

Setting a new standard for economic revitalization
Columbus, Ohio

The Federal Historic Tax Incentives promote not only the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings, but also the revitalization of older communities. Columbus, Ohio, is well known for its historic neighborhoods and a downtown commercial center with a large concentration of historic buildings. With a population of 800,000, the city has more than 20 historic districts.



photo: Judy Williams

Community Properties of Ohio, a subsidiary of the nonprofit Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, recently completed a multi-year citywide rehabilitation of 71 historic buildings in seven urban historic neighborhoods, utilizing the historic tax credits. Their overall effort centered on the acquisition and subsequent rehabilitation of 209 buildings of Section 8 housing, the majority of which were located in neighborhoods suffering from disinvestment and criminal activity. One neighborhood with a significant concentration of these properties is adjacent to the Ohio State University, which served as a critical partner in this reinvestment effort.



photo: Community Properties of Ohio

The portfolio within these seven communities consisted of vacant buildings and dilapidated housing, with units in extremely poor physical condition. The revitalization and preservation of the existing Section 8 housing was considered key to helping stabilize and stimulate community renewal. All historic buildings were certified as completed rehabilitations by the National Park Service.

The renovation work included groups of historic buildings and other scattered site properties, with varying architecture and building materials. Missing porches were replaced and exterior repairs made, which along with new landscaping, blended into and

contributed to the stability of the respective city neighborhoods. At the same time the interiors of the affordable housing units were modernized, adding amenities that were previously nonexistent such as showers and air conditioning. Residents who had been temporarily relocated while the work took place were provided the opportunity to return to the newly renovated buildings.

The award-winning work of Community Properties of Ohio (CPO) did not end following the investment of more than \$100 million in the project. As the quality of housing improved, CPO established a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation, CPO Impact, and began to focus on building resident relationships with community partnerships to address resident needs, stabilize housing, increase neighborhood safety, and identify ways to help residents move beyond poverty.

CPO Impact has partnered with local law enforcement to launch a public safety program, help send kids to summer camp, implemented an at-risk resident program, and added senior/disabled supportive services, as well as many other programs which support their resident and community objectives



photo: Community Properties of Ohio