



## ***Advocacy & Legislative Victories***

- **Improved the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) Program:** Succeeded in getting the NRTC statute amended to raise the tax credit to 100% and double the annual limit per participating corporation from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. These changes have already increased corporate contributions to community based development organizations to implement projects in their neighborhood plans nearly four-fold to over \$4 million.
- **Protected SRAP and Balanced Housing Funding:** Led a successful, last minute budget fight to prevent a raid of \$10 million more from the Balanced Housing Program to cover an equal cut planned for the direct appropriation to the State Rental Assistance Program. As a result, SRAP remained level-funded at \$37.5 million, with \$17.5 million from appropriations and \$20 million from Balanced Housing. We continue to support an increase in funding to \$50 million and an end to using Balanced Housing dollars to fund SRAP.
- **Advanced the Very Low Income Housing Bill:** This bill, which would require all state housing programs to target 25% of affordable housing units created for very low-income households, was passed by the Assembly Housing and Local Government Committee as a result of Network member advocacy during our spring Lobby Day.
- **Advocated for National Housing Trust Fund:** Helped advance legislation to create a national affordable housing trust fund for the production and preservation of rental housing; working now with our national partners to ensure that this legislation provides appropriate allocation of resources for a variety of income levels and housing choices.
- **Deepened Involvement in Housing Preservation:** With the need for effective preservation measures becoming increasingly urgent, we are working with members and allies to: frame proactive legislation and other actions to help stem the pending tide of foreclosures and address their impact on neighborhoods; pursue local and statewide solutions to the loss of multifamily housing, including partnering with the Newark/HUD Tenants Coalition to address expiring use concerns; and support state agency efforts toward developing a comprehensive housing preservation strategy.
- **Encouraged County Homeless Trust Fund:** Worked with local partners to craft state enabling legislation permitting counties to generate revenue for the creation of a homeless trust fund to support programs outlined in their 10 year Homelessness Plans. Revenue could come from a variety of sources, including an increase in the county's portion of the document recording fee. 140 groups in New Jersey have called for this legislation to be adopted.
- **Supported *Homes for New Jersey*:** Continued assisting this broad coalition of business, religious and community leaders' quest to get the state to make the reforms necessary to fulfill the Governor's promise of 100,000 homes by 2015. The Network helped hire Homes' first Executive Director, Alison Badgett, and is part of the leadership team.

## ***Increasing Networking, Visibility and Public Awareness***

- **Strengthened Advocacy Infrastructure:** Conducted five statewide and regional trainings, honing the skills and issue knowledge of over 110 advocates to increase the impact of our advocacy work. More than 75 Network members filled the State House on May 10, bringing their skills and energy to bear on the legislative process, with some two dozen participating in advocacy efforts in Washington, DC with our national partners, the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) and the National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations (NACEDA). A-Teams were active in 11 counties in 2007.
- **Increased Media Presence:** Coverage of our work increased dramatically with Joseph Picard becoming the Network's Communications Specialist; our increased reach on housing and community development issues include launching Diane Sterner's blog on njvoices.com and publishing op-eds in the *New York Times* and *Asbury Park Press*.
- **Expanded Membership and Services:** Recruited 25 new members, and increased members' visibility around the state with new membership materials, including window decals and pins. Published ten newsletters and numerous action alerts to support advocacy efforts and keep members apprised of funding and resource opportunities, upcoming events, job openings and program and policy changes that affect them.

## ***Capacity Building and Resource Development***

- **Housing Production:** Graduated 11 individuals from 7 organizations from the fourth cycle of our Housing Production Business Planning Course, which incorporated presentations from numerous funders and featured our first ever Deal Clinic with seven lenders. Graduates' business plans project a combined 330% increase in their



## 2007 Highlights

affordable housing production over the next five years. Housing Production Task Force, consisting mainly of Business Planning graduates, met twice to share ideas and gather feedback on existing programs.

- **Housing Development Finance Professional Certification Program:** Partnered with the National Development Council to offer 5 courses this year, including the final two modules in their 4 course Housing Development Finance Certification Program (23 participants received certification in June) as well as courses on Mixed Use- Mixed Income Development, New Markets Tax Credits, and Low Income Housing Tax Credits, attended by 71 participants.
- **Abandoned Properties:** Supported city-wide groups, allies and municipal officials in Jersey City, Camden, Irvington and Newark as they work to implement the abandoned properties list ordinances adopted in these cities. Working with members of the Paterson Alliance to lay the groundwork for enactment of an ordinance in that city.
- **Multifamily Preservation & Receivership:** Conducted initial meetings with potential receivers and refined receivership approval application, which is now available on-line on DCA's website. Assessed potential receivership projects with state agencies and allies, including projects in Camden, Lakewood, Mt. Holly, Newark and Paterson.
- **Neighborhood Planning:** Supported 17 members to create and/or begin implementing neighborhood plans. To date 11 members have DCA-approved plans and 2 more are pending approval. Three member organizations have approved projects while 8 others have projects pending. A total of 7 projects have received NRTC funding, while 3 members received Wachovia Regional Foundation implementation grants. Assisted in the initiation of 2 new planning and organizing initiatives to create revitalization plans in East Trenton and North Camden. Held two Task Force meetings to share best practices among members
- **PLAN Fund:** Continued to market this predevelopment and acquisition loan fund, initiated by the Network and HMFA and operated by The Reinvestment Fund, to NJ CDCs. Nearly \$9.5 million toward the initial \$10 million capitalization goal has been raised, with 41 loans (up to 1300 units) totaling \$6,318,710 made to date. TRF honored the Network at their Annual Meeting in June for our role in creating this program.
- **Community Economic Development (CED):** Continued monitoring existing borrowers, made 1 new loan to support commercial corridor redevelopment in Camden, and increased one loan for a mixed use mixed income project in Neptune.
- **Support for Citywide Networks:** Worked with members in Paterson, Newark, Camden and Jersey City to support efforts to increase resources, access properties and pursue other common goals; initiated conversations with members in Cumberland County to do the same. Highlights include presenting at CCDA's first city-wide symposium; supporting CCDA's efforts to improve the City's information management systems and property disposition process; partnering with JCAHC on their Affordable Housing Month event and to lay the groundwork for an inclusionary zoning campaign; and working with NCDN and Newark officials to release the Brookings Institution's *Restoring Prosperity* report.

### ***Participating as Innovators in the Field of Community Development***

- **Expanded NACEDA:** Continued working with other state and city CDC associations – now up to 25 – to position the National Association of Community and Economic Development Associations to pursue a national CED agenda; to strengthen state CED associations' role in promoting local community development efforts; and to act as convener of the CED field. The Network's ED continued to serve as chairperson, and helped hire NACEDA's first Executive Director. Network staff and board members attended NACEDA's inaugural Summit in March and have supported its organizational capacity assessment (OCA) and policy work.
- **CDC Research:** Completed analysis of CDC and citywide activities captured through the 2006 survey process and subsequent interviews. Engaging members around the findings to plan effective local policy and training agendas. Created a staff position to assist with these citywide strategies, in order to meet the challenges and new opportunities facing our members in their changing environments.
- **Shaped Urban Revitalization Policy Recommendations:** Completed intensive review of policy recommendations resulting from the release and subsequent discussion of *Cities in Transition: New Jersey's Urban Paradox*. Engaged members, allies and decision makers in the process, in order to have stakeholder and government input, with the final report to be released in early 2008. To maximize our reach, we worked with New Jersey Future as local partners in the May 2007 release of the Brookings Institution's report, *The States Role in Revitalizing Older Industrial Cities*.