

For immediate release

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Contact

Catherine DeLoughry
cdeloughry@alleghenyconference.org
412-281-4783 ext. 3131
412-496-8538 (cell)

Homewood, Sharpsburg Join Allegheny Conference's Strengthening Communities Partnership

Communities to receive support in seeking investment and technical assistance from Allegheny Conference member organizations

(PITTSBURGH – June 16, 2015) – Today, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development announced the addition of two new communities – Homewood and Sharpsburg – to its Strengthening Communities Partnership (SCP) program. Launched in 2013, the SCP is designed to concentrate private investment and resources to help address disparities still present in many of our region's communities.

“We're pleased to welcome the communities of Homewood and Sharpsburg as the newest participants of the Strengthening Communities Partnership (SCP),” said Bill Schenck, chair, Strengthening Communities Partnership, and vice chairman, TriStateCapital.

“Since its launch two years ago, the SCP has been successful in pooling private sector resources to leverage nearly \$10 million to help build capacity and drive revitalization in participating communities. We look forward to working with Homewood and Sharpsburg to continue this progress and help make our region a more livable place for everyone,” continued Schenck.

The goal of the SCP is to concentrate private investment through tax credits purchased by businesses in the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) and complement that with targeted, *pro bono* professional services that will make redevelopment projects happen in the neighborhoods.

The communities of Homewood and Sharpsburg were selected through a competitive RFP process conducted earlier this year. Operation Better Block, Inc. (OBB) and Allegheny River Towns Enterprise Zone, Inc. (ARTEZ), community development corporations representing Homewood and Sharpsburg respectively, submitted proposals with detailed development plans underway but in need of additional investment.

“Although Homewood is challenged in many facets, it is also one of Pittsburgh's most promising neighborhoods, said Jerome Jackson, executive director, Operation Better Block,

Inc. (OBB). “Over the past year and a half, OBB has worked with residents, property owners, and other stakeholders to develop a strategic plan for community revitalization in Homewood. As we begin our work with the new Homewood Community Development Collaborative, we appreciate the commitment of the Allegheny Conference to our efforts and look forward to joining the Strengthening Communities Partnership.”

“Located about five miles from downtown Pittsburgh, Sharpsburg is a community in transition that is well positioned to benefit from its partnership with the Allegheny Conference,” said Iris Whitworth, executive director, Allegheny River Towns Enterprise Zone, Inc. (ARTEZ). “The partnership will assist us in building organizational capacity and in implementing *Uniquely Sharpsburg*, our multi-year strategic revitalization plan to create a more livable and dynamic Sharpsburg and to transform the community into one of the region’s great river towns.”

Homewood and Sharpsburg join five other communities currently participating in the SCP, including Connellsville, McKees Rocks, Mt. Oliver/Knoxville, the city of Washington and Wilkinsburg.

About the Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP)

NPP is a tax credit program of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, which provides an 80 percent tax credit to companies that make contributions to qualifying community development organizations. Supported activities include: affordable housing, real estate development, social services, crime prevention, education, workforce development, and other community revitalization efforts.

Businesses must contribute a minimum of \$50,000 per year, and communities can receive up to \$500,000 per year. In order to receive the maximum tax credit of 80 percent, businesses must commit to contributions for six years. Multiple businesses can participate in one NPP.

Participating businesses need only complete a single form to contribute, which makes it easy to participate. Net cost to contributing business is approximately 13 cents on the dollar. Partnering neighborhood organizations must complete a thorough Neighborhood Partnership plan, which creates measurable goals and outcomes.

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[The Allegheny Conference on Community Development](#) and its affiliates, the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, work in collaboration with public and private sector partners to improve the economy and the quality of life in southwestern Pennsylvania.