

WORKING CAPITAL

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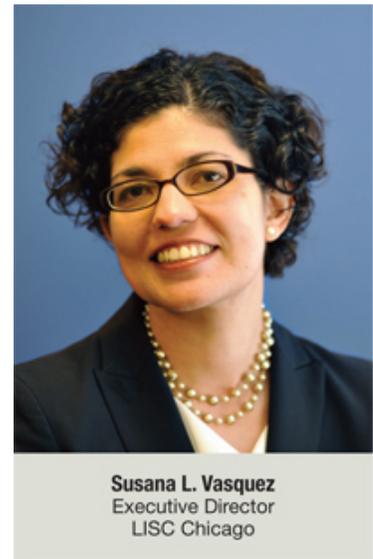


The Newsletter of the Chicago Program
of Local Initiatives Support Corporation

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The first half of 2012 has provided great testimony to the leadership and innovation that Chicago's community developers bring to our region. As you'll see in these newsletter stories, the **Chicago Neighborhood Development Awards**, followed by the Institute for Comprehensive Community Development's **Getting It Done II conference**, were great forums to communicate the breadth and depth of community development in Chicago and nationwide.

Not long after those events, **Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy** discussed crime and safety issues – and the necessity of engaging community organizations and residents in addressing them – at our Great Neighborhoods Club meeting. LISC has been engaged with McCarthy, the Chicago PD, the mayor's office, and the County to discuss how to support community engagement and social service strategies in various neighborhoods.



Susana L. Vasquez
Executive Director
LISC Chicago

LISC Chicago's board chair, **Lori Healey**, is providing her leadership to the NATO host committee, which has created a number of opportunities for Chicago's neighborhoods such as an online classroom-to-classroom concert at Thomas Kelly High School in April. **NATO Assistant Secretary General Kolinda Grabar, Mayor Rahm Emanuel** and **Alderman Ed Burke** joined as Kelly band members and students at a school in Afghanistan took turns performing music for each other. After the performances, students from both schools took part in an interactive discussion about each other's culture, schools and musical education.

Meanwhile, LISC Chicago's New Communities Program network is working with the city's Department of Public Health on policy recommendations for the Healthy Chicago 2020 plan. **Dr. Bechara Choucair**, who heads up the department, has already met with our NCP neighborhood representatives and has more meetings scheduled in the months ahead.

On another front, seven NCP communities (Auburn Gresham, Chicago Lawn, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, East Garfield Park, Little Village and Pilsen) are in the final stages of "**Testing The Model**" planning, our data-informed neighborhood planning process. They're looking at areas of health, safety, education and housing and how data can inform their strategies and enhance their implementation to achieve greater community impact. This new area of work recently received a generous grant from the MacArthur Foundation, which continues to be a key funder of LISC Chicago.

In the “getting things done” department, a couple of longstanding Logan Square projects – championed by the **Logan Square Neighborhood Association**, LISC, and others – reached critical mass. The formerly shuttered Cooper Lamp factory on West Diversey Avenue, now called the **Green Exchange**, has attracted a variety of green-oriented tenants – validating the community’s determination to preserve the building as an employment center rather than upscale housing. And the **Bloomington Trail**, an unused railroad embankment that snakes through a couple of NCP neighborhoods on the Northwest Side, received funding that will allow the **Trust for Public Land** to convert the full trail into a park and pedestrian/cycle path. LISC provided critical early financing and technical support to these efforts.

Our **Smart Communities** program is building momentum by working with youth, small businesses and community residents to demonstrate how technology can improve their quality of life. LISC has been asked to present on its work at an Interagency and Funder Symposium on Multiplying Economic and Social Impact through Technology on Monday, May 21, at the Department of Commerce. With that in mind, we’ve also been busy expanding our **Centers for Working Families** – both in number and the services provided. These types of community development initiatives ensure that neighborhoods can become better connected to the strengths of the city as a whole and be better protected from the varying rhythms of a changing global economy. The stories and photos in this issue of Working Capital will give you a broader look at what LISC Chicago and its neighborhood partners are doing and why.

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