

2008 Highlights

Housing and
Community Development
Network of New Jersey



Advocacy & Legislative Victories

- **Helped Win Comprehensive Housing Reforms:** Worked with state legislative leaders to develop and achieve passage of A500, New Jersey's most comprehensive housing reform legislation in 20 years. This law provides for:
 - A **State Housing Commission**, which will gather and disseminate information on housing needs, and prepare and adopt an annual Strategic Housing Plan with public input.
 - A 2.5% **Statewide Developer Fee** on non-residential development in every town, expected to generate some \$60 - \$80 million/year to support affordable housing development;
 - A **Very Low Income Housing** component, requiring state housing programs to target 13% of all affordable homes they create to very low-income households, nearly doubling NJ's current commitment to this population;
 - **Replacement of Affordable Housing in Redevelopment Areas** to help protect NJ's scarce affordable housing stock;
 - A 20% affordable housing requirement in all **Transit Oriented Development**, other state-supported development and regional planning areas;
 - **Elimination of Regional Contribution Agreements (RCAs)**, and dedication of \$20 million to create an Urban Fund for housing production and rehabilitation.
- **Foreclosure Prevention/Neighborhood Stabilization:** Passed the NJ Mortgage Relief and Stabilization Act, which will direct additional funding to recast subprime mortgages and help non-profits purchase properties in foreclosure, helping to keep people in their homes. The bill also makes lenders and loan servicers responsible for maintaining properties that become vacant during the foreclosure process, grants a 6 month forbearance period to give people time to restructure or refinance their loan, provides consumer protections and requires the state to collect and publish key foreclosure data.
- **County Homeless Trust Fund Legislation:** Worked with local partners to introduce enabling legislation permitting counties to generate revenue for the creation of a homeless trust fund to support programs outlined in their 10 year Homelessness Plans. Revenue will come from a \$3 increase in the county's portion of the document recording fee. 140 groups in New Jersey have called for this legislation to be adopted.
- **Funding for School Construction:** Supported additional \$3.9 billion approved by the legislature in the spring for this program; held initial conversations with SDA about amendments to the current school facilities law that increase the effectiveness of the program, promote the creation of community schools and facilitate joint use projects or facilities.
- **Fully Funded State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP):** Supported Governor Corzine's proposal to increase SRAP funding by \$15 million in the FY09 budget to a historic level of \$52.5 million.
- **National Housing Trust Fund:** Working with our national allies, won passage of legislation to create a national affordable housing trust fund for the production and preservation of rental housing.

Increasing Networking, Visibility and Public Awareness

- **Strengthened Advocacy Teams & Built Leadership:** Each A-team has grown, with significant expansion in Mercer, new teams in Bergen and Somerset/Hunterdon, and a formalized relationship with Morris Housing Alliance. We are using "meet and greet" model to recruit new participants and now have 122 official A-team members – We had a 30% increase in Lobby Day participation, and A-team leaders are becoming strong policy advocates.
- **Sponsored Press Events and Public Education:** Held 2 major report releases: *2008 Out of Reach* and the *Agenda for Urban Transformation*. Made presentations to numerous organizations on many CD-related topics; organized four advocacy trainings for over 100 participants; developed a response paper and press conference to address concerns about A500 and COAH's Third Round rules; issued 30 policy bulletins & 10 newsletters. Launched new website to raise visibility and create interactive forum for members.

Capacity Building and Resource Development

- Provided an in-depth introduction to **Green/Sustainable Building Techniques** for affordable housing, including the fundamentals of sustainability and how to apply them to various housing situations within New Jersey.
- Offered **Construction Project Management Essentials** course, which evaluated models of housing

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production and systems for qualifying and selecting project team members, including architects, engineers, site planners and general contractors. Participants examined and evaluated standard AIA contracts and the modifications recommended to empower the owner's representative.

- Through our **Asset Management Portfolio Strategy (AMPS) Program**, eight organizations owning or managing some 1850 rental units across the state are working to create long-term strategies to develop, manage and preserve rental properties and other assets.
- **4% Housing Tax Credit Finance Course:** 19 participants examined the anatomy of a tax credit deal, reviewed case studies showcasing the types of projects that can best take advantage of 4% credits, including mixed income and preservation projects, and discussed this year's program changes and the challenges presented by COAH rules and current funding streams.
- **Business Planning Implementation Support Program:** Launched pilot support program with 9 Business Planning for Housing graduates to update their business plans and identify their financing needs going forward.
- **Abandoned Properties:** Supported city-wide groups and local officials in Jersey City, Camden and Vineland as they worked to implement their local abandoned properties list ordinances; working with the Paterson Alliance to enact an ordinance in that city.
- **Neighborhood Planning:** Worked with members and DCA to improve implementation of the NRTC program, achieving faster application and approval processing and other streamlining goals. Shared good national and local practices in crime prevention, and provided individual support to members with their plan implementation strategies.
- **Community Economic Development (CED):** Created new Mixed Use Mixed Income working group charged with examining the barriers to integrating mixed-use and mixed-income projects into neighborhood and business plans. Revised the prospectus of our SEED (Sustainable Employment and Economic Development) Loan Pool and set new fundraising goal to make gap financing available to support small mixed-use projects.
- **Neighborhood Stabilization:** In response to the growing foreclosure crisis, worked with members to help shape plans for use of \$64M in HUD Neighborhood Stabilization funds coming to NJ and to pursue effective stabilization strategies. Connected members to resources to expand their capacity and impact in foreclosure prevention, and created a clearinghouse for REO properties.
- **Support for Citywide Networks:** Provided targeted support to nonprofit or CDC networks in 4 cities and Cumberland County to help them pursue specific policy goals or strategies aimed at facilitating local community development initiatives. Some highlights include conducting a post-project "audit" of recently completed projects in Newark to identify ways to streamline the development process, working with Paterson groups on a mixed use school agenda, and helping groups in several cities pursue property acquisition and funding strategies.

Participating as Innovators in the Field of Community Development

- **Expanded our National Scope:** Continued to work with the National Alliance of Community and Economic Development Associations to shape and pursue an expanded national CED agenda; to strengthen individual associations through NACEDA's Organizational Capacity Assessment program; and to advance the Managing Neighborhood Change project and other promising initiatives for the field.
- **Released *NJ and Its Cities: an Agenda for Urban Transformation*,** the final product of the Network's Urban Revitalization Research Project. The report recommends numerous policies and strategies the state and local governments can pursue to achieve integrated, equitable and responsible revitalization, which we are now working with local and statewide partners to help implement.
- **Launched Recruitment & Retention Effort:** Convened 30 member task force from universities, state and local government, foundations and CDCs to develop strategies addressing the lack of skilled entry and mid-level professionals available to CDCs and government agencies engaged in housing, economic development and community revitalization. Proposed strategies include finding ways to close the gap between available formal training and CDC needs, attracting and supporting the development of the field's younger staff, and identifying effective models to assist with executive transitions.