



## *Invitation to Apply*

# Mayors' Institute on Affordable Housing and Health: Advancing City-Level Strategies to Generate Sustainable Solutions

LED BY THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NEIGHBORWORKS AMERICA

*This institute is part of NLC's Culture of Health Mayors' Institute Series, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.*

**WHEN:** APRIL 2-3, 2019 (Mayors' Institute)

APRIL 3-4, 2019 (Site visit and capacity-building session with city teams)

**WHERE:** DETROIT, MICHIGAN

**GOAL:** To support mayors in their efforts to identify and advance practical, comprehensive solutions to problems of housing affordability in their communities by engaging residents and community-based organizations in the design and development of community-centric housing and health initiatives.

## WHO SHOULD APPLY?

- Is your mayor/city seeking to build and strengthen efforts to expand affordable housing and promote it as a platform for health and well-being?
- Could your city benefit from stronger collaboration with local residents, community development organizations, health stakeholders and other partners?
- Can your city make better use of multiple channels for addressing the affordable housing crisis, including developing and maintaining dedicated affordable housing units, increasing access to healthy, affordable housing and preventing displacement of current residents?

If the answer to these questions is yes, your city is strongly encouraged to apply for this important opportunity. Mayors and their teams will benefit from peer sharing as well as practical guidance and advice from national, state and local experts on a range of issues associated with affordable housing.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

The National League of Cities (NLC) invites mayors, city staff and cross-sector teams to participate in an intensive, problem-solving session on affordable housing and health. The peer-to-peer learning session will include dialogue and discussion with participating teams and leading experts that will help strengthen

efforts by local officials and community partners to develop and/or augment effective responses and solutions. Mayors and their teams will explore ways to align local efforts with national and state policies and examine promising practices and strategies that engage housing organizations, community development organizations, hospitals, health systems, universities and other large employers and anchor institutions.

NLC is hosting this Mayors' Institute in partnership with [NeighborWorks America](#) through its Healthy Homes and Communities Initiative. As a congressionally chartered, nonpartisan nonprofit, NeighborWorks America has created places of opportunity in communities across the country for nearly 40 years. NeighborWorks builds the skills, supplements the funding and amplifies the reach of grassroots organizations so they can leverage additional resources to achieve their missions. The NeighborWorks network of more than 245 independent, nonprofit organizations helps individuals, families and communities thrive through comprehensive approaches to affordable housing and community development. Recognizing the deep tie between community development and health, NeighborWorks America combines its investments and strategies to support [health and well-being](#) at each critical stage of life.

## IMPETUS FOR ACTION

Cities and towns across the nation are experiencing housing-related challenges. In fast-growing communities, rising rent levels and home prices leave many low- and moderate-income residents without affordable options and threaten to force long-time residents out of their neighborhoods. In “legacy cities,” rural towns and other communities with declining populations, the biggest problems stem from disinvestment in the current housing stock, which undermines the quality and safety of residential units while contributing to blight and vacant properties. Across all communities, poor construction, inadequate maintenance and environmental hazards posed by the presence of lead, asthma triggers and other toxins

further reduce the supply of housing that is both affordable and safe.

Inability to secure affordable and safe housing has a powerful influence on health outcomes for local residents. In the most dire circumstances, homelessness jeopardizes the lives and health of individuals and families, exposing them to a broad array of imminent dangers and risks. Residents who avoid homelessness but are forced to move frequently due to a lack of affordable and safe housing still confront many challenges, as housing instability exacerbates health problems and undermines education and employment prospects. An inadequate supply of affordable housing also can concentrate low-income families in distressed neighborhoods characterized by high rates of violence and limited or no access to jobs, transportation, health care, open space and nutritious food.

A home's condition and location are closely associated with health outcomes for residents. For example, up to 40 percent of childhood asthma diagnoses — nearly 2.5 million cases — may be attributable to substandard housing conditions. An unhealthy home can also cause lead poisoning or accidental injuries and fail to prevent exposure to extreme heat or cold. At the same time, homes that cost too much to rent or maintain can undermine health by siphoning money from other necessary expenses such as healthy food and medical care and increasing levels of stress that can negatively impact mental and physical well-being. Improving these conditions for residents by expanding access to affordable housing units is a critical action to improve population health outcomes in communities across the nation.

As the role of housing as a determinant of success in life — affecting health, access to education, and the opportunity for upward mobility — becomes better understood, cities face the daunting task of eliminating the affordable-and-healthy housing shortfall. The challenge for city leaders is to ensure that city residents can afford a safe and healthy place to live, one that enables them to work, support and protect their families, and ultimately thrive and reach their full potential.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- A strong commitment by the mayor to develop and strengthen efforts to expand access to affordable housing in your community.
- Mayoral participation in the Mayors' Institute on April 2-3, 2019, in Detroit, Michigan.
- Readiness to develop and present a case statement that articulates key city challenges or opportunities related to affordable housing and reflects a clear understanding of the importance of access to affordable and safe housing to the health of residents.
- Ability to assemble a diverse team to participate in the Mayors' Institute, including the mayor, relevant senior city staff and community-based organizations. Team members may include: representatives from housing and public health agencies; staff from community-based organizations, including local community development organizations; private partners such as hospitals, colleges and universities; and key community or regional foundations that can provide leadership to strengthen efforts and advance innovative solutions. **We encourage cities to partner with [NeighborWorks network organizations](#) on this effort in order to provide both community input and affordable housing expertise.**
- Commitment by team members to attend associated events immediately following the Mayors' Institute (including site visit(s) and team planning sessions). Mayors are welcome but not required to stay for the subsequent sessions on April 3-4.

## ADVANCING OUTCOMES: WHAT CITIES CAN EXPECT FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE MAYORS' INSTITUTE

NLC's well-established Mayors' Institute model stimulates and supports city-level progress by fostering a rich exchange of ideas among mayors, city staff, community partners, prominent researchers, practitioners and other national experts. While the primary focus is on support

for mayors to advance their local efforts, lessons emerging from the Mayors' Institute will also inform future efforts to promote a culture of health in communities throughout the nation, highlighting the potential of cross-agency, multi-sector approaches to address the most difficult and pressing health challenges. NLC staff will work with selected teams to build an effective case statement that frames local challenges and opportunities to expand access to affordable housing. Each case statement will include, among other elements, a description of what success would look like at the local level.

- **Elevate Best Practices and Lessons Learned:** The Mayors' Institute will feature an engaging dialogue with peers and expert faculty, creating opportunities to share best practices, lessons learned and practical support and advice on locally-defined challenges.
- **Leverage Recent Research and Innovations:** The Mayors' Institute will highlight emerging examples, based on the latest research and review of innovative models, of how other cities are working to increase availability and access to affordable housing, with a focus on opportunities to strengthen coordination across systems.
- **Learn from Philanthropic Organizations Supporting Efforts to Address Issues Related to Affordable Housing:** Mayors will be joined by leaders and experts from some of the nation's leading philanthropic foundations to hear from them about innovations they are supporting.

## APPLYING FOR THE MAYORS' INSTITUTE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HEALTH

Up to six cities will be selected for this Mayors' Institute. Mayors who are interested in participating should submit a letter of interest by January 28, 2019, and a narrative application of no more than five pages in length by February 4, 2019. The narrative should respond to the following prompts and questions (appendices will not be read).

## KEY DATES FOR POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

What?	When?	Where?
<b>Deadline for Letters of Interest</b>	January 28, 2019	Send to Leah Ettman at <a href="mailto:Ettman@nlc.org">Ettman@nlc.org</a>
<b>Deadline for Applications from Interested Cities</b>	February 4, 2019	Send to Leah Ettman at <a href="mailto:Ettman@nlc.org">Ettman@nlc.org</a>
<b>Announcement of Selection of Cities for Mayors' Institute</b>	February 20, 2019	Via email
<b>Deadline for Submission of Final Case Statements &amp; Presentations for Mayors' Institute</b>	March 25, 2019	Send to Leah Ettman at <a href="mailto:Ettman@nlc.org">Ettman@nlc.org</a>
<b>Mayors' Institute</b>	April 2-3, 2019	Detroit, MI
<b>Site Visit and Hands-On Learning Experiences</b>	April 3-4, 2019	Detroit, MI

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

### Mayor's Availability:

1. Confirm that the mayor is available to participate in the Mayors' Institute on **April 2-3, 2019**.

### City Team Composition:

2. Identify a team of up to five people that includes the mayor as well as relevant senior city staff and community partners; community development corporations like NeighborWorks; private partners from hospitals or colleges/universities; and key community foundations/partners. **Teams that include a NeighborWorks network organization will receive priority consideration in the selection process.** To identify a NeighborWorks network organization that serves your community, please use the online directory available [here](#). If you have any questions about NeighborWorks organizations' service area, please contact Sarah Norman, director of Healthy Homes & Communities, at [health@nw.org](mailto:health@nw.org). (Note: NLC will cover travel costs for the mayor and two team members for each participating city. Up to two additional team members are welcome to participate at their own or the city's expense.)

### Current City Efforts:

3. Briefly describe the city's experience in addressing issues related to housing affordability, including the scope and scale of current efforts. Does your city have a strategic plan to expand access to affordable and safe housing?
4. Summarize the role that the mayor has played in identifying funding, forging partnerships or advancing policies, practices and programs to support affordable housing and related health efforts. If applicable, describe what the city has learned and how these lessons have influenced or changed local efforts?
5. List the key stakeholders in your city's efforts to address challenges related to affordable housing. (Please consider the role of broader community stakeholders such as residents, community development corporations (CDCs), community development financial institutions (CDFIs), community land trusts (CLTs), and local anchor institutions such as hospitals or universities.)
  - a. Key stakeholders
  - b. Role of each stakeholder in current efforts/strategy

- c. Current level of engagement (low, medium, or high) and level needed to be successful
6. Identify funding sources that are being used to support the city's current efforts (e.g., city investments and contributions, including land use and/or tax incentives; strategic partnerships with private, nonprofit partners; nonprofit hospital funding; state and/or federal funding; philanthropic or private/corporate contributions).
  7. Briefly describe key strategies and mechanisms that have been successful and/or helped spur change.

### **Desired Goals/Results:**

8. What results does the mayor hope to achieve by expanding access to affordable and safe housing? For what population(s)?
9. Have you taken specific steps to address equity issues in this work?
10. What indicators have been established to track and measure progress on achieving desired results? What data are being collected and analyzed as part of this effort?
11. Why does the mayor feel that this is the right time to further address this issue? Is there a specific opportunity upon which the mayor now seeks to capitalize (e.g., partnership, funding, city/state/federal legislation/policy/

bond/levy, public will or demand, public understanding of need based on recent events, etc.)?

12. What do you hope to learn through the Mayors' Institute and how would you apply it?

### **Gaps and Areas of Opportunity:**

13. Please rate the level of the city's current need for assistance in each of the areas below (score 1 for highest need and 9 for the lowest need).
  - a. Research and data
  - b. Communications
  - c. Expanded partnerships (state, federal & local) / engagement with additional multi-sector stakeholders
  - d. Education of or outreach to policy and decision makers
  - e. Financing strategies
  - f. Attention to equity issues
  - g. Sustainability of current initiatives
  - h. Community engagement
  - i. Best practices and relevant examples from other cities

# Questions?

PLEASE CONTACT

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