District, Sacramento.

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