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### Payment of Round I Grants

The Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 was signed into law by President Obama on March 11. NeighborWorks America will proceed with the payment of the balance of Round I grants as soon as the 2009 appropriation is received from the Treasury Department, currently still scheduled to take place towards the end of this month. Each organization will receive a payment receipt and an Investment and Grant Funds Letter, indicating the amount of expendable and capital funds disbursed, a few days after the payment is made. Approved Round I capital awards will be paid as capital; eligible organizations that requested the conversion of up to \$400,000 of their Round I capital awards to unrestricted funds will receive an Adjustment Grant Letter after Round I payments are made. To receive grant funds, NeighborWorks organizations must be eligible.

### Networking Site for Community Development Professionals

[LeadersforCommunities.org](#) is a new professional networking site launched by NeighborWorks America for leaders in the community development field to connect with each other and share knowledge, resources, tools and job opportunities. Funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation and operated by NeighborWorks America, the site has been developed to facilitate communication across all types of community development organizations, and among people with diverse backgrounds and skill sets. It is designed to provide a rich source of innovative ideas, answers to tough community development challenges, and career growth resources. Join [LeadersforCommunities.org](#) today to grow your effectiveness and your career.

### Web Site Available for Consumers to Locate Foreclosure Counselor

President Obama's Homeowner Affordability and Stability Program (HASP) was officially launched on March 4th. NeighborWorks has created a Web site to make it easier for consumers to find a counselor who can help them with their foreclosure needs and explain the Making Home Affordable modification and refinance options. The site, [www.findaforeclosurecounselor.org](http://www.findaforeclosurecounselor.org), enables anyone to search for a National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling Program-funded counseling agency by state or zip code. Borrowers that are interested in exploring their options and eligibility under HASP can contact a counseling agency for free counseling without being referred by a servicer. If it is determined they may be eligible for the loan modification or refinance program, the counselor will work with the borrower to submit an intake package to the servicer.

### **New Avoiding Foreclosure Scams Fact Sheet Available**

NeighborWorks America has published a new tip sheet on *How to Avoid a Foreclosure Rescue Scam*. This resource is available both on the [NeighborWorks consumer site](#) and in the Media Tools section of the Marketing Center on the [Network Members Site](#).

### **National Community Stabilization Trust: April 9 Introduction**

NeighborWorks America and the National Community Stabilization Trust will host two web-ex sessions on April 9, from 1:00 to 2:30 and 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. EST. These sessions will provide an introduction to the Trust, including the programs it offers and ways to explore partnership with the Trust. All Network members are invited to attend, and two sessions have been scheduled to ensure adequate call capacity. Please hold these times on your calendar, if interested. More details, including information on the web-ex and call-in number, will follow.

### **Guidance for Working with USDA 502 Borrowers**

For those of you who are counseling homeowners who have USDA Rural Development loans under the Section 502 Direct program - as you reach out to your most local RD office, it may be helpful to know in advance that RD has no current policy that will allow for refinancing of their existing loans. The existing 502 direct mortgage is already likely to be a deeply subsidized account and may be out 33 years. However, RD staff have exhibited flexibility in the past in helping mortgage owners through a difficult period. Tools include a range of options from reduced monthly payments to forbearance periods.

The RD 502 Direct mortgage program can also be used in certain circumstances to refinance an existing mortgage other than 502, and the refinance could include improvements to the home. If you are not able to effectively communicate with Rural Development staff at the respective regional or state office, please contact [David Dangler](#) and let him know.

### **Success Measures for Community Stabilization**

A streamlined evaluation package to assess baseline conditions and measure progress over time for post-foreclosure community stabilization programs is now available. It features ready-to-use data collection tools and templates to measure baseline conditions and progress in these vital dimensions of community stabilization in target neighborhoods:

- Community Physical Conditions
- Community Housing Market Health
- Community Image, Confidence & Management

A pilot program will be implemented for ten Network organizations working on targeted community stabilization to gather baseline data by September 2009. Support for pilot organizations will include:

- Orientation to framework and tools plus training delivered to you on-site in data collection, data system and data analysis;
- Fully subsidized one-year subscription to the web-based Success Measures Data System;
- Guidance and assistance in implementation from Success Measures consultants, including on-site assistance in training/coordinating data collection plus support in overall project management and data analysis; and
- A grant (\$2,000) to defray costs associated with initial data collection.

A link to more information appears on the home page of the [Network Members Site](#).

## HUD Issues Warning on Deceptive Practices

NeighborWorks America has received notification from HUD staff about a deceptive Web site posing as HUD. This site tries to dupe people into giving out personal information (known as "phishing") - and because they've made their site appear to be an "official us government website," some people may fall prey to this scam. The site is (or was, as it now seems to have been disabled): <http://bailout.hud-gov.us/>.

If anyone asks you about this site, please advise them to stay away.

## Columbus Housing Partnership Awarded LEED Platinum Certification

A residence in the North of Broad neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio, was awarded Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) for achievement in green homebuilding. The home is the first Platinum-certified residential dwelling in the state of Ohio and the first in the Midwestern United States. It was built by NeighborWorks member [Columbus Housing Partnership](#) and a collaboration of other nonprofits, government, corporate and educational entities. [Read press release](#). Go to [nwgreen.org](http://nwgreen.org) to see more award winning examples in the network.

## Community Housing Partners Awarded LEED Silver Certification

A residential facility for at-risk youth built by Network member [Community Housing](#)

[Partners](#) has been awarded Leadership in energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. Visit [nwgreen.org](http://nwgreen.org) to see more award winning examples in the network.

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