



The four-story St. John's Residences Condominiums project (seen here in an artist's rendering) is benefiting from NSP2 funding. Construction is complete on the third floor of the project.

NSP2 picks up steam

Seven affiliates work quickly to put funds to use by deadline

By Julie Gurnon

With 10 months left to spend \$29.8 million of the \$138 million awarded to Habitat for Humanity International in the second round of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, the pace of new construction and rehabilitations is picking up.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has set aggressive timelines for using the funds, since “the intent of these grants clearly is to quickly address an emergency situation in areas of the greatest need,” according to the Federal Register.

All seven Habitat affiliates chosen to take part in phase two are keeping the Olympian pace, using NSP2 funds and private funds to rehabilitate foreclosed properties or redevelop vacant land while transforming entire communities. Here's a sampling of the recent surge in activity:

- Habitat for Humanity of Greater Miami (Florida) recently completed 10 houses in two weeks during its annual blitz build. The affiliate currently has 27 homes under construction.
- Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Habitat for Humanity is holding a dedication event and neighborhood walking tour for 19 partner families Saturday. On May 9, dozens of AmeriCorps members will arrive for the

2011 Build-a-Thon, where they will help construct 10 homes. The affiliate also has 19 other homes under construction.

- Pensacola (Florida) Habitat for Humanity will welcome about 50 AmeriCorps members May 1 to build the first three homes in what will be a 114-home subdivision.
- Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles (California) is holding a dedication of 10 townhouses May 14. The affiliate is also building three new homes, rehabilitating five homes and acquiring new properties.
- Dallas (Texas) Area Habitat for Humanity is building 51 homes. To date, 48 homes have been completed, and the affiliate expects to finish the 100th home in July.
- Habitat for Humanity – New York City is planning a late-spring kickoff event for a multihousing rehabilitation project known as “100 Homes in Brooklyn,” and third-floor construction has been completed on the new four-story, 12-unit St. John's Residences Condominiums.
- Habitat for Humanity of Collier County (Florida) is building or rehabbing 17 homes and acquiring property in areas recently approved by HUD.

The building boom resulting from HFHI's NSP2 grant is exciting to see, said Donna Golden, director of government grants and lending resources at HFHI. But everyone knows it takes more than Habitat staff to meet the challenge of stabilizing neighborhoods in three years.

For example, the Blitz Off Broadway held April 4-16 in Miami happened thanks to a \$500,000 donation from JPMorgan Chase and crucial funding from other local businesses, with the support of 1,500 volunteers and the countless relationships Habitat of Greater Miami has made with local organizations and residents.

“Using a community's resources is a primary principle of NSP2,” Golden said. “It's about re-establishing the connections that have been lost because of the economic downturn.”

With hard work, collaboration and local partnerships, she said, Habitat will meet the goal of spending 50 percent of NSP2 funds by February 2012.

“It's certainly a marathon,” she said. “But at the finish line, a gold medal doesn't compare to knowing you've provided affordable homes for more than 1,000 families.”

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