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By Linda Lindner (New Jersey) - January 27, 2023



The [National Fair Housing Alliance](#) recently announced recipients of its \$8.3 million Inclusive Communities Fund Grant program. Three local partners from New Jersey were part of the 16 metropolitan areas that received up to \$185,000 each to help people access equitable housing opportunities and promote stable, healthy, viable communities.

The [Housing Partnership’s NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center](#), [New Jersey Community Capital](#) and [Invest Newark](#) were named among the recipients.

The funds were made available as part of last year’s settlement with Fannie Mae that provided \$35 million to promote homeownership, neighborhood stabilization, access to credit, property rehabilitation and residential development.

“Invest Newark is pleased to receive this grant award. It will help Invest Newark and the Newark Land Bank complete 25 single-family homes over the next two years. That is 25 more homeowners in the city of Newark building wealth for their families and for the next generation. The investment will help to create hundreds of construction jobs, pump \$3.75 million into the local Newark economy and help to return 25 vacant or blighted properties back to Newark’s tax rolls,” Marcus Randolph, CEO and president, Invest Newark, stated.

“As an organization that is dedicated to building more affordable housing options, this funding is essential to making sustained and meaningful impacts across the state,” Bernel Hall, CEO and president of NJCC, said. “We are grateful to NFHA in allowing us to receive this grant and are thrilled to continue leading the way in creating equitable development and accessible home buying opportunities for communities regardless of economic status.”

The Inclusive Communities Fund Grant Program invests fair housing settlement funds intended for community relief into neighborhoods or populations that have been destabilized by housing discrimination. The Inclusive Communities Fund empowers all individuals to access safe, sustainable housing of choice; creates inclusive, healthy and well-resourced neighborhoods; and addresses systemic barriers that limit equitable housing opportunities for everyone.

“Too many neighborhoods have been destabilized by systemic housing discrimination. We are ready to invest in these areas to rebuild communities of color,” Lisa Rice, CEO and president of NFHA, said. “By partnering with Invest Newark, we will revitalize block after block, the neighborhoods most impacted by the 2008 mortgage crisis, and build more inclusive and equitable communities. We look forward to working with our partners to ensure everyone has access to safe, sustainable, and fair housing choices and well-resourced neighborhoods.”

The grants allow for NFHA partners to undertake activities that support Black and Latino communities, encourage access to housing with an emphasis on homeownership and provide critical support to communities that have been harmed by discriminatory practices. Funding will be used for:

- Down payment assistance grants that will go directly to new homeowners, including several programs that are piloting a first-generation down payment assistance program that will primarily serve Black and Latino families;
- Financial literacy and credit counseling programs;
- Implementing Special Purpose Credit Programs to expand access to quality, affordable credit for Black and Latino consumers;
- Increasing the supply of affordable units for homeownership that is available in and for Black and Latino communities;
- Expanding opportunities for long-term affordable housing by supporting new properties for community land trusts and limited equity housing cooperatives;
- Further expanding access to credit for Black and Latino families through programs such as those that offer more affordable mortgage products and/or credit-building accounts to income-qualified families;
- Supporting organizations to “clean and green” vacant lots by creating community gardens and other types of green space;
- Facilitating acquisition and rehabilitation of vacant homes to become affordable homeownership opportunities;
- Providing foreclosure prevention counseling and grants;
- Preventing loss of generational wealth by addressing title and heirs property issues;
- Providing repairs for existing homeowners so that they can remain in their homes, addressing health and safety issues and ensuring the longevity of ownership.

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