



Choice Neighborhoods e-Newsletter

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Choice Neighborhoods: Creating Sustainable Neighborhood Improvements Webinar

Creating sustainable neighborhood improvements is a vital component of transforming distressed neighborhoods. Featured in the first [Choice Neighborhoods Promising Practice Guide](#), Boston's neighborhood improvements, funded in part by Choice's Critical Community Improvement dollars, are a diverse group of projects that reach the entire community. In a webinar on June 3rd from 3:00 to 4:00 pm EDT, Bob Gehert, Deputy Director of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development, and several community partners will discuss how the city built upon its existing relationships with community based organizations to select their neighborhood improvements and successfully leveraged Choice funds to lead to broader investments. Both Planning and Implementation grantees will gain insight on creating a coordinated effort for neighborhood improvements, evaluating the neighborhood surrounding their targeted housing sites for investments, and capitalizing on funding sources outside of their Choice Neighborhoods grant. To register for this webinar, visit the following:
<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/583725930>.

Summer Food Service Program Webinar Invite

Summer is nearing and the school year will soon come to a close. Unfortunately, for many school-age children that live in low-income households, this means that they will go without a nutritional meal. Please help us feed kids this summer and assure that all receive healthy, nutritional meals. Please join us on Thursday, May 15, 2014 at 1:00-2:00pm EDT for the "How Housing Communities Can Feed Summer Meals to Children" webinar. Register for this webinar to see what other PHAs and their local service providers are doing to combat hunger, and make meals accessible in their communities. To register for this webinar, visit the following:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DPF87LZ>.

HUD Releases Promise Zones Initiative Stakeholder Webinar Recordings

HUD has released webinar slides and recordings from the Promise Zone Initiative webinars held April 29 and 30, 2014. Topics included:

- The public comment period for the second round of applications
- Eligibility criteria
- Best practices from the first round
- Timeline for the second round
- Details on the President's Promise Zone Budget Proposal
- Questions and Answers

All webcasts are posted at <https://www.onecpd.info/promise-zones/>.

Draft Second Round Promise Zone Application Materials Posted for Public Comment

The second round of Promise Zone designations is planned to open for solicitation in 2014. A minimum of 5 and up to 15 designations will be made in this round. By the end of 2016, 20 Promise Zone designations are expected. On April 17, 2014, HUD published a notice in the Federal Register requesting public comment on the proposed selection process and criteria for the second round of the Promise Zone initiative. The public comment period closes on Monday, June 16, 2014. [Click here to provide written comments on the proposed selection process and criteria.](#) HUD will review all written comments and take them into account as we finalize the Second Round Application so that the initiative can support other communities more effectively in future years.

The [Promise Zones](#) resource page provides application material, FAQs, and other guidance on Promise Zones.



RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Department of Education Releases New Parent and Community Engagement Framework

It is important for schools and districts to discuss ways that they can support parents and the community in helping students to achieve success. The challenge is many states, districts and schools struggle with how to execute these partnerships and cultivate positive relationships with families. The U.S. Department of Education is proud to release the [Dual Capacity Framework](#) for schools and the broader communities they serve to build parent and community engagement. This framework may be used to teach schools, district staff and parents to more effectively work together to increase student achievement. For more information from the official blog of the Department of Education, click [here](#). The introductory video from Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in regards to the Dual Capacity Framework can be viewed [here](#).

The White House Initiative on Education Excellence for Hispanics Announces the Release of the ¡Gradúate! Financial Aid Guide to Success

The White House Initiative on Education Excellence for Hispanics is excited to announce the release of the ¡Gradúate! Financial Aid Guide to Success (Guide). The Guide consolidates and outlines, in a culturally relevant way, information and resources made available to better support Hispanic students in their efforts to enroll and afford a postsecondary education.

The Guide, available in English and Spanish, includes recommendations on how to prepare a college application and complete the Federal Aid Form for Student Aid (FAFSA), helpful tips on how to choose the right college, and types of financing options, including resources for students granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and non-U.S. citizen students. Access the Guide on this [Initiative's web page](#). The guide will also be housed on the U.S. Department of Education's new online resource page, [Educational Resources for New Arrivals & DACA students](#), designed to help the immigrant community navigate the U.S. educational system.

Local Governments Expand Incentive Programs for Technology Companies

Incentives are taxpayer-backed programs used to influence business decisions, spur company investment and/or create jobs in specific locations. In the past several years, incentive use has increased since they are no longer reserved for special projects and are now being offered to entities of all types and sizes. Within the last few weeks, communities in the Greater Washington D.C. area have either proposed or implemented incentive policies to attract more technology companies. To read more about these incentives, click [here](#).

Please give us your feedback!

We work diligently to make this e-newsletter relevant to your work. Please submit Grantee feature articles, constructive feedback, story ideas, and funding announcements to: choicetaenewsletter@bctpartners.com.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Aetna Foundation Announces 2014 Regional Grants Program

The Aetna Foundation is pleased to announce the opening of its 2014 Regional Grants Program – *GoLocal: Cultivating Healthy Communities*. This program is designed to help support initiatives that encourage healthy eating and active living, particularly within low-income, underserved and minority communities. Grants will support local initiatives that promote eating fresh fruits and vegetables and being physically active, which can help to prevent obesity and many chronic health conditions. Applications will be accepted during two cycles: April 10th through June 5th and June 16th through July 30th. Grants will be awarded at one of two levels: \$25,000 or \$50,000 for up to a one-year project period. Click [here](#), to learn more about this initiative.

Nonprofit, Philanthropy and Banking Sectors Partner to Finance Health Center Growth

A new partnership was announced by the Goldman Sachs Urban Investment Group, Kresge Foundation, Low Income Investment Fund, Primary Care Development Corporation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Reinvestment Fund, to finance the expansion of community health centers. Increased demand for health centers has grown due to the increase in insured patients through the Affordable Care Act. The \$130 million, three-year initiative intends to bring much needed capital to the growing healthcare needs of low-income communities. Read more about this newly formed partnership [here](#).



NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

INITIATIVE CORNER

Save the Date for the Promise Neighborhoods Conference, June 23 – 25, 2014 in Washington, D.C.

Choice Neighborhoods grantees are invited to this year's Promise Neighborhoods conference, titled "Pipeline to Success: Engaging School, Family, and Community Partners."

The conference is designed to accelerate local results by strengthening your work with schools, families, and community residents. Sessions will be organized into six tracks: partnering with schools and school districts, integrating physical and behavioral health, safety and well-being, community stability, family and community engagement, and program administration.

Each participating team is invited to bring at least six people to the conference. Additional information about the conference will be available soon. Please contact Anand Sharma (anand.sharma@cssp.org) at the Center for the Study of Social Policy if you have questions.

Do you have a Technical Assistance (TA) Question, Request, or Suggestion?

Grantees with TA questions or requests, or a suggestion for an upcoming TA activity, are invited to submit them to BCT and HUD at hud.gov/choiceta.



RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Lifting the Fog around FHA Lending?

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) is taking new steps to encourage lenders to extend credit to first-time homebuyers and other traditionally underserved borrowers. However, because of the credit risk associated with this target population, lenders may shy away from offering these loans. An Urban Institute report explains the problem that has constrained FHA lending in recent years and looks at how the FHA is attempting to solve it. To read the report, click [here](#).

The Search for Affordable Housing Is Pushing the Middle Class to the Exurbs

One commonly held financial health metric is that a family should devote no more than about twenty-eight percent (28%) of their incomes to housing, but in certain parts of the country, this is not the case. By the end of last year, in areas like Los Angeles, the median amount of income required for housing was more than one third. These proportions are even higher than in the pre-bubble, pre-crash period from 1985-2000. Real estate research firm Zillow recently released new [data and maps](#) that examines the uneven nature of housing prices across several major U.S. cities and metropolitan areas. Click [here](#) to read this article.