



The United States Conference of Mayors

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BALTIMORE, LITTLE ROCK (AR), WEST SACRAMENTO (CA) RECEIVE TOP HONORS FOR INNOVATIVE NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAMS

The U.S. Conference of Mayors and Wells Fargo Announce Winners of 2015 CommunityWINSSM Monetary Grants

San Francisco (June 21, 2015) — Mayors Stephanie Rawlings-Blake of Baltimore (MD), Mark Stodola of Little Rock (AR) and Christopher Cabaldon of West Sacramento (CA) have been recognized with top honors in the 2015 CommunityWINS -- Working/Investing in Neighborhood Stabilization -- Grant Program, administered by The U.S. Conference of Mayors and funded by the Wells Fargo Foundation.

Presented at Conference's 83rd Annual Meeting in San Francisco, the awards include monetary grants to city-based non-profit organizations and recognize mayors for exemplary leadership in developing local programs that promote long-term economic prosperity and improve the quality of life for residents in three categories: neighborhood stabilization, economic development, and job creation.

An independent panel of judges, selected by The U.S. Conference of Mayors, determined the winning cities from a pool of 162 applicants in three populations groups -- small, medium and large.

Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors commented, "Our 2015 CommunityWINS Grant Program gives the Conference an opportunity to showcase positive change happening now in our cities to make a difference in the lives of residents. We are grateful to Wells Fargo and the Wells Fargo Foundation for their support of the CommunityWINS Program, which also highlights the talent and commitment of mayors and city governments."

- **Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake** was presented \$300,000 on behalf of Civic Works, Inc. for its work with *Growing Green Tracks Team* -- a collaborative effort to address blight and improve the city's image of Baltimore as is seen by millions of passengers along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor.
- **Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola** was presented \$150,000 on behalf of Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind for its unique -- *Employment for Individuals Who Are Blind – Inclement Weather Outer Layer (IWOL)* project – which offers employment for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and provides funding for training and machinery accommodations.
- **West Sacramento Mayor Chris Cabaldon** was presented \$150,000 on behalf of the West Sacramento Foundation in support of the *FutureReady* program, which connects students studying engineering, science and technology to work-based learning internships and job training.

Additional Outstanding Achievement awards were also presented to: **Newark Mayor Ras Baraka** on behalf of Newark Community Economic Development Corporation (\$75,000); **Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt** on behalf of NeighborWorks Green Bay (\$50,000); and **Lima, OH Mayor David Berger** on behalf of Lima-Allen County Neighborhoods in Partnership (\$50,000).

The Grants were presented by Martin Sundquist, Executive Director, Wells Fargo Housing Foundation. Wells Fargo's support makes the CommunityWINSSM Program possible.

"Wells Fargo is delighted to collaborate with the US Conference of Mayors to make these grants available for nonprofits and enable them to make vital improvements in their cities," said Sundquist. "Wells Fargo cares about the communities we serve and we're

inspired by the tremendous interest in the inaugural CommunityWINS grant program that will add up to make a big difference in helping revitalize neighborhoods.”

Following are brief descriptions of the winning programs and grant amounts for each:

FIRST PLACE

BALTIMORE, MD/ \$300,000 to Civic Works, Inc.

Currently there are 16,000 vacant properties in Baltimore City – many along the Amtrak’s Northeast corridor that passes through the city. The Growing Green Tracks Team is a city-led collaborative that sees these vacancies as opportunities to strengthen and connect blighted communities through greening projects and reinvestment. Permanent enhanced greening sites including an integrated network of parks and squares, rain gardens, day-lighted streams, recreational trails, urban farms, wetlands, and community gardens, as well as public art will provide permanent community amenities, while “clean and green” site improvements and aesthetic boarding address problem areas to stabilize the neighborhoods and increase economic development potential. Civic Works’ Community Lot Team employs and trains individuals to transform vacant and abandoned lots into community gardens and green spaces. (250,000+ population)

LITTLE ROCK, AR/\$150,000 to Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind

Arkansas has the second largest blind/visually impaired population per capita in the U.S., thus the primary goal of Employment for Individuals Who Are Blind program is to provide full time employment for 25 individuals, including at least 10 of those who are blind or visually impaired. Through the Inclement Weather Outer Layer (IWOL) project, their new product line -- the IWOL jacket -- to be used by the U.S. Army will be brought to Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind (ALB) diversifying its current product mix and ensuring sustainable operations. Not only will ALB sustain the current levels of employment by supporting jobs at existing production lines, but it will also create additional employment for 25 Arkansans thus contributing to the area’s economic development and bringing federal contract revenue to the city. (75,000-250,000 population)

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA /\$150,000 to West Sacramento Foundation

Junior and senior high school students in the Engineering, Science and Technology Academy at River City High School (the only public high school in the district) in the FutureReady program will be provided high-quality, work-based learning opportunities that align with their curriculum. Through paid internships with local engineering, science and advanced-manufacturing companies, students will be prepared for success in an entry level job and/or post-secondary education. Employers will benefit by having increased access to a local labor pool that has completed industry-relevant academic coursework and has previous on-the-job experience. (75,000 population)

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

NEWARK, NJ/\$75,000 to Newark Community

The grant will be used to develop and open a Community Storefront Program in a vacant city-owned storefront property, which will house 5-10 entrepreneurs on a shared, revolving basis. The program will provide potential entrepreneurs with the skills to launch a business, as well a physical venue in which to launch it. A rotating schedule will be created whereby each program participant is given a series of times to pilot their business ideas and sell their goods and services. In addition, a marketing campaign will be used to solicit businesses for the project. The rotation insures that participants are able to troubleshoot problems between their Storefront appearances, maximize the market potential of their business, and limit their risk. Newark Community Economic Development Corporation will provide technical assistance to the businesses seeking expansion to ensure a smooth transition into their new locations. (250,000+ population)

GREEN BAY, WI/\$50,000 to NeighborWorks GreenBay

The Armory at 815 Chicago Street was long used by area military branches for training and storage. In the early 1970s, operations were moved elsewhere and the building began a slow decline. Today, NeighborWorks Green Bay seeks to renovate the 20,000 square foot structure to develop an indoor farm and agri-business entrepreneurial program at the location -- targeting low and moderate- income residents and veterans seeking to learn farming, improve their job skills, or start a new career or business. The operation will ultimately run as an enterprise without need for subsidy through the sale of produce and fees for service. The employment, economic development, and food-related benefits of the operation will provide a triple bottom line of “people, planet and profit.” (75,000-250,000 population)

LIMA, OH/\$50,000 to Lima-Allen County Neighborhoods in Partnership

Lima-Allen County Neighborhoods in Partnership (LACNIP) intends to expand and improve their Community Pride cleanup programs, add to the existing community gardens program, and assist the city with maintenance of vacant properties. Funds will be used to purchase equipment such as a tractor with attachments for a variety of land functions, materials to construct greenhouses enabling year-round gardening, and to contract with an individual to oversee the program. The city has struggled with the existence of many vacant properties that have continued to be unused, yet cost the city to maintain. LACNIP approached the city about using an empty fire station, located in a declining neighborhood where businesses were closing and housing stock was in disrepair, to create a resource center for the community. This will also give the organization, which has existed for 20 years, relying strictly on volunteers, bringing all neighborhood associations together to partner with the city, county, businesses, other nonprofits, law enforcement, schools and universities, and developing programs to fulfill their mission and improving the aesthetics, safety and communication throughout the area, a home. (75,000 population)

About The United States Conference of Mayors -- The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are nearly 1,400 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/usmayors](https://www.facebook.com/usmayors), or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.