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## **GRANT HELPS DETROIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS PROTECT VACANT PROPERTIES**

DETROIT - September 18, 2009 - Community Legal Resources will award mini-grants to ten Detroit community-based organizations as a program of the Detroit Vacant Property Campaign (DVPC). The grants will help residents maintain and protect vacant properties in their neighborhoods. The grants will be awarded through the Community and Property Preservation (CAPP) program, which is funded by The Kresge Foundation.

The ten organizations approved for CAPP grants are the 200 Lakewood Block Club, Bagley Community Council, Central Detroit Christian Community Development Association, Corktown Residents' Council, Detroit Catholic Pastoral Alliance, Historic Boston Edison Association, Land Assembly for Neighborhood Development, Our Neighborhood Engaged, Southwest Detroit Business Association, and the Springdale Woodmere Block Club.

This is the second round of the CAPP program, which provides supplemental financial assistance to community-based organizations that are incurring costs due to do-it-yourself vacant property maintenance and security initiatives. The CAPP program helps stabilize Detroit neighborhoods suffering from increasing numbers of vacant properties and declining vacant property conditions.

Community Legal Resources received dozens of grant applications. The applicant pool was very diverse, representing different kinds of organizations and neighborhoods.

Organizations applied for funding for security and maintenance activities including 1) mowing lawns, 2) boarding up properties, 3) cleaning trash from vacant properties, and 4) plowing snow. Several organizations proposed innovative strategies, like using murals to fight blight on abandoned commercial properties and launching a neighborhood Adopt-a-Vacant Property program.

The Southwest Detroit Business Association (SDBA) is using CAPP program funds to supplement a pilot Geographic Targeting Nuisance Abatement Program that attempts to deal with properties that create nuisances and negatively impact the surrounding community. Matthew Bihun, Programs Manager for the SDBA, notes “...the program is designed to engage—and subsequently—empower residents to utilize creative remedies to abate nuisances...” The SDBA plans to use the CAPP funds to pay for a three-tiered strategy of security, maintenance, and beautification to address blighted vacant properties that are near neighborhood assets, such as churches, schools, libraries, and other cultural institutions.

The CAPP program is funded by the Kresge Foundation and administered by Community Legal Resources (CLR). CLR is a nonprofit legal services provider and the lead organization on a collaborative project called the Detroit Vacant Property Campaign (DVPC). The DVPC is an initiative of Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation and involves community groups, city residents, faith-based organizations, Community Development Advocates of Detroit, and the University Of Michigan Taubman College Of Architecture and Urban Planning. The purpose of the campaign is to empower Detroit residents to reduce the negative effects of vacant properties and turn vacant properties into neighborhood assets. For more information, please see [www.detroitvacantproperty.org](http://www.detroitvacantproperty.org).