

PolicyLink launches the Promise Neighborhoods Institute

April 30, 2010 - New York, NY - Following the Obama Administration's release today of the \$10 million Promise Neighborhoods federal application, the national nonprofit group PolicyLink has launched the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink - an independent, nonprofit, foundation-supported resource to assist communities through the initiative's application and implementation process.

The Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink offers valuable tools and strategies to help nonprofits, community leaders, government officials, and grassroots organizations in poor areas craft a successful proposal. Through technical support for planning, coalition building, needs assessments, and many more essentials, the Institute will help urban, suburban, rural, and tribal communities conceptualize, design, and implement a Promise Neighborhoods model that fits the needs and priorities of their constituents.

Inspired by the comprehensive anti-poverty efforts of the Harlem Children's Zone, the federal Promise Neighborhoods program will support communities efforts to build "effective schools and strong systems of support to children and youth in poverty and, thus, meet their health, social services, and educational needs," according to the Obama Administration. The Promise Neighborhoods initiative includes \$10 million in competitive planning grants to help design a pipeline of social, educational, and health supports in poor communities across America. Once chosen, 20 communities will receive up to \$500,000 each to design their own initiatives, programs and services that expand access to quality education, healthcare, and other vital needs in their communities.

"Improving the odds of poor children is hard work - it takes dedication, determination and a clear sense of where you're going," said Geoffrey Canada, president and CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone. "The Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink will provide communities with the guidance and support they need to help all their children achieve their full promise."

"The Promise Neighborhoods Initiative is an unprecedented step towards enacting real, tangible changes that will lift up our communities in crisis, and give poor children a fair and equitable opportunity to achieve their dreams," said PolicyLink Founder & CEO Angela Glover Blackwell. "Cities and communities across the country have been working tirelessly to find solutions that work, but they cannot do it alone. By providing these vital tools and resources, the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink will help underserved areas effectively invest in our children's health and education, and chart a new course for our nation's future."

Last November, PolicyLink and Harlem Children's Zone convened more than 1,500 community leaders from across the country at the "Changing the Odds" conference in New York City to discuss how to lift up the HCZ model and create a national paradigm upon which other neighborhoods can build their own communities of opportunity. This highly successful event - which featured a host of national figures, including US Education Secretary Arne Duncan, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and Newark Mayor Cory Booker - marked the first of many steps towards providing underserved neighborhoods with essential resources to improve quality of life for poor children and families.

"You cannot divorce where children live from what they learn," Education Secretary Arne Duncan said during his remarks at the conference.

Candidates for the Promise Neighborhoods Request for Proposals will have 60 days to apply for the grants. For links to the RFP and background information on Promise Neighborhoods and the Harlem Children's Zone, please visit www.PromiseNeighborhoodsInstitute.org.

ABOUT POLICYLINK

PolicyLink (www.policylink.org) is a national research and advocacy institute advancing economic and social equity by Lifting Up What Works. Founded in 1999, PolicyLink helps create sustainable communities of opportunity that offer access to quality jobs, affordable housing, good schools, affordable transportation, and healthy food. The organization is based in Oakland (Calif.), with offices in New York City, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, and New Orleans.