

2015

Highlights

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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Housing and
Community
Development



Network of New Jersey

We Supported New Jersey's Community Development Sector and Promoted the Impact of our Network.

- ▶ Released county specific **STRONGER TOGETHER** data for Morris, Union, Essex, Passaic, Hudson, and Bergen counties at four high-profile events with over 100 people. Additional release events are planned for 2016.

PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION & ADVOCACY



PROMOTED HOUSING POLICIES TO MOVE NJ FORWARD AND BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES

- Supported our Advocacy Teams and local developer networks of more than 100 leaders advancing policies to **Create Vibrant Communities** and homes people can afford.
- Shepherded legislation, including bills to enhance land-banking opportunities, fund foreclosure counseling, **Help Sandy Survivors**, and address court decision limiting towns' ability to inspect rental property.
- Organized our members to address homelessness, working on a Code Blue Program.



PROTECTED THE MOUNT LAUREL DOCTRINE

- Published *Developing Effective Municipal Housing Plans Report* to provide nonprofits and advocates with guide for working with municipalities to implement fair housing plans under the NJSC's March 2015 decision.
- Organized trainings and webinars for members about the NJSC's *Mount Laurel* decision.
- Promoted opportunities for our members to collaborate with municipalities to reach their goals; provided **Training and Technical Assistance**, and communications tools to community developers and advocates.



SUPPORTED AN EFFICIENT AND EQUITABLE SANDY RECOVERY

- Helped enact the "Sandy Transparency" bill, which increases efficiency and transparency in the distribution of Sandy aid money.
- Shepherded bi-partisan passage of the Sandy Foreclosure bill, to **Prevent Foreclosures** on homeowners rebuilding through RREM. Gov. Christie conditionally vetoed this bill.
- Supported and actively participated in Long Term Recovery Groups in nine affected counties.



HEALTHY HOMES

- Launched a renewed effort with our partners to advocate for **Lead Poisoning Prevention** tools, including passing legislation to appropriate \$10 million for the Lead Hazard Control Assistance Fund. Gov. Christie pocket vetoed this funding.
- Helped **Pass Legislation** to require additional public information about pests in the home.
- Provided training information for Connecting Energy Efficiency and Disaster Resiliency at ACI Affordable Comfort Conference.
- Organized a workshop for potential PACE participants, to encourage sustainable reinvestment in NJ's communities



ADVANCED FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- **Met with 14 Members of NJ's Congressional Delegation** as part of the National Low Income Housing Coalition's Lobby Day in March and part of NJ Hill Day 2015 in July.
- Led the NJ effort to build support for the United For Homes campaign to fund the **National Housing Trust Fund** (NHTF) through changes to the mortgage interest deduction. As a result of FHA action, the NHTF will be funded for the first time; NJ will receive an estimated **\$4 Million** from the NHTF annually, starting in 2016.
- Educated our members on HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rules.
- With our national partners, we **Fought Proposed Budget Cuts** and restored funding to key programs.



Check out our

- ▶ **UNDER ONE ROOF**, the Network's annual community development conference and membership meeting, sold-out for the first time ever. Over 250 people attended our signature event and we added 41 new Network members.



- ▶ Over 125 advocates attended our annual **LEGISLATIVE DAY**, featuring over 30 meetings with decision makers; Network staff and members testified about the *Stronger Together* data to the Assembly Economic Development Committee.

COMMUNITY STABILIZATION & NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION



FOSTERED PROBLEM PROPERTY RESTORATION

- Provided direct technical assistance to municipal officials and CDC practitioners, advancing efforts to reclaim and **restore problem properties** in communities around NJ.
- Oversaw a threefold growth in the use of Vacant Property Registration Ordinances and expanded use of out-of-state creditor legislation throughout the state, providing critical resources for local communities to manage the impacts of these properties and develop long-term solutions to blight and abandonment.
- Organized and co-sponsored numerous sessions on problem property reclamation strategies, including two statewide conferences with our partners and a panel presentation at the **Inaugural People & Places National Conference**.
- Facilitated opportunities for CDCs to use historic preservation tax credits; presented information problem property tools at the NJ Historic Trust conference to over 200 attendees.



SUPPORTED NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

- Our **Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force** met regularly to share best practices and brainstorm on an array of issues, hosting speakers on topics including combined sewer overflow and deconstructive demolition of abandoned properties.
- The Network continued to serve on the State's NRTC Task Force, monitoring implementation and advocating for continued efficacy and flexibility.



ADVANCED FORECLOSURE PREVENTION AND RECAPTURE EFFORTS

- Participated with APA-NJ on the next round of the **Community Planning Assistance Program**, providing volunteer planners to promote and assist with local planning projects with Network members and other groups.
- Coordinated a panel session at **Center for Community Progress' national conference** in Detroit, highlighting the results of the NRTC program.
- Provided recommendations to HUD for **Programs and Services** needed in **Disaster Recovery Situations**, including a comprehensive response to HUD's Office of Homeownership Counseling.
- **Communicated Regularly with Policy Makers** to relay the concerns of counselors and offer suggestions for improved implementation and administration of various foreclosure-related programs and services.
- Participated in local foreclosure task forces and joined with the **National Housing Resource Center** to address national policy, resource and program issues related to foreclosure prevention and counseling efforts.

website to stay up to date www.hcdnnj.org

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & MEMBER SERVICES



PROVIDED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Conducted two trainings on using problem property tools for the NJ Association of Planning and Zoning Administrators.
- Conducted four trainings attended by over 100 individuals including *Community Real-Estate Development Process*, *Community Planning: An Introduction on How to Make Your Community Stronger through Planning*, *Low Income Housing Tax Credits for beginners and experienced professionals*, and *Project Feasibility Analysis Workshop*.
- Provided technical assistance to our members in the areas of strategic and business planning, resource development, marketing, pre-purchase and foreclosure housing counseling, and addressing problem properties.
- Entered into *Partnerships with the Center for Nonprofits, NJ Redevelopment Authority and the National Development Council* to expand training opportunities for members.



EDUCATED OUR MEMBERS AND NJ'S DECISION MAKERS

- Garnered extensive media coverage on a range of topics and events, including the NJ release of the NLIHC's *Out of Reach* report and county versions of the *Stronger Together Report*.
- Engaged in extensive communications outreach to support our agenda and promote the important work our members are doing around NJ. As a result of our targeted communication efforts, the Network and our members were covered in over 370 print, radio, and television media stories. We distributed a total of 35 TA Alerts, Newsletters, and Policy Bulletins to keep our members, supporters, and allies informed and on the cutting edge of Network news, resources, policy opportunities and industry best practices.
- Launched the *"NJ Housing Needs Resources" Webpage* to provide access to data that members and allies can use when discussing housing and community development issues in the state.



CONTINUED HUD HOUSING COUNSELING INTERMEDIARY AND RELATED SUPPORT

- As one of three funded HUD counseling intermediaries in NJ, the Network supported our member organizations with technical assistance, training and resources which they used to provide counseling services. Through this program, six dynamic housing counseling sub-grantee organizations provided *Services and Education to Over 1,700 Households*.

- Sustained our Housing Counseling Association, convening organizations throughout the state, beyond those who are part of our HUD counseling program, to share information and best practices.
- Presented trainings to housing counselors, including on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing and the PSEG & Sesame Street Emergency Preparedness for Community Caregivers; convened a Housing Counselors' interactive session with HUD leaders.
- Continued to participate in the National Housing Resource Center to be engaged at the federal level on the issues that are important to the housing counseling industry.



PROVIDED SANDY OUTREACH INFORMATION

- Working with the State of NJ and HUD to provide information to the residents of the nine hardest hit counties informing them of the services and opportunities available to assist them in recovering from Superstorm Sandy. Partnering with our member organizations to reach Sandy survivors still in need of assistance to recover and rebuild from the storm. *We Reached Nearly 50,000 People in 160 Communities*.



SUPPORTED THE FOURTH REGIONAL PLAN WITH THE REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION (RPA)

- Participated in the RPA's Steering Committee to help develop the Fourth Regional Plan (4RP), and collected more than 200 surveys about the Plan.
- As the state partner for RPA, we organized over 25 feedback sessions throughout the NJ 13 counties in the RPA region to get input into the 4RP Plan from low-income, communities of color, and others underrepresented constituencies to ensure equity in the regional planning process.



LAUNCHED COMMUNITY LEADER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- In partnership with the Supportive Housing Association and others, the Network has restarted a *Community Scholars Program* that matches students with community development organizations for an intensive hands-on learning experience that can bring a new generation of experts and advocates to our field. The first class of approximately a dozen students will start in summer 2016.
- We also began the initial planning process for a *Mentor Program*, for emerging professionals in the field, and a *Leadership Council*, for peer-to-peer communication among CDC executive staff.