

A Look Back

Building Sustainable Communities is a comprehensive, long-term, collaborative process that starts with extensive community planning and evolves through a set of programs and projects that address critical pieces of a community's core. When Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) adopted this approach in 2006, we could not have imagined how quickly the impact would be felt, or how decidedly partners from the private, public and nonprofit sectors would join our efforts. Five goals define our Sustainable Communities strategy:

- **Expanding investment in real estate**
- **Increasing family income and wealth**
- **Stimulating economic activity**
- **Improving access to education**
- **Supporting healthy environments**

What follows are some examples of our nationwide efforts in 2007 to meet those goals. While they cannot cover the broad scope of LISC's far-reaching work, these examples illustrate the depth and breadth of the services and support we provide.

Expanding Investment in **Real Estate**

Connecticut Statewide: Throughout the state, very poor cities are located alongside some of the highest-cost suburban and rural areas in the country. To address this unique challenge, LISC developed a two-tiered strategy to encourage inner-city revitalization efforts while also promoting affordable housing statewide. To that end, LISC launched the Housing Connections program, which is supported by a three-year, \$750,000 contract from the Connecticut Housing Finance Agency. By the end of 2007, Housing Connections already had provided technical assistance to 35 affordable housing organizations, resulting in plans to build 284 homes.

Phoenix: LISC funded a long-time partner, Native American Connections, Inc., to create Carefree on North Central, which provides 36 safe, affordable homes for elderly Native American citizens. LISC also engaged new partners in 2007, including the Arizona Community Foundation, which helped LISC create a pool of recoverable grant funds to support predevelopment activities for large-scale housing projects. The



Carefree on North Central; Phoenix, Ariz.

first project, which was approved in December, will create 37 affordable homes for working families.

San Diego: COMM22, an innovative, mixed-use, transit-oriented development in Logan Heights, was supported by a \$100,000 predevelopment loan from LISC. The groundbreaking project includes more than 200 affordable rental and homeownership units; 67,000 square feet of commercial space, including an on-site employment center; and a child-care center for local working families. COMM22 garnered substantial acclaim, receiving a Neighborhood Revitalization Catalyst award from the local Urban Land Institute chapter.



Left: Housing Connections; Connecticut Statewide

Upper Right: Center for Working Families; Chicago, Ill.

Lower Right: Homeowners; Duluth, Minn.

Increasing Family Income & Wealth

Chicago: In 2007, LISC fulfilled its commitment to roll out 12 Centers for Working Families throughout the city. The Centers offer employment services, financial counseling and benefits support to more than 6,800 families, and are staffed by seasoned employment and financial counselors, as well as AmeriCorps volunteers. By the end of the year, more than 1,390 people had new jobs, and more than 6,950 personal income tax returns were filed, resulting in \$10.7 million in Earned Income Tax Refunds to working families.

Duluth: LISC provided grant support to Community Action Duluth to implement the organization's asset- and income-building efforts, including a variety of matched savings programs for residents purchasing and maintaining homes. Also, through Duluth's Hillside Homeownership Incentive Program and a local employer-assisted housing program, LISC and NHS Duluth helped 11 families purchase new homes and counseled 198 new homebuyers.

Indianapolis: Two local, LISC-sponsored Centers for Working Families opened their doors in 2007, offering a broad range of financial counseling services to neighborhood families in need. In addition, LISC increasingly assumed leadership and oversight of wealth-building programs in two other neighborhoods. These programs featured a jobs pipeline between residents and employers, as well as efforts to move the unbanked into banking relationships.

Stimulating Economic Activity

Detroit: Oddfellows Hall, a long-vacant and abandoned eyesore, was redeveloped with significant financing from LISC, including loan funds and New Markets Tax Credits. LISC's partner, the Southwest Detroit Business Association, renovated the building, which includes both office and commercial space. The building is now the anchor of the surrounding community, and it is currently home to two non-profits – Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision and Southwest Detroit Development Collaborative – as well as two multicultural arts organizations that engage 300 youth annually in programs and activities.

Rural Ohio: LISC helped finance the Adams Brown Community Action Program's efforts to expand a local recycling center in Georgetown. The newly renovated 22,000 square-foot facility has created jobs and stimulated the local economy. New, state-of-the-art technology has increased the center's recycling capacity by 75 percent.

Washington, D.C.: LISC invested \$18.6 million in New Markets Tax Credits in The Shops at Park Village, a new shopping center located in D.C.'s long-neglected Congress Heights neighborhood. The project is anchored by a Giant supermarket, which held its grand opening in December. The Giant is the first new supermarket in the area in more than 40 years. The complex also houses an International House of Pancakes, the neighborhood's first sit-down restaurant.



Upper Left: Urban Ecology Center; Milwaukee, Wis.

Lower Left: The Shops at Park Village; Washington, D.C.

Right: Hope Street Family Resource Center; Woonsocket, R.I.

Improving Access to Education

Eastern Pennsylvania: In an effort to encourage teenagers to become more involved in their community, LISC worked with McCaskey High School in Lancaster to develop a service-learning program for nearly 100 students. The students conducted a community needs assessment and decided to construct a playground for more than 90 children living in nearby affordable rental homes. The playground, which received funding from the State Representative, was built by the students and their parents.

Milwaukee: In partnership with Lisbon Avenue Neighborhood Development CDC, LISC initiated service-learning programs in two Washington Park public schools, reaching more than 100 students. Additionally, LISC worked with the Urban Ecology Center to develop a new facility in Washington Park. The Center offers hands-on science and conservation lessons to more 1,600 children from eight Washington Park schools.

Rhode Island: LISC, NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley and Connecting for Children & Family Woonsocket celebrated the opening of the Hope Street Family Resource Center. This development is the latest in LISC's 12-year, \$35-million investment in the Constitution Hill neighborhood. The Center provides more than 100 families with much-needed affordable childcare, as well as office space for Connecting for Children & Family, which makes education and healthcare opportunities available to inner-city children.

Supporting Healthy Environments

Houston: In 2007, LISC celebrated the tenth anniversary of its highly successful National Football League (NFL) Grassroots program, which has created more than 150 recreational football fields for youth in 20 cities nationwide. In Houston, LISC provided a \$200,000 grant to South Campus Sports Association for the development of an artificial turf field that will be used by nearly 4,500 children. Since 1999, \$550,000 in NFL Grassroots Program grants have improved the quality of community fields throughout the Houston area.

Washington State: LISC sponsored a six-week "SafeGrowth" course for police officers, developers and city agency staff in Seattle and Tacoma. Participants learned strategies for integrating crime prevention with economic development from a nationally known police consultant. During the course, some local developers and King County Sheriff deputies created a crime-resistant design plan for a large urban park slated for redevelopment, ultimately helping to turn the crime-ridden area into a safe space.

Los Angeles: Through a new relationship with Global Green USA, LISC is incorporating green building standards into its charter school development efforts. Thanks to this innovative partnership, 28 new schools across Los Angeles will operate in "green" facilities. LISC is working with two other intermediary organizations to establish a \$15 million Revolving Loan Fund to support the creation of the schools.

The Year in Numbers

Breaking Records in 2007

Investments

\$1.06 billion

in distressed communities nationwide,
including:

\$730 million in equity

\$284 million in loans

\$45 million in grants



Accomplishments

20,400

affordable homes and apartments

3.2 million

square feet of retail and community space

15

schools financed for 6,000 students

10

childcare facilities supported for 975 children

32

playing fields renovated for 64,000 kids