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# Partnership **Update**

 news and information from *The Partnership for New Communities*

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## **Bank of America awards \$1 million to Partnership** ***Gift to support employment opportunities, economic development***

Bank of America recently awarded a \$1 million grant to The Partnership for New Communities - the largest corporate gift The Partnership has received to date.

The grant will support economic development and employment activities, primarily Opportunity Chicago, a five-year, \$23 million workforce development initiative to help 5,000 residents of public housing prepare for work, find a job and remain working – ideally progressing along a career path.

The grant was part of a \$5 million commitment announced in December to provide funding for several initiatives assisting Chicago residents and supporting city neighborhoods.

Bank of America, which completed its purchase of LaSalle Bank in October, also committed to sustaining LaSalle's and Bank of America's combined philanthropic giving in Illinois at over \$14 million per year.

"Both Bank of America and LaSalle have shown extraordinary corporate leadership in Chicago and to The Partnership in particular," said Partnership Executive Director Maria Hibbs. "LaSalle was our first corporate contributor in 2003, just after The Partnership was formed. Bank of America has been active on our Advisory Committee and has provided previous support for Opportunity Chicago. And both institutions have worked to hire public-housing residents."

With the recent grant, Bank of America's investment in The Partnership totals \$1.55 million.

**(continued on p. 5)**



***Mayor Daley announces Bank of America's \$5 million commitment in local grants at a press conference in December.***

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## **Cook County housing CEO, former resident to lead CHA**

Starting January 16, Lewis A. Jordan, a seasoned public-housing director and former corporate executive, will head the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA).

Jordan, 48, is no stranger to public housing. Born to parents living in the CHA's Rockwell Gardens development on the city's West Side, he said he feels both knowledgeable about and well connected to the issues public-housing residents often face.

Before taking his post at the CHA, Jordan served as executive director of the Housing Authority of Cook County, supervising the management, operation, maintenance and

**(continued on p. 3)**

**Partnership awards grants nearing \$4.6 million in 2007**

The Partnership for New Communities' grant-making activity reached an all-time high in 2007 with nearly \$4.6 million issued to 17 not-for-profit organizations. Funds were allocated to projects supporting the people and places affected by the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation.

The largest portion of funding supports workforce development, with almost \$3.7 million granted to programs within Opportunity Chicago, the collaborative, five-year initiative created to help develop new employment opportunities for 5,000 public-housing residents by the end of 2010. (See *related story on p. 6 describing The Partnership's 2007 Economic Development Initiative*)

"We believe that work is the critical pathway to family self-sufficiency and community stability. But we also recognize that many residents of public housing face significant barriers to employment. Removing those barriers requires a major commitment not only on the part of residents themselves, but also the systems that assist them," said Partnership Executive Director Maria Hibbs.

"Opportunity Chicago is a cross-sector commitment by business, government at all levels and philanthropy to both assist residents in preparing for and finding work today as well as achieving longer-term system changes," Hibbs added.

In addition to launching high-quality programs, Opportunity Chicago is streamlining and enhancing service delivery through better inter-agency coordination. The initiative involves employers in meaningful ways to increase their satisfaction with the hiring process and prospective employees. Opportunity Chicago is also expanding training programs through public-private workforce partnerships in five high-growth industries with large numbers of entry-level positions and opportunities for advancement.

**Partnership Update**

January 2008

The Partnership for New Communities is a funders collaborative bringing together business, civic and philanthropic leaders to invest in strategic economic development, community-building and employment-related initiatives to promote large-scale improvements in the neighborhoods most affected by public-housing transformation in Chicago.

*Partnership Update* is published regularly by The Partnership for New Communities to provide information on a variety of topics, including status reports on the CHA's Plan for Transformation, updates on The Partnership's activities and projects and highlights of relevant research findings.

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During 2007, The Partnership funded programs from every Opportunity Chicago strategy area supporting transitional jobs, innovative contextualized literacy programs, customized skills training, and industry specialists who developed employer relationships in several key employment sectors. Last year's funding also supported technical assistance for service providers and the Chicago Jobs Council's ongoing management, coordination, and communications efforts on behalf of the initiative.

Several, new Opportunity Chicago programs have already launched, with others scheduled to begin early this year. Look for highlights and success stories in future issues of *Partnership Update*.

The Partnership will continue to support workforce and economic development programs in 2008, along with an ongoing commitment to documenting and tracking the physical and socio-economic changes in Chicago's "transforming" neighborhoods.

**New CEO at Chicago Housing Authority** (continued from p. 1)

**Mayor Richard M. Daley introduces Lewis Jordan as the CHA's new CEO during a press conference in December.**

financial aspects of more than 2,000 units and 13,000 Section 8 vouchers within the agency's jurisdiction. Prior to that, he was the executive director of the Rockford Housing Authority and had a 19-year career in management and human resources at Allstate Insurance in Northbrook.

"I've done this for the last six years, so I have plenty of recollections of the families and the trials and tribulations they go through in public housing," Jordan said at a news conference in December. "I think a big part of my communication strategy is one that's grassroots – sitting down and talking to residents."

One of Jordan's biggest responsibilities will be overseeing the CHA's 15-year Plan for

Transformation involving the construction or rehabilitation of 25,000 units of public housing, with almost 7,000 being built in new mixed-income developments.

"I believe Lewis Jordan brings with him the personal background, professional credentials and sense of commitment required to complete the objectives of the Plan for Transformation," said Mayor Richard M. Daley. "I have told him the program won't be completed until every qualified family who wants to transition to a new or rebuilt home is able to do so."

This year, the CHA expects to deliver more than 1,000 new units for families and senior citizens, bringing the current total to upwards of 17,000 new or rehabbed units – almost 70 percent of the project's final goal.

But Jordan stressed the extensive effort needed to ensure residents don't feel overlooked and have access to what they need for a better quality of life. "This isn't just about brick and mortar," Jordan said. "This is about transforming lives."



The Partnership for New Communities was featured as a model of civic leadership engagement on the November 29 Smart City radio program.

Host Carol Coletta interviewed Partnership Executive Director Maria Hibbs for the weekly hour-long public radio talk show, which examines ideas and trends in urban life through discussions with national and international public policy experts, economists, business leaders, artists, developers and planners.

Click here to hear the interview:

[http://www.smartcityradio.com/smartcityradio/past\\_shows.cfm?showsmartcityID=369&PageNum\\_getsmartshows=1](http://www.smartcityradio.com/smartcityradio/past_shows.cfm?showsmartcityID=369&PageNum_getsmartshows=1)

**Fed forum focuses on advancing low-wage workers**

Opportunity Chicago was among the initiatives highlighted at *Strategies for Improving Economic Mobility of Workers*, a conference sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago on November 15 and 16.

The event, co-sponsored by the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, presented research findings and illustrated policies, practices and initiatives affecting low-wage workers.

Conference speakers included Alan Blinder, former vice chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and professor at Princeton University; Edward Lazear, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers; and author and journalist Alex Kotlowitz.

Maria Hibbs, executive director of The Partnership for New Communities, moderated a panel of experts discussing "The Power of Public-Private Partnerships."

Panelists included:

- Bob Giloth, director of Family Economic Success at the Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Evelyn Diaz, deputy chief of staff to Mayor Richard M. Daley
- Donald Sykes, president and CEO of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Development Board
- Bob Straits, director of the Employment Management Services Division at the Upjohn Institute
- Brenda Palms-Barber, CEO of the North Lawndale Employment Network, a Partnership grant recipient providing employment services as part of Opportunity Chicago

Panelists shared how public-private partnerships leverage resources, build capacity, improve flexibility, foster creativity and strengthen results.

For further information about the conference, visit

[http://www.chicagofed.org/community\\_development/2007\\_mobility\\_of\\_workers\\_conference\\_session1.cfm](http://www.chicagofed.org/community_development/2007_mobility_of_workers_conference_session1.cfm)

## The Partnership for New Communities

*Civic Leadership for Chicago's Neighborhoods*

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**\$1 million Bank of America grant award** (continued from p. 1)

At a press conference announcing the bank's \$5 million commitment, Mayor Richard M. Daley recognized the importance of the bank's philanthropic investments. "It's a great source of our city's strength that we have businesses like Bank of America who demonstrate their commitment to communities by improving the well-being and quality of life for all Chicagoans," the Mayor said.

"Bank of America has a long history of supporting organizations in the heart of Chicago's neighborhoods," said David Rudis, Illinois president, Bank of America. "We are pleased to partner with the City of Chicago to assist in meeting the important priorities of this community."

The \$5 million philanthropic commitment announced in December will be distributed to help meet the following community needs:

- *\$2 million* for Chicago mortgage foreclosure prevention, including \$1 million to Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago for its Home Ownership Preservation Initiative
- *\$1.25 million* for new workforce opportunities, employment training and services for Chicago residents, including \$1 million to The Partnership and \$250,000 to the Chicago Workforce Board
- *\$1 million* to local human service organizations that assist qualifying residents with home heating bills
- *\$750,000* to support Chicago teenagers in apprenticeship and internship programs that help develop their workplace and financial literacy skills

Bank of America has been an active contributor to the betterment of Chicago neighborhoods for many years. It previously announced a \$70 billion community development goal in Illinois for the delivery of capital and credit to low-income, moderate-income and minority communities.

The bank has also provided \$128 million in financing to redevelop the former Henry Horner Homes, Hilliard Homes, ABLA, and Stateway Gardens public-housing sites under the Chicago Housing Authority's 15-year Plan for Transformation.

**Earned Income Tax Credit Day is January 31***You can help*

Social Security and income taxes often concern low-income workers who earn an honest living but still find themselves in tight financial situations.

Many are unaware of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), adopted by Congress in 1975 to provide workers with an incentive for employment while helping to alleviate some of the burden associated with tax deductions. When an individual's EITC amount exceeds the amount of taxes he or she owes, the outcome is a tax refund to those who apply and meet the requirements. To create awareness of this credit and to assist workers in finding out if they qualify, the Internal Revenue Service began EITC Day. This year, EITC Day is January 31.

Started in 2007, the goal of this day is to publicize the importance of this anti-poverty credit. Those with limited English proficiency, nontraditional families and childless workers may benefit greatly from this legislation but may simply be unaware of the requirements.

If you know someone who may qualify for this program, please be a partner in getting the word out by visiting [www.irs-eitc.info/SPEC](http://www.irs-eitc.info/SPEC) for a 2008 EITC Partner Toolkit. This online kit is designed to ensure people get the information, tools and products they need to learn more about EITC.

Information about the closest free tax preparation site is available by calling the IRS toll-free line: (800) 829-1040.

**\$2 million initiative lures commercial corridor growth**

*Winnie Robinson, an intern with Cleanslate, works to enhance the appearance of the Madison Street retail corridor as part of the Near West Side Community Development Corporation's Madison Retail Development Initiative. Cleanslate has partnered with the Near West Side CDC on the project with support from The Partnership for New Communities.*

Some of Chicago's most promising neighborhoods are getting a boost for commercial development through a \$2 million initiative funded by The Partnership for New Communities.

Launched in 2007, the three-year strategy aims to stimulate job growth and retail and service opportunities by attracting private investment along three commercial corridors on Chicago's South and West Sides: Madison Street between Sacramento and Ashland, State Street between 31<sup>st</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Streets, and Cottage Grove between 41<sup>st</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Streets. All grants will assist organizations in establishing these corridors as attractive and dynamic destinations for investors, residents and visitors alike.

In many of Chicago's Near West and Mid-South Side communities, housing built under the city's Plan for Transformation and other private construction have outpaced retail development. Commercial corridors in these neighborhoods have, for decades, offered little more than a string of vacant lots, liquor stores and currency exchanges.

Neighborhood residents, including market-rate buyers, renters, those purchasing affordably priced homes and occupants of public housing are demanding more, and several community-based groups are listening.

"Our plan is for The Grove [Cottage Grove corridor] to become a pedestrian-friendly destination - a South Side neighborhood similar to attractive commercial locations on the North Side," said Bernita Johnson-Gabriel, executive director of the Quad Communities Development Corporation (QCDC). "We want this to be a place where families will come to eat at their favorite restaurant, then spend some time walking the street and shopping. The Partnership has taken an active, hands-on approach from day one to help build momentum for The Grove."

To date, The Partnership has granted \$745,000 through its economic development initiative, including \$415,000 for progressive development projects like QCDC's Cottage Grove Revitalization Initiative and the Near West Side Community Development Corporation's Madison Retail Redevelopment Initiative. Both projects include such activities as conducting market studies, overseeing neighborhood clean-up and beautification, and installing vibrant neighborhood banners.

The accomplishments, dedication and hard work put forth in the first year of the strategy clearly show that plans have kicked into high gear.

**(continued on p. 7)**

**Initiative aims to lure commercial growth** (continued from p. 6)

“Taken together, the efforts of our partner organizations add up to a promising model and step-by-step process for commercial development in urban neighborhoods,” said Maria Hibbs, executive director of The Partnership for New Communities. “Get the data. Make the business case. Engage the community. Create a destination. Lease the properties. These communities have plenty of purchasing power, and we want to help them demonstrate their market potential.”

The monies within the current initiative will be allocated primarily to small business development and consulting; economic development program support for community-based organizations - including capacity building and technical assistance; corridor beautification; branding and marketing; and “green” initiatives.

The \$745,000 issued to date supports the work of the following organizations:

- Sustain Inc. - \$80,000
- Metropolitan Planning Council - \$30,000
- Near West Side Community Development Corporation - \$205,000
- Taproot Foundation - \$100,000
- Quad Communities Development Corporation - \$210,000
- Women’s Business Development Center - \$120,000

Prior to the launch of its economic development program, The Partnership awarded \$840,000 in grants for projects to attract commercial development and strengthen small businesses, collaborating with Chicago Community Ventures, Civic Consulting Alliance, Metro Chicago Information Center, QCDC and Women’s Business Development Center.

**Opportunity Chicago unveils marketing, branding strategy**

**OPPORTUNITY**  
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Opportunity Chicago has launched a new marketing effort aimed at increasing awareness about the initiative’s mission and impact.

The project’s partners have been working with a design team to create a brand identity, new brochure, presentation and Web site.

Opportunity Chicago’s industry sector specialists are now providing their business contacts with a brochure touting the initiative as a “valuable resource for Chicagoland employers.” It features information on the ways businesses can participate in the effort, as well as the benefits of getting involved. Industry specialists are also using the professionally designed presentation as an effective tool when communicating with groups of employers.

The Web site is being used to inform various audiences about Opportunity Chicago’s efforts. The site – [www.opportunitychicago.org](http://www.opportunitychicago.org) – offers details on the initiative’s work “illuminating opportunities for success.” Pages on the site contain information about Opportunity Chicago’s history, mission, partners and clients - including employers and residents, and success stories.

This new effort is part of Opportunity Chicago’s larger communication strategy. “We are grateful to The Partnership for its support of this effort. There are great things taking place throughout this initiative, and we’re excited to have new ways of sharing them with and engaging the full range of our stakeholders,” explained Leise Grimmer, project coordinator for Opportunity Chicago at the Chicago Jobs Council.

This year, communication efforts for the five-year initiative will include media outreach and resident marketing while continuing to effectively interact with the initiative’s business and civic partners. Opportunity Chicago is a collaborative effort to help 5,000 public-housing residents prepare for, obtain, and advance in employment.

**'Big Shoulders' report highlights Opportunity Chicago efforts**

The Chicago Jobs Council pointed to Opportunity Chicago as a promising workforce development model that should be expanded in a measured report following its 2005 *Big Shoulders, Big Challenges* publication on the city's public-funded workforce development system.

*Big Shoulders, Big Challenges* examined public funding for workforce development and made recommendations on building a stronger system for disadvantaged job seekers and the business community.

Over the past two years, there have been significant changes in funding – both positive and negative. Several important federally and state-funded programs have suffered cuts, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Employer Training and Investment Program (ETIP), and Workforce Investment Act (WIA). But others, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and various programs targeting persons with disabilities saw an increase in allocated funding.

The most recent report, *Big Shoulders, Big Challenges: An Update on Workforce Development Funding in Chicago*, issued by CJC In December 2007, provides current analysis, comparisons, and set of recommendations based on fiscal year 2006 data.

Download the full report from CJC's Web site, [www.cjc.net](http://www.cjc.net)

**Investor Impact: Bank of America**

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, more than 75 growth-oriented inner city entrepreneurs from across the country gathered in Chicago for "**Inner City Capital Connections**," (ICCC) a day of education and networking with equity capital investors. ICCC is a partnership between the Inner City Economic Forum, a program of the national non-profit Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC), and Bank of America Capital Access Funds (BACAF), a division of Bank of America and a leading private equity investor in underserved markets.

Building from ICCC research that seeks to understand the role of growth financing capital in inner city companies and the challenges for suppliers of equity capital conducting inner city deals, this event sought to bring resources and investment opportunities together.

"In a very short time, ICCC has shown that inner city companies are not only ready for growth capital – they are hungry for it and willing to do all that it takes to build strong sustainable businesses," said Manjari Raman, senior vice president of ICIC. "A majority of the companies participating in ICCC call the experience transformational and within months show a dramatic spurt in growth. For the first time, we are actually able to see the direct connection between access to capital and its steroid-like impact on entrepreneurship in the inner city. For private equity investors in the US, this opens up a whole new asset class for investments."

For more information, visit [www.icic.org](http://www.icic.org)