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WELLS FARGO FOUNDATION, GROUNDED SOLUTIONS NETWORK, CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PROGRESS LAUNCH NATIONAL CATALYTIC LAND INITIATIVE FOR LASTING AFFORDABILITY

Three-Year Project Aims to Transform Vacant Properties, Reduce Displacement in Atlanta, Houston, Portland

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Three U.S. cities will receive technical assistance, strategic planning, peer learning and community engagement support to convert deteriorated properties into assets for permanently affordable housing production in emerging neighborhoods. ‘Catalytic Access to & Use of Land for Lasting Affordability,’ is a new national initiative announced today by [Grounded Solutions Network](#) and the [Center for Community Progress](#), with significant initial grant support from the Wells Fargo Foundation.

Atlanta, Houston, and Portland (OR) were selected as a three-city cohort, each with the documented potential to achieve community land trust permanently affordable housing at scale, with a specific focus on benefitting their existing populations of color who are at significant risk of involuntary displacement.

Tony Pickett, CEO of Grounded Solutions, noted that, thanks to the generosity of the Wells Fargo Foundation, “Grounded Solutions will lead the innovative 36-month Catalytic Land Cohort effort, defining a real estate pipeline for equitable development with strategic land bank policy and implementation support provided by the Center for Community Progress; the only national nonprofit specifically dedicated to building a future in which vacant, abandoned and deteriorated properties no longer exist.”

“Community Progress has helped hundreds of communities across the country design and implement groundbreaking strategies, policies, and tools—like land banks—to tackle vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties,” said Dr. Akilah Watkins-Butler, President & CEO of Community Progress. “Through this initiative we are excited to collaborate with local partners to open up new pathways to equitable development in the three participating cities and offer valuable lessons around scaling-up solutions to the housing affordability crisis with a focus on equity and inclusion.”

Beyond solely targeting vacant and abandoned property with a traditional land bank organization, an innovative proactive land banking strategy can unlock and generate new avenues for community land trust housing to serve families of color, leveraging the best aspects of land bank and land trust partnership.

With an initial \$700K in funding support for the first year of cohort activities provided by the Wells Fargo Foundation, the Catalytic Land Cohort will:

- Engage local community stakeholders – and particularly communities of color – to understand and influence the creation of new tools and policies to implement their existing community land use and housing plans
- Expand a robust network of relationships among national community development experts, peer communities and experienced practitioners
- Leverage portfolios of distressed and underutilized properties in support of existing Community Land Trust housing programs that provide lasting affordability

“Housing affordability is a major issue affecting communities across the U.S., as far too many families struggle to keep a roof over their heads,” said Connie Wright, senior vice president, Wells Fargo Foundation housing philanthropy. “This collaboration builds on Wells Fargo’s evolution of our philanthropy strategy, which includes a [\\$1 billion commitment](#) for housing affordability philanthropy over the next six years to create scalable solutions to reduce the cost burden of housing.”

Catalytic Land Cohort representatives and stakeholders are scheduled to convene for the first time to launch the initiative in October during the [2019 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference](#) in Atlanta.

About Grounded Solutions Network

A national nonprofit membership organization, Grounded Solutions Network supports shared equity housing programs with capacity-building resources, inclusive housing policy development, strategic planning, peer learning, technical assistance, training and programmatic support. Members now include over 230 nonprofit organizations and public agencies throughout the country.

About the Center for Community Progress

The mission of the Center for Community Progress is to foster strong, equitable communities where vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties are transformed into assets for neighbors and neighborhoods. Founded in 2010, Community Progress is the leading national, nonprofit resource for urban, suburban, and rural communities seeking to address the full cycle of property revitalization. The organization fulfills its mission by nurturing strong leadership and supporting systemic reforms. Community Progress works to ensure that public, private, and community leaders have the knowledge and capacity to create and sustain change. It also works to ensure that all communities have the policies, tools, and resources they need to support the effective, equitable reuse of vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties.

About Wells Fargo

Founded in 1852 and headquartered in San Francisco, Wells Fargo & Company (NYSE:WFC) provides banking, investment and mortgage products and services, as well as consumer and commercial finance, through 7,700 locations, more than 13,000 ATMs, and the internet (wellsfargo.com). With approximately 262,000 team members, Wells Fargo serves one in three households in the United States. With its corporate philanthropy, Wells Fargo aims to pave a path to stability and financial success for underserved communities by focusing on housing affordability, small business growth, and financial health, among other local community needs. In 2018, Wells Fargo donated \$444 million to nearly 11,000 nonprofits. For 10 consecutive years, Wells Fargo has held the honor of No. 1 in workplace giving by United Way Worldwide. Wells Fargo team members also actively support communities by donating more than 2 million hours of volunteer time in the last year. News, insights and more information on the company’s overall corporate responsibility are available at Wells Fargo Stories and www.wellsfargo.com/impact.

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