

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date: June 22, 2015
	Agenda Item No. 34 Roll Call No. <u>15-1041</u> Communication No. <u>15-344</u> Submitted by: Phillip Delafield, Community Development Director

AGENDA HEADING:

Approve the submission of an application to the Center for Community Progress Technical Assistance Scholarship Program.

SYNOPSIS:

A national non-profit organization, the Center for Community Progress, is seeking applications from public entities for technical assistance to help assess, reform, develop, and/or implement systems to address the issue of vacant and blighted properties in their community. Community Progress will select up to four (4) communities to participate in the program and will commit up to 200 hours of technical assistance from a team of experts specializing in relevant aspects of vacant, abandoned, and problem property reclamation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: Up to \$10,000

Funding Source: Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Operating Budget, Community Development Department, Special Revenue and Other Funds, Page 57.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Founded in 2010, the Center for Community Progress is a national non-profit organization solely dedicated to helping communities develop solutions to address blighted, vacant, and other problem properties. The goal of their Technical Assistance Scholarship Program is to help public entities diagnose the root causes of vacancy and blight, implement policy changes to prevent further vacancy and blight, and reform local systems to more effectively and efficiently address existing vacancy and blight. In the last few years, the City of Des Moines has identified vacant and blighted property as a significant issue threatening the health of many of our neighborhoods. This has been additionally supported by the Capital Crossroads, Capital Core: Neighborhood Improvement Plan.

Community Progress has provided technical assistance and support to more than 150 communities in 30 states. Their areas of expertise include comprehensive assessment of policies and systems related to vacancy and abandonment, property data collection and management practices, strategic code enforcement, property tax enforcement and foreclosure reform, land banks and land banking, and maintenance and reuse strategies. In this round, Community Progress will select up to four (4)

applicants to receive a scholarship for up to 200 hours of technical assistance. Depending on the number of hours awarded, the City will need to provide a cash match of up to \$10,000.

The City will request Community Progress's assistance through the Technical Assistance Scholarship Program to investigate the root causes leading to vacant and blighted properties in our community, including an assessment of current local policies, systems and practices, and recommend an implementation plan for more effectively and efficiently addressing the issue on a Citywide scale as well as through targeted neighborhood revitalization efforts. The assessment will include review of code enforcement regulations and practices, delinquent tax enforcement and related legislation, and revitalization tools and programs. The recommended actions will likely include modifications to existing practices as well as next steps on implementing new tools, for example, a vacant property registry or a land bank. The City will request that the Technical Assistance team indicates which steps to take first in order to resolve the issue most rapidly in the short term and prevent further property decline over the long term.

The application is due June 30th. Communities will be notified of whether or not their application is successful in early September, and if awarded, the time period for technical assistance would occur from October 2015 – April 2016.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: May 5, 2014

Roll Call Number: [14-0734](#)

Action: [Resolution](#) of Support endorsing the Capital Crossroads: Capital Core Neighborhood Improvement Implementation Plan. ([Council Communication No. 14-212](#)) Moved by Hensley to adopt, and request that two Council Members be on the committee. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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