



Issue 65 | October 2017

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

FY 2017 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Applications Due by November 22

The NOFA for the FY17 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants has been posted on [Grants.gov](#). Applications are due by **Wednesday, November 22, 2017**. This NOFA makes available up to \$132,000,000 for Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants. Implementation Grants support those communities that have undergone a comprehensive local planning process and are ready to implement their plan to redevelop the distressed public and/or assisted housing and neighborhood. Potential applicants should download the NOFA and related forms from the [Grants.gov](#) website. Questions can be sent to ChoiceNeighborhoods@hud.gov. Additional information, including a mapping tool, can be found on the [Choice Neighborhoods website](#).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Brownfields Cleanup Grants FY2018

The Environmental Protection Agency released [guidelines](#) for funding requests to clean up brownfield sites, advance sustainable and equitable practices and contribute to environmental justice. A brownfield site is land contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, controlled substances, petroleum or petroleum products, or is mine-scarred land. An estimated 38 grants are available totaling \$7.5 million in funding. Local governments are eligible to apply. [Applications](#) are due November 16, 2017.

Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture is seeking applications for two types of grants, (1) Community Food Projects (CFP) and (2) Planning Projects (PP). The Community Food Projects grant supports programs that meet the food needs of low-income individuals, increase local food access, or educate the public about nutrition. Planning Projects grants fund planning efforts for long-term solutions. Nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. [Applications](#) are due December 4, 2017.

AmeriCorps State and National Grants FY2018

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. [Applications](#) are due January 17, 2018.

EVENTS AND TOOLS

Ready to Respond: Tools for Resilience

Enterprise Community Partners produced a [toolkit](#) for affordable housing organizations on how to make their buildings resilient, prepare their staff to handle emergencies and ensure their residents remain safe. View the [Ready to Respond: Strategies for Multifamily Building Resilience webinar](#) for an overview of the background and guiding principles of the Ready to Respond manual.

Online Early Learning Curriculum Free for Public Housing Authorities

Age of Learning's award-winning digital curriculum ABC Mouse Early Learning Academy provides free software for Housing Authorities to use in community computer labs that improve early learning outcomes for children. Free training and promotional materials are also available. To participate, [register here](#).

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Reciprocity: The Key to Better Community Engagement

[Strong Towns](#), an organization focused on improving civic participation to build resilient communities, published an essay, [How to do Real Public Engagement](#). Strategies highlighted include relationship-building with reciprocal benefits, selecting the right space, accessibility, welcoming children and humanizing the event.

Supporting Brain Development in Traumatized Children and Youth

The Child Welfare Information Gateway published a [bulletin for practitioners](#) to better understand trauma and how it effects brain development, as well as strategies for supporting children and youth that have experienced trauma.

SPOTLIGHT

Resilient Housing and Infrastructure in Norwalk, Connecticut

This past September, Hurricane Harvey, Irma, and Maria caused extensive damage to communities across Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico. This damage highlights the importance of designing and building housing that is resilient to natural disasters. [South Norwalk](#), a Choice Neighborhood, had its own experience with 2012's Superstorm Sandy, as well as persistent flooding. As a result, the Choice Neighborhoods Grantee and their partners are incorporating resiliency into their housing and neighborhood efforts.

In 2014, the Housing Authority of the City of Norwalk and the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency were awarded a \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant for the neighborhood of South Norwalk. Part of their Transformation Plan is focused on re-designing the Washington Village public housing development and the surrounding neighborhood with resiliency in mind. The eastern portion of the neighborhood is close to the harbor and lies in a 100-year flood plain. This community suffers from persistent, property-damaging flooding. The community was hit by Hurricane Irene in 2011, and then again by Superstorm Sandy in 2012, while the planning team was applying for Choice Neighborhoods. The storm caused severe flooding at the Washington Village development, destroyed appliances and personal belongings, and displaced almost half of the community's households.



Figure 1: Construction underway at 20 Day Street, Washington Village

Choice Neighborhoods funds were used to pay for a civil engineering firm to develop plans for the resilient new development, which will be LEED certified. When designing new housing, using a green certification program, such as [LEED](#) or [Enterprise Green Communities](#), can help guide the selection of materials and design-choices to ensure a building can withstand the elements. Another key design component for Norwalk is to raise the first-floor residential units by 10.5 feet, and use the ground floor for parking, putting the first habitable floor level at 6.5 feet above the 100-year flood plain elevation.

The City is supporting the Choice Neighborhoods efforts by investing CDBG-DR funds into resilient infrastructure, including raising the intersection of Day and Raymond Streets above the 100-year flood plain level to provide dry egress (see the circular plaza in Figure 2); relocating existing overhead electrical, telecommunication and cable facilities underground; and relocating existing underground switchgear and transformers onto pads located above the base flood elevation. Elevated walkways will provide residents a safe way to exit the development and retreat to higher ground on the other side of a community park. In addition, below the parking garage, galleys will be installed to collect storm-water, separate out oil and petroleum, and allow water to seep into the ground, reducing the burden on the City's storm management pipes.



Figure 2: Ariel view of conceptual plans for Washington Village

Fortunately, flooding is a problem that is well understood and predictable. What is less predictable is resources to rebuild and mitigate damage after a storm occurs. Project manager Tom Ivers recommends that housing authorities make sure they fully understand their flood insurance terms and the process for submitting claims prior to a natural disaster.

As witnessed recently, many communities have become vulnerable to hurricanes and natural disasters. In addition to helping the environment, building resiliently can save money in the face of a natural disaster, help residents by lowering utility costs, and improve quality of life for residents and the surrounding community.

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