

Department of Education Releases 2011 Promise Neighborhoods Grant Application Guidelines

Washington, DC – July 6, 2011 – The US Department of Education made the 2011 Promise Neighborhoods application guidelines available this morning. Applicants will have the opportunity to apply for grants from a \$30 million allocation to plan and implement Promise Neighborhoods—communities of opportunity centered around strong schools that enable children to learn, grow, and succeed.

This three-fold increase from last year's \$10 million allocation comes in part as a result of advocacy efforts from PolicyLink, the Harlem Children's Zone, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy, who formed the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink. The institute provides support to communities building Promise Neighborhoods, and works to broaden the understanding that the Promise Neighborhoods strategy is key to lifting millions of children out of poverty. Led by the institute, individuals and organizations across the country joined in the advocacy efforts to ensure that Promise Neighborhoods would continue to be a federal government priority.

"These planning and implementation grants are just what communities need to build and sustain Promise Neighborhoods," says Angela Glover Blackwell, founder and CEO of PolicyLink, a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity. "We applaud the Department of Education for their thoughtful allocation of funds to give children all across the country the chance to succeed."

Inspired by the successful model of the Harlem Children's Zone, Promise Neighborhoods create a continuum of services from the cradle through college to career, combining high-quality education with community- and family-based supports.

"These grants are a smart investment in America's future," said Geoffrey Canada, President and CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone. "By getting kids on track as early as possible and working with them through college, we have seen the odds for an entire community dramatically change for the better, so I'm thrilled to see this happening for poor children across the country. Last year's federal grants have already sparked tremendous excitement among struggling communities, so these new grants will really take this movement to the next level."

Last year, over 330 communities applied for Promise Neighborhoods planning grants. Twenty-one communities received grants, and many more groups have been planning Promise Neighborhoods even without federal funding. Because multiple grant categories are available, and because any community may apply for funding, whether or not they have already received a planning grant, the number of applications is expected to be high, and the types of applicant communities will likely be quite varied.

"Promise Neighborhoods are innovative and data-driven, and focus strongly on positive outcomes for children, youth, and families. This investment in communities by the Department of Education is smart economically and provides a solid foundation for sustainable change," said Frank Farrow, Director of the Center for the Study of Social Policy.

The Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink combines the leadership of PolicyLink, the Harlem Children's Zone, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy to support communities through the federal application process and general strategic planning of Promise Neighborhoods.