COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES APRIL 2023

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES OVERVIEW
NeighborWorks America's Community Initiatives department supports community driven and comprehensive community development efforts to build vibrant, healthy local communities that provide equitable opportunities for people to thrive. Through our programs, we advance:

- **Place-based** community stabilization strategies aimed at creating a strong and balanced real estate market, safe and attractive conditions, and a positive neighborhood image;
- Community building and engagement strategies that **foster resident leadership**, collective capacity, social connections and community health and well-being; and
- **Systems-level strategies** that bring together community stakeholders to address complex challenges to promote community health, wealth and equity.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES TOOLBOX
We achieve these objectives using the following tools:

- Peer Learning
- Technical Assistance
- Thought Leadership
- National Partnerships
- Professional Development
- Research, Case Studies and White Papers
- Grantmaking
- Pilot Programs

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Overview: NeighborWorks defines comprehensive community development (CCD) as a resident-led, place-based, intentional approach aimed at improving lives and strengthening communities. By creating a shared vision, unified strategy, and collaborative structure to attract and deploy resources, this approach creates vibrant local communities that offer people equitable opportunities to thrive.

NeighborWorks recognizes that CCD work requires planning and investment at various stages of implementation and is committed to supporting the network at each stage.

- **Network Capacity Building** – NeighborWorks has been supporting cohorts of organizations at the "emerging, forming and sustaining stages" of CCD efforts. In FY 23, we will offer another round of supplemental grants to support organizations that are seeking to develop or refine plans to guide their CCD strategies, as well as organizations that are advancing best practices in CCD. We will also offer the opportunity for network organizations to join CCD peer exchange cohorts.

- **Training & Professional Development** – CCD 101 workshops are available on-demand for network staff. NeighborWorks is also developing a new training resource and facilitators guide to assist boards of directors in assessing CCD risks, opportunities and impact. Additionally, NeighborWorks is developing a two-day NTI course focused on the principles and application of the CCD framework.

Additional resources:

- CCD Principles Factsheet
- CCD Continuum & Self-Assessment Tool
- CCD 101 Webinar – Comprehensive Community Development: Why it Matters (Passcode: CCD101WEB!)
- Supplemental grants to support planning and implementation

Contact: Elizabeth Celaya and Rachel Fischer

MIDDLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Overview: In partnership with the National Community Stabilization Trust and the national Middle Neighborhoods Steering Committee, NeighborWorks sponsors the Middle Neighborhoods Community of Practice. The Community of Practice is an informal, facilitated network of practitioners, researchers, and policymakers working in the field to strengthen middle neighborhoods. Middle neighborhoods are a category of neighborhoods that are neither clearly healthy and thriving, nor overtly distressed. Long seen as stable communities for middle- and working-class families, today many middle neighborhoods are on the edge of growth or decline. Learn more at middleneighborhoods.org.

- **New Mapping Tool** – On May 11, the Center for Economic Development at Cleveland State University will present a new mapping tool that matches middle neighborhoods with other, similar neighborhoods around the nation. Presenters will describe a new typology of middle neighborhoods, and provide policy recommendations that address what they see as the greatest threats to middle neighborhoods so they may survive as a place where households of modest- to middle-income can buy homes and build wealth. Register here.

Additional resources:

- Past middle neighborhoods webinars
- Middle neighborhoods resource list

- Middle Neighborhoods in the Desert Southwest: A First Look
- Join the Middle Neighborhoods Community of Practice

Contact: Paul Singh

COMMUNITY BUILDING & ENGAGEMENT (CB&E)

Overview: NeighborWorks believes that community residents are the best authorities on what makes their community thrive. We know that resident knowledge, skills, relationships, leadership, and collective ability are the keys to create and sustain positive change. This matters because resident engagement leads to more effective and lasting solutions, ongoing community investment, and the active citizenry necessary to create and maintain vibrant communities where all people can thrive.

The CB&E team supports organizations across the NeighborWorks network to collaborate with residents to realize their shared vision. In particular, we ensure that network organizations are positioned to achieve impact in their efforts to build community, develop resident leaders, and support resident-driven groups.

- **Community Leadership Institute (CLI)** – The CLI is an annual training event that strengthens the voices and skills of resident leaders. The 2023 CLI will take place in San Francisco, CA on October 26-29. To learn more about the CLI, visit the Member Site and register here to join us on May 11 at 4:00 PM ET to talk about how to form your CLI team.

- **Building Leaders, Building Communities (BLBC)** – BLBC is a leadership development program that focuses on resident-led change. It uses a co-facilitator model in which network staff and resident leaders design and deliver a series of training modules. The facilitators guide is available in both English and Spanish and NeighborWorks regularly offers a training course on BLBC as part of the NeighborWorks Training Institutes. This year, we will also offer a course on BLBC offered at the CLI.

- **Dorothy Richardson Award for Resident Leadership** – The Dorothy Richardson Award for Resident Leadership honors the spirit and life's work of Dorothy Mae Richardson, and her neighbors, who sparked a movement in the 1960s in the North Side of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Their leadership resulted in the establishment of the first Neighborhood Housing Services, the forerunner of today's NeighborWorks network. The CB&E program is currently assessing nominations for the 2023 Dorothy Richardson Awards. The honorees will be recognized at the CLI.

- **CB&E Collective and Members Meeting** – The CB&E team supports regular peer exchange through monthly CB&E Collectives. Additionally, the annual CB&E Members Meeting will take place on August 24-25 at the NeighborWorks Training Institute in Chicago, IL. All CB&E members in the NeighborWorks network are encouraged to attend to share and learn about promising practices.

- **CB&E Integration Project** – The CB&E team is currently developing a series of case studies that examine how network organizations define CB&E and understand its value proposition in guiding and implementing community development strategies. The resulting report will highlight how CB&E can contribute to other lines of business, production goals, and/or revenue generation.

Additional Resources:

- Creative Community Development

Contact: Sarah Parmenter

HEALTHY HOMES & COMMUNITIES (HH&C)

Overview: Recognizing the deep ties between community development and health, NeighborWorks supports the network in working "upstream" to improve living conditions and address social and racial inequities. Through HH&C, we help the network to undertake robust resident engagement strategies, shift mindsets, establish health partnerships, integrate a focus on health equity across their organizations, secure grant and capital investments, and measure their impact.

- **Health Equity Action Lab** – In FY 23, NeighborWorks will launch a Health Equity Action Lab (HEAL). Based on our experience bridging health and community development, HH&C has designed a robust curriculum to prepare organizations to integrate and embed health equity within their organizations. HEAL will provide a one-year peer learning opportunity to shift mindsets and actions toward health equity

- **Health Partnership Investment** – Many NeighborWorks organizations are looking to expand health-sector partnerships and secure capital investments for neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing, and other community development projects. To address this opportunity, NeighborWorks has partnered with the Center for Community Investment to assist NeighborWorks organizations in making a case for health-sector investments. For more information, see "From Silos to Collaboration: Building a Health Partner Investment Strategy," which outlines the steps required to launch these capital strategies.

- **Community Health Workers** – During the pandemic, the NeighborWorks network provided rent relief, emergency food assistance, personal protective equipment, and COVID-19 testing and vaccines to community members. This experience resulted in new interest in exploring community-based health service models. In response, NeighborWorks has funded a cohort of network organizations to explore and scale community health worker (CHW) programs to address health disparities. Forthcoming in FY 23, we will release a toolkit to support community developers launch CHW models and integrate them into their programming.

- **Lessons from the Network's COVID-19 Response** – This spring, HH&C will release a new report that highlights how the NeighborWorks network responded to the

pandemic and found ways to shift programs and services, create new partnerships, generate new funding, sustain long-term operations, and keep communities healthy, safe, well, and connected.

Additional resources:

- Advancing Health in Communities: Health Partnership Stakeholders Map and Glossary

Contact: Romi Hall

RURAL INITIATIVE

Overview: NeighborWorks America's Rural Initiative is dedicated to creating vibrant rural communities by delivering a range of essential services through 121 network organizations who have opted in as members of the Rural Initiative. With approximately 20 percent of the nation's population classified as rural, empowering rural-serving organizations is a clear national imperative. Therefore, the Rural Initiative promotes, supports and enhances comprehensive community development – a mix of affordable housing, economic development, and other locally determined strategies that strengthen and revitalize rural communities.

- **USDA Webinars** – The Rural Initiative is hosting a bi-monthly webinar series with the USDA Rural Development. The series is intended to build connections and (re)introduce USDA RD programs which may directly benefit network organizations. Webinars have featured the Self-Help Housing and Rural 502 Direct Loan programs, Rural Utilities and Infrastructure, and Rural Business Cooperative Services.

- **Rural Lending Collaboration** – This year's rural lending cohort consists of five organizations that are focused on expanding their homeownership lending programs through new partnerships and collaborations with other nonprofits and local governments. They are all located in rural communities with recreation or tourism-based economies that have experienced drastic increases in home prices during the pandemic. The Rural Initiative is supporting cohort members in tailoring their lending products to new rural populations while offering peer-to-peer learning around the issue of providing affordable workforce housing.

- **Manufactured Housing** – Manufactured housing represents a potential untapped, affordable housing solution in communities across the country. NeighborWorks and Next Step, Inc. recently partnered together to develop "Manufactured Housing: A Resource for Engaging Nonprofit Boards and Community Stakeholders" to assist organizations in talking about manufactured housing and its benefits with different board-level audiences. This toolkit includes two PowerPoint templates tailored to nonprofit and local community development boards. This new resource joins the original "Blueprint for Affordability and Community Impact" and a new Training course around inclusive zoning, currently under development, in supporting organizations to better understand manufactured housing.

- **Digital Inclusion** – NeighborWorks is sponsoring two Digital Inclusion Cohorts in partnership with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA). This cohort reaches organizations in every geography, urban, rural, or suburban, across the entire NeighborWorks network. The entry-level *Digital Navigator Cohort* is providing tools to help participants learn to become a digital navigator, a trusted guide who assists community members in internet adoption and the use of computing devices. The intermediate level *Digital Capacity Building Cohort* is focused on building a working knowledge of digital inclusion strategies, learning best practices from around the country, and gaining experience with tools and resources from NDIA.

Additional Resources:

- Manufactured Housing: Blueprint for Affordability and Community Impact
- Manufactured Housing: A Resource for Engaging Nonprofit Boards and Community Stakeholders

Contact: Sarah Kackar and Elena Kaye-Schiess

SHARED EQUITY HOUSING INITIATIVE

Overview: Beginning in FY19, NeighborWorks America has received several special appropriations from Congress to launch and support the Shared Equity Housing (SHE) Initiative. Through this initiative, NeighborWorks is building the capacity of nonprofit organizations to use shared equity strategies to develop long-term affordable housing options, build wealth for lower-income families in collaborative ways, and create vibrant and equitable communities.

The SEH Initiative supports an array of models that employ resale restrictions and community control to make housing units affordable and keep them affordable even as the families who live in them transition in and out over time. By building housing with lasting affordability that can serve a community over generations, these models result in a range of positive outcomes for families and promote neighborhood stability.

- **Capacity Building Resources** – NeighborWorks is continuing to provide capacity building, technical assistance, training and evaluation assistance to support the creation or expansion of shared equity approaches in the network. This spring, we opened applications for the third round of production and capacity-building grants, with funding announcements anticipated in May.

Additional Resources

- View "Shared Equity & Cooperatively-Owned Housing: A Guide to Navigating the Models" for more information about shared equity models.
- To learn more about lessons from the first three years of the initiative, see the report "Advancing the Promise of Shared Equity Housing Models."

Contact: Jenee Gaynor