

# 2016

## *Highlights*

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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Housing and  
Community  
Development



**Network** of New Jersey

# We Supported New Jersey's Community Development Sector and Promoted the Impact of our Network.

- ▶ Worked with legislators and allies to **PREVENT FORECLOSURES FOR SANDY IMPACTED FAMILIES**. Signed by Governor Christie, this law enacts a three year moratorium on foreclosure for Sandy impacted residents while they rebuild.

## PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY

### PROVIDED SANDY OUTREACH INFORMATION/ SUPPORTED AN EFFICIENT AND EQUITABLE SANDY RECOVERY

- Continued to provide **resource information** to the residents of the nine hardest hit counties, informing them of the services and opportunities available to assist them. We partnered with member organizations and allies to reach Sandy survivors still in need of assistance to recover and rebuild from the storm. We **reached at least 150,000 people** in the nine counties and statewide conducting presentations and provided information at numerous LTRG, COAD/VOAD, and other recovery advocate sessions.
- Organized five **Housing Resources Fairs** reaching hundreds of Sandy-Impacted residents, and helped launch **housing opportunity showcases** with developers who have homes available for Sandy-impacted residents.
- Promoted the need for **future recovery efforts** to coordinate with existing nonprofits and include housing counseling in the response to a future emergency.

### PREVENTING & ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

- Enacted **exemptions for fees for key forms of identification** often needed by people experiencing homelessness, including a birth certificate and non-driver identification card.
- Held quarterly meetings of our **Homelessness Working Group**, to help members strategize about solutions to the growing crisis in our communities.
- Mobilized with our allies to **stop changes enacted by DHS** to Emergency Assistance, including promoting legislation to prevent them from being implemented.
- Advanced state legislative solutions, including proposals to enact cold weather emergency standards, aka **"Code Blue,"** to allow counties to raise more money for **County Homeless Trust Funds**, and to remove restrictions on people receiving general assistance benefits under Work First.

### SUPPORTED THE FOURTH REGIONAL PLAN WITH THE REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION (RPA)

- Hosted meetings with our members to get input into the **Fourth Regional Plan policy recommendations**, in our role as a state partner, and provided significant feedback to RPA. RPA is now working with our Trenton members on community economic development.
- Featured RPA leaders at Network events to address the findings in **The State of Our Health** that showed how the health of residents in our region is heavily influenced by the urban environments where they live, work and play.

### MADE OUR VOICES HEARD

- Brought **200 housing advocates** to the NJ State House for **Legislative Day**, where we held **51 meetings** with legislators and staff and moved a dozen policy priorities in committee. Organized **two trips to Washington, DC**, where dozens of leaders met with Congressional staffers in April, and more than **350 people came for NJ Hill Day** in July. Over half of NJ's Congressional members heard from consumers about the need to support important federally funded housing programs and services.



Check out our

- ▶ **LAUNCHED BUILD A THRIVING NEW JERSEY**, the Network's campaign for future leaders to invest \$600 million annually to create affordable homes and strengthen our economy.



- ▶ **Community Scholars & Internships: LAUNCHED THE COMMUNITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM** and graduated 14 scholars who gained hands-on experience in the community development field, and increase the capacity of our members during the 10 week session.

## COMMUNITY STABILIZATION & NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

### SUPPORTED HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & HEALTHY HOMES

- **Launched the #LeadFreeKidsNJ campaign**, bringing public attention and advocacy pressure on the Governor and other elected officials to restore **\$10 million** for the Lead Hazard Control Assistance Fund to remediate this toxin. Diverted to fill budget gaps over the last decade, these funds were disbursed to nonprofits at the end of 2016 as a result of this ongoing campaign.
- Secured another **\$10 million for lead testing in schools**, won **changes to NJDOH regulations** so that actionable blood lead levels in children align with the standards recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, and helped pass changes that allow for increased testing of at risk children in a doctor's office.
- **Hosted 100 participants** at our first **Healthy Communities & Homes Summit** to explore the challenges and opportunities for improving health in NJ's communities and homes. Working with the Newark Healthy Homes committee and the Passaic County United Way's "Invest Health" effort as well as supporting quarterly meetings of our members.
- **Achieved progress on our policy priorities**, including legislation to require municipalities to conduct **lead paint inspections** in one and two family rental homes, to require a lead safe certification when a home is rented and to **adopt measures for schools** to address effects of low levels of lead exposure.

### ADVOCATED FOR THE MOUNT LAUREL DOCTRINE

- Filed as **Friend of the Court**, along with other allies, backing the inclusion of the 'gap-period' in municipalities' calculations and mobilized public support for this, and for the inclusion of very low income residents in fair share calculations. We worked with our members to create a blue print for **including nonprofit developers** in municipal settlements.

### SUPPORTED NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

- Unveiled a **status update** of the **Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program** which found that more than \$87.2 million in NRTC dollars have been invested by a wide array of corporation into 29 approved neighborhood plans in 14 communities and 113 projects.
- Our **Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force** met regularly to share best practices and address challenges facing NRTF members. The Network continued to serve on the **State's Task Force**, monitoring implementation and advocating for transparency, efficacy and flexibility.
- Promoted **tools for addressing foreclosures and problem properties** for 2016 NJ APA Conference, and in partnership with the NJ League of Municipalities, as well as for multiple municipalities.
- Developed and conducted **training on real estate development** and fiscal impact analysis for the NJ Association of Planning and Zoning Administrators, a training which will be run again in 2017.
- Coordinated **land banking and community land trust training** for our members and local officials.
- Supported legislation to **codify and fund the foreclosure mediation program**.

website to stay up to date [www.hcdnnj.org](http://www.hcdnnj.org)

# RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & MEMBER SERVICES



## CONTINUED HUD HOUSING COUNSELING INTERMEDIARY AND RELATED SUPPORT

- Received the **largest HUD Comprehensive Housing Counseling Grant** awarded in New Jersey, and increased the number of our HUD approved housing counseling sub-grantee agencies to nine as a result. This allowed us to expand our capacity.
- In 2016, over **1478 households** received HUD funded comprehensive **housing counseling** from our sub-grantees. This counseling includes pre-purchase counseling, financial education and counseling, **Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) education** and post ownership counseling which includes default, delinquent and reverse mortgage counseling.
- **Provided Training for Housing Counselors**, through individual technical assistance opportunities, quarterly meetings and group workshops.
- Prepared counselors for the **pending certificate examination** in a partnership with JP Morgan Chase.



## ENHANCED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR FIELD

- Mentored a **Fellow from the Nelson Mandela Leadership Institute**, who came to the U.S. from Madagascar to learn about community development and nonprofit management.
- **VISTA**: Became an AmeriCorp VISTA site, bringing four VISTAS with three specialties to the Network. Our VISTAS worked with members, and participated in the program's 1 of 1 Million celebration.
- CEUs: Offered **Continuing Education Credits for the first time** to Annual Conference participants, through a collaboration with Mercer County Community College.



## NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Continued to be the **state partners** for our national organizations, **NLIHC and NACEDA**. Worked with NACEDA to host NDC's housing finance certification series, saving nonprofit members over \$4000 for the entire series.



## EDUCATED OUR MEMBERS AND NJ'S DECISION MAKERS

- Hosted **350 people** at our second sold out Annual Conference, **Under One Roof**, which featured our first ever Gubernatorial Listening Panel with announced candidates.
- Launched the **Community Development Spotlight series**, with 5 events that focused on the great work being done by our members. Stakeholders came together to hear about housing counseling, homelessness prevention, NRTC activities and other efforts to make our state a better place to live and work.
- Released local versions of our **Stronger Together** report for Mercer, Middlesex, Salem, and Burlington counties.
- Held **Breaking Down Barriers Summit** jointly with Bergen Volunteer Center focusing on the need for greater CDC engagement in Bergen County, as well as highlighting current successful efforts.
- **Redesigned Network's website** featuring more interactive areas, including the Member Spotlight webpage, where members can promote their events and accomplishments to the Network's audience. Our website received over 33,000 page views during 2016.
- Introduced **Network Voices**, a place for Network staff and others to share professional insight on issues and events affecting the sector. Since its inception, Network Voices has published **85 posts** with over **7200 page views**.