



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **First-ever Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Grant Awarded to Woodlawn \$30.5 Million to POAH will Yield \$270 Million in Investments**

*HUD award means boost for housing, retail, education and public safety initiatives*

Chicago (August 31, 2011) – Change is coming to the Chicago’s Woodlawn community. Today, Secretary Shaun Donovan, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, announced that the Woodlawn community will be the recipient of a \$30.5 million grant for a comprehensive and integrated development and revitalization plan.

The awarding of the first ever ‘Choice Neighborhoods Initiative’ grant went to the national non-profit group, Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), who proposed that their transformation of the former 504-unit all Section-8 Grove Parc Plaza Apartments, along Cottage Grove between 61<sup>st</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, into Woodlawn Park, a new mixed-income, mixed-use development, will serve as the anchor for a comprehensive Woodlawn revitalization.

Responding to a competitive process, in which more than 64 other applicants vied for the federal funding, POAH enlisted a variety of other partners to address the comprehensive approach and financial ‘match’ demanded by HUD. POAH put together a proposal that expects to leverage the \$30.5 million into \$272 million of total development in the area over the next three years.

The critical ‘first partner’ in the application is the City of Chicago which will work with POAH in land acquisition, financing, planning and a host of other activities.

While POAH and the City of Chicago took main responsibility for the preparation of the application, this process is truly a community effort, involving 20<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Willie Cochran and numerous community organizations, including Woodlawn NCP, Woodlawn Children’s Promise Community, and many others.

Among the key elements of the proposed transformation plan are:

### **Housing & Infrastructure**

- Demolition of existing, distressed 504-unit Section 8-assisted Grove Parc Plaza complex, with 100% preservation of affordability through 1-for-1 unit replacement onsite or nearby in mixed income settings.
- Creation of Woodlawn Park, a healthier mixed-use, mixed-income community on the former Grove Parc site featuring 420 ‘green’ housing units and 95,000 square feet of retail and community space along the South Cottage Grove Avenue corridor.

- Direct investment in existing Woodlawn multifamily housing stock, including investment in foreclosed and abandoned properties through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) and other programs – supporting the renovation or new construction on vacant sites of a total of 575 ‘offsite’ mixed income dwellings.
- Infrastructure investment in critical community improvement including community space, new parks and green space, transportation infrastructure and a recreational facility.

### **Education**

- The Woodlawn Children’s Promise Community (WCPC), in conjunction with the Urban Educations Institute (UEI), has designed a comprehensive educational initiative designed to improve access and outcomes from early childhood through college, for all Woodlawn children.
- The WCPC initiative will deploy field tested UEI early childhood and college readiness programs, extended day programs, expanded access to technology in the classroom and beyond, staffed Help Desks to provide one-stop-shopping for WCPC resources and family, and social supports delivered through Jane Addams Hull House – all in the context of overarching school reform and teacher initiatives carried out by WCPC and Chicago Public Schools.

### **Economic Development**

- WCN plans a new 15,000 square foot community resource center at the heart of the Woodlawn Park development that will feature a satellite Center for Working Families, providing tailored skill-building and job connections to assisted residents and their neighbors.
- Onsite staff from Jane Addams Hull House will connect assisted residents to a range of programs and services through Hull House, University of Chicago affiliates and other community organizations and religious institutions.
- Local hiring will be a key priority during constructions and ongoing operations of proposed WCN developments and the WCN will build job placement programs with key employers including University of Chicago.

### **Public Safety**

- The WCN will implement a coordinated gang violence initiative that incorporates a range of national gang intervention best practices, and provides resources for safety-related capital improvements in the neighborhood.
- The initiative will integrate data-tested anti-gang enforcement strategies – including more intensive community policing and coordination with ‘civilian community watch,’ block clubs and parent school patrols; abatement of nuisance properties and gang headquarters in coordination with planned NSP development efforts – with expanded support, services, education and alternative activities for youth.

### **The Partners:**

- Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc. (POAH) is the Lead Applicant for the CNI, with the City of Chicago as its Co-Applicant.
- In addition, the Woodlawn Children’s Promise Community, the Woodlawn New Communities Program, and Jane Addams Hull House Association are key partners leading the WCN’s education, community engagement, and resident services components.

Chicago is one of just five cities nationwide to receive the first-ever Implementation Grants awarded under HUD’s [Choice Neighborhoods Initiative](#), a new strategic approach intended to help transform high-

poverty, distressed neighborhoods into communities with healthy, affordable housing, safe streets, and access to quality educational opportunities. Chicago joins Boston, New Orleans, San Francisco and Seattle to receive a combined \$122 million.

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*POAH is a mission-driven affordable housing nonprofit with offices in Chicago and Boston that specializes in the preservation of at-risk subsidized multifamily housing. POAH owns and operates close to 6,800 affordable housing units at 54 properties nationwide.*

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