

Houston Awarded \$50 Million HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, August 29, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has named Houston the recipient of a \$50 million CHOICE Neighborhoods Implementation Grant. The grant, one of seven awarded nationwide in 2024, will fund the implementation of the Cuney Homes Housing Plan. The plan will construct 1,115 mixed-income, transit-oriented housing units on the Cuney Homes public housing property and in the surrounding Third Ward neighborhood.

To commemorate the Choice Implementation grant award, a celebration was held on July 26, 2024, and was attended by Mayor Whitmire, Houston Housing Authority (HHA) President and CEO David A. Northern, Sr., U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Federal Housing Commissioner Julia R. Gordon, Cuney Homes Resident Council Board President, residents and various other elected officials and community partners.

"We are proud to be a 2024 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grantee in Houston," said Houston Mayor John Whitmire. "This initiative highlights the power of federal and local collaboration. With a substantial \$50 million investment in the Third Ward, Houstonians will witness a vibrant transformation starting with Cuney Homes, benefiting and enhancing our entire city. This project represents a step forward in urban renewal and showcases how strategic partnerships can profoundly uplift communities."

Houston's application was submitted through a collaborative effort between HHA (applicant) and the City of Houston (co-applicant). The private sector was represented by the lead real estate development and investment company, [The Integral Group](#), in collaboration with Rule Enterprises. Rule Enterprises will co-lead the housing implementation with The Integral Group, Urban Strategies will lead the People Strategy, and the City of Houston will lead the neighborhood strategy.

"Houston's selection as a 2024 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grantee underscores the power of strategic partnerships and community-driven development. The transformation of Cuney Homes, in Houston's historic Third Ward, will not only provide essential housing but also foster a vibrant, inclusive community," said Vicki Lundy Wilbon, The Integral Group President of Real Estate. "At Integral, we are committed to creating value in cities and rebuilding the fabric of communities, and this project is a testament to that mission."

"It's an honor for us to be selected, alongside Integral, for HUD's flagship program," said Brandon Rule, Rule Enterprises CEO. "With this \$50 million grant, we will create lasting impact in Houston's Third Ward by delivering quality mixed income housing and opportunities that will empower the community for generations to come."

Thanks to this strategic leveraging, Houston will successfully generate over \$600 million in total investment from the initial \$50 million HUD investment. Houston's commitment to this initiative has been remarkably effective, leveraging \$12 from community partners for every dollar received from the HUD grant. This achievement significantly surpasses the average, where CNI grant recipients typically generate \$8.65 in community contributions for each grant dollar.

"This historic \$50 million investment and the total number of leveraged funds coming into the Third Ward is a testament to the power of community and collaboration," said David A. Northern Sr., President and CEO of HHA. "By reimagining Cuney Homes, we're setting the stage for a remarkable story of urban renewal – one where quality housing drives economic growth, educational achievement, and improved health outcomes. This is how we build a more equitable and prosperous Houston for all."

While the primary focus of Houston's plan will be replacing Cuney Homes, a property that contains 553 two-story residential units, the seven-phase Housing Plan will include a wide range of housing types such as multi-family, duplexes, townhomes, and condominiums. The design will include retail spaces to support business growth on Emancipation Avenue, green spaces, public plazas, and greenways.

The Choice Neighborhoods Grant follows \$9 million in recent awards received by the HHA, which include:

- Housing Mobility Related Services: \$5 million to support residents in accessing housing opportunities in areas of higher opportunity.
- Housing Interventions to End the HIV Epidemic (HINT): \$2.5 million to provide housing and supportive services for individuals living with HIV. HHA is the only public housing agency among eleven nationwide grantees for this program.
- Older Adult Home Modification Program: \$1.25 million to improve accessibility and safety in homes of older residents.
- Emergency Safety and Security Grant: \$250,000 from the HUD Capital Fund Emergency Safety and Security Program to enhance safety measures in public housing properties.

These additional grants further demonstrate HHA's commitment to improving housing conditions and services for residents across various needs and demographics.

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