EQUITY AND INCLUSION

INCLUSIVE GROWTH BUILDS STRONG AND RESILIENT REGIONS

A child’s future should not be determined by the zip code he or she lives in. Unfortunately, educational attainment, employment, upward mobility, and even healthcare can be affected by one’s street address and neighborhood.

In communities throughout the country, local leaders are identifying obstacles that limit access to opportunity for Americans. These include land-use decisions, housing policy, transportation investments, and lending practices that make it difficult for people to find quality housing, good schools, public services, stable jobs, or healthy foods—and reflect lasting patterns of segregation with a disproportionate effect on low-income families and communities of color.

By helping all citizens reach their full potential, we are helping to increase US competitiveness. Inclusive regions with lower income inequality, less segregation, and better access exhibit greater economic growth and stability with more chances for upward mobility.

A critical component of HUD’s mission for the past 50 years has been to support planning and urban development efforts that expand opportunity for Americans. HUD’s Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) grants awarded in 2010 and 2011 constitute HUD’s most comprehensive community and regional planning effort in decades. HUD’s SCI awarded funding to 143 communities through Regional Planning Grants and Community Challenge Planning Grants, serving forty percent of the U.S. population.

HUD’s $250 million investment opened the door to hundreds of millions of dollars of public and private investment and engaged more than 3,300 core partner groups nationwide.

HUD’s grantee communities are empowering people historically not involved in community planning and policymaking to get involved in community decisions that affect their daily lives. Grantee activities are leading to new jobs, housing, transportation, and economic opportunities. With the economic and demographic shifts facing our country, ensuring equitable access to opportunity is not just a civic responsibility, but an economic imperative.

BY THE NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>109 MILLION</th>
<th>Total population living in regions that are now measuring access to opportunity as an indicator of economic competitiveness</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Transit systems targeting improved access to job centers for low-income workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Local demonstration projects designed to eliminate barriers to opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td>3,000+</td>
<td>Average number of individual residents engaged in a HUD SCI grantee’s planning project</td>
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HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative grantees have employed the following strategies to enhance equity:

**BUILD INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**

**IDENTIFY REGIONAL BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY**

**PRIORITIZE INVESTMENTS TO EQUALIZE OPPORTUNITY**

**IMPROVE LOCATION OF TRANSPORTATION ASSETS**

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**SCI GRANTEE CASE STUDIES**

**Greater Memphis Area, TN**

The Mid-South Regional Greenprint Consortium, led by Shelby County Government, created the GREENPRINT 2015/2040 plan to address transportation, community health and wellness, social equity, and economic development through an integrated network of green spaces and trails in Greater Memphis. Emphasizing equitable participation and strong representation from minority and low-income communities, the project engaged more than 3,000 residents who provided crucial feedback on the plan and identified underserved areas where Greenprint investments could provide maximum benefit. The Greenprint network of trails will link households across the region, including underserved neighborhoods, to key destinations, such as major employers and services. The Greenprint Consortium committed to the establishment of an outreach council that will monitor potential displacement stemming from Greenprint investments. Other activities include the publication of an outreach toolkit for effective public engagement and incentivizing affordable housing on or near Greenprint corridors.

Learn more at: [http://midsouthgreenprint.org/](http://midsouthgreenprint.org/)

**Lane County, OR**

As part of the Lane Livability Consortium, the University of Oregon led a research/outreach effort to engage the growing Latino community in Lane County. The project produced equity indicators and engagement tools to help public agencies build trust and measure progress on issues important to the Latino community. By providing safe spaces for residents to share concerns and ideas, utilizing trusted informal networks for disseminating information, and improving cultural competency of agency staff, the project reduced isolation, fostered networking within Latino and immigrant communities, and yielded insights on local plans that may not have been captured otherwise. Municipalities will incorporate these findings in the updated Eugene-Springfield Consolidated Plan, which guides the use of HUD block grant funding for affordable housing and community development, and will influence the fair housing plans jurisdictions will begin in Fall 2015. Other Oregon towns look to replicate the process, including training staff on outreach to Latino and other marginalized communities.

Learn more at: [www.livabilitylane.org/](http://www.livabilitylane.org/)

**Piedmont Triad, NC**

The Piedmont Triad region in NC exemplifies a national trend of increasingly concentrated poverty in suburban areas. The Piedmont Together Consortium found the best way to achieve sustainable economic growth was to confront the deep disparities preventing all residents from contributing to regional prosperity. Elected officials, the business community, and leaders of disinvested communities jointly developed an Equitable Growth Profile, discovering regional GDP would be $9.5 billion greater if racial gaps in income were eliminated.

Piedmont Together hosted two Equity Summits to generate tools for increasing access to opportunity. Mayors have been supportive of strategies that would assist disengaged youth, improve transit access, and strengthen career pathways. A workforce training program was launched to build job-readiness skills for living wage jobs. Throughout the planning process, Piedmont Together prioritized inclusive and meaningful engagement with economically vulnerable communities, and has won state planning awards for their approach.

Learn more at: [www.piedmonttogether.org/](http://www.piedmonttogether.org/)

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EQUITY IN THE PUGET SOUND REGION (Seattle, WA)

Connecting Housing, Transportation, and Jobs through Thoughtful Transit Expansion

The Puget Sound region received a HUD Community Challenge Planning Grant and a Regional Planning Grant under the SCI. While the project teams and scope of work were distinct for each grant, stakeholders shared a common organizing framework: capitalize on investments in transit to support equitable development and enhance access to opportunity.

REGIONAL: GROWING TRANSIT COMMUNITIES

The Central Puget Sound Region is poised to make a $25 billion investment in regional transit infrastructure in the coming decades—and is committed to maximizing benefits for low-income communities and communities of color.

To accomplish this goal, the Growing Transit Communities (GTC) Partnership developed an equitable development growth strategy for 74 station areas. The Partnership conducted an opportunity mapping analysis to guide corridor planning and inform regional transportation and housing voucher investments. Forty-two (and counting) jurisdictions and local organizations have become signatories to a Regional Compact that identifies actions to accomplish equitable transit expansion.

With an Equity Co-Chair and a cross-sector stakeholder body, the Regional Equity Network (REN), the GTC empowered low-income communities and communities of color to participate in planning and decisionmaking. The REN convened a Puget Sound Equity Summit to establish a shared agenda for advancing equity priorities.

The region devoted more than 20 percent of its HUD SCI grant to GTC’s Equity Grant Program, which supported 43 community-based organizations as they reached out to citizens, built capacity, and conducted research to inform station-area projects.

REGIONAL EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (REDI) FUND

The GTC Partnership also created a new business tool to overcome the logistical and financial challenges associated with building affordable housing near transit. The Regional Equitable Development Initiative (REDI) Fund is helping developers purchase land for future affordable housing or to rehabilitate or preserve existing affordable housing near transit. The City of Seattle, King County, the State of Washington, and ARCH, a regional coalition for housing, were GTC partners that collectively committed $5 million to seed the REDI fund.

LOCAL: COMMUNITY CORNERSTONES

Seattle’s Community Cornerstones project was initiated in response to accelerated development pressures along a new light rail that runs through lower-income communities in Southeast Seattle. One of the most ethnically diverse areas of the city, Southeast Seattle is home to many refugees and recent immigrants.

To preserve economic and cultural diversity while also supporting newcomers, the project established a TOD acquisition fund to create affordable housing and a commercial stabilization program for small immigrant and refugee-owned businesses. In addition to the $3 million HUD Community Challenge Planning grant, the City leveraged $5.9 million in local public and private sources to support community anchors and prevent displacement.

Community Cornerstones engaged more than 700 residents, building the capacity of immigrant and refugee communities to participate in community decisions. In response to residents’ request for a shared Multicultural Community Center, the City secured a grant to help with the center’s planning, and the project is moving forward under the leadership of historically underrepresented communities in Southeast Seattle.

Building on the work of Community Cornerstones, Seattle’s City Council unanimously adopted a resolution in 2015 that cements race and social equity as the lens of the City’s new Comprehensive Plan, Seattle 2035, which guides the city’s growth and zoning decisions over the next 20 years. The City has developed tools to measure displacement risk and access to opportunity. This approach will ensure that growth does not displace low-income communities and communities of color, and that all residents have what they need to reach their full potential.
TOOLS FOR ADVANCING EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The following tools were developed by HUD and SCI Capacity Building Intermediaries to help communities advance equity and inclusion.

HUD FAIR HOUSING AND EQUITY ASSESSMENT (FHEA)

Seventy-four HUD Regional Planning grantees completed the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (FHEA) as a requirement under the grant program. HUD designed this tool to assist grantee communities in evaluating access to opportunity in their regions, particularly as it pertains to infrastructure and housing. Successful grantees completed a thorough data analysis, facilitated deliberation of the data by community stakeholders, led a collaborative decision-making process, and set priorities for investment to address adverse neighborhood and environmental conditions, often resulting from historic patterns of discrimination. These examples are useful models for communities implementing HUD’s new Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule.

DATA

Grantees teamed with universities and other experts to collect data and learn as much as possible about the trends in their region. In Austin, TX, CAPCOG created a Change Index to measure how indicators of opportunity shifted in the past decade.

Deliberation

Together North Jersey worked with Rutgers University to create an online mapping and data tool that allows viewers to visualize demographic and economic change, health exposures, and school quality.

Decision-Making

The Smart Valley Places FHEA demonstrated the barriers to opportunities for African American, Southeast Asian, and Latino communities in the San Joaquin Valley, CA.

During the deliberation phase, those communities prioritized code enforcement, supermarket access, and infrastructure improvements in high poverty communities; workforce development; and new investments in lower-cost homes in higher opportunity neighborhoods.

INVESTMENT

The City of Madison, WI used their FHEA to evaluate potential locations for a new community center and to inform a common council resolution advancing their equity agenda.

The City is also developing an Equity Impact Model to inform government policies and practices. Dane County, WI drew upon the FHEA to conduct racial equity trainings and has hired an Equity Coordinator for County initiatives.

NATIONAL EQUITY ATLAS

The National Equity Atlas is an online tool that equips policymakers with data to track and measure demographic changes and indicators of racial and economic inclusion at the regional, state, and national level.

This database is publicly available and draws on historical data and demographic projections through 2040. Equity Profiles, produced in partnership with local leaders, use this data to tailor strategies for inclusive growth.

The National Equity Atlas was developed by PolicyLink, one of the SCI Capacity Building grantees that provided technical assistance to SCI grantees, and the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity.

The tool can be accessed here: www.nationalequityatlas.org.

Several HUD SCI grantees used this tool to understand demographic trends in their regions.

- In Kansas City, local and national partners formed a Regional Equity Network to inform policymaking. With data from its Regional Equity Profile, the Mid America Regional Council (MARC) directed $1 million in transportation funds toward investments to further equal access and greater opportunity.

- After Rhode Island’s Equity Profile revealed racial disparities in the state’s labor market, then-Governor Chafee of Rhode Island issued an executive order to increase diversity among government employees and contractors, launching the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Opportunity.

- The Southeast Florida Regional Partnership used the findings of their Equity Profile to galvanize community leaders, the public and private sector, nonprofits, and philanthropies to create a Regional Opportunity Network. This partnership will work to close health, education, and income gaps and promote equitable economic growth.

For more information, please visit the SCI Resource Library: www.hudexchange.info/programs/sci/resources