



Choice Neighborhoods e-Newsletter

Issue 16 · July 2013



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Boston, MA has First Choice Neighborhoods Closing

The Boston Implementation grant is the first Choice Neighborhoods grant to reach the closing table and begin construction. The City of Boston's Choice Neighborhoods Plan, known as the Quincy Corridor Transformation Plan, went to closing on June 28, 2013. The lead grantee, the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), and the co-grantee, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC), a local community-based organization, received a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grant in August 2011.

Woodland/Morrant Bay, the site targeted for redevelopment, is a Section 8, multifamily-insured, scattered-site project in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston; it will be renamed Quincy Heights. Redevelopment will be completed in one phase, including the reconfiguration and renovation of 102 units in nine buildings into 80 units in seven buildings; the demolition of two buildings; and the new construction of 49 replacement units on four adjacent parcels to be acquired by the owner, the Quincy Heights Limited Partnership (the Partnership). The development will be built to Enterprise Green Communities standards of design and energy efficiency. Through ongoing Project-Based Section 8 subsidies units will remain affordable; the Partnership has agreed to maintain affordability levels for a 40 year term. DBEDC is the sponsor of the development. QHI Housing, Inc., an economic development corporation, is the general partner in the Partnership and owns .01% interest in the partnership. The syndicator raised \$20,200,556 in equity in exchange for \$19,806,230 in tax credits, an equity raise of \$1.02 per tax credit dollar.



In addition to the affordable housing component of Boston's Quincy Corridor Transformation Plan, a portion of the Critical Community Improvements funds are being used for an innovative economic development project. DBEDC has partnered with Crop Circle Kitchen to redevelop the vacant, two acre, 36,000 square foot former Pearl Meats Factory building into a multi-tenant food

production facility that will support over 50 businesses and create more than 100 new jobs within the first three years of operation. A \$500,000 Choice Neighborhoods Critical Community Improvement grant was used to help leverage the remaining funds in this \$14 million project, including \$3.8 million in New Market Tax Credits. Small-scale food production businesses will be able to rent this fully-equipped, licensed commercial kitchen; storage space will also be available to rent. Through a shared approach, this facility will fill a gap in the availability of small-scale food manufacturing space in the City, and offer new opportunities for fledgling entrepreneurs to start and expand their businesses. Business owners will also receive technical assistance in areas such as recipe development, bookkeeping, marketing, product sourcing, and bulk purchasing. Construction is scheduled to begin this summer, and the first businesses should be operating on site by spring 2014.

One of the organizations responsible for implementing the Neighborhood component of Boston's Choice Neighborhoods transformation plan, the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), also received a U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhoods Planning Grant for an area that includes the Quincy Corridor. This Promise Neighborhoods Planning grant will bring stakeholders together to better coordinate student-focused literacy, health, and violence-prevention programs. To learn more about Boston's Promise Neighborhoods grant, click [here](#).

The combination of resources from Choice Neighborhoods and Promise Neighborhoods funds will help improve the quality of life for residents of Quincy Heights through improved job skills, education, and access to quality employment. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Boston Choice Neighborhoods grant and the Quincy Corridor Transformation Plan.

Congratulations to the entire Boston Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grant team on this accomplishment. Job well done!

Planning Grantee Forum Recap

On Wednesday, June 26, 2013, HUD and the Choice Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Team (BCT Partners and the Center for the Study of Social Policy) hosted a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grantee Forum at HUD Headquarters in Washington, DC. This one-day forum provided an array of workshops on neighborhood revitalization with leading experts from across the country on topics such as economic development, public safety, sustainable leadership, youth outcomes, and building an education pipeline with early learning providers. Grantees were also able to network with each other to discuss challenges and opportunities in facilitated peer exchanges. Some of the notable takeaways from the forum include:

- **Focus on outcomes:** Ensure that efforts aim to achieve measurable outcomes rather than accomplish a broad vision or mission statement.
- **Recognize the utility of small-scale projects:** Consider the benefit of undertaking small-scale projects with visible results to help change the perception of the community and solicit buy in from long-term residents.
- **Data is power:** In order to develop a viable economic development plan, know as much as possible about your community and neighborhood assets.
- **Expand your network of stakeholders and engage them early:** Think beyond residents and community stakeholders to include civic groups, businesses, and local anchor institutions.

Stay tuned to the Choice Neighborhoods technical assistance [website](#), where all of the materials from the forum will be uploaded in the coming weeks.

Promise Zones Initiative Information Available

Since 2009, President Obama has provided proven tools to combat poverty, investing more than \$350 million in 100 of the nation's pockets of persistent poverty. Building on those efforts, in his State of the Union Address earlier this year, the President laid out an initiative to designate a number of high-poverty communities as Promise Zones, where the federal government will partner with and invest in communities to create jobs, leverage private investment, increase economic activity, expand educational opportunities, and improve public safety. Communities will compete in a transparent process, and be required to demonstrate the strength and effectiveness of their local commitment, to become a Promise Zone. Each designated Promise Zone will be asked to identify a set of outcomes they will pursue to revitalize their community, develop a strategy supporting those outcomes, and realign resources accordingly. For communities selected, the federal government will partner to help the Zones access the resources and expertise they need.

The Obama Administration will designate 20 communities over the next four years – including up to five this year – with an intensive and layered approach to revitalizing communities. This layered approach includes working with local leadership, and bringing to bear the resources of a number of the President's signature neighborhood revitalization initiatives from HUD, the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Agriculture to ensure that federal programs and resources support the efforts to turn around 20 of the highest poverty urban, rural and tribal communities across the country.

Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grantees are eligible to participate. To keep you informed of this effort, a Q&A document has been posted [here](#), which includes qualifying criteria for Promise Zone communities and the full list of communities eligible to apply for the first round of Promise Zone designations. Direct outreach to eligible communities for the 2013 round will begin shortly. In the meantime, information will be updated regularly as new details become available, and in response to questions from the public. Questions not addressed in the posted information should be sent to PromiseZone@hud.gov, so that responses can be posted to the [website](#).

Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

HUD has made \$109 million available in Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grants to revitalize public and HUD-assisted housing and to transform communities. Public housing authorities, local governments, nonprofit organizations, tribal entities, and for profit developers partnering with a public entity are eligible to apply. Approximately four grants will be made for up to \$30 million each. Applications must include a plan to revitalize a severely distressed public or HUD-assisted multifamily housing project located in a distressed neighborhood into a vibrant, mixed income community. Applications are due by September 10, 2013. Click [here](#) to access the NOFA.

Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference

The Center for Community Progress has announced the agenda and program for their upcoming Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference. The conference will take place September 9-11, 2013 in Philadelphia, PA and feature 33 concurrent sessions, seven mobile sessions, and seven in-depth training seminars designed to teach participants how to capitalize on the opportunities that lie in vacant properties. Some of the topics that will be discussed include land banking, community gardens, code enforcement, and tax foreclosure reform. Participants will also be able to attend site visits of successful revitalization efforts in Philadelphia and in adjacent communities. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

NARSAAH Conference

The National Alliance of Resident Services in Affordable and Assisted Housing (NARSAAH) will be holding their 2013 National Conference on October 3-5, 2013 in Miami, FL. The conference includes a comprehensive three-day agenda designed for employees of resident services, leaders of resident councils/resident advisory boards, resident commissioners, and service providers. Conference workshops will cover a range of topics including funding for resident services, reducing health disparities, structuring partnerships with foundations, utilizing community centers effectively, and strategies for accessing and utilizing tenant participation activity funds effectively. Participants are also able to attend one of the three six-hour certificate training programs tailored for public housing authority employees and service providers, resident commissioners, or resident council leaders. Click [here](#) for more information, including the online registration form.

Research Study on the Use of Arts and Cultural Activity in Community Revitalization

The [Kresge Foundation](#) and the [Surdna Foundation](#) are collaborating on research to identify the variety of ways that arts and cultural activities are evident in strategies for revitalizing low-income communities. This research defines art and cultural activity broadly. The research includes the work of both professional artists and amateur practitioners in all artistic disciplines including visual, performing, literary, film, and media. The research also includes activity concerned with a community's cultural traditions in all artistic disciplines including culinary arts, and any efforts that underscore the importance of design, especially design efforts that engage community residents.

This effort is not a program evaluation. The purpose of the research is to get a better sense of the range of ways and frequency with which arts and cultural activity is evident. The aim of the research is to identify evidence of the involvement of artists, cultural tradition bearers, designers, creative community leaders and residents as well as the involvement of arts and cultural organizations of all sizes in community improvement efforts. Research findings are intended to inform the field of practitioners and academics concerned with community arts and culture. To submit examples, or to obtain additional information, please contact Dan Lurie, Director of Strategic Partnerships at the National Endowment for the Arts, at luried@arts.gov.



RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Guidebook to Reduce School Dropout Rates

America's Promise Alliance has updated their online Grad Nation Community Guidebook, a research-based toolkit for communities working to increase graduation rates and better prepare young people for success. The resources included in the Guidebook aim to help stakeholders use data effectively to solicit support, develop an early warning and recovery system for at-risk students, and prepare a long-term action plan. Click [here](#) to access the Guidebook.

Improving Outcomes for Children and Families in Small and Mid-Size Cities

The National League of Cities recently published a new report highlighting promising city strategies to improve the lives of children and families in communities with populations below 75,000. The report, *Municipal Leadership for Children and Families in Small and Mid-Size Cities*, offers an array of activities shared by local officials from more than 40 cities and towns across the country. Efforts in areas such as early childhood development, education, health and safety, family economic success, neighborhood revitalization, and youth and community engagement are covered in the report. Click [here](#) to access the report.

Employment and Training Administration Resources for Job Seekers

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has released two new resources for job seekers and service providers to assist in the identification of quality occupations with both current openings and long-term potential. The first resource is a webinar outlining how to use workforce data effectively to identify jobs with growing demand; the webinar also outlines how to obtain the education and training needed to qualify for the jobs. ETA has also developed a tool for job seekers that analyzes existing online job resources and gives a summary of the type of content found on each resource, such as current job openings, employment projections, wages, employment and unemployment data, and other unique features of the site. Click [here](#) to view the webinar or [here](#) to access the tool.

Indicators of School Crime and Safety

The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics has released its annual report *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2012*. This report explores the nature of crimes occurring both in school as well as on the way to and from school. Data are provided from the perspective of students, teachers, and principals, and is drawn from an array of sources. Topics such as victimization, bullying, school conditions, fights, weapons, students' access to guns without adult permission, the presence of security personnel at school, the availability and student use of drugs and alcohol, and student perceptions of personal safety are addressed in the research. Click [here](#) to read the report.

Job Corps Participants Enrollment

The U.S. Department of Labor's Job Corps program is seeking new applicants to fill immediate openings and return its 125 centers nationwide back to full capacity. Young people ages 16 to 24 who meet low-income requirements are eligible to enroll at no cost. Participating students receive academic and career technical training, room and board, counseling and mentoring services, and basic medical care. Job Corps graduates receive the skills necessary to start a career, enlist in the military, or pursue higher education. Participants also have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma, receive career counseling, and transitional support for up to 21 months after graduation. Click [here](#) or call 1(800)733-JOBS for more information.

The U.S. Department of Education Participates in the "It Gets Better" Campaign

Staff members from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), including Secretary Arne Duncan, have released a video sharing personal stories and identifying tools that support students who are being bullied. Click [here](#) to watch the "It Gets Better" video. Also, ED, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Justice has strengthened their efforts to provide parents, educators, and students with the tools they need to stop harassment, including the resources available on the StopBullying.gov website.

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: choicetanewsletter@bctpartners.com.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

High-Need Community Projects Fund

The Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation Community Partners grant program has made funding available to nonprofit organizations and local municipalities undertaking high-need projects such as building renovations, technology upgrades, and safety improvements. Lowe's Community Partners Grants range from \$5,000 to \$100,000, with most being awarded between \$10,000 - \$25,000. The second cycle for 2013 opened June 1st; the cycle closes July 30, 2013. Click [here](#) to learn more about the grant and to take the eligibility quiz.

Planning Grants to Develop Interventions for Youth At Risk of Homelessness

The U.S. Administration for Children and Families will fund up to 18 grantees to engage in a two-year planning process that will serve young adults involved in the child welfare system who are at risk of being homeless. Each planning process will follow the [Intervention Model](#) developed by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. Grantees will receive up to \$360,000 to develop, refine, and test the core elements of the Intervention Model and to produce a plan with outcomes in the areas of stable housing, permanent connections, education/employment, and social-emotional well-being. Nonprofit organizations, local governments, public housing authorities, institutions of higher learning, and for-profit organizations other than small businesses are eligible to apply. Applications must be received by July 22, 2013. Click [here](#) to view the funding announcement.



NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

INITIATIVE CORNER

United Neighborhood Centers of America Conference

The 2013 United Neighborhood Centers of America (UNCA) Neighborhood Revitalization Conference was held in Washington, DC on June 27 and 28, 2013. The conference brought together community development practitioners, advocates, policy experts, government officials, and neighborhood residents to discuss current challenges and best practices in neighborhood revitalization. Conference sessions included discussions of resident engagement, innovative education practices, using data to drive decision making, and building effective cross sector partnerships. Check the [UNCA](#) website in a few weeks to find videos and other information from presentations. You can read updates from the conference on Twitter using #nr2013.

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

The Built Environment and Public Health

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a new report on how certain kinds of land use and transportation strategies can reduce the environmental and health impact of development. The report, *Our Built and Natural Environments: A Technical Review of the Interactions among Land Use, Transportation, and Environmental Quality*, summarizes trends in land use, buildings, travel behavior, population growth, and the expansion of developed land. Strategies to reduce the impact of these trends are also highlighted. Click [here](#) to read the press release. Click [here](#) to register for the webinar that the EPA will be hosting on July 24, 2013 to give an overview of the findings from the report.

National Initiative on Mixed-Income Communities

Case Western University, with additional funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, James L. Knight Foundation, and the HUD Campaign for [HOPESF](#), has launched the *National Initiative on Mixed-Income Communities* as a research and data resource for those seeking information on creating and sustaining mixed-income communities. Research briefs, case studies, and other publications are available to help guide mixed-income development efforts. Click [here](#) to learn more.

“Housing Opportunity and Services Together” Program Evaluation

In December 2010, the Urban Institute launched the Housing Opportunity and Services Together (HOST) initiative as a new “whole family” approach to coordinating services for residents of public housing by confronting key barriers to self-sufficiency, while simultaneously integrating services for children and youth. The Urban Institute recently released an evaluation of the initiative, highlighting the lessons learned from the implementation and planning efforts at the four HOST sites over the past few years. Click [here](#) to access the brief and to learn more about HOST.

HUD PD&R Research Partnerships

HUD’s Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) was recently granted the authority to enter into research partnerships with outside entities through non-competitive cooperative

agreements. Organizations interested in conducting research on an issue relevant to HUD policy priorities can receive funding from HUD for up to 50% of the cost of the research project. The policy priorities include gleaning knowledge from HUD demonstration projects and developing a better understanding of how housing is a platform for improving quality of life. For more information about PD&R's research partnerships, click [here](#).



GRANTEE FEATURE

Washington, DC Housing Authority's Mobile Green Market: An Oasis in a Fresh Food Desert



The District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) provides quality affordable housing to extremely low-income through moderate-income households, fosters sustainable communities, and cultivates opportunities for residents to improve their lives. In January 2011 DCHA received a \$300,000 HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant for the Kenilworth-Parkside community. (The

Kenilworth-Parkside community is also undergoing educational transformation through a U.S. Department of Education's 2012 Promise Neighborhoods Implementation Grant.)

It was a cold winter day when DCHA announced receipt of the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant, and fresh produce was the last thing on anybody's mind. However, as the planning process progressed and involvement in the community increased, residents identified healthier food options as an important need in the neighborhood. "The area around Kenilworth-Parkside is commonly referred to as a food desert," said Janice Burgess, Deputy Director in DCHA's Office of Capital Programs and Development. With the help of partners, DCHA is able to cultivate sustainable communities and help residents improve their lives. "We got together with Elinor Bacon, DCHA's Kenilworth-Parkside Choice Planner, and reached out to Michael Babin, one of DC's top restaurateurs, who has established a program for bringing fresh produce to

District communities that lack fresh produce options,” Burgess added. Babin is the driving force behind Arcadia’s Mobile Green Market, a 28-foot, farmers' market-on-wheels that brings crates full of local, sustainably produced food for sale across the Washington, DC area, catering to underserved communities that do not otherwise have access to fresh, affordable food. The majority of the vegetables are grown on Arcadia Farm, which is located just a few short miles from downtown Washington, DC, on the historic grounds of Woodlawn Estate.

In addition to providing fresh, local produce, the Mobile Market also comes with something not seen at many stores in the neighborhood — affordability. The Mobile Market carries fresh produce at the peak of its season, in addition to farm fresh eggs, milk, cheese, bread, and meat from a network of local farmers within 80 miles of the Washington metro area. Locally grown products allow for better pricing, which is passed on to the customer. The Mobile Market not only accepts Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) vouchers and senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers, it also has a Bonus Bucks program for low-income families that actually doubles the value of their funds. If a family spends \$10 worth of EBT benefits with the Mobile Market, they get \$20 worth of fruits and vegetables.

The 2013 Mobile Market season began May 1st and runs through October 30th. The Mobile Market makes nine stops through the DC metropolitan area, including four stops east of the Anacostia River. Every Tuesday from 4 pm – 6 pm, it can be found at Circle 7 Express, 740 Kenilworth Terrace NE, in the heart of the neighborhood undergoing a transformation planning effort, with HUD support through a Choice Neighborhood Grant.