

Partnership **Update**

 news and information from *The Partnership for New Communities*

Partnership Touted as Model for Collaboration

Advisory Committee Member Highlights Collaboration in Speech to National Civic Leaders

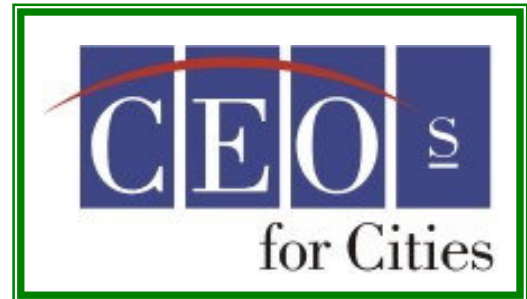
In a May 6 speech to the group CEOs for Cities, Partnership Co-chair Jonathan F. Fanton detailed the success of Chicago's government, corporate, nonprofit, and philanthropic CEOs' collaborations around "a big challenge."

Fanton, President of the MacArthur Foundation and member of CEOs for Cities, spoke to those gathered at the group's national meeting in Chicago about the use of collaboration in ensuring the success of what he referred to as "the largest transformation of Chicago's urban landscape since the great fire" – the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation.

Fanton detailed what he considered good examples of "how changing times blend with an innovative partnership, enabling government, business, universities, community groups, faith communities, and philanthropy to work together in a new way to take advantage of the responsibility and flexibility that has devolved to Chicago." He highlighted such examples as The Partnership's efforts and outcomes in the advancement of employer-assisted housing, the establishment of job opportunities and job training for community residents, the improvement of educational opportunities, the recruitment and expansion of neighborhood businesses, and the development of useful market research, among others.

Fanton concluded his comments, saying: "We will know in two to three years whether Mayor Daley's bold vision will be fulfilled. I am confident it will."

CEOs for Cities is a national, non-partisan alliance of cross-sector urban leaders, including mayors, corporate executives, university presidents, and heads of business leadership groups, foundations, and other civic organizations. Based in Chicago, the group's mission is to equip urban leaders across sectors and cities to strengthen urban economies through an exchange and application of best practices, ideas, and advocacy. Mayor Daley is one of the group's co-chairs.



New initiative moves CPS teachers to head of home-buying class

Community partners gathered to formally announce their support of new incentive programs at "Sweet Home Chicago," a free homebuyer fair held on May 14. The event was designed to educate CPS teachers about affordable homeownership and provide information about other housing resources and programs available citywide. Pictured are Maria Hibbs, executive director, The Partnership; Barbara Eason-Watkins, chief education officer, Chicago Public Schools; Chicago Housing Commission Commissioner Jack Markowski; and Alyson Cooke, director, External Resources, Chicago Public Schools. **See story on p. 4.**

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Off to a good start

LISC/Chicago's Near West Center for Working Families celebrates new clients and programs within months of opening

Since its launch in February 2005, the Near West Center for Working Families (CWF) has enrolled 39 clients, and plans to enroll at least 24 new clients in the coming months.

A festive evening orientation session on April 5 formally kicked off the CWF and included a range of speakers, each of whom detailed new program options available to participants.

April also brought a close of the free tax preparation services, which had been available to participants since January; Mid America Bank opened approximately 20 accounts at the tax site, making direct deposit of the tax refund possible for each new account holder.

Near West also held its first group-based financial education workshop, as the Center for Economic Progress (CEP) ran a session called "Understanding your Credit Report." Near West has asked CEP to run at least 5 additional workshops on a variety of topics throughout the coming year.

LaSalle Bank to provide emergency loan products to CWF clients

LaSalle Bank has created a new emergency loan product specifically for LISC-supported Centers for Working Families (CWF). The pilot program uses small unsecured loans as tools for economic empowerment.

Targeted toward CWF clients, the program provides small loans (\$300-\$1000) to those who have limited resources to utilize in an emergency situation (i.e. medical emergency, car breakdown, etc). Instead of using a payday loan to get through a difficult financial time, clients of the CWF financial education program would have access to a small consumer loan from LaSalle Bank for their emergency needs. The loan term is 12 months with the customer receiving a payment book to handle monthly payments. Though each loan is underwritten, relaxed credit guidelines are used for this program. The CWF financial counselor will assist the program participant with completing the simple, one-page loan application.

This two-fold approach will empower recipients to take charge of their individual economic development by promoting their financial literacy, increasing their familiarity with banks, and improving their overall financial status.

Research on Employment in Public Housing Released

The Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families (**Jobs-Plus**), a large-scale employment program implemented in six housing developments between 1998 and 2003, markedly increased public-housing residents' earnings. Chicago was not a site for the program, but its impact on public-housing residents in Baltimore, Chattanooga, Dayton, Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle is noteworthy as community leaders consider employment options for Chicago's public-housing residents.

The program, involving all working-age, non-disabled residents and implemented by a collaboration of local organizations, had three key components: employment-related services, rent-based work incentives that allowed residents to keep more of their earnings, and activities to promote neighbor-to-neighbor support for work.

A March 2005 report published by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MRDC), details the findings. Here are some highlights:

- Four of the six study sites built substantial Jobs-Plus programs.
- Once Jobs-Plus was in place at the four sites, it increased both employment levels and the earnings of residents (including those who eventually moved away) relative to a comparison group. This impact was sustained over time at three of the sites.
- The large positive earnings effect in stronger implementation sites held for a wide range of residents defined in terms of gender, race or ethnicity, age, past employment, past welfare receipt, past duration of residence, and future resident mobility.
- The positive effects on individual earnings were more likely to translate into more earnings across the housing development as a whole in sites where fewer residents moved out. However, these effects did not spark changes in overall social conditions or quality of life in the developments.

This report in its entirety can be found at <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/405/full.pdf>

Chicago Community Ventures Selects Participants for Small Business Development Initiative

Eleven high-potential small businesses located within communities undergoing transformation will receive capital support, two years of comprehensive counseling, and technical assistance through Chicago Community Ventures' Small Business Development Initiative. These services will help the local businesses strengthen their existing infrastructures, preparing them to take advantage of and benefit from any planned development and transformation in their surrounding communities.

A kickoff training class was held in April for the selected companies: Cequr Securities, Café Penelope, Arts of Life, Left Wing Scenic, Fulton Street Baking LLC, Ineeka Tea, Eagle Grinding, Erica Enterprises, Neleh Artistic Expressions, Publicity Works, and Educational Service Associates.

SBDI Participant Wins Innovative Illinois award

In her March 28 article, "New products steeped in conventional ideas", *Chicago Tribune* reporter Ann Meyer reports on the success of Ineeka Tea. This SBDI participant recently received an Innovative Illinois award, sponsored by the Chicago West Side Entrepreneurship Center with funding from the state's Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, recognizing the innovation and business acumen of its founder, Shashank Goel.

Goel devised "Brew-Tache" infusion system (pictured), a disposable infuser—featuring pre-measured, whole-leaf tea—to help tea-drinkers enjoy premium organic tea, which his family (owners of Tea Group Inc.) has been growing for generations. Born and raised on a tea plantation, Goel has been promoting his family's tea in this country since 1996.

Tea Group Inc.'s Ambootia Tea is currently sold in bulk to upscale restaurants and distributed internationally; Goel would like to see his Ineeka Tea on the shelves of specialty food stores. Through a mix of innovation and enterprise, Goel is succeeding in delivering tea from Indian fields to American tables.



Employer-Assisted Housing Catching On

Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) has been successful in recruiting a number of companies to move forward with EAH programs in support of the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation, including a variety of educational and financial institutions. The following list of companies demonstrates MPC's progress toward its goal of securing 20 employer commitments by the end of 2005:

- Walsh Companies
- Draper and Kramer
- MB Financial
- First Midwest Bank
- Charter One
- MB Real Estate
- Illinois College of Optometry
- Mellish and Murray
- Swedish Covenant Hospital
- Metropolitan Planning Council
- De LaSalle Institute
- Chicago Public Schools
- University of Chicago & Hospitals
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- Midway Moving Company
- Bank One (under Chase Management)
- Advocate Bethany Hospitals
- National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice

More information about MPC's project can be found at www.reachillinois.org.

New Initiative moves teachers to the head of home-buying class

New assistance programs help to make dreams of home-ownership reality for CPS teachers

A \$250,000 grant to the Children First Fund will help teachers in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to purchase affordable, market-rate homes in the Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA) mixed-income developments. Administered by the Teacher Housing Resource Center (THRC), the CPS Teacher Homebuyer Assistance Program (THAP) will offer participants interest-free, forgivable loans to be used toward down payments and closing costs on new homes.

"Partnering with CPS and the City to provide an additional incentive for teachers to choose the CHA's mixed-income developments clearly supports The Partnership's objective of attracting a broad range of homebuyers to transformation communities," explained Partnership Executive Director Maria Hibbs. "These new developments greatly expand housing choices for CPS teachers. At the same time, CPS teacher homeowners can be significant contributors to building community, particularly during the early phases of the new developments."

THAP's basic program, with \$500,000 in funding from CPS and the Chicago Department of Housing, offers \$3,000 to teachers who buy homes anywhere in the city. The Partnership's support provides an additional \$4,500 for teachers who purchase homes in any of Chicago's new mixed-income developments. The incentives are available to CPS teachers who are first-time homebuyers with at least one year of academic service to CPS.

A March 13 *Chicago Tribune* article ("City schools to offer mortgage assistance to teachers") reported that Peck Elementary teacher Kathe Myers qualified for the program and attended a homebuyer class before making plans to use the incentives to move into her condo in the Westhaven Park neighborhood in summer 2006. "It is a good time to be a teacher in the Chicago Public school system," Myers said.

Chicago Public Schools CEO Arne Duncan said that the THAP is a "great example" of how Chicago works together to support education. "Being able to offer brand-new affordable housing in great neighborhoods helps us recruit and retain the best teachers for our schools. The Department of Housing, the Chicago Housing Authority and The Partnership for New Communities have been invaluable partners in the program," he said.

"We are delighted to work with new partners to further increase the mortgage resources available to Chicago's hard-working teaching professionals," said Housing Commissioner Jack Markowski in announcing The Partnership's support on May 14 at "Sweet Home Chicago," a free affordable-housing fair for CPS teachers that attracted an estimated 400 teachers. **(Photo on p. 1.)**

CHA CEO Terry Peterson invited those at the expo to become part of one of the country's most ambitious housing and community development efforts. "Teachers will find diverse, healthy and affordable communities in our new mixed-income developments. Because of their professional status, teachers will automatically be natural role models for these neighborhoods," he said.

More information is available at <http://www.teacherhousing.cps.k12.il.us/>

Mayor Announces Support for Incentive Programs

Announcing his support of the Teacher Homebuyer Assistance Program (see above), Mayor Daley pointed to the value of having teachers as community members. "When teachers live in the city, they participate in civic life by joining block clubs, community organizations and other groups that are dedicated to improving our quality of life. It's easier for them to come in early, or stay late, to tutor children, coach teams or advise student organizations.

"One of the top priorities of my administration is to keep Chicago affordable for people of every age, income and background. Another high priority is to continue the year-to-year improvement of the Chicago Public Schools by attracting the very best teachers. This program will help us meet both those goals."