

**NEW YORK STATE COMMUNITY, OPPORTUNITY  
AND RE-INVESTMENT INITIATIVE SOLICITATION OF INTEREST (SOI)**

**I. PURPOSE OF SOLICITATION**

New York State is taking a comprehensive look at how multiple investments in a particular neighborhood can be better coordinated and aligned behind evidence-informed practice to increase impact and promote efficiencies. The Community, Opportunity and Re-Investment initiative (initiative) seeks to build the well-being of communities and assure that all New Yorkers have the opportunity to thrive in a safe and stable community from a supported childhood to a productive adulthood. This approach coordinates and builds on the combined knowledge and skills of multiple entities including state and local agencies, community residents and civic leaders. It recognizes that social problems are interconnected and so solutions must be as well. Service sectors addressed by this initiative include but are not limited to: public safety; housing; education; labor; economic development; health (including mental health); and children and family services.

In New York State, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent in cities within which certain neighborhoods face multiple and long-standing barriers to success. Despite substantial investments, outcomes achieved as a result of these expenditures are not uniformly successful, and the combined impact of those expenditures is not measured in a consistent or uniform manner. This initiative builds on and will more effectively support local public and private efforts that are underway in many of these neighborhoods by aligning the commitment and resources of State government behind evidence informed programs, in a place-based approach. This alignment is intended to transform communities by:

- Identifying neighborhoods with the greatest social and economic needs;
- Helping neighborhoods identify the specific, measurable results they seek to improve residents' well-being including identifying early intervention opportunities to improve the lives of residents, improving the quality of life within a neighborhood context, and linking activities to measure collective impact;
- Better aligning existing public and private resources to support neighborhood-based interventions that are successful in improving outcomes for residents.
- Developing strategies that match promising practices to the unique challenges of each particular neighborhood;
- Building partnerships among public and private, city and neighborhood-level organizations that together can provide a "continuum of solutions that ensures good results throughout the lives of residents;
- Supporting communities that demonstrate readiness to partner across sectors and respond to these strategic approaches.

The purpose of this solicitation is to identify a single organization within each eligible city, defined in section two below, to work with New York State to develop and implement comprehensive, coordinated place-based strategies. The key characteristic of these organizations is the ability and willingness to lead a cross sector partnership that includes multiple organizations and local leaders.

For purposes of this initiative "place" is defined as the physical, social and economic environment that affects residents' access to a safe place to live, acceptable housing alternatives, healthy and affordable

food, quality health services, education and occupational skills training, jobs, transportation and other determinants of health and well being. Place may be a single neighborhood or several within a given city.

The overarching vision of this initiative is to improve the collective impact of services, supports and opportunities available at the neighborhood level in order to measurably impact the following goals and objectives:

1. Reduce crime and create a safe environment;
2. Address poverty through support for education and employment opportunities;
3. Produce and support a skilled workforce that has access to jobs;
4. Strengthen social bonds;
5. Improve health throughout the lifespan;
6. Improve educational outcomes;
7. Ensure equal access to necessary human services to eliminate disparities in outcomes; and
8. Ensure access to safe and affordable housing

While the long-term aim is to improve multiple results as part of broad neighborhood revitalization initiative, participating cities may find it useful to focus initially on several specific objectives as steps towards achieving a broader community agenda.

## II. ELIGIBLE CITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

A lead organization may be a unit of local government, a non-profit or any other entity that has demonstrated success in organizing a similar complex, multi-stage project ( including financial capability) and a track record of successful cooperation with multiple organizations.

Lead organizations interested in working within one of thirteen cities listed below are invited to submit letters of interest. These cities were selected based on data showing a presence of high need census tracts and neighborhoods as measured by crime, poverty, unemployment, substandard housing, health status and educational attainment data. Neighborhoods within each of the cities listed below will be the initial focus of this intervention:

- Albany
- Binghamton
- Buffalo
- Mt. Vernon
- Newburgh
- New York City (all 5 counties/boroughs)
- Niagara Falls
- Poughkeepsie
- Rochester
- Schenectady
- Syracuse
- Troy; and
- Utica

### III. INFORMATION REQUESTED

Organizations that wish to be considered as the leader of a cross-sector partnership are asked to describe the following (Note: We are seeking ONE letter of interest from each lead organization representing a cross-sector partnership within each eligible city):

1. The neighborhood(s) within the identified cities that would most benefit from a place-based approach to improving the quality of life for residents, and why. Use relevant data such as population demographics, crime statistics, unemployment, educational attainment, and housing and health outcomes to describe the objective neighborhood conditions that stimulate interest in this initiative. Provide a clear geographic boundary for the selected neighborhood. Discuss any neighborhood assets that can be built on.
2. Information about the potential lead organization that will represent and organize the cross-sector partnership including that organization's ability to bring together relevant partners to implement the stated objectives. The quality and capacity of organizational leadership, both individuals and collectively, will be a crucial to initiative success. Specific to the organization designated as the community lead, please explain how that organization will work as a leader and a participant in a cross-sector partnership including experience with the following:
  - Creating strategic and accountable partnerships;
  - Collecting, analyzing and using data for learning and accountability
  - Designing and implementing strategies based on the best available evidence
  - Developing financing approaches that better align and target resources to neighborhood goals and strategies;
  - Managing a community process designed to improve results for individuals, children and families
  - Working with neighborhood residents as leaders, owners and implementers of neighborhood transformation efforts;
  - Addressing policy and regulatory issues that create barriers to the delivery or receipt of services;
  - Using communications strategies to build public and political will; and
  - Building organizational and leadership capacity.
3. Desired Outcomes for the identified neighborhoods as follows:
  - Specific outcomes the partnership hopes to achieve through an integrated, place-based strategy, and the corresponding phases of how this plan would be implemented;
  - The proposed approach to creating an integrated continuum of solutions that brings together public and private resources to achieve the priority results at the neighborhood level;
  - How the neighborhood's residents and change leaders will be involved in the initiative to ensure that changes made are relevant, and responsive to residents over time; and
  - How the partnership expects to sustain the changes made over time, across different local administrations and leadership, to assure continuity.
4. The lead organization and a list of the organizations that together seek to achieve the objectives described in section one of the solicitation. Potential participants may include, but are not limited to: local elected officials; community leaders; school districts; criminal justice agencies and police;

housing authorities; health and human service agencies; child welfare and social services departments and nonprofit providers; the One-Stop Workforce system; community not-for-profits; businesses; local philanthropic groups; and faith-based organizations.

5. The capacities of the proposed members of the community-based coalition as they relate to the following: experience serving residents or otherwise addressing resident needs in the defined neighborhoods (or in similar neighborhoods) and if possible in the selected community by each of the identified organizations; experience in serving children and families, working with criminal justice agencies and offenders, addressing economic/community development, working with local health care providers, building affordable housing, improving substandard housing stock; and receiving and expending public funding subject to audit. If available, provide outcome data that shows the impact of programs(s) on individuals and families in the city and if possible in the anticipated neighborhood.
6. Current partnerships and connections within the city and if possible within the selected neighborhood and how these would relate to the entity that will take the lead in this initiative. Provide notable examples of community organization/mobilization efforts and innovative ways in which local organizations have created strategic partnerships and connections within the city and if possible within the proposed neighborhood.
7. Community and organizational experience with national place-based initiatives or philanthropic place-based investments. A number of federal place-based initiatives are in the planning or implementation process including Promise Neighborhoods, Choice Neighborhoods and the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (“NRI”). These models share several common elements with New York’s approach, and links to further information about them are included below. Entities currently participating in one of the above programs, or any-other externally-funded place-based strategy with similar goals should describe how that involvement will complement the current proposal.
8. Letters of support from the organizations and/or leaders that will be part of the cross-sector partnership. A letter of support from your city’s chief elected official is required; additional letters expressing support for the cross-sector partnership for the purposes of this initiative will be very helpful.

#### IV. FUTURE SUPPORT

Participating entities representing cities and neighborhoods will receive the benefit of multiple state agencies working together to coordinate, integrate and streamline resources around local priorities and needs. Efforts will be undertaken to help align and integrate, within a neighborhood - the resources and commitment of local funders and community partners to achieve common goals and objectives. In addition, organizations evidencing interest may be provided the following supports through subsequent solicitations:

1. **Planning:** Neighborhoods may be provided assistance with local planning to achieve the neighborhood revitalization results they select, facilitated by a state-supported coordinator. The planning process for each neighborhood would begin with a needs assessment and evaluation of existing/ongoing neighborhood plans and priorities. A state-sponsored Community Conditions Survey (“CSS”) may be completed in each neighborhood (described below). A state-supported local

coordinator may be available to work with neighborhood stakeholders to review various program models and develop a plan to best address the priority needs of the selected neighborhood.

2. **Community Conditions Survey.** A Community Conditions Surveys (CCS) can identify infrastructure interventions that address community conditions such as crime, public health, housing, and economic development. Proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear of and incidence of crime, and to improve a host of other community issues as well. Participating communities may receive the benefit of technical assistance to implement a CCS tailored to this project including:
  - A software program, research and evaluation association, or some combination thereof, designed to draw data from local programs and agencies to assist in better identifying unmet needs, overlapping services, and intervention points for residents to prevent future distress.
  - Coordination of State and Local resources in implementation. Once a community has conducted the needs assessment and possible CCS, established a clear results framework and identified the services, supports and opportunities that they want to put in place to achieve the results, assistance with development of an implement plan may be provided through a local Coordinator who will facilitate regular local meetings with the key stakeholders and serve as a liaison with a parallel State-level team to discuss barriers and facilitators to success identified in the neighborhood implementation plan. Regular local meetings will track success of the initiative and make program changes based on measurable indicators of progress.
3. **Capacity Building Support.** This may include cross-site meetings with participating neighborhoods to share ideas and build a community of practice among local leaders as well as to connect local leaders to researchers, policymakers and networks of individuals and organizations working on place-based neighborhood revitalization strategies. Through a community of practice, participating cities and neighborhoods will share knowledge across disciplines and learn about innovative approaches that can inform their own local solutions. Support may also be available through a web-based Resource Center that provides access to tools and best practices
4. **At the completion of this initiative:**
  - Neighborhoods will have created sustainable plans to achieve desired outcomes and results.
  - Neighborhoods will have greater capacity to attract and effectively use federal, state and local resources to achieve desired outcomes
  - State agency resources and policies will be better aligned with neighborhood level plans and priorities.
  - Outcomes will improve across sectors.

## V. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE FOR SOI RESPONDENTS

NOTE: This is NOT a Request for Proposals. Rather it is an invitation to furnish NYS with information regarding interest and capability to participate in this initiative.

SOI Response Format: Responses should be written in MS WORD format and should not exceed 15 pages, double spaced, and 12 point Times Roman font. The SOI should address the following categories as described in Section III of this document:

- Neighborhood(s) within the identified cities you have selected for this initiative; Desired outcomes;
- The lead organization and partner organizations and agencies that will work collaboratively to achieve the outcomes;
- Existing partnerships and collaborations and how they will inform and support this initiative;
- Experience in serving the selected or similar neighborhoods;
- Information regarding the proposed lead organization;
- Experience with national place-based initiatives or philanthropic place-based investment; and,
- Letters of support from key organizations and individuals demonstrating a local/neighborhood commitment to the project. A letter of support for the chief elected official of the selected city is required. .

SOI Response Deadline: The deadline for receiving SOI responses is 5:00 PM, Friday, October 26, 2012 via e-mail or U.S. mail to the SOI contact person noted below

SOI Response Clarification: New York State may seek additional information (clarifying or otherwise) following receipt of the SOI responses. This may be through phone discussions, meetings, correspondence, or in-person interview and may be with an individual, subset of respondents or all respondents.

SOI NOT BINDING: This SOI is not an offer or commitment and is not capable of being accepted to form a binding agreement. The SOI may be withdrawn or modified at any time, and any responses may be rejected.

SOI Preparations: The State of New York is not liable for any costs incurred in the preparation and/or production of any SOI. By submitting a SOI the respondent agrees not to make any claims for, or have any right to, damages because of any misunderstanding or misrepresentation, or because of any misinformation or lack of information. The response shall become the property of the State of New York.

SOI Contact Person: Hope Plavin NYS Department of Health, Empire State Plaza, Corning Tower, Room 1482, Albany, NY 12237 ([hap01@health.state.ny.us](mailto:hap01@health.state.ny.us))

## V. Federal Place-Based Initiatives

Promise Neighborhoods Initiative. Promise Neighborhoods, established under the legislative authority of the Fund for the Improvement of Education Program (FIE), provides funding to support eligible entities, including (1) nonprofit organizations, which may include faith-based nonprofit organizations, (2) institutions of higher education, and (3) Indian tribes. The vision of the program is that all children and youth growing up in Promise Neighborhoods have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career. For more information about the federal Promise Neighborhoods Initiative go to <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html#description>

Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. The Obama Administration recognizes that the interconnected challenges in high-poverty neighborhoods require interconnected solutions. Struggling schools, little access to capital, high unemployment, poor housing, persistent crime, and other challenges that feed

into and perpetuate each other call for an integrated approach so residents can reach their full potential. An important part of the Administration's strategy for catalyzing change in these communities is the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI) — a bold new place-based approach to help neighborhoods in distress transform themselves into neighborhoods of opportunity. NRI engages the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC), White House Office of Urban Affairs (WHOUA), and the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Education (ED), Justice (DOJ), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Treasury in support of local solutions to revitalize and transform neighborhoods. The interagency strategy is designed to catalyze and empower local action while busting silos, prioritizing public-private partnerships, and making existing programs more effective and efficient. For more information go to <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oua/initiatives/neighborhood-revitalization>

**Choice Neighborhoods.** Choice Neighborhoods grants transform distressed neighborhoods and public and assisted projects into viable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods by linking housing improvements with appropriate services, schools, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs. A strong emphasis is placed on local community planning for access to high-quality educational opportunities, including early childhood education. Choice Neighborhoods grants build upon the successes of public housing transformation under HOPE VI to provide support for the preservation and rehabilitation of public and HUD-assisted housing, within the context of a broader approach to concentrated poverty. In addition to public housing authorities, the initiative will involve local governments, non-profits, and for-profit developers in undertaking comprehensive local planning with residents and the community. For more information go to [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/ph/cn](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn)