



# The NeighborWorks® Achieving Excellence in Community Development Program

*in collaboration with Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government*

PERFORMANCE-DRIVEN EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR  
SEASONED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LEADERS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS.

Made possible in part by a grant from  FannieMae.

  
AMERICA

# Applying the Power of Innovation and Performance to Impact Your Organization and Your Community

*“Achieving Excellence is a venture capital investment in the organization, not just a training program. And it’s yielding immeasurable returns.”*

Achieving Excellence Graduate

In your leadership role, you are called upon every day to maintain the delicate balance between the routine and the visionary: day-to-day administrative and personnel management must be handled along with strategic repositioning of the organization to meet changing realities and the development of ever-elusive new sources of funding. In performing this challenging yet critical balancing act, so many questions arise:

- › How to find the time, resources and staff focus to create long-term sustainability without compromising today’s needs
- › How to re-energize the creative thinking necessary to address bigger-picture issues
- › How to respond when organizational challenges appear strategically overwhelming

Seasoned professionals like you want and need increasingly sophisticated continuing education opportunities, executive coaching and practical guidance that are directly relevant to your field, but most leadership programs are too generic to add much value. With your already heavy workload, any advanced education must address your real work – not add to it. The NeighborWorks® Achieving Excellence Program is an ideal solution.

NeighborWorks® America is committed to educating outstanding leaders and promoting innovation in the affordable housing and community development field through this 18-month performance-driven program for seasoned community development leaders. Through our collaboration with Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and renowned organizational performance and learning expert Douglas K. Smith, you will be privileged to take part in a performance program unlike any other – one that assists you in taking your skills and knowledge to a level you may not have thought possible. In the process, you’ll increase your performance - and that of your board and your organization - in a way that is entrepreneurial, sustainable and highly valuable.

## Achieving Excellence— Comprehensive Curriculum, Coaching and Practice

The NeighborWorks® Achieving Excellence in Community Development program has proven to be one of the most innovative and high-impact programs in the affordable housing and community development field. The program provides the forum, the challenge, the tools, the space and the opportunity for you to lead your organization to a higher level of effectiveness and sustainability. Achieving Excellence is a performance-driven organizational investment program for seasoned executive directors and senior staff in community development.

At the beginning of this intensive program, you will select a specific and significant challenge facing your organization – a challenge with solutions that can not only dramatically change how your organization operates, but also provide the impetus for change in the overall field of community development. Your work throughout the program will focus on the critical challenge facing your organization.

The interdependent components of this program include:

**Curriculum** › The multidisciplinary approach of the academic curriculum concentrates on the issues of leadership in community development. Augmented by resources from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and other well-known thought-leaders, the coursework is case-based and focuses on your issues – those on your plate right now, those on the horizon, and the ever-present challenge of how to increase the community impact of the work you do. Faculty will lead three cutting-edge sessions at Harvard that feature critical exploration of emerging issues in strategic analysis and planning, leadership and organizational alignment, performance measurement, community building, alliances and partnerships, and other relevant topics. Their approach will open your mind to new ideas and approaches, allowing you to learn from the best and most recent work in the field and apply it within your own environment.

**Executive Coaching** › To assist you in achieving your organizational goals, learning and change, the program provides personalized guidance on

performance-driven change by innovative leaders in the field. One of a team of leadership coaches will guide you through the 18-month program and help you identify the outcome-based goals to achieve success. You can expect to work on your performance challenge regularly through conference calls, online chats, and one-on-one conversations with your coach and your peer group of colleagues several times each month.

**Peer Group Work** › The program provides structured peer group collaboration among this talented cohort. Working with a group of approximately nine other senior leaders and executive directors, you will work to achieve your own performance challenges — being accountable to each other while also being accountable to yourselves, your organizations and your communities. This group will provide support when you face obstacles and honest feedback to keep you on track when you begin to fall short — and you will do the same for each of them. The combination of consulting, coaching and peer group collaboration will maximize your efforts to apply what you have learned to the challenges that matter most to your organization's success.

### Outcomes

You will emerge from this program having advanced your organization's capacity and performance. Some of the specific outcomes you can expect are:

- › Definition and analysis of a major performance challenge facing your organization or the communities you serve. If you put the work into it, at the conclusion of the program, you can expect to have achieved clear and measurable successes to address that challenge.
- › New and revitalized ways of “seeing” and “leading” – cutting-edge thinking on leadership, management, industry structure and strategy, technology, networking and community building will be used to challenge, inspire and help you succeed.
- › Membership in a network of experienced, motivated, performance-minded fellow community development leaders – people who will help and support you as you find new ways of working and performing.

# An Unparalleled Learning and Performance Program

*The NeighborWorks® Achieving Excellence in Community Development program provides the forum, the challenge, the tools, the space and the opportunity for you to lead your organization to a higher level of effectiveness and sustainability.*

- › This is not just a training or educational program – it's a performance program with high-level executive coaching and a curriculum that will change your organization.
- › You will learn from – and be supported by – the highest quality faculty, leadership experts and executive coaches. No other program compares.
- › You'll receive executive education that is specific to your needs and the challenge you identify – not curriculum-centric as with other leadership programs.
- › You'll gain perspectives and ideas on creative thinking, learning and performance from multiple vantage points: not just academic experts, but also thought-leaders in the field and colleagues who have significant leadership experience.
- › Accountability is built in, and reinforced by participants in the program as well as key stakeholders in your own organization. You can expect to make your challenge a centerpiece of your operating and strategic plans. You'll commit to your staff, your board and other key stakeholders that you and your organization will take on this challenge and make a real performance impact.
- › Your assignments are linked to specific milestones within the program, giving you the structure and discipline necessary to support your success in implementation.
- › The real value of the program equates to over \$38,000 per participant — and even more when organizational efficiencies are accounted for — but the cost is highly subsidized by NeighborWorks® America and Fannie Mae.



*According to independent evaluations of the program by an impact assessment firm, virtually all of the participants – as well as over 90% of the organizations’ staff and board members – report profound positive impacts on their organizational coherence and innovation; outcomes focus and performance measurement; organizational capacity; and community results.*

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Am I a candidate for this program?**

The typical participant is an executive director or senior manager with significant scope of authority for a number of years in a community development organization that is at least five years old. We define “community development organizations” as those that focus on housing, community revitalization, or economic, commercial and business development. To be selected, you must be thoughtful about the community development field, excited about your current responsibilities, and eager to take that work to the next level by articulating, committing to, and achieving success on a specific, critical challenge facing your organization. Approximately 50 candidates will be selected to participate in this highly innovative program.

### **How much time does the program take?**

As a participant, you must invest significant time and effort toward achieving your organizational challenge over the 18 months of the program. Expect to put your challenge in your operating and strategic plans, and to commit to your staff, your Board and other stakeholders that you and your organization will take on the challenge to make a significant impact. As far as “time away,” this organizational investment program will consist of twelve days of university coursework at Harvard, two one-day meetings and regular conference calls and online chats with your coach and peer group. You will also submit several written updates on your challenge over the course of the program. At the conclusion of the program, you will participate in a one-day final forum at a NeighborWorks® Training Institute. However, the real investment of time takes place every day as you focus on tackling an issue critical to your organization’s success and truly prioritize your time like never before.

### **How does the program work?**

You will arrive at Harvard University in September or October 2010 for the first 5-day session and a kick-off dinner. Led by the Harvard faculty, this session focuses on how you exercise leadership and management. Themes of marketing, governance and portfolio management will be addressed as well. You will be led through a session on performance and organizational challenges, guiding you from the big picture of the themes introduced in the first session to applying the learning to your own organization. At the end of the first academic session, you will work with executive coaches to hone your performance challenge and to develop benchmarks to meet and report on over the next



six months. The coaches will facilitate the next six months of the program. You and your peer group will work together to reach your respective benchmarks with each other’s feedback and aid, as well as with consulting assistance and resources. You will gather once with your small peer group 6-7 weeks into the program to discuss your progress and how to overcome barriers. You will report on your progress when the entire group reconvenes for the beginning of the second course in February/March 2011.



The second academic session will focus on the internal management issues you face as you tackle your organizational challenge. This session will also explore connections with your board and community. Between the second and third sessions, you will continue to work with coaches and peers through the difficulties and successes of tackling your organizational challenge and you will attend a one-day meeting with your coach and peer group during the summer. The third session will focus on mergers, acquisitions, organizing and collaborations as we look at challenges facing the entire field of community development.

Between the second and third sessions, you will continue to work with coaches and peers through the difficulties and successes of tackling your organizational challenge. At the conclusion of the program in February/ March 2012, you and your cohort of talented practitioners, faculty and consultants will have tackled the obstacle or made significant progress to achieve your organization's continued excellence.

### **What can I expect as a return on investment?**

NeighborWorks® Achieving Excellence in Community Development program is providing a demonstrable return on investment. An internal assessment of the first class alone showed that just 18 months from the program's inception, participants identified nearly a half-billion dollars of new capital leveraged by their organizations, which they attributed in some measure to the program. This represents an amazing \$300 to \$1 return on investment. Evaluation of recent cohorts demonstrated:

- › More than \$12.3 million new income generated by 23 organizations, more than \$5.5 million of which was generated through operations (fees for service, etc.)
- › Average total assets increased by 23%; average increase attributed to AE was \$6,860,507 per organization with \$96,047,109 cumulatively.
- › Total clients served increased by 146%.
- › Number of successful homeowners created increased by 15%.
- › Approximately 2,500 new affordable rental units developed, managed or acquired by 18 organizations
- › 89,100 square feet new commercial space created by 7 organizations
- › Affordable housing units developed and managed increased 32% and 22%, respectively.

*\* EnCompass LLC – Achieving Excellence impact evaluation studies: November 2005 and June 2006*

### **How much does the program cost?**

The real cost of Achieving Excellence equates to more than \$38,000 per person, but funding from NeighborWorks® America and our sponsors underwrites 80% of the program's cost. This means that participants pay a program fee of \$5,000 to \$10,000 depending upon their organization's operating budget (see fee structure below) — approximately 20% of the actual cost of the program.

The program fee goes toward overall program costs, tuition, executive coaching, accommodations and meals during the Harvard sessions, the peer group meetings and the final forum at a NeighborWorks® Training Institute at the end of the program. The fee can be paid in two installments with the first payment due by June 30, 2010 after you have been accepted to the program and have signed the program contract. The second payment is due in winter/spring 2011. Participants are also responsible for all airfare/travel costs, meals on travel days and during the non-Harvard sessions, accommodations at the non-Harvard events and possibly other incidentals.

In a very real and explicit sense, the “price” of your participation is the time, effort, work, and commitment you bring to the challenge you define. You will be required to devote a substantial amount of energy and thought to truly solving your challenge and capitalizing upon this opportunity. In exchange for the substantial real costs we are subsidizing, we require that you perform against this challenge and that you also provide us and future participants with feedback on your experience.

### **Fee Structure**

Small organization: Core operating budget of less than \$750,000

Year One \$3,500

Year Two \$1,500

Intermediate-sized organization: Core operating budget of \$750,000 — \$2 million

Year One \$5,000

Year Two \$2,500

Large organization: Core operating budget of more than \$2 million

Year One \$7,500

Year Two \$2,500

### **Application/Program Calendar**

By March 15, 2010

Applications Due

By May 15, 2010

Candidates notified of decisions

Week of Sept. 26-Oct. 1, 2010 (*tentative*)

Program begins at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government

February/March 2012

Commencement

### **Contact Information**

For an application or more information about the NeighborWorks® Achieving Excellence in Community Development program, please visit [www.nw.org/ae](http://www.nw.org/ae) or call (800) 438-5547.

**NeighborWorks® America**

NeighborWorks® America creates opportunities for people to improve their lives and strengthen their communities by providing access to homeownership and to safe and affordable rental housing. Since 1991, we have assisted nearly 1.2 million low- to moderate-income families with their housing needs. Much of our success is achieved through our support of the NeighborWorks® network—more than 235 community development organizations working in more than 4,400 urban, suburban and rural communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In the last five years, NeighborWorks® organizations have generated more than \$15 billion in reinvestment in these communities.

**NeighborWorks® Training Division**

Since 1988, NeighborWorks® America's Training Division has provided intensive core and specialized community development training through its NeighborWorks® Training Institutes, regional "place-based" trainings, and e-learning offerings, to more than 25,000 professionals at all levels of experience.

*For additional information, contact:*

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