

Livable Communities Program Facts

Investments in community vitality

Thriving job centers stand on once-polluted land. Workers can find affordable housing in the communities where they work. Residents can shop, get on a bus to go to work, and enjoy a local park all within walking distance from home.

These opportunities are supported by the 1995 Livable Communities Act (LCA), administered by the Metropolitan Council.

Voluntary program, based on incentives

The LCA provides funding for communities to invest in local economic revitalization, affordable housing initiatives, and development or redevelopment that connects different land uses and transportation. The program is a voluntary, incentive-based approach to help communities grow and redevelop, and to address the region's affordable and lifecycle housing needs.

Programs help reach local, regional goals

The Council makes grant and loan awards through four programs:

- **Tax Base Revitalization Account (TBRA)** – Cleans up brownfields for redevelopment, job creation and affordable housing.
- **Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA)** – Supports development and redevelopment that links housing, jobs and services while demonstrating efficient and cost-effective use of land and infrastructure.
- **Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA)** – Produces and preserves affordable housing choices for households with low to moderate incomes.
- **Land Acquisition for Affordable New Development (LAAND)** provides communities with no-interest loans to help address affordable housing needs.

To compete for LCA funding, communities must negotiate long-term affordable and lifecycle housing goals with the Council and develop a Housing Action Plan. In 2011, 94 communities are participating in the program.

The LCA's emphasis is on cooperation and incentives to achieve regional and local goals. Communities are well-positioned to make decisions about how their cities and towns will grow and develop, but the LCA recognizes it often takes partnerships and shared resources to move from community plans to tangible results.

Investments reap impressive results

From 1996 through 2010, the Council awarded 633 grants totaling more than \$212 million in Livable Communities funds. Of those, 68 awards have been relinquished, for a net of 565 grants totaling \$181 million. The net results of these grants are expected to leverage billions of dollars in private and other public investments. Following is a summary of grants made and their expected results:

- 285 pollution cleanup grants totaling over \$82.7 million were made to 40 cities and counties; 88% of



The emphasis of the Livable Communities program is on cooperation and incentives to achieve regional and local goals. Communities are well-positioned to make decisions about how their cities and towns will grow and develop, but the LCA recognizes that it often takes partnerships and shared resources to move from community plans to tangible results.



In addition to economic development and affordable housing, other benefits of LCA funds are restored natural resources, improved transportation options, new community amenities and thriving new neighborhoods.

the awards moved forward toward completion, for a net of 250 TBRA grants totaling \$73.4 million. The projects will add \$63.9 million in net tax capacity and more than 31,000 new and retained jobs.

- 196 LCDA grants totaling over \$98 million were made to development and redevelopment projects that link housing, jobs and services, and maximize efficient infrastructure in 57 older and developing cities. Of these, 90% moved forward towards completion, for a net of 176 grants totaling \$85.6 million.
- 131 grants to 51 cities provided affordable housing opportunities, with 90% of LHIA grants moving forward to completion. These net awards have provided 717 rehabilitated affordable rental units, 2,112 new affordable rental units, and more than 800 affordable new and rehabilitated ownership units.

Other benefits of LCA funds are restored natural resources, improved transportation options, new community amenities and thriving new neighborhoods.

Advisory Committee helps select projects

The Livable Communities Advisory Committee recommends funding awards to the Council for the Livable Communities Demonstration Account. The committee reviews development and redevelopment proposals against the program’s criteria for connected development patterns that link housing, jobs and services. The committee’s 13 members have expertise in development specialties, including local government planning, economic or community development; public and private finance; new development and redevelopment; transportation; environment; and site design.

Cooperative efforts reduce ‘red tape’

Communities in the region applying for public affordable housing funds to produce affordable multi-family rental housing need fill out only one application through Minnesota Housing. Representatives from the Council, the Family Housing Fund and Minnesota Housing review the applications and makes grants from a variety of public funding sources, including LHIA.

TBRA funding is coordinated with complementary programs at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

For more information

- [*Livable Communities program information*](#)
- [*Related fact sheet: Affordable Housing*](#)