

Frequently Asked Questions

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What is the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative?

A: The Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI) is an interagency collaborative supporting the Obama Administration's new approach to federal engagement in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. By aligning federal resources focused on distressed communities, the NRI can more effectively support local community, government, business, and institutional leaders in creating successful neighborhoods of opportunity.

Q: What agencies are leading the Initiative?

A: The Initiative is being led by the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC), White House Office of Urban Affairs (WHOUA), and the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Education (ED), Justice (DOJ), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Treasury.

Q: Why is the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative made up of these five agencies?

A: Many Federal agencies have an important role to play in neighborhood revitalization, and as the Initiative grows, it will include additional agency partners. At the outset, however, we have begun building the Initiative with these five agencies, to create a model for coordination and alignment of Federal programs and resources in distressed neighborhoods.

Q: Why do we need the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative?

A: A child's zip code should never determine his life opportunities or potential, but research shows that neighborhood poverty is a critical factor in determining whether or not children will one day make more money than their parents. In distressed neighborhoods, high unemployment rates, rampant crime, health disparities, inadequate early care and education, and struggling schools contribute to intensify the negative outcomes associated with living in poverty. Interconnected solutions are needed in order to resolve the interconnected problems that families living in these neighborhoods face.

Working in coordination would achieve a much bigger impact in distressed communities than any one agency could accomplish alone. That is why the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative's approach is designed to be **Interdisciplinary**, to address the interconnected problems in distressed neighborhoods; **Coordinated**, to align the requirements of federal programs so that local communities can more readily braid together different funding streams; **Place-based**, to leverage investments by geographically targeting resources and drawing on the compounding effect of well-coordinated action; **Data- and results-driven**, to facilitate program monitoring and evaluation, to guide action needed to make adjustments in policy or programming, and to learn what works and develop best practices; and **Flexible**, to adapt to changing conditions on the ground.

Q: What are the five programs at the center of the Initiative?

A: To date, agencies in the Initiative have begun a collaboration centered on five programs:

1. **Choice Neighborhoods (HUD)** – Choice Neighborhoods supports efforts to transform distressed public and assisted housing into sustainable mixed-income housing that is physically and financially viable over the long term, to promote positive outcomes for families, and to transform neighborhoods of concentrated poverty into viable, mixed-income neighborhoods with access to key assets and services.
2. **Promise Neighborhoods (ED)** – Inspired by experiences of initiatives such as the Harlem Children’s Zone, Promise Neighborhoods supports projects that are designed to create a comprehensive continuum of education programs and family and community supports, with great schools at the center, that will significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth, from birth through college and career, in the nation’s most distressed communities.
3. **Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (DOJ)** – A new program proposed for FY 2011, Byrne is a community-based strategy that aims to control and prevent violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in designated high crime neighborhoods across the country, providing funding to support partnerships between law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations that balance targeted enforcement with prevention, intervention, and neighborhood restoration services.
4. **Community Health Centers (HHS)** – Community Health Centers have for more than four decades provided comprehensive high-quality preventive and primary health care to America’s most medically underserved urban and rural communities. Health centers serve patients regardless of their ability to pay, making them the essential primary care provider for nearly 19 million people in need.
5. **The Behavioral Health Community Initiative (HHS/SAMHSA)** – By focusing resources in selected disadvantaged communities and building on a core infrastructure to support implementation at a sufficient scale, the Behavioral Health Community Initiative will substantially improve the outcomes for substance use and mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery services for the residents of the community.

Q: How does the NRI Workgroup plan to integrate?

A: The agencies represented on the Initiative have already developed frameworks for integrating centerpiece programs in FY 2010 and 2011, including coordinated funding priorities and joint funding notices. In addition, the agencies plan to coordinate peer review processes to ensure that reviewers with experience in neighborhood revitalization, education and development from birth through college, and public safety are involved in grant competition reviews. Initiative members are using common language in their relevant funding notices and program evaluation metrics, as well as developing a shared theory of change.

Q: What is the status of the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative?

A: The public rollout of the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative took place on Tuesday, September 21, in conjunction with the Department of Education's announcement of the 2010 Promise Neighborhoods planning grant awards.

Q: Will there be targeted funding for this Initiative?

A: Right now, we are working within current programs to target and coordinate funding of neighborhood revitalization strategies with resources already identified. The Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative is focused on making each agency's place-based investments more effective, to get better results with existing investments.

Q: How can we tell if this approach makes a difference?

A: We will monitor and evaluate the programs and places that work with an integrated neighborhood-level approach to identify improvements to resident outcomes over time. Member agencies intend to work together to align the goals and program evaluation metrics of the various programs as much as possible. The Initiative's approach is data- and results-driven – to facilitate program monitoring and evaluation, to guide action needed to make adjustments in policy or programming, and to learn what works and develop best practices. Moreover, the Initiative's approach is consistently informed by promising practices from communities across the country that show evidence of significant impacts on resident and community quality of life.