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In addition to **The Bulletin**, MHP also publishes **The Capitol Update**, a newsletter that follows the ins and outs of state and federal housing policy and legislation that affect Minnesota. Click [here](#) to sign up for the **Update**.

NEWS



Three Minnesota Regions Vie for HUD Sustainability Dollars

The rage across the country is sustainability, integrating basic community functions in an environmentally responsible, energy efficient manner. Three Minnesota regions are among the thousands of communities that recently demonstrated their enthusiasm for sustainability by submitting proposals to HUD's [Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program](#). Nearly \$100 million is available this year nationwide for communities looking to undertake sustainable regional planning.

According to HUD, the grants will support efforts to integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments across jurisdictions according to a set of

federal [livability principles](#). Notably, the grants require applicants to articulate how the “perspectives of diverse and traditionally underrepresented populations” influence the regional plans.

While \$100 million is a modest sum when spread across the country, the program, as one of President Obama’s signature domestic policy approaches, may portend the future. The proposals also provide insight into how regions would integrate public investments and ensure participation of marginalized communities.

The three Minnesota proposals each fall into a different population category for the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants. Proposals hail from the Twin Cities (500,000-plus population), northeast Minnesota (population 200,000-500,000), and a five-county region in central Minnesota (under-200,000). The Twin Cities plan is an approach to fine-tuning an existing integrated regional plan, while the other two submissions represent all-new plans.

Along with the Metropolitan Council, the **Twin Cities consortium** includes Hennepin and Ramsey counties, the five-county transit board, the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota Housing, and the McKnight Foundation. The Twin Cities proposal focuses on plans for five new transit-way corridors (Southwest LRT, Bottineau, Cedar Avenue, Northstar, and East I-94/Gateway corridor). For the Central LRT corridor, now under construction, there would be four projects—related to workforce development, alternative energy systems, energy efficient and affordable housing, and green infrastructure. Other proposed activities include studies on fair housing and location-efficient mortgages.

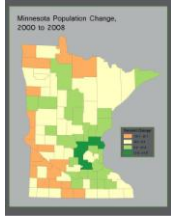
The metro proposal would identify and fund a community engagement team—led by the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Nexus Community Partners, and the University of Minnesota’s Center for Neighborhood Organizing. This team would assist underrepresented populations in participating in the corridor planning and in developing criteria and funding recommendations which advance engagement strategies connected to planning activities.

The Twin Cities proposal notes that the Metropolitan Council and Minnesota Housing are subject to the priorities and appointments of the governor and legislature being elected this November. The application says that, while policies have differed under different political leaderships, the general planning direction has been maintained despite political changes, and is expected to continue after the election. (Here’s hoping.)

In the **northeast**, the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission leads a large consortium including St. Louis County, Duluth, Northland Foundation, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, and the Fond du Lac Band of Ojibwe. Their planning goal is first to map regional assets, and then to fund pilot projects that both address regional problems and advance HUD’s sustainability principles. A likely project, states the proposal, will be one that enables the region to “sustainably accommodate” the region’s aging population. An information “tool-kit” would also help communities with limited staff undertake sustainability projects through, for example, descriptions of model projects, catalogues of resources, and roadmaps to implement zoning that supports sustainability. The regional community action agency, board on aging, and Fond du Lac Band would be responsible for ensuring underrepresented groups are engaged.

The **north central** proposal would support sustainable development in the five counties (Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena) served by the lead-applicant, the Region Five Development Commission. The consortium also includes numerous housing, transportation, economic development, land-use, education, and community agencies, including the University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, which plays a central role. The Region Five planning process would advance twelve regional goals, ranging from broadband Internet service to addressing fore-closures. The proposal describes a commitment to full community engagement, with the number of participants involved being substantial. Ten teams, each consisting of twenty people, will identify the regional vision, planning scenarios, and evaluation. The Region Five consortium includes honoraria for disadvantaged populations and agency commitments to include clients in the planning efforts.

While it appears that HUD's interest in transportation strategy was largely focused on transit services for high-population areas such as the Twin Cities, Minnesota's Greater Minnesota applicants offered strategies to preserve mobility of residents, yet minimize single-occupant auto traffic in areas of less density. For instance, both plans promote the "complete streets" approach (car traffic joined by bike and foot traffic). Region Five emphasizes bike trails and safe routes for children to get to school; the northeast consortia emphasizes car pooling, town-to-town transit, and creating housing near the area's new mining operations.



HUD is expected to announce awards in mid-October. But applicants have more than a planning grant at stake. HUD has announced that applications meeting a threshold score will receive "Preferred Sustainability Status." This standing will provide further benefits—such as access to federal capacity building resources—the details of which HUD has yet to reveal.

August Minnesota Housing Board Meeting – Report

Most of the action at the August Minnesota Housing board meeting centered on a proposed reaffirmation of Minnesota's Business Plan to End Long Term Homelessness. Also discussed were the Agency's current financial performance, shifting of funds within the home ownership education and counseling programs, changes to the rental rehab loan program, and the timeline for updating the Agency's strategic plan.

Triggering much discussion, the Agency staff recommended that the board "reaffirm the Agency's commitment" to the goal of housing 4,000 people who have been homeless long-term. This involves pushing the plan's completion goal back to 2015. The plan was first adopted in 2004 with the 4,000-unit goal to be completed by 2010. Progress exceeded annual goals for the first five years, but fell off markedly with the troubled economy. Assistant Commissioner Tonja Orr and Laura Kadwell, Director for Ending Long-Term Homelessness, reminded the board that, as of June 2010, 2,867 housing opportunities had been created. Of the households served in 2009, 88% were still housed successfully by the end of the year. Orr and Kadwell added that the plan has spurred the commitment of the business and philanthropic communities as well as the creation of regional and local homelessness plans. Public spending also shifted from emergency, jail, and detox services towards greater preventive and routine care.

The board, while expressing support for the Plan to End Long Term Homelessness, was torn about whether or not to reaffirm the goal of achieving 4,000 housing opportunities by 2015. Board Chair Mike Finch questioned the use of the Agency's scarce resources for long-term homelessness, given its price tag and the relative lower cost of other housing programs. He expressed concern that the state has had to cover many of the ongoing costs of the program, rather than non-state sources, such as SSI, picking up those costs. The long-term cost of rental assistance borne by MHFA was an area called out specifically. Another member asked if it makes sense to fund units if dollars for services have not been pre-identified. Staff responded that funding for services often has successfully been pieced together, once units are underway. Ultimately, the board requested additional data about long-term costs and the funding sources sustaining the plan to date.

The board also received an update on the Agency's financial performance. The Agency's bond rating is expected to be the same this year as last. Staff reported that, in the context of a dismal market, the Agency's performance looks okay, but the market is not good for housing.

For the Homeownership Education, Counseling, and Training Fund, which in part funds the Minnesota Home Ownership Center, the board approved shifting funds towards greater resources for foreclosure counseling. The shift increases foreclosure prevention counseling spending by 13% to help meet high levels of demand. It reduces spending on loans through the Foreclosure Prevention Assistance Program and eliminates spending this year on post-purchase counseling. Staff also reported that the Agency will need to devise a plan to address reductions in funding for foreclosure counseling over the long term. Minnesota has won competitive federal grants for foreclosure counseling in recent years, which has

enabled marked expansion in the state's network of counselors. However, future funding will diminish; a transition plan will be needed.

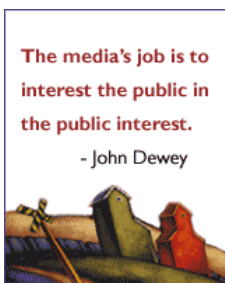
The board approved a request to post for public comment proposed changes to the Rental Rehab Loan Program. This biennium at the legislature, the funding source for this program designed to rehab affordable rental housing was changed from federal HOME funds to state appropriations. That gives the Agency far more flexibility in using the program. Some parts of the state (some cities and counties in the Duluth and Twin Cities areas) already receive HOME funds as an entitlement, so staff proposed making Rental Rehab Loans available to the non-HOME funded areas first. Funds would be made available to HOME-funded areas only if dollars remain uncommitted. The program would also shift from a forgivable grant to a 15-year loan.

Finally, to help Agency staff and board agree upon priorities for the Agency's next strategic plan, the board will participate in a special planning meeting on September 26. Board members requested specific discussion not only of the long-term homelessness plan, but also of regional inequities in funding commitments as presented in the July meeting (see the [August MHP Bulletin's report](#)). The board will revisit the strategic plan in October and approve it in November.

RESOURCES

Recent Range of Radio Broadcasts on the Importance of Housing

NPR (National Public Radio) recently aired programs of interest. See the transcripts or



listen to the stories: "[Affordable Housing Dwindles As Need Grows](#)" - 8/16 (guests Linda Couch/National Low Income Housing Coalition, Dean Faust/Emory University), and "[Era of Homes as Piggy Banks May be Over](#)" - 8/24. And here is a list of Minnesota housing print and downloadable broadcast stories that gained wide coverage recently through the Minnesota News Connection (Public News Service):

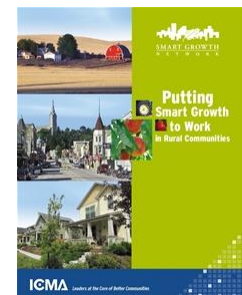
- [A Fresh Coat of Paint Aids Independence for Metro Homeowners](#) - 8/6
- [State Plan to End Homelessness Falling Short of Six-Year Goal](#) - 8/10
- [Out of Work and Facing Eviction: The New Homeless in Minnesota](#) - 8/11
- [Out on the Street Because of Landlord Foreclosure? Not Necessarily...](#) - 8/12
- [Layers of Trauma: Homeless Families in Greater Minnesota](#) - 8/16

Where Energy Efficiency & Low Income Households Meet

Low-income households in need of energy savings often are the last to benefit from energy efficiency improvements. A [new online toolkit](#) from the Center for Housing Policy hopes to change that. The toolkit features strategies to improve the energy-efficiency of existing homes, especially for low- and moderate-income households. Also [listen to the podcast](#) featuring former MHP policy analyst Rebecca Cohen, now senior research associate at the Center for Housing Policy. Cohen interviews Casius Pealer, Director of the U.S. Green Building Council Affordable Housing Initiative, about how to bridge the gap between the housing industry and the energy-efficiency industry at state and local levels.

Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities

Ever wondered how sustainability and smart growth principles apply to rural areas? A [new, informative report](#) examines smart growth strategies that can help guide growth in rural areas while protecting natural and working lands and preserving rural character. The [report by ICMA](#) (International City/County Management Association) covers three strategies: 1) creating an economic climate that enhances the viability of working lands and conserves natural lands; 2) helping existing places thrive by taking care of assets such as Main Streets and infrastructure; and 3) building vibrant, enduring neighborhoods.



By the Decade: Housing History since the 1930s

A new [interactive online timeline](#) tells the story of U.S. federal housing policy. View and download by-the-decade highlights of HUD programs and legislation using this nifty timeline, along with corresponding data on population, interest rates, and housing starts. Available at www.huduser.org/hud_timeline/index.html.



NLIHC 2010 Advocates' Guide & Fact Sheets

NLIHC's *2010 Advocates' Guide to Housing and Community Development* is available both online and for purchase in book form. The Guide contains updated chapters on 70 housing and housing-related programs and issues, from the National Housing Trust Fund and the Housing Choice Voucher program to the mortgage interest deduction and the Federal Housing Administration. Each chapter provides a program history and description as well as information on what advocates need to know now about current program issues. Access the Guide at: www.nlihc.org/doc/2010-ADVOCATES-GUIDE.pdf. Copies are available in book form at \$40 for non-members, \$25 for members. Bulk rates are available; for details, email sarah@nlihc.org.

NLIHC has also updated its current [issues fact sheets](#) and its priority legislation chart as of August 1, based on recent legislative activity and policy outlooks. Fact sheets track legislation related to NLIHC's 2010 policy agenda, including the National Housing Trust Fund, vouchers, public and assisted housing preservation, budget and appropriations, Gulf Coast housing recovery, renters in foreclosure, low income housing tax credits, climate and green housing, and housing plus services issues. Find the updated information at: <http://www.nlihc.org/template/page.cfm?id=228>

MHP @ WORK

MHP Community Engagement Fund Awards to Cities of Orr and Virginia

At its June and August meetings respectively, MHP's Loan and Grant Committee approved [Community Engagement Fund](#) grants of \$5,823 for the City of Orr and \$7,500 for the City of Virginia. The Orr application came from the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission to provide assistance for a comprehensive plan that includes housing. As a hub for tourism and economic activity in St. Louis County, Orr is looking toward sustainability. The City of Virginia will conduct meetings and surveys, collect neighborhood information, develop rehabilitation strategies, then identify and apply for funding to create a Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

MHP Communications Survey for our Partners

Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP) is committed to serving your needs in how we communicate, so we're reaching out to partners, readers, and subscribers for feedback. You should have recently received an email and link to a quick 3-minute survey. Please look for it: by completing this short (we promise!) survey, you'll help us do a better job of getting good information to you in ways that serve you. Contact Rick Bernardo with questions: 651-925-5549 or Rick.Bernardo@mhponline.org.

MHP Invites NSP-related Questions & TA Requests (Coming: Oct. 20th Clinic)

NSP (Neighborhood Stabilization Program) obligations are looming. For any and all NSP-related questions, let us help. As a National Technical Assistance (TA) Provider, MHP is offering direct technical assistance for Minnesota NSP Recipients. Call 651-925-5559 and within one working-day receive an answer to program questions. This phone assistance is part of [new TA services](#)—under grants from The [St. Paul Foundation](#) and the [F. R. Bigelow Foundation](#)—that include:

- Direct TA to CDCs (Community Development Corporations)
- "On-Line" Phone TA
- Short informal meetings to assist with NSP-related questions or concerns
- COMING SOON—**October 20th—NSP Post Obligation Clinic**

CALENDAR



September 10–19

“Homeless is my address, not my name” • Opening Wed. Sept. 15, 7–9 P.M.

Burnet Gallery, Le Meridien Chambers Hotel (open 11 A.M.–9 P.M. daily at 901 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55403) - An oral history project of homelessness in Hennepin County, this audio/photo exhibition is created from hundreds of conversations with individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Featuring striking portraits (photography by Larry LaBonté and Kris Drake) and first person audio, the project was created through a partnership between Heading Home Hennepin, the Family Housing Fund, and St. Stephen's Human Services. To learn more, visit www.OralHistoryofHomelessness.org.

September 13

Landlord-Tenant Law Seminar in Duluth

This half-day training through HOME Line inform landlords, tenants, service providers, and attorneys about Minnesota's state laws (Chapter 504b) on landlords' and tenants' rights and responsibilities. Fee: \$30. (Prospective volunteers for staffing HOME Line's tenant rights hotline can attend at no cost.) For details and to register, [click here](#). Contact [Deb](#) at 612-728-5770 x.109 with questions.

September 16

2010 Minnesota Supportive Housing Conference

RiverCentre, St. Paul, MN (September 15, 2010, Supportive Housing Tours) – The conference offers nonprofit organizations, government, and community stakeholders access to national speakers and high quality training opportunities on relevant topics for the field. Keynote speakers are State Representative Jeff Hayden (House District 61B), and Jennifer Leimaile Ho, Deputy Director for Accountability Management at the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. The day before the Conference is an opportunity to tour a variety of supportive housing models created by community partners around the Twin Cities. For more, go to www.csh.org/mnconf.



September 21

HousingJobs Supporter Training

5:30–7 P.M., Hope Community Children's Village Center (611 E. Franklin Ave) - Aeon has arranged for their speaker's bureau trainer to provide this session to help housing clients develop and practice what they need to tell their story to lawmakers. By the training's end, they will be ready to talk to lawmakers in meetings, testify in committee hearings, and make calls in response to Action Alerts. An informal dinner is included; RSVP required and space is limited. RSVP by September 16th to Darielle Dannen: 612-789-7337 x.13 or DDannen@mccdmn.org



September 21

Homelessness 201 Workshop: Identifying Street Drugs & Paraphernalia

2–4 P.M. Minneapolis (RS Eden - Lindquist Apartments) - This session provides information on identifying various street drugs and replacement therapy. It also covers routes of administration for various drugs and those routes' respective effects on the body. Also discussed: identification of drug paraphernalia, syringe exchange information, disease prevention rationale, HIV, and Hepatitis C. Find out more and register through the “Homelessness 201” page on [Metro-wide Engagement on Shelter and Housing's](#) web site.

October 5–7

Home Certified Specialist - Rental Housing Compliance (HUD Planning & Development Training)

DoubleTree Hotel (1500 Park Place Blvd, Minneapolis 55416) - Focusing on on-going compliance requirements for HOME rental properties, this provide an in-depth and applied discussion of inspections, rents, income documentation, sales of units to tenants during the affordability period, and more. This is an

advanced course that results in certification upon successful completion of the course exam. For full course description and agenda, see the [website](#). Register [on-line](#), by via fax, or mail (for the latter, call the 703-902-1264 or e-mail cpdtrainings@circlesolutions.com).

November 8

“Homes for All 2010” • Program & Registration

Watch the [Homes for All 2010](#) web site—“Believe Connect Create”—and mark your calendar for Minnesota’s largest gathering of affordable housing supporters and experts at St. Paul’s RiverCentre. Online any day now are early-bird registration (save money), the program schedule (including keynotes and 18 breakout sessions), and more. Co-hosted by MHP and Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity.



Upcoming MHP Deadlines

MHP Funds - 2010 Programs, Application Materials & Deadlines

To help build organizational competence and support the development or rehabilitation of permanent affordable housing, MHP offers funds and loans to nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and other affordable housing developers outside the 7-county Twin Cities metro area. For 2010 guidelines, application materials, and schedule, go to the “[MHP Funds](#)” section of MHP’s web site. For more, contact Sarah Belleful, *MHP Housing Programs Officer*: Sarah.Belleful@mhponline.org or 651-925-5558.

Next application deadlines are:

- *September 14*
- *November 16*

[The MHP Bulletin](#) is published and distributed monthly by the Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP - 2446 University Ave. W. - Ste. 140 | St. Paul MN 55114). It includes affordable housing news, announcements, legislative updates, publications, and upcoming events. For more information on affordable housing, back issues of *The MHP Bulletin*, to submit news or events for future issues, or if you want to unsubscribe, call Rick Bernardo at (651) 925-5549 or email him at Rick.Bernardo@mhponline.org.

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Minnesota Housing Partnership’s mission is to promote homes for all Minnesotans and to assist Minnesota communities in the creation and preservation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income people. MHP is an equal opportunity provider and employer.