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For Immediate Release

**NATION'S LARGEST COMMUNITY DEVELOPER PRESENTS BOLD
VISION FOR REBUILDING STRUGGLING COMMUNITIES**

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*New LISC CEO Maurice Jones Launches Agenda that Places Living-
Wage Jobs and Low-Income Families at the Center of the
21st-Century American Story*

HOUSTON, TX (NOVEMBER 18, 2016) – “This is not a time for us to get quiet, it’s a time for us to get loud,” said **Maurice Jones, the new president and CEO of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)** in his first major address to hundreds of nonprofit community developers, corporate leaders and policymakers gathered in Houston to discuss revitalizing American communities.

Speaking a week after the presidential election, which highlighted the country’s economic insecurities, Jones emphasized that LISC is uniquely positioned to address these issues as well as the widening gulf between rural and urban Americans. LISC, he noted, is one of the only nonprofits of its type that invests in both urban and rural communities.

In fact, low-income communities everywhere, he noted, are reeling from the loss of manufacturing jobs and need help to capture the opportunities of a rapidly shifting economy. “Our communities need to remain in the story of how America adjusts to the new global economic realities,” he said. “It’s up to us to make sure people don’t see them as a footnote in the story.”

With offices in 31 urban areas and partnerships in thousands of rural counties, LISC's investments over four decades have resulted in more than \$60 billion flowing into America's toughest communities to help improve the lives of low-income residents. Jones called for LISC to expand its work, especially in the South where poverty rates are high and persistent poverty has been growing.

Transforming communities and supporting their residents has historically taken years, in some cases decades. That's no longer acceptable, Jones said, explaining that LISC must "find ways to accelerate our work to results. We need to do that to build more of a coalition for the work, but we also need to do that because of the [economic] forces that we are battling against," which are progressing rapidly.

Jones asserted that focusing on living-wage jobs must be a priority. While some two million jobs are created each year in the United States, he noted, low-wage jobs are growing at four times the rate of living-wage jobs, and most of those are concentrated in affluent areas. Part of the solution to increase employment, he said, is to enhance access to the technology and knowledge-based sectors. Jones said he plans to deploy LISC's "delivery system" and engage its broad network of local community partners to drive a national agenda focused on new opportunities and job growth.

Jones also sees tapping additional resources and new leadership on the state and local level as critical to this mission: "We are going to need more partners in the state and local government in particular, which is where significant assets exist for economic development."

It is imperative, Jones added, for LISC to nurture and engage with more and new community leaders, particularly people of color, women and youth: "We need more leaders who look like the communities where we work."

LISC's track record of lifting up communities positions the organization to take on what Jones called "audacious goals." According to a recent study, neighborhoods where LISC had invested intensively over several years showed a nine percent increase in both wages and employment compared to similar places where LISC had not worked in the same time period.

LISC's role on the ground in hundreds of communities targeted for investment and support, Jones said, is analogous to being the Starbucks of community development. "We've got a store on every corner. Our delivery system is second to none."

Jones outlined these strategies at the 2016 LISC National Leadership Conference, "Building on Local Ideas: What's Next for America's Communities," which brought together community development and anti-poverty leaders from across the country to share their experiences and identify scalable best practices.

Robert E Rubin, former Treasury Secretary and LISC's longtime board chairman, introduced Jones to the Houston audience. He prefaced his introduction saying that upending poverty is not just a moral and human imperative, but also an important economic issue. Equipping the poor to successfully enter the workforce, he said, "could contribute greatly to our nation's economic competitiveness in a time of rapid change."

The conference was hosted by LISC's Houston office, which has been on the ground for 27 years driving more than \$243 million into Houston neighborhoods. LISC's approach in Houston as well as nationwide is comprehensive—addressing needs in housing, jobs, education, health and safety in the same place at the same time so that progress in one is not undermined by neglect in another.

"Our *GO Neighborhoods* initiative has been transformational because it brings together traditionally disconnected sectors in the places where people need the most support," said **Amanda Timm, LISC's executive director in Houston**. "At the core of this work is getting the whole community engaged and that includes neighbors as well as leaders from corporate and civic life."

Jones took the helm at LISC in September. Jones was raised by his grandparents on a tobacco and corn farm in southern Virginia. He is a Rhodes Scholar and a graduate of University of Virginia Law School. He came to LISC after serving as Virginia's Secretary of Commerce and as a deputy secretary at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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About Local Initiatives Support Corporation

LISC equips struggling communities with the capital, program strategy and know-how to become places where people can thrive. It combines corporate, government and philanthropic resources. Since 1980, LISC has invested more than \$16 billion to build or rehab 348,000 affordable homes and apartments and develop 56 million square feet of retail, community and educational space. For more, visit www.lisc.org.