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Brian Sullivan
(202) 708-0685

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HUD AWARDS NEARLY \$100 MILLION IN NEW GRANTS TO PROMOTE SMARTER AND SUSTAINABLE PLANNING FOR JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Part of Obama Administration's Partnership for Sustainable Communities

WASHINGTON – For the first time ever, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is awarding nearly \$100 million in new grants to support more livable and sustainable communities across the country. HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan today announced that 45 regional areas will receive funding through a new initiative intended to build economic competitiveness by connecting housing with good jobs, quality schools and transportation.

HUD's new Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program will support State, local, and tribal governments, as well as metropolitan planning organizations, in the development and execution of regional plans that integrate affordable housing with neighboring retail and business development (see attached list of grantees). Many of the grants will leverage existing infrastructure and all reward local collaboration and innovation.

“Regions that embrace sustainable communities will have a built-in competitive edge in attracting jobs and private investment,” said Donovan. “Planning our communities smarter means parents will spend less time driving and more time with their children; more families will live in safe, stable communities near good schools and jobs; and more businesses will have access to the capital and talent they need to grow and prosper. In awarding these grants we were committed to using insight and innovation from our stakeholders and local partners to develop a ‘bottom-up’ approach to changing federal policy as opposed to ‘top-down.’ Rather than sticking to the old Washington playbook of dictating how communities can invest their grants, HUD’s application process encouraged creative, locally focused thinking.”

These grants are part of the Obama Administration's Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which brings HUD, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency together to ensure that the agencies' policies, programs, and funding consider affordable housing, transportation, and environmental protection together. This interagency collaboration gets better results for communities and uses taxpayer money more efficiently. Coordinating federal investments in infrastructure, facilities, and services meets multiple economic, environmental, and community objectives with each dollar spent. The Partnership is helping communities across the country to create more housing choices, make transportation more efficient and reliable, reinforce existing investments, and support vibrant and healthy neighborhoods that attract businesses. At a time when every dollar the federal government invests in jumpstarting the economy is critical, the President's plan ensures that all these agencies are coordinating efforts and targeting resources with precision. Reflecting this new collaboration, these grants were judged by a multidisciplinary review team, drawn from eight federal agencies and from partners in philanthropy.

HUD's inaugural grants under this program will support metropolitan and multi-jurisdictional planning efforts that incorporate housing, land use, economic development, transportation and infrastructure. This holistic planning approach will benefit diverse areas across the U.S. including \$25.6 million split evenly between regions with populations less than 500,000 and rural places (fewer than 200,000 people). HUD is reserving \$2 million to help all of these areas build the needed capacity to execute their plans.

The grants are awarded through one of two categories. One category of grants will assist regional planning for sustainable development where such plans do not currently exist. A second category of funding will support the implementation of existing sustainability plans.

Shelley Poticha, the director of HUD's new Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities said, "The response to this program is huge. We were inundated with applications from every state and two territories – from central cities to rural areas and tribal governments. This program was designed by people from local government, and incorporated local input at every stage."

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HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. HUD is working to strengthen the housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers; meet the need for quality affordable rental homes; utilize housing as a platform for improving quality of life; build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination; and transform the way HUD does business. More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and espanol.hud.gov.