

## **NSP2 Homes' Block Outreach Marketing Initiative**

NHSSF is rehabbing foreclosed REO homes in the Brownsville neighborhood as part of the Brownsville Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. A house acquired for rehabbing becomes an important variable in the success of the stabilization and revitalization of a neighborhood, and its effect on its surrounding block is the best way to understand this role. Thus, a Block Outreach Marketing Initiative for all REO properties bought to be rehabbed with NSP2 funds within Brownsville is being proposed for the following reasons:

- 1. The appearance of the block will impact prospective buyers' assessment of the house for sale.**
  - a. Engage residents in discussing how their properties and public space on the block could be beautified in order to help attract the strongest buyer possible to the NSP home for sale.
  - b. Provide seed money (e.g., \$500 to the block if 4-6 residents participate) through an ideas competition to allow residents to initiate these block beautification projects while NHSSF is rehabbing the home so that the block will be "staged" most effectively when the house is put on the market and open houses held.
- 2. A home purchased for NSP2 rehab makes NHSSF a physical stakeholder in the neighborhood.**
  - a. Throughout the acquisition and rehab process NHSSF is now a "resident" of the community and of the block a house is located on, and as such should be responsible in how it maintains and works on the house. NHSSF should maintain the outside landscaping and ensure that the house is not an eyesore or blight contributor.
- 3. Informing residents of future plans for the house's development.**
  - a. Providing signage that explains the future plans for the house.
  - b. Hosting informational events at the house that help residents understand its development.
  - c. Provide walk-through tour of completed house.
- 4. Empowering residents to decide what their block should look like, and what role the rehabbed house will have in this look.**
  - a. Engage residents in discussing what their current block looks like, understanding that the new resident will simply follow whatever precedent other neighbors set
  - b. Provide seed money through an ideas competition to allow residents to initiate block beautification projects that set the precedent for what public and private space in the neighborhood should look like.
    - i. Examples of resources to spruce up block: Flowers & Plants; Porch decorations; Rent dumpster to throw stuff out; Install house Flags; Support CITIZENS funded tree planting.
- 5. Engage neighbors in understanding that they can be part of successful marketing/ sale of rehabbed property, as well as other homes for sale in their neighborhood.**
  - a. Neighbors can invite their friends, family and colleagues to become an NSP-qualified buyer with the idea of buying the house on their block.
  - b. Neighbors can invite their friends, family and colleagues to the NHSSF open house with the idea of encouraging them to become an NSP-qualified buyer for another home in the neighborhood yet to be completed.
  - c. Neighbors can participate in open houses to meet and greet prospective buyers.
  - d. Prospective buyers can be invited to see the inside of a neighbor's home.
- 6. Creative use of the house while it awaits sale and occupation.**
  - a. Using the house as a site for public art displays.

- b. Host landscaping and home maintenance workshops at the house.
- 7. Introducing the new residents to the neighborhood.**
- a. Coordinate a meeting to which new homeowner and surrounding neighbors are invited, during which a brief history of the neighborhood is presented and how the neighborhood operates is discussed.

### **How It Works**

Whenever NHSSF acquires a property to be rehabbed through NSP2 in Brownsville, NHSSF CB&O organizing staff will door-knock the houses on that block, telling each neighbor about the house's future rehab plans and inviting them to a walk-through of the house. The meeting could be co-hosted by a block resident, with snacks provided. NHSSF rehab staff, an NHSSF realtor and CB&O staff would brief them on:

1. Rehab plans for the property;
2. Necessary qualifications for a buyer to purchase an NSP2 property;
3. Opportunity for the block beautification grant ideas competition.

The block beautification grant opportunity will be advertised through a flyer inviting the block to apply with a brief description of improvements, a budget, and 4 or more neighbors willing to participate. CB&O staff will follow up as appropriate to try to ensure a successful application. Then, assuming the application is approved, staff will assist neighbors in organizing the improvements.

### **Benefits of the Program**

1. The NSP2 rehab home in Brownsville will sell at a quicker pace because of the improvements on the block, and the engagement of neighbors in marketing the property to friends, family and colleagues.
2. Neighbors will have a successful experience of banding together to accomplish a common goal, which they might then be motivated to repeat, either on the block or in a larger neighborhood context, and which may give them a greater sense of control over the future of their neighborhood followed by greater confidence in the neighborhood's future.
3. Neighbors will be more conscious of the impact their properties have on the number and quality of buyers attracted to homes for sale in the neighborhood, and might view their property and community with fresh eyes and an increased sense of responsibility and efficacy; additional improvements or heightened standards of maintenance may follow.
4. The buyer of the home is more likely to be proactively embraced by neighbors and pulled into community life because of their investment in recruiting them to the neighborhood. They will also learn what the standard of property care is for the neighborhood, and will be encouraged to meet it with their own homecare.

### **Proposed Budget**

We propose starting with a pilot budget of \$2,000 for the first 4 properties NHSSF acquires in Brownsville, at \$500 each. The \$500 will serve as a grant to be awarded to the winning idea within each block. Each project's impact will be evaluated against goals, and if successful, we would propose that an additional \$3,000 be allocated for the remaining 6 properties/blocks.