



NEWS RELEASE

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January 20, 2011

**REACH RECEIVES TWO MAJOR GRANTS TO SUPPORT
HEALTHY HOUSING IN PORTLAND**

PORTLAND, OR – Low income families living in unhealthy homes can breathe a little easier thanks to a \$500,000 grant recently awarded to REACH Community Development, Inc. by the Portland Housing Bureau. The \$500,000 federal grant supports the Portland Healthy Homes Program, administered by the City in partnership with Multnomah County's Health Department. The grant will allow REACH to expand our home repair program to address habitability issues in 175 rental housing units over the next three years. The grant is targeted to low-income families in the city who are disproportionately affected by sub-standard housing. The goal of the program is to make improvements to the physical environment before the health and safety of residents becomes compromised. The Healthy Homes Program will be coupled with a public education campaign led by the City and County, creating partnerships that provide leveraged resources and services, and targeted outreach opportunities to low-income communities.

The Healthy Homes Program emphasizes the integration of healthy homes remediation with other existing home repair programs, such as REACH's Community Builders Program (CBP). The CBP is a free home repair program available to low-income senior and/or disabled homeowners in Portland, Oregon. The program serves approximately 200 elderly and disabled homeowners with over 1,500 free repairs annually. It is like no other program in the region in its mission, scope and commitment to safe housing for low-income renters and disabled homeowners. REACH's services address significant public health concerns due to sub-standard and unsafe housing conditions. The program improves the quality of each recipient's life, helping homeowners avoid displacement due to gentrification and poverty.

In related news, REACH was recently selected as a sub-recipient under Multnomah County's, Community Asthma Inspection and Referral (CAIR) program. Multnomah County is one of 25 entities nationwide to receive a total of more than \$13 million from the U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development. REACH's grant, totaling \$225,000 over three years, will enable us to perform repairs on an additional 120 homes to address sources of illness and hazards in the home environment, such as allergens, asthma and respiratory illness, lead, radon and more. The two new grants will allow REACH to significantly expand the scope of the CBP to include a broader range of families who are experiencing unhealthy housing conditions. It's an "upstream" approach to addressing and preventing common causes of illness brought about by poor housing conditions.

"REACH is committed to helping Portland's seniors and low-income residents live safely and in good health in their homes," says Dee Walsh, Executive Director. "We're thrilled to receive these two grants. Through these innovative partnerships, low-income families can get the repairs they need to remove dangerous health hazards from their homes." Both grants complement REACH's own *Healthy Homes, Healthy Lives* initiative, begun in 2009. The initiative focuses on increasing overall resident health through a self-empowerment and leadership development program; and to broadly share our key learning's and best practices to support local and regional goals of increasing the health of the greater community.

"Low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities are among the households most likely to live in poorly maintained homes, which exacerbate chronic health conditions," says Margaret Van Vliet, Director, Portland Housing Bureau. "We are delighted to work with organizations such as REACH to ensure that Portland area landlords and residents have access to much-needed home repairs."

REACH has been developing and managing affordable housing and providing supportive services to our residents since 1982. Our portfolio of over 1,398 units includes single family homes, apartment buildings and mixed-use developments located throughout the greater Portland metropolitan area. Visit our www.reachcdc.org for more information.



A healthy community begins at home

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