

RESEARCH PROJECT INTO EFFICACY OF SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH PROMOTION SERVICES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING LAUNCHED

Community Opportunity Fund Teams with Enterprise Community Partners, Success Measures at NeighborWorks America and Top Universities for New Study

(NEW YORK, NY – September 8, 2021) – Community Opportunity Fund has teamed up with top academic institutions at Columbia, Dartmouth and Harvard universities, Enterprise Community Partners and Success Measures at NeighborWorks America to launch a joint research project to study the efficacy of providing comprehensive social, environmental and health promotion services in affordable housing settings.

This research project will develop a resident data collection infrastructure across a diverse range of geographies, communities, and multifamily housing types to serve as a data platform to assess current and future Community of Opportunity interventions. It will provide the data foundation to support research on the benefits of using affordable housing as a platform to deliver physical and virtual social, health and educational programs to improve the lives of residents.

The goal of the project will be to track the effectiveness of services on residents, building culture and housing conditions, and resident perspectives. The proposed social/environmental well-being audits will follow the successful application of energy audits conducted to determine the efficacy of different types of energy efficiency interventions.

The research will begin with a pilot study at 10 Jonathan Rose Companies communities to thoroughly assess the impact of these programs on residents and building culture over time. This partnership of top educational institutions, affordable housing providers and non-profit service providers is currently developing the infrastructure to collect pertinent information about residents, building amenities and environmental conditions to plan interventions and evaluate the impact of services through initial funding from Jonathan Rose Companies.

“Research and evaluation at this scale is not typically possible in affordable housing,” said Stephany De Scisciolo, Ph.D., vice president of Knowledge, Impact and Strategy (KIS) at Enterprise Community Partners. “Previous research on resident services has often been limited to a single intervention at a single property. This project offers the opportunity to measure and understand impact across an entire portfolio, a ground-breaking capability that will uncover new and better strategies to benefit the people and communities we serve.”

The partnership is currently seeking additional funding for the multi-site pilot that will test the study infrastructure and community engagement model, provide key baseline data on a range of health, well-being and environmental factors, and position the research initiative for major federal and foundation research opportunities that will ensure longitudinal studies on the value of stable affordable housing and the community of opportunities service and engagement model on health equity.

“The purpose is to figure out as an industry what the most effective leverage points are from a time and cost point of view to transform the lives of affordable housing residents, and how to turn this into public

policy,” said Jonathan F.P. Rose, president of Jonathan Rose Companies, Jonathan Rose Companies, LLC, a leading investment manager with expertise in green affordable and mixed income acquisition and development. “Our goal is to magnify this work. With the Biden administration, there is now a tremendous opportunity with enormous receptivity to these ideas. We think this is a really great opportunity.”

There is a clear and compelling opportunity to provide comprehensive social, environmental and health promotion services in affordable housing settings. These efforts should be thoroughly examined for effectiveness by developing the infrastructure to collect pertinent information about residents, building amenities and environmental conditions to plan interventions and evaluate the impact of services and enhance the ability to change future interventions.

The project will be co-created with residents to build trust and encourage their voluntary participation in the project. It will also be developed with significant input from community-based staff such as Resident Service Coordinators, Property Managers, and others.

The data will be made available to the research team, who have helped to design the data collection project. They represent a cross-sectoral collaboration between academic partners (Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, Dartmouth Health Policy Institute, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health), housing providers (Jonathan Rose Companies) and affordable housing intermediaries (Enterprise Community Partners and Success Measures at NeighborWorks America).

About Community Opportunity Fund

Community Opportunity Fund is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to assisting residents in affordable housing in the United States of America to access a range of health, educational, cultural, social, and other services that will enhance the quality, well-being, and opportunity in their lives and in their communities, in order to improve their life outcomes. They measure the results from these programs and use the data to shift public policy and funding towards the creation of communities of opportunity.

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Summary of Partner Roles in the Project

Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health: Based on formative work it did during the projects’ planning phase, advise on the overall criteria for the data about property and resident characteristics to be tracked through a Jonathan Rose Companies database and other aspects of the site selection processes. Columbia will play a key role in the research design for a pilot study including input and review of the revision of the health and well-being survey for residents and integration of the resident engagement processes into the research process.

Dartmouth Health Policy Institute: Play a key role in the research design including criteria for site selection and pilot study design. Provide input on the overall criteria for property and resident characteristics to be tracked through a Jonathan Rose Companies database and other aspects of the site selection process. Provide input and review of the revision of the health and well-being survey for residents and structuring of the proposed data analysis to be conducted.

Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health: Determine the appropriate environmental monitoring components of the study, work with Jonathan Rose Companies to establish the operational aspects of the environmental monitoring processes and develop resident survey questions related to assessment of environmental conditions.

Enterprise Community Partners: Provide input on the health and well-being and environmental components of the resident survey as well as expertise on implementing research studies in affordable housing properties through input on the guides and support materials needed by sites. Support the dissemination of lessons learned and study results to the broader affordable housing field. Explore potential policy implications for securing sustainable funding for resident services.

Success Measures at NeighborWorks America: Serve as overall project manager for the development of the study infrastructure and carry out key roles including: supporting Jonathan Rose Companies in setting up the property and resident tracking database and pilot site selection criteria; coordinating partner input into the revision of the resident survey; finalizing and translating the survey into the multiple languages needed at pilot sites; providing Success Measures Data System (SMDS) access for the research team and the pilot properties and setting up the survey in SMDS in multiple languages; developing a resident engagement strategy and developing outreach materials for residents about the survey process; developing a survey guide for properties and the data collection team; providing outreach and training to property managers, resident service coordinators and resident leaders to support the data collection process at properties.

Jonathan Rose Companies: Through a dedicated staff person for this project, coordinate outreach to residents at pilot properties and serve as key resource person for all property managers and resident service coordinators at pilot properties. Coordinate with the Success Measures data collection team and provide key project coordination for research team meetings and communication. Maintain property and resident data for the pilot cohort. Through the in-kind contributions of key Jonathan Rose Companies Social Impact staff and leadership, will provide oversight, grant management and fund development support as well as participate in research team meetings to frame findings for academic and other field dissemination.

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Providing access to healthy food, continuing education, health screenings and other social programs are at the heart of Jonathan Rose Companies' Communities of Opportunity approach to transforming the lives of affordable housing residents. The new research project will study the effectiveness of this programming and how to turn this into public policy. Photo Courtesy of Jonathan Rose Companies