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NORTH LAWNDALE COMMUNITY COORDINATING COUNCIL SELECTED AS FINALIST FOR \$10 MILLION “CHICAGO PRIZE” BY PRITZKER TRAUBERT FOUNDATION

“Advancing North Lawndale Together” Initiative Will Leverage Capital Funding for Community Investment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 12, 2019

CHICAGO, IL – The North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council (NLCCC) was selected by the Pritzker Traubert Foundation as one of six finalists for the coveted “Chicago Prize” on December 11th. The prize, whose winner will be selected and announced in May 2020, will award \$10 million to a community-led, investment-ready initiative to create a better economic future for residents on Chicago’s West and/or South Side.

“We’re thrilled to be selected as a finalist for the Chicago Prize,” said Rodney Brown, Executive Director of New Covenant CDC, lead organizer for the NLCCC’s Chicago Prize effort. “We have a unique opportunity to create and advance our own future. We envision North Lawndale as a healthy, vibrant community with a diversified and innovative economy, competitive workforce, engaged citizens and infrastructure that supports long-term sustainable growth. The Chicago Prize will help us move the needle ahead in achieving this vision.”

NLCCC’s initiative, called “Advancing North Lawndale Together,” is centered on leveraging investment in key capital projects that will catalyze economic stability for thousands of long-time North Lawndale residents. It will kick start efforts to implement the North Lawndale Quality of Life Plan that was the impetus for the formation of the NLCCC in 2015, and brought residents together to plan a viable future for their community. The Quality of Life plan was launched in November 2018 and focuses on enhanced housing opportunities, job and skills training and improved access to health care. The “Advancing North Lawndale Together” initiative draws on that plan to offer selected investment-ready capital projects that will address community needs for new jobs, housing, services and infrastructure.

“The North Lawndale Quality of Life Plan reflects our collective vision for our community – a plan developed by and for North Lawndale residents,” said Debra Wesley, President of Sinai Community Institute, a part of Sinai Health System. “Winning the Chicago Prize would allow us to leverage over \$41 million in investment to revitalize this neighborhood I grew up in. And it is significant because it is the first time we have a redevelopment plan designed not by outside investors, but by the people in our community, our residents and stakeholders and homegrown nonprofits, all with the full support of our elected officials. It’s truly a transformational opportunity.”



The NLCCC initiative is a collaboration between the New Covenant CDC, Sinai Community Institute (SCI), Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (LCDC), Lawndale Christian Legal Center (LCLC), North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN), and local arts organization Under the Grid (UTG).

Projects targeted in the initiative include:

- **Ogden Commons** – New construction includes a 30,000 square foot ambulatory surgical center, mixed income housing and commercial development in the first Opportunity Zone located on Chicago’s West Side. The project is a joint venture of The Habitat Company, Cinespace Chicago Film Studios and Sinai Health System.
- **Canaan Homes** –LCDC is developing affordable homes on now vacant lots so families can remain in the community. The effort will launch a new construction model for affordability that can be developed at scale in any neighborhood.
- **Lazarus Apartments** – LCDC will return to service 48 now vacant affordable apartment units and preserve them as affordable (30-60% AMI) for another 30 years. This includes 15 units set aside for formerly incarcerated residents and their families.
- **NLEN Workforce Campus** – NLEN will renovate a 20,000 square foot vacant building on Homan Avenue into an active community hub that will serve over 5,000 job seekers and be home to workforce programs, pop-up retail space for local entrepreneurs, a rooftop apiary, a peace garden, a worker bee café, community event space and a Wintrust Bank branch.
- **LCLC Workforce Housing** – LCLC will restore a currently problematic vacant building for housing and other programming for Opportunity Youth, giving at-risk youth a new start.
- **UTG Placemaking** – UTG will be working with all of the NLCCC initiatives project sites to thread physical assets together and integrate greenspace and art into each location.

The Chicago Prize will push to completion aspects of the North Lawndale Quality of Life Plan that promote economic stability and opportunity for residents, with transformational investment that builds on social capital, collaboration and community cohesion. All the partners in the initiative are led and primarily staffed by native West Siders, African Americans and/or women who are committed to ensuring the long-term health and viability of the neighborhood for the people who already live there.

“We already have a tremendous history of community development in North Lawndale, but we are still one of Chicago’s lowest income neighborhoods with 25 percent unemployment and over 40% of our residents living below the poverty line,” said Richard Townsell, Executive Director of Lawndale Christian Development Corporation. “Over 50 years ago, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. moved his family to North Lawndale to protest the living conditions that black families were living in. Many of those conditions persist today. Our plan gives us a unique opportunity to finish the work he started in North Lawndale.”

A key aspect of increasing economic opportunity for all North Lawndale residents through “Advancing North Lawndale Together” is supporting the needs of a spectrum of vulnerable populations, including those with a criminal background.

“Another key aspect of this initiative is finding a path to economic opportunity for our most challenged residents, including those with criminal backgrounds,” said Cliff Nellis, Executive Director of LCLC. “In our community, 59% of men have been arrested at some point. This initiative will open doors previously shut on those with a criminal background in need of affordable housing or employment as well as low income youth at the highest risk of violence and a lifetime of incarceration.”



According to Brenda Palms Barber, President and CEO of NLEN/Sweet Beginnings, the efforts of the NLCCC partners is really about independence. “What we’re talking about is giving North Lawndale residents the ability to control their own destiny – what their community looks like and how they live together. Investment like this means dignity, respect and freedom. It means better housing, economic mobility, jobs that are pathways to economic resilience and break a generational cycle of poverty and incarceration. To us, that’s really a winning combination.”

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