Enterprise is a leading advocate for the Section 4 Capacity Building for Community Development and Affordable Housing program. Over the last 20 years, Enterprise has distributed over $125 million to more than 1,250 community development organizations throughout the country. Section 4 strengthens the nation’s lower-income urban and rural communities by bolstering local nonprofit community developers.

Since Congress authorized the program in 1993, Section 4 has been the sole HUD program specifically designed for nonprofit capacity building. Section 4 is an important, unique and efficient program that leverages significant private capital using minimal federal dollars. This program creates jobs, supports small businesses, builds housing and strengthens communities.

Capacity building develops core skills that strengthen the ability of organizations to implement HUD programs, raise capital for community development and affordable housing projects, coordinate on cross-programmatic, place-based approaches and facilitate knowledge sharing. Capacity building remains a key part of HUD’s Strategic Plan for FY2010-2015.

Learning Collaborative: Meeting the Challenge of Housing and Service Coordination

As an unprecedented number of Americans move into retirement age, three trends threaten to limit their ability to safely grow old in their own homes: poverty, chronic illnesses and the cost of housing. The poverty rate amongst older Americans is growing, reaching 9.1 percent in 2012, according the U.S. Census Bureau. From 2000 to 2010, the proportion of individuals over the age of 65 living with at least two chronic illnesses grew from 37 percent to 45 percent. Housing costs have also been increasing, with 22 percent of seniors over the age of 65 spending more than 50 percent of their income on housing.

In response to this challenge, Enterprise has teamed up with two partners – LeadingAge, a nonprofit with a membership of 6,000 nonprofit senior housing organizations and public and private entities focused on healthy aging, and Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future (SAHF), a network of the 11 largest nonprofit owners of affordable multifamily housing – to launch The Learning Collaborative for Affordable Senior Housing Plus Services.

This two-year pilot brings together nonprofit housing providers and their service provider partners to develop, share and explore strategies to improve the health and well-being of low-income seniors in affordable housing, while generating cost savings to the health care system. Section 4 funds are being used to build the capacity of participating organizations to better connect affordable senior housing with health care and services and advance best practices in the affordable housing industry as a whole.

Spotlight on Section 4 Grantee: National Church Residences

National Church Residences, one of the participants in the Learning Collaborative, is the nation’s largest nonprofit developer and manager of affordable senior housing with over 300 communities in 28 states and Puerto Rico. In Ohio, National Church Residences operates affordable senior and family housing communities and also offers permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless people, assisted living and nursing care facilities and continuing care retirement communities. Additionally, the organization provides services in the Columbus area through a home health agency and six adult day care centers.

National Church Residences recognizes the importance of leveraging housing as a platform for health care. In 2012, they launched a pilot program involving their housing and services divisions called the “Aging at Home Medical Practice” (AHMP). The goal of the pilot is to demonstrate better care, better health and lower cost through the integration of primary care on site at four National Church Residences housing developments. AHMP aligns and coordinates health services to better serve groups of seniors with high cost health needs. AHMP providers meet with seniors in their homes to combat the negative effects of poorly managed chronic conditions.
Local challenge

One of the challenges National Church Residences has encountered in its efforts to provide primary care on site is motivating residents to engage with nurse practitioners and to manage their own health. This problem was particularly acute at the Hilltop Senior Village pilot site, where after nine months of operation, only one third of the residents had been seen by the AHMP nurse practitioner and only 10 percent had designated their nurse practitioner as their primary care clinician. Many residents feared losing health benefits or preferred to see their own primary care provider, even though access to these providers is limited by distance and a lack of transportation options.

Compounding this problem is the fact that many senior residents in affordable housing have multiple barriers to self-management - e.g., the ability to understand, monitor and manage the symptoms of chronic conditions without supervision, a lack of health literacy, low levels of confidence and poor family support for health management. Consequently, many senior residents face a significant risk within twelve months of severe health decline and require intensive supportive resources to continue living independently.

How Section 4 funds were used

Enterprise provided a $25,000 Section 4 grant in February 2013 to enable National Church Residences to dedicate needed personnel to implement the Patient Activation Measure (PAM), a survey that gauges resident health practices, and the Coaching System, a one-on-one program to encourage healthy behavior, at the Hilltop Senior Village. The grant allowed the organization to:

- Purchase and implement a Patient Activation Measure tool to assess resident health engagement levels and to self-manage their health.
- Increase staffing to provide additional care coordination for Hilltop Senior Village residents.
- Conduct a Vulnerable Elder Survey to assess the service needs of the senior community at the Hilltop Senior Village.

Enterprise grant funding also allowed National Church Residences’ medical home team at Hilltop Senior Village to complete the training necessary to administer the PAM tool and track results, as well as to learn how to incorporate effective coaching techniques in order to engage residents.

How Section 4 funds enhanced capacity of organization

Early into the grant period, Section 4 funds had already led to substantial program impact, enabling National Church Residences to:

- Significantly increase the number of residents seen by the AHMP nurse practitioner.
- Engage over three quarters of residents in the Patient Activation and Vulnerable Elder surveys.
- Perform 56 one-to-one coaching sessions and two group coaching sessions for residents identified through both surveys.
- Establish and expand the membership of a “Residential Health Council” to engage residents in identifying areas to improve health and safety outcomes.
With the help of Section 4 funding, National Church Residences is developing a national senior care model based on AHMP. They will share their successes and improvements with all of the Learning Collaborative teams, increasing the capacity and strength of the field.

In addition, the AHMP program’s success has contributed to National Church Residences’ programmatic sustainability. Already, the organization is working with several managed care organizations that are interested in National Church Residences being part of their network and are willing to enter into shared savings reimbursement models. National Church Residences’ experience is creating a road map for other Learning Collaborative teams to increase the long-term sustainability of their programs.

Going forward, National Church Residences intends to build upon the success of the AHMP pilot by expanding the program with a focus on dual eligible residents (those who receive both Medicare and Medicaid). They plan to increase their efforts to include residents of senior affordable housing and permanent supportive housing, as well as clients of adult day centers, in self-managing chronic illnesses and addressing pervasive issues such as loneliness, isolation and depression. The ultimate goal is to improve health outcomes and lower health care costs for residents and clients.

For more information, please contact: Victoria Shire, 212.284.7101, vshire@enterprisecommunity.org.