



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***HOPE Fair Housing Center Announces Austin Works 2014 Funding Awards for Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization***

West Chicago, IL – Today, HOPE Fair Housing Center (HOPE) announces the Austin Works 2014 funding awards for Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization programs working in the Austin neighborhood of Chicago.

**Executive Summary** - On October 18, 2013, HOPE announced a Request for Proposals for \$600,000 to support neighborhood revitalization efforts in the Austin community, an area fraught with vacant and abandoned properties and foreclosures and struggling with high unemployment. The goals of the RFP were to mitigate the negative effects of the foreclosure crisis by prioritizing proposals designed to foster long-term sustainability in the focus area of Austin.

The HOPE Funds are a result of a federal housing discrimination complaint filed in April 2012 by The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and 13 of its member organizations, including HOPE, with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) against Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. alleging that Wells Fargo's Real Estate Owned (REO) properties in white areas were much better maintained and marketed than REO properties in communities of color. The settlement with Wells Fargo, the first-ever agreement regarding the equal maintenance and marketing of REO homes, provides \$27 million to 19 cities across the nation to foster homeownership, assist with rebuilding neighborhoods of color impacted by the foreclosure crisis, and promote diverse, inclusive communities.

Requests received totaled \$1,621,415.00

**Summary of Austin Works 2014 Revitalization Awards:**

A total of **\$678,948** in grant funds has been awarded to the following recipients:

**\$172,500** to **Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, Inc.** to provide forgivable down payment and closing cost assistance grants to homebuyers purchasing in the Austin neighborhood.

**\$110,550** to **Oak Park Regional Housing Center** for **Austin Ascending**, a program which will redevelop 2-4 unit buildings for owner occupant purchasers, technical assistance for building owners, homeownership counseling and landlord training services, and affirmative marketing.

**\$50,000** to **Austin Coming Together/GoodCity NFP** for community outreach in the Levin Park area of Austin.

**\$345,898** to **Westside Health Authority** for **100 Men 100 Homes** to provide property rehabilitation, community outreach, and job training to the formerly incarcerated.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

The review committee assessed proposals based on the following evaluation criteria:

**Potential Impact** – including geographic focus, strategic opportunities, leveraged resources, commitment to the community, commitment to work collaboratively with key stakeholders, cost-effectiveness of outcomes sought.

**Clarity of Objectives** – a sound and innovative approach, knowledge of the target population and geographies, knowledge of best practices.

**Probability of Success** – Financially stable applicants and partners, readiness to begin projects quickly or project is already underway, demonstrated track record of team leader and partners, demonstrated track record of applicant strategic partners working collaboratively, demonstrated support from local public or private organizations.

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**HOPE Fair Housing Center** ([www.hopefair.org](http://www.hopefair.org))

Established in 1968, HOPE is the oldest fair housing center in Illinois. HOPE Fair Housing Center seeks to create equal housing opportunities regardless of race,

color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, familial status, or any other characteristics protected under state or local laws. Located in West Chicago, HOPE serves 30 counties in Northern and North Central Illinois. **An Open House will be held Friday, December 6 beginning from 3 to 7pm at our new offices at 245 W. Roosevelt Road, Building 15, and Suite 107 in West Chicago, IL.**