CDC Reports to the Board on the Countywide Economic Development Trust Fund

In October 2015, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Community Development Commission (CDC) to establish a County Economic Development Trust Fund (CEDTF). The agencies were tasked with finding practical, effective ways that County government can support economic growth, and create sustainable, quality jobs in a more resilient diverse economy.

On March 1, 2016, the CDC and CEO presented the 90-day report to the Board of Supervisors and provided a summary of the activities occurring, a few of which are outlined on the right. The report identified several specific economic development initiatives, within the scope of the County’s jurisdiction and expertise, designed to build capacity in all communities with an emphasis on connecting opportunities to disadvantaged communities in the unincorporated areas. The initiatives are based on research and analysis conducted through the County’s Economic Development Implementation Roadmap (2015) and the Los Angeles County Strategic Plan for Economic Development (2010-2014 and 2016-2020), all of which offer strategies for improving the business environment, encouraging productivity, and supporting the people, places, and actions that can help the regional economy grow.

Of particular note, the CDC reported that a consultant was procured to provide technical support for formulating an implementation plan for advancing bioscience industries in the County. Bioscience is the branch of the sciences concerned with living organisms. The efforts will be aimed at developing an innovative, thriving environment encompassing academic institutions, training centers, and companies with the support of local communities. The Board expressed overwhelming support of the efforts by the CDC and CEO thus far, and the direction the plan is taking.

Reported Activities:

- Identified 52 target areas in the unincorporated County that are zoned for manufacturing and may be eligible for business loans that offer a below market interest rate, flexible loan terms, and no pre-payment penalty.
- Organized a working group of financial and investment experts to develop the program parameters of the Catalytic Development Fund.
- Identified 11 communities in the unincorporated County to target the RENOVATE Program, a countywide facade improvement program.
- Provided an overview and assessment of State Economic Development Programs.

CEDTF Components:

- County Manufacturing Business Loan Program
- Bioscience Implementation Plan
- Countywide Industry Sector Development Strategy
- Catalytic Development Fund Working Group
- Community Business Revitalization Program
- Evaluation of State Economic Development Programs
- Advisory Committee
- Targeted Fee Waiver Program for Small Business
On February 3, 2016, CDC Executive Director Sean Rogan, CDC Deputy Executive Director Monique King-Viehland, and Meta Housing Corporation President Kasey Burke joined the community in celebrating the groundbreaking of Tiki Apartments located in the Florence-Firestone unincorporated area of the County. The CDC contributed $500,000 in Homeless Service Center Funds, provided by Los Angeles County Second District Supervisor, Mark Ridley-Thomas for construction and permanent financing.

Meta Housing Corporation and Western Community Housing will rehabilitate an existing apartment building and a vacant motel to provide 35 units of affordable housing for homeless persons that are frequent users of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, as well as one onsite property manager’s unit. The rehabilitation of the two blighted structures will make a significant contribution to the redevelopment of the surrounding community.

LAMP Community, the lead service provider, will offer residents an onsite case manager, client service coordinator, and mental health and substance abuse counseling among other supportive services. Tiki Apartments will be equipped with a community kitchen, multi-purpose room, laundry rooms, and an outdoor common area. Tiki Apartments is scheduled for completion in December 2016.

In January 2015, Los Angeles County had more homeless persons than any state besides California and New York, and more homeless Veterans than any State except California. The County accounted for nearly 8 percent of the nation’s homeless persons, and over 9 percent of its homeless Veterans.

The County is home to a high number of homeless persons with greater needs - those who are chronically homeless or those who live in places not meant for human habitation, such as sidewalks, parks, cars, and abandoned buildings. As such, on March 1, 2016, the County’s Chief Executive Office issued a memo to the Board of Supervisors affirming the County’s support for increased Federal Fiscal Year 2017 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) appropriations for the Homeless Assistance Grants, HUD-VASH vouchers, and Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers. Bringing additional funds to the County would enable the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) to assist more families, seniors, Veterans, and those who are unsheltered or chronically homeless. The County has made it a priority to advocate for additional funding in an effort to reduce or eliminate homelessness.

Yearly, the County’s Federal Legislative Agenda includes policies which support increased funding for homeless assistance programs, additional resources for meeting the housing and related supportive service needs of special populations, such as Veterans, and funding which would increase rental housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The Agenda also includes an overall policy to support proposals which would provide a greater share of total available funding to the County.
On February 25, 2016, HACoLA invited local landlords to the Homes for Heroes Luncheon in an effort to promote the newly implemented and groundbreaking Landlord Veteran Incentive Program (Landlord VIP). HACoLA received an overwhelming response from the public; in fact, a total of 130 interested landlords and four local media outlets filled HACoLA’s conference room and listened to presentations by management, the Los Angeles Housing Services Authority (LAHSA), and Del Richardson and Associates, Inc. Most importantly, landlords were given the opportunity to meet HACoLA staff and sign up for the Landlord VIP on the spot to learn about specific details. As a result of the Homes for Heroes Luncheon, 45 owners have signed up for the Program. Many landlords in attendance expressed their feelings of civic duty and proudly shared that they too, served our Country.

The Landlord VIP is the first of its kind. The Program incentivizes landlords to reserve their available units to lease to a homeless Veteran. HACoLA offers one month’s free rent to hold available units while a homeless Veteran is referred and paperwork to lease the unit is completed. The Program comes as a result of a $1.1 million award from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to implement a program aimed at ending Veteran homelessness. To ensure the maximum flexibility for the County’s Veterans, HACoLA has signed interagency agreements with several local housing authorities within Los Angeles County and is in talks with a total of 16 other agencies in an effort to eliminate jurisdictional barriers. Collectively, these efforts will work in tandem to help Veterans navigate a complex administrative system and reduce the amount of time it takes to utilize HACoLA vouchers.

New Incentive Program is a Win-Win for Landlords and Homeless Veterans

Here is how the Program works:

1. Landlords complete a pre-Request for Tenancy Approval form.

2. HACoLA staff will contact the landlord to schedule an inspection of the vacant unit within a short period of time.

3. The landlord enters into a signed agreement with HACoLA to hold the unit for a homeless Veteran and receives a monetary incentive in an amount up to one month’s rent.

4. A homeless Veteran with an active HACoLA voucher is quickly referred to the vacant unit.

For more information, contact Landlord VIP at:

(626) 586-1572
LandlordVIP@hacola.org

Homes for Heroes
The CDC celebrated the groundbreaking of the Mosaic Gardens at Willowbrook Apartments, a new 61-unit affordable housing development that includes 31 units for formerly homeless persons that are frequent users of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, 29 units for low-income families, and one manager’s unit. The development will include seven fully accessible units for the mobility impaired and three units for the audio or visually impaired. In addition, the majority of units will have universal design features and be adaptable for persons requiring accessibility modifications.

The CDC provided construction and permanent financing of $3.3 million in HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds, over $2 million in County General Funds, and $840,000 in Homeless Bonus Funds, as well as $100,000 energy efficiency and $35,000 gym incentives. Further, HACoLA will provide 31 project-based vouchers, allowing the units to be targeted to persons earning 30% of Area Median Income.

Sean Rogan, Executive Director of both the CDC and HACoLA said, “The CDC and HACoLA are proud to invest multiple resources to ensure the viability of Mosaic Gardens at Willowbrook, and help combat the severe housing shortage facing the area.” Mosaic Gardens is scheduled for completion in March 2017.