

Promise Neighborhoods:

A Comprehensive Approach to Expanding Opportunity for All Children

A strong and vibrant America requires children who are educated, healthy, and ready to enter the workforce. Yet, thirteen million children live in poverty and less than a fifth of poor fourth graders are proficient in reading and math. These children lack the opportunity and resources to achieve their full potential.

Children facing educational, health, and safety challenges can be found in neighborhoods across the country, in cities, suburbs, rural, and tribal areas. The challenges facing these children are tough and no quick fix exists. Multi-faceted approaches are needed so that all children have access to resources that ensure they are healthy, their families are strong, and they live in safe homes and supportive neighborhoods.

The Promise Neighborhoods Program seeks to create a comprehensive pipeline of educational and community supports to make certain that children reach their full potential.

Every child deserves a Promise Neighborhood.



Key Components of the Promise Neighborhoods Program

Inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone, Promise Neighborhoods are place-based efforts to wrap children in integrated, coordinated, high-quality academic, social, and health programs and supports from the cradle to college to career. Strong schools are core to every Promise Neighborhood, as is family and community engagement.

Administered by the U.S. Department of Education, some of the key features of the program include:

- **The Importance of Planning and Implementation.** In the first year of Promise Neighborhoods funding (FY 2010), 21 communities received planning grants between \$400,000-500,000 to develop a plan to create their Promise Neighborhood. This spring, these and other communities will apply for planning or implementation funding from the \$30 million FY 2011 budget allocation. These increased resources will help communities engaged in both planning and implementation—essential steps in improving the educational outcomes for poor children in America.
- **Leveraging Local Resources for Maximum Impact.** Promise Neighborhoods grantees have the support of the public and private sectors, which have committed matching funds for the federal grants received. For example, in FY 2010 Promise Neighborhoods planning grantees were required to obtain matching funds equal to at least 50 percent of the award (unless they applied as a rural or tribal community, in which case the matching requirement is 25 percent of the grant award). FY 2010 Grantees raised almost \$7 million in matching resources, including \$2.3 million from private philanthropy.
- **Diverse Communities Targeted.** Promise Neighborhood grantees fall into three priorities: multiple indicators of distress including low levels of academic achievement or high poverty levels; distressed communities in rural areas; and distressed tribal communities.
- **Evidence-Based, Results-Focused.** Promise Neighborhoods grantees must propose strategies based on the best available evidence of improving outcomes for children and the surrounding community.
- **School Partnerships.** Lead agencies are either nonprofit organizations or institutions of higher education that must team up with one or more schools in their neighborhood. FY 2010 grantees are partnering with 96 schools, 90% of which are traditional public schools and 10% of which are charter public schools.

Some key results of the Harlem Children's Zone include:

- For the eighth year in a row, 100 percent of children who participated in HCZ's original Harlem Gems® pre-K program were school ready. In FY 2010 across all four of the Gems programs, 99.4 percent of children attained a school readiness classification of average or above.
- Participants in the HCZ Asthma Initiative have missed fewer days of school (6.8 percent vs. 25.7 percent) and have fewer emergency-room visits (14.8 percent vs. 45.7 percent) due to asthma. This is critically important in a neighborhood where over 29 percent of children 12 and under have asthma.
- A Harvard University evaluation of HCZ's Promise Academy Charter Schools concluded HCZ "is enormously effective at increasing the achievement of the poorest minority children. Taken at face value, the effects in middle school are enough to reverse the black-white achievement gap in mathematics and reduce it in English Language Arts. The effects in elementary school close the racial achievement gap in both subjects."
- An average of \$5,000 per year per child is spent on HCZ programming to achieve these and other results, compared to over \$200,000 per year per young person in the New York Juvenile Justice System.

About the 2010 Promise Neighborhoods Grantees

With assistance from the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink—a nonprofit institute that provides communities with a system of support to help strengthen their Promise Neighborhoods—the 21 grantees are developing plans for their communities. These plans highlight how Promise Neighborhoods can implement their comprehensive approaches for children by leveraging public and private sector support, and coordinate the services and resources of local nonprofits, schools, health centers, universities, and foundations.

These Promise Neighborhoods grantees are representative of the 339 different groups from urban, rural, and tribal areas that applied for the Promise Neighborhoods program. Many of these and other communities are expected to apply for implementation funds this year. These increased resources will help make Promise Neighborhoods a reality so that all children grow up healthy and well-educated. The children of today are the teachers, engineers, and community leaders of tomorrow. The Promise Neighborhoods program is one of the most important investments we can make as a nation.

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