



Choice Neighborhoods e-Newsletter Issue 35 / February 2015

CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Awards

On January 16th, HUD Secretary Julián Castro [announced](#) a new round of Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants. After a highly competitive process with over 50 applicants, targeted federal investments of up to \$500,000 were awarded to neighborhoods in: Flint, MI; Gary, IN; Louisville, KY; Mobile, AL; North Las Vegas, NV; and St. Louis, MO. These awards will help grantees craft comprehensive, locally-driven plans to revitalize and transform distressed neighborhoods. To learn more about the newest Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grantees, click [here](#).

2014 Choice Neighborhoods Grantee Conference Report

The recently released [2014 Choice Neighborhoods Grantee Conference Report](#) highlights key successes and lessons from Choice Neighborhoods grantees and is a practical tool for local leaders who seek to revitalize struggling neighborhoods. In the report, grantees and experts provide concrete details about what was critical to their success and the steps they took to secure these key elements. Several grantee stories featured in the report have also been showcased in a new [HUD blog post](#).

Important Dates for the New Planning Grantees! Details Coming Soon!

New FY14 Planning Grantees, please save the dates for two Choice Neighborhoods events:

- *February 24th from 3:00 – 4:30 pm EST* – HUD will host a welcome webinar for new Planning Grantees. The webinar will offer an opportunity for new grantees and their partners to learn more about Choice Neighborhoods, what to expect as Planning Grantees, and an overview of the program requirements. Please ask your partners to join as well.
- *April 14th and 15th* – HUD plans to host an in-person meeting for the FY14 Planning Grantees at HUD Headquarters in Washington, DC. The two-day event will include hands-on workshops about neighborhood impact and strategy development and interactive discussions with earlier Choice Neighborhoods.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE AND PROMISE ZONES CORNER

Promise Neighborhoods Training and Technical Assistance Center

The [Promise Neighborhoods Training and Technical Assistance Center](#) is now live. The site is designed for Promise Neighborhoods grantees and any community that is interested in improving cradle-to-career education results for its children. The site offers a toolbox, including evidence-based solutions to reach education goals; best practices in data use, partnerships, finance, and other capacity-building topics; and webinars.

Second Round of Promise Zones Competition Applicants

This spring, at least eight new communities will be designated as Promise Zones. Out of the 123 applications received, HUD intends to designate six urban communities, including one small/medium Metro CBSA. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) intends to designate at least one rural community and at least one tribal community. View the list of applicants [here](#).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Community Economic Development Grants: Jobs and Business Development

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will award up to \$17.7 million in Community Economic Development grants to Community Development Corporations to enhance job creation and business development for low-income individuals. The deadline to apply is April 24, 2015. For eligibility criteria and more information, [click here](#).

Community Economic Development Grants: Food Deserts

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is awarding up to \$9.5 million in grants to Community Development Corporations for community-based efforts to improve the economic and physical health of people in areas designated as food deserts. The application deadline is April 24, 2015. For eligibility criteria and more information, [click here](#).

ArtPlace Announces New Grant

ArtPlace America has launched a one-time grant program which will provide up to \$3 million each to six non-governmental organizations that are interested in sustainably incorporating arts and cultural strategies into the organization's work. The application deadline is March 12, 2015. For more information, please [click here](#).

Environmental Education Grant Program

The EPA's Environmental Education Grants Program will award three grants of approximately \$192,000 each to organizations whose work designs, demonstrates, and/or disseminates environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. The deadline to apply is March 6, 2015. For more information, please [click here](#).

EVENTS AND TOOLS

Early Childhood Teacher Evaluation and Training

Two new tools are available for evaluating the effectiveness of early childhood educators. The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders' [Evaluating Early Childhood Educators Guide](#) discusses how evaluation systems can be developed for a variety of early education settings. Additionally, the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes' [webinar](#) explains how principals can be effective evaluators of early teachers.

Identifying Potential English Language Learners

The U.S. Department of Education has published the first chapter of the “English Learner Tool Kit” to help state and local education agencies quickly identify potential English Learners in need of language assistance services. To access the report, [click here](#).

National League of Cities (NLC) Congressional City Conference

The NLC Congressional City Conference will be held in Washington, DC on March 7-11, 2015. [Click here](#) to register and join other city leaders in discussions on topics ranging from economic development to funding opportunities.

Best Practices for Embarking on a Broadband Partnership

[BroadbandUSA](#) is a new interagency initiative that provides tools and information to help communities secure broadband access. Their latest tool, [BroadbandUSA: An Introduction to Effective Public-Private Partnerships for Broadband Investments](#), offers best practices in developing effective broadband partnerships.

FEMA Youth Preparedness Council

FEMA is accepting applications from youth for the FEMA Youth Preparedness Council. The council brings together youth from across the country to work on disaster preparedness. Applications are due by March 2, 2015. For more information, click [here](#).

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

City Accelerator Guide for Embedding Innovation in Local Government

Living Cities' [City Accelerator Guide for Embedding Innovation in Local Government](#) offers local leaders a practical framework for building a culture of innovation to break through problems facing cities and low-income residents.

After Winning, Then What? An Inside Look at Four Winners of Federal Early Education Grant Competitions

New America has published in-depth case studies on four cities that have successfully built sustainable early education models by leveraging four competitive grant programs: Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, the Social Innovation Fund, Investing in Innovation, and Promise Neighborhoods. Please view the entire report [here](#).

Get a Job: Labor Markets, Economic Opportunity, and Crime

In the West Coast Poverty Center's latest Poverty Research Flash, Robert Crutchfield takes a nuanced look at the relationship between economic opportunity and crime. The full brief can be found [here](#).

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

In the Philadelphia Choice Neighborhood of Sharswood/Blumberg, an innovative model is being used to engage and strengthen the community. As part of the FY 2013 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant, The Enterprise Center CDC will provide their Community Leaders Program for up to fifty community members and other stakeholders, who will serve on the Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan Advisory Committee and task forces.

The Community Leaders Program focuses on building the capacity of community members to invest in and be part of the transformation in their neighborhood. Over a nine-month period, community residents and other stakeholders will be trained to conduct surveys, provide connections to social services, engage in public education campaigns, and develop new initiatives to improve their neighborhood. In order to graduate from the program, participants also plan and implement a service project, which will be coordinated with the Choice Neighborhood "doing while planning" initiative. HUD has recently selected The Enterprise Center CDC's Community Leaders Program as one of 26 [Innovation of the Day Finalists](#) out of 260 nominees. To learn more about the Community Leaders Program, [click here](#).

If you have suggestions for topics or content that you would like to see in upcoming newsletters, please submit those requests to choicetnewsletter@bctpartners.com. Content must be submitted by the 20th of each month to be considered for the upcoming month's publication.