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Enterprise and HPD select three grantees for initiative

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New York, NY Enterprise Community Partners and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) unveiled a grant to Brooklyn Workforce Innovations (BWI), The HOPE Program (HOPE), and New York City College of Technology (City Tech) to design a new program through their “Housing Career Pathways” initiative. The workforce development providers, in partnership with a labor market research team from the City University of New York (CUNY) and an advisory board of housing providers and government agencies, will develop a program to train and connect low-income individuals in NYC to permanent jobs in affordable housing development, management, and preservation.

The grantees will work with Enterprise and HPD to design the model program, which includes creating an implementation plan, evaluation approach, and budget for the program by the end of the year.

They will also develop a template for a recruitment and engagement strategy, a skills training curriculum based on the anticipated job pipeline, and placement, retention and career advancement strategies. The advisory board will oversee program design to ensure it meets the needs of both participants and employers. The advisory board includes CAMBA, Shinda Management and CB Emmanuel, MBD Community Housing Corporation, WHEDCO, Phipps Houses, Wavecrest Management, Lemle & Wolff, L&M Development Partners, Covington Realty, Bronx Pro Group, Artimus, Asian Americans for Equality, Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, NYCHA, and The Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity.

“New York’s affordable housing industry is a powerful economic engine for the city, and low-income New Yorkers who live in affordable homes should be able to access the jobs it creates,” said Judi Kende, VP and NY market leader, Enterprise. “We are excited to work with BWI, HOPE, City Tech, and our partners at HPD to create a system for individuals to build careers in the industry and ensure that communities home to affordable housing developments can capitalize on the economic opportunities they bring.”

“Our collaborations with our dedicated partners allow for expanded access to the many opportunities affordable housing creates, from housing to employment. Through this initiative we look forward to empowering low-income New Yorkers, and working with our development and construction partners to create a pathway to job opportunities,” said HPD commissioner Louise Carroll. “I would like to thank Enterprise and our own economic opportunity staff for their hard work in getting this program off the ground.”

As part of mayor De Blasio's Housing New York plan, HPD is on track to build or preserve 300,000 units of housing by 2026. So far, this plan has generated over 3,600 permanent jobs and is expected to produce thousands more by 2026. The "Housing Career Pathways" initiative will help low-income New Yorkers, particularly those living in neighborhoods with affordable housing developments, build the skills necessary to prepare for and access these jobs. Potential jobs, with the opportunity for future career growth, include resident liaisons or relocation assistants, assistant development project managers, income certification and compliance assistants, legal coordinators, office managers, and human resource assistants.

Enterprise, in partnership with HPD, is convening the workforce development and housing provider partners to collaboratively design a program that both prepares participants for careers in affordable housing and meets the needs of affordable housing organizations. Following the design period, the program is anticipated to be piloted by Enterprise in partnership with HPD with the intention of eventually scaling the model citywide.

"Brooklyn Workforce Innovations has 20 years of experience bridging employment skills gaps, and we are excited to bring that to bear alongside such thoughtful and influential housing and workforce leaders during the design phase of this initiative," said Aaron Shiffman, executive director, BWI. "Our goal is to find ways to leverage affordable housing growth such that it creates upwardly-mobile career opportunities for low-income New Yorkers."

"We are thrilled to partner with Enterprise and this coalition to build career pathways for New Yorkers in affordable housing," said Kelly LoBianco, chief program officer, HOPE. "This partnership is unique in the diversity of stakeholders at the table and the investment from Enterprise in the process, which will yield robust training opportunities for our neighbors and a talent pipeline for local housing providers."

"Organizations are fueled by the skills that employees possess. Workers need to have proficiency in industry-related tasks coupled with general acumen," said Shermira Busby-Forrester, director, Business & Industry Workforce Training Center, New York City College of Technology. "The Housing Career Pathways initiative is a good start to develop best practices that will help shape the NYC housing industry employment skills gap."