



Building Opportunities for Families and Communities

Strong Partnerships for Affordable Housing

THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

Our Commitment to Affordable Housing:

- In the past 25 years, McKnight has invested more than \$200 million in affordable housing.
- We have partnered with and supported two of the most highly productive affordable housing organizations in the United States, resulting in housing for more than 36,000 families.
- Our commitment to affordable housing remains strong. Grant levels will remain constant in 2008, focusing on strategic investments.

Why Refresh Our Concept?

- After more than 25 years of investment, we evaluated our program to determine if it was making a difference and could be improved to have greater impact.
- We invested more than two years reviewing our housing funding, listening to our key partners, facilitating focus groups and evaluating best practices in planning and design as we toured communities across the nation.
- We worked to understand architecture and design, construction techniques, regional housing strategies, community planning, barriers to development and better partner collaboration.

What We Learned:

- Need greater focus on the end goal of housing-improved outcomes for people- rather than production itself
- Locating housing in communities of opportunity offers multiple benefits by improving family stability and quality of life and better access to wealth building resources
- Important to consider the full continuum of affordable housing (from homelessness to first-time homebuyers)
- The lack of public will is largest barrier
- Affordable housing can be catalytic when linked to community assets– transportation, education, jobs, and other amenities
- We have a responsibility to promote innovation

Where Does that Lead Us?

- McKnight re-energized its affordable housing program to increase its positive impact on communities and families.
- Our vision for affordable housing is to increase family stability and link families to greater opportunities in our communities.
- We promote an integrated view of affordable housing that directly links to other community resources to maximize positive results for families.
- Building on past success and partnerships, McKnight hopes to move affordable housing from the **margins to the mainstream**.
- New challenge for the Foundation and our partners: To set aspirational goals and integrate affordable housing into all of our communities as an essential community asset.

Program Goals and Outcomes:

- *Public Will:* We will strive to increase public acceptance of and support for affordable housing as a community asset rather than a liability.
- *Innovation & Design:* We will promote innovation and quality design that is good for people, places and the environment. Housing that look great, is located wisely, and green.
- *Increased Preservation & Production:* We will strive to accelerate the pace of affordable housing preservation, production and permanency.

Public Will

- Raise the public acceptance of affordable housing as a community asset
- Advocate for strategic housing investments that promote healthy communities
- Increase the number of communities that accept and promote affordable housing
- Increase the disbursement of affordable housing without contributing to concentration of poverty

Innovation & Design

- Encourage continual internal and external affordable housing design innovation and improvements
- Promote supportive housing, holistic/integrated services and opportunities for healthy family development
- Increase the number of low-income people and families living in high-quality, energy and cost-efficient housing
- Design and produce affordable housing indistinguishable from market-rate housing

Increased Preservation & Production

- Test new strategies and innovative financing tools for increasing preservation, production or permanency
- Build the capacity of organizations and partnerships to create more affordable housing (new private/non-profit partnerships)
- Advocate for greater public and private investment
- Streamline development processes by supporting improvements in affordable housing policies and systems, including reducing bureaucracy and barriers
- Provide resources for gap financing that supports long-term affordability and promotes permanent affordability

What is McKnight's Role?

- By working closely with our partners we are committed to learning together, asking new questions, and holding each other accountable for strategic decisions
- Our long-term investment and deep relationships in the housing field position us to promote innovation and quality design
- We are committed to providing leadership in two critical areas:
 - Building public will
 - Encouraging innovation, quality design, and better housing location

Where Are We Now?

- Multi-year commitments to our key housing partners:
 - The Family Housing Fund
 - Greater Minnesota Housing Fund
 - Corporation for Supportive Housing
 - Minnesota Housing Partnership
- Additional strategic grants to other housing-related organizations
- Completed Evaluation Framework that establishes a set of outcomes to measure results over time - See on website at www.mcknight.org

McKnight's Next Steps:

- In 2008, work with partners to develop strategies to increase public will and encourage innovation and design
- Establish systems to track progress and evaluate and learn from the field.
- McKnight will be more disciplined and strategic when awarding housing grants that achieve the goals and objectives articulated in our evaluation framework.

Questions and Answers
