

FACT SHEET
National Resource Network: *New Solutions for Cities*

Overview

Cities across the nation are working to grow their economies to attract jobs, retain an educated workforce, and build ladders of opportunity for those in the middle class working to get into the middle class. But many cities face long-term challenges—from aging infrastructure to tight local budgets to long-term declines in population and employment. The National Resource Network (the Network) was created out of a demand from cities around the country to have access to experts, technical advice, and information that can help them address the mounting challenges of growing inequality, high unemployment, under-performing schools, aging infrastructure and vacant and blighted properties. The Network will help cities address these challenges through on-the-ground expert engagements and advisory services, among other forms of assistance.

- Funded at \$10 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Network consortium includes leading experts and practitioners from the private and nonprofit sectors as well as academia who work with city leaders every day to address their greatest economic needs:
 - [Enterprise Community Partners](#)
 - [Public Financial Management](#)
 - [HR&A Advisors](#)
 - [New York University’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service](#)
 - [International City/County Management Association](#)
- In addition, more than a dozen other key partners—including the Center for Community Progress, Jobs for the Future, the Trust for Public Land and The Urban Institute – have been recruited to work with the Network. The Annenberg Foundation, Ford Foundation and Surdna Foundation have already committed to partnering with and supporting the Network.
- The consortium will raise an additional \$10 million over three years from foundations, corporate funders, and local governments to further leverage HUD’s initial \$10 million investment.

Services provided by the National Resource Network

“311 for Cities”

- Many cities already offer local “311” resources to help their residents navigate and better access critical local services and information. Now the Obama Administration is doing the same for city officials seeking support on their top priorities.
- The Network provides the first “311 for Cities” service that will offer on-demand access to expertise and assistance to cities across the country. Cities confronted with a range of persistent challenges often lack the means to consult with experts in a timely fashion to find solutions. They know the problems and often just need to know where to look for best practices that have worked in other places.

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- As of May 2014, over 50 cities have direct access to this “311 for Cities” resource, with the ability to receive expert assistance via the Network website www.nationalresourcenetwork.org. City officials and staff can log on and get best practice ideas and advice from national experts on community development, economic development, operations, budget and other key issues.
- The “311 for Cities” service will expand to hundreds of cities nationwide over the next year.

On the Ground Assistance

- For cities that need and qualify for comprehensive and direct assistance, the Network deploys teams of private and public sector experts to work with cities on the ground to implement locally identified projects and initiatives that will deliver economic benefits in the near term.
- The Network’s team of experts will assess local needs and hone in on key priorities, provide recommendations, and help cities identify and execute on strategies that align with their economic recovery, such as solving a major affordable housing challenge, tackling high crime rates, or helping the city improve its fiscal outlook through budget improvements.
- Network teams also work to build local capacity and leadership for the future. The Network will help cities to identify potential funding from, and strategic partnerships with, foundations, nonprofits, and local businesses to help them achieve their economic goals.
- In the first year, on-the-ground assistance will be piloted in at least 10 locations, including Compton, CA; Lynwood, CA; Fall River, MA; Kansas City, KS; and Miami, FL. Starting as early as winter 2014, additional cities will be able to apply for direct assistance based on the Network’s evaluation of their needs and readiness to move forward on economic turnaround.

Peer Networks

- The Network’s support for economic recovery will not end with its on-the-ground assistance. Through peer activity, the Network will bring together city leaders, policymakers, and expert practitioners who are developing practical solutions that can be shared and disseminated to promote innovation, collaboration, and leadership development.
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- The Network will also support the development of “local resource networks” within select cities, which will deepen the benefits of peer learning and cross-sector

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collaborations. For instance, a local resource network may help build on a city partnership with businesses to advance agreed upon economic development goals. These approaches, which will be developed in late 2014, will create new opportunities for local leaders to network with and learn from each other.

Policy Lessons & Advice

- The Network website will offer a public curated library of best practices, toolkits, and technical assistance opportunities from federal agencies and, over time, state and local agencies and national nonprofits.
- The Network will also work closely with the federal government to identify recommendations and strategies for federal agencies that could improve on existing efforts to support local economic recovery. On-the-ground assistance and “311 for Cities” inquiries will be a way for the Network to take the pulse of what cities need from federal partners for sustained economic recovery.

Additional Information on National Resource Network and the Consortium Members can be found at: www.nationalresourcenetwork.org.

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