

# ***Choice Neighborhoods: Using Critical Community Improvements to Transform Neighborhoods***



***July 16, 2014  
2:00 – 3:00 PM EST***

# Webinar Tips:

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In your attendee control panel, be sure to choose the audio mode you intend to use (telephone or VoIP).

If you find you are having a sound quality issue, hang up and dial back in. Sometimes these problems clear themselves up when the bad connection is terminated.

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Check the volume setting in audio setup. Click **Speakers Setup** and then click **Play Sound**. Adjust the slider bar to the desired volume.

# Webinar FAQs

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## What if I have a question?

We will have time for questions after the presentation. If you would like to submit a question at that time, please type it in to the question box of the GoToWebinar menu bar at the side of your screen.

## Is the webinar being recorded?

The webinar is being recorded and will be available for download after the presentation.

## Have feedback?

You will receive an email with a survey after this webinar is complete. We hope that you take the time to complete this survey as it will help CSSP improve future webinars.

# Purpose

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- Explore Choice Neighborhoods' focus on neighborhood transformation, with revitalized housing as a central component
- Build on the Promising Practice Guide on Boston's Critical Community Improvements
- Dive deeper in to how the City of Boston leveraged their Critical Community Improvement funds to develop creative and strategic neighborhood improvements
- Identify "lessons learned" helpful for other communities

The Promising Practice Guide on Boston's Critical Community Improvements can be found online at:

[www.hud.gov/choiceta](http://www.hud.gov/choiceta)

# Presenters

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- **Mindy Turbov**, Director, Choice Neighborhoods, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Bob Gehret**, Deputy Director, Department of Neighborhood Development, City of Boston
- **Harry Smith**, Director of Sustainable Economic Development, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

# Neighborhood Focus

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- Choice Neighborhoods goes beyond revitalizing public or HUD-assisted housing
- Grantees develop comprehensive neighborhood plans that address broader neighborhood needs:
  - *Public safety*
  - *Local schools*
  - *Employment*
  - *Economic development*

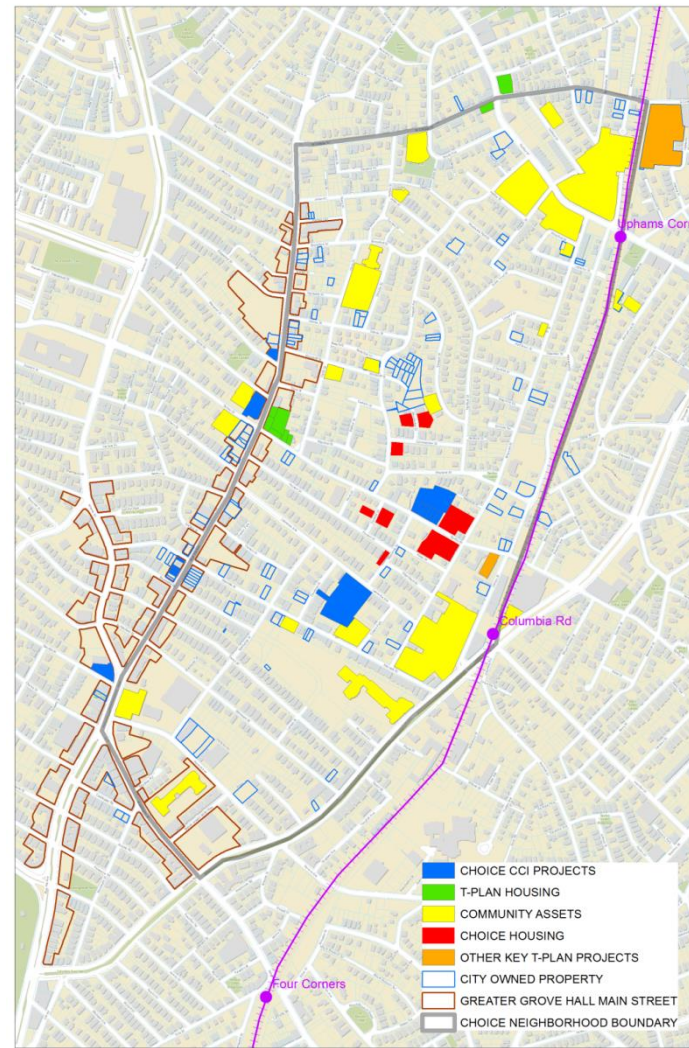
# Critical Community Improvements

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- Critical Community Improvements are innovative projects that reach the entire community
- 15% of the Choice Neighborhoods implementation grant award can be used to leverage these neighborhood improvements
- Strategic use of CCI funds
  - Creatively addressing community priorities
  - Not replacing other dollars
  - Leveraging other dollars

# Boston's Choice Neighborhood

- One of five initial Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grantees awarded in 2011
- \$20.5 million grant to revitalize a housing project in the Quincy Corridor neighborhood
  - About 38% of Quincy Corridor residents have incomes below the poverty line
  - The neighborhood is ½ square mile with more than a third of its housing units subsidized
- Grant award allowed the city up to \$3,075,000 to invest in Critical Community Improvements



Quincy Corridor  
Target Area



# Boston's CCI Collaboration

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- Former Mayor Menino created an advisory committee for the entire Choice Neighborhoods initiative
- Committee included leading community organizations including the city's co-grantee Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, Project RIGHT, and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
- Committee also included representatives of the city departments most involved in the Choice Neighborhoods effort and Quincy Corridor, the Departments of Neighborhood Development, Streets, Public Property, as well as the Mayor's Office of Advocacy and Strategic Investment and the Boston Public Schools' Office of Community Engagement and Circle of Promise

# CCI Advisory Committee's Guidelines

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*Projects must be:*

- Transformational
- Create an obvious physical presence
- Not merely replace money the city otherwise would have invested in the community

# Boston's CCI Projects

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- Bornstein and Pearl Small Business Center (Pearl Meats) - \$500,000
- Façade Improvement Projects/Main Street Revitalization - \$300,000
- Facilities Improvements for Nonprofits - \$200,000
- Grove Hall Wi-Fi - \$300,000
- Playgrounds - \$825,000 and \$450,000
- Additional Commercial Redevelopment & Infrastructure Projects – \$500,000

# Bornstein & Pearl Food Production Small Business Center Leveraged Funds

Sources of Funding for Pearl Meats TOTAL	\$13,987,500
Choice Neighborhoods	\$500,000
Section 108 Loan Guarantee	\$3,200,000
HHS/OCS grant	\$788,000
EPA	\$118,063
New Markets Tax Credit Equity	\$3,761,700
State Government Mass Works	\$1,465,000
Boston Community Capital	\$2,560,000
CEI/Wholesome Wave	\$500,000
Boston Foundation	\$100,000
DBEDC Cash/Equity	\$831,237



# Bornstein & Pearl Food Production Small Business Center





Exterior, after renovations

Interior  
Photographs



# Other Resources and Investments in the Quincy Corridor

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- Designation of the Quincy Corridor as a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) under Boston's Community Development Block Grant Program
- Commercial component of the Quincy Commons housing project - \$920,000 in Section 108 loans and CDBG and Economic Development Initiative grants
- Community Gardens on Leyland Street and the Julian-Judson-Dean - \$297,000 in CDBG
- Greater Grove Hall Main Streets organization - \$150,000 in CDBG
- Acquisition /demolition of decrepit 3-family home on the Pearl Meats sites - \$217,000 in HUD Community Challenge Planning Grant
- Donation of many city-owned vacant land parcels



# Neighborhood Improvements Lessons

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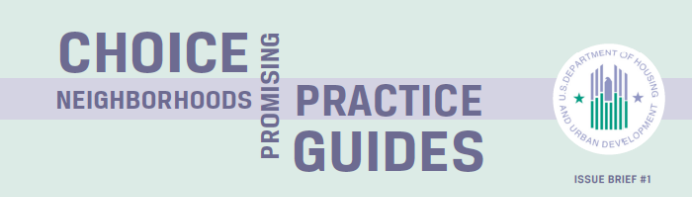
- Engage city leadership at the highest possible level
- Think strategically and develop local guidelines for qualifying neighborhood improvements
- Engage community partners in decision-making
- Listen to all stakeholders involved
- Create synergies across investments
- Leverage other dollars

# Questions and Discussion

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To submit a question to our presenters, please type it in to the question box on the GoToWebinar menu bar on the side of your screen

# To Learn More:



## Creating Choice Neighborhoods: Boston's Critical Community Improvements



### BACKGROUND

Choice Neighborhoods enables communities to revitalize struggling neighborhoods with distressed public housing or HUD-assisted housing. It is accomplishing this goal by providing innovative funding for projects that support revitalization efforts in the neighborhood surrounding the targeted public or HUD-assisted housing. The Critical Community Improvements (CCI) funding, a component of Choice Neighborhoods, allows implementation grantees to allocate up to 15 percent of their total grant award for projects that jumpstart other public and private investments in the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community. Critical Community Improvements promote economic development activities, such as loan or grant funds to attract new businesses, or façade improvements; housing improvements in the neighborhood, such as model block programs or existing homeowner repair programs; or open space and park improvements, such as assistance to purchase vacant land for new parks or community facilities.<sup>1</sup>

This guide highlights the process that the Boston Choice Neighborhoods grant team used to determine the neighborhood improvement projects to fund with Critical Community Improvements dollars. The projects – a commercial food production facility, retail façade improvements, facilities improvements for local nonprofits, community wi-fi, and playgrounds – are innovative and reveal the potential and flexibility of these funds. Boston's story serves as a promising practice for other grantees seeking "out of the box" uses for their CCI funds, as well as other communities seeking to prioritize strategic neighborhood improvements.

### BOSTON'S CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD

In August 2011, the City of Boston and its co-grantee, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC), received one of the five initial Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grants awarded by HUD.<sup>2</sup> Boston is the first city government to be a Choice Neighborhoods grantee.

The \$20.5 million grant is enabling the city and its partners to revitalize Woodlee/Morant Bay, a severely distressed 129-unit, scattered-site – Section 8 housing project consisting of 11 two- and three-story buildings clustered around Quincy Street in the Quincy Corridor neighborhood. Quincy Corridor is situated in the larger Dorchester neighborhood. The developers, DBEDC and Quincy

- Share and discuss the Boston guide with your partners
  - Community-driven process
  - Benefits and impact
  - Lessons learned
- Guide is available online at: [www.hud.gov/choiceta](http://www.hud.gov/choiceta)
- Keep an eye out for new guides based on grantees' promising practices