White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) National Fact Sheet

What is SC2?

The Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2) supports President Obama's agenda to build ladders of opportunity for all Americans who are working hard to make it to the middle class. Through historic investments and partnerships, SC2 is helping the communities that were hardest-hit by the recession.

The Obama Administration launched the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative pilot program in July 2011. The SC2 concept was developed through engagement with mayors, members of Congress, foundations, non-profits and other community partners who are committed to addressing the challenges of local governments. SC2 and its partners are working together to coordinate federal programs and investments to spark economic growth in distressed areas and create stronger cooperation between community organizations, local leadership, and the federal government.

By the Spring of 2014, SC2 **will be working in over 20 communities and regions** nationwide.

SC2 Teams Partnering with Communities:

- SC2 Teams support the communities' visions for economic development, help communities more effectively invest existing resources, align federal programs, and facilitate new partnerships and peer learning opportunities wherever possible.

- SC2 has already deployed teams of federal inter-agency experts to work alongside mayors and their staffs in seven pilot locations, including:
    - Chester, PA;
    - Cleveland, OH;
    - Detroit, MI;
    - Fresno, CA;
    - Memphis, TN;
    - New Orleans, LA;
    - Youngstown, OH.

- In the coming months, SC2 Teams from these cities will transition each pilot city into the SC2 Alumni Network where they will have access to peer-learning events and other opportunities to assist with technical assistance or pilot initiatives that may be appropriate. Members of the Alumni Network will designate federal points of contact to share innovations, best practices, and troubleshoot barriers, all of which will continue to inform federal policy.

- In January of 2014, SC2 announced that the following cities were selected through a competitive process:
    - Brownsville, TX;
    - Flint, MI;

- o Gary, IN;
- o Macon, GA;
- o St. Louis, MO;
- o Rockford, IL;
- o Rocky Mount, NC

SC2 Visioning Challenge:

- SC2 will continue its work in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, which awarded **Greensboro, NC; Hartford, CT; and Las Vegas, NV** the SC2 Economic Visioning Challenge. This challenge is an innovative competition that uses a prize model to spur the creation of a comprehensive economic development strategy in these communities.

SC2 Fellowship Program:

- Operating in the SC2 pilot cities since September 2012, the SC2 Fellowship Program provides distressed cities with highly-skilled professionals who work directly with local governments and community nonprofits. Their work focuses on helping cities on strategic projects that are vital to promoting economic development and revitalization. Funded at $2.5 million, the SC2 Fellowship program was developed and funded by HUD and has placed 17 fellows in the original seven SC2 pilot cities to serve for two-year terms.

SC2 Impact:

At a time when economic resources are limited, SC2 is helping communities make every dollar count. SC2's work has enabled pilot communities to more effectively utilize **more than $368 million in existing federal funds and investments**. More significantly, the initiative has succeeded in strengthening local capacity for communities to meet challenges and take advantage of opportunities to grow their economies. [See City fact sheets for more details.]

Due to the initiative's initial success, and to oversee the ongoing SC2 Initiative, President Obama signed an Executive Order on March 15, 2012 establishing a White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2 Council). The Council coordinates federal efforts to ensure communities have access to comprehensive technical assistance and provides policy recommendations on ways to strengthen local economies, streamline federal resources and regulations, and disseminate best practices. The SC2 Initiative published its first Annual Report in April 2013.