



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SUBJECT: Duluth Awarded \$25,000 Cities of Service Grant to Implement Let's Grow-Lincoln Park

BY: Amy Norris, Public Information Coordinator

DULUTH AWARDED \$25,000 CITIES OF SERVICE GRANT TO IMPLEMENT LET'S GROW-LINCOLN PARK

Grant funds, provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies, will support a new “impact volunteering” initiative that will yield 1700 pounds of fresh produce through community gardening in Lincoln Park.

October 26, 2012, Duluth, MN - Cities of Service announced that it has awarded the City of Duluth a \$25,000 grant to implement a service initiative designed to address food access equity. Duluth is one of 18 U.S. cities to be awarded a grant to support mayors who are harnessing the power of volunteers in a strategic way to address priority problems in their communities.

“Over 6,000 people live in the Lincoln Park neighborhood, making it one of our more densely populated neighborhoods in Duluth,” says Mayor Don Ness. “This grant will help us leverage the power of our citizens to strategically and measurably address both the physical and economic barriers to food for that community, which is a USDA identified ‘food desert’.”

The Cities of Service model focuses on “impact volunteering” – volunteer strategies that target community needs, use best practices, and set clear outcomes and measures to gauge progress. Dozens of cities across the nation have adopted the model since its introduction in 2009. Using this approach, New York City has coated more than 4 million square feet of rooftops to reduce carbon emissions by 745 metric tons, Nashville has upgraded more than 240 homes to increase energy efficiency and help the city recover from historic floods, and Pittsburgh has removed 20,000 pounds of litter to revitalize its neighborhoods.

The *Let's Grow-Lincoln Park* initiative will develop community gardens in the Lincoln Park neighborhood to increase residents' access to affordable fresh, healthy food. The City of Duluth is partnering with the Duluth Community Garden

Program (DCGP), as well as the Healthy Duluth Area Coalition (HDAC), Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC) and other community partners who have been engaging neighbors in Lincoln Park on food access issues. Working together and with volunteer support, the Let's Grow-Lincoln Park will yield 1,700 pounds of fresh produce.

More than 60 mayors competed for this initial round of grants. Grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000 will also support volunteer initiatives in Atlanta, GA; Austin, TX; Baltimore, MD; Birmingham, AL; Fall River, MA; Flint, MI; Indianapolis, IN; Kalamazoo, MI; Little Rock, AR; Nashville, TN; Orlando, FL; Philadelphia, PA; Phoenix, AZ; Pierre, SD; Pittsburgh, PA; Providence, RI; and Richmond, CA. The *Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund* grant will be presented to the Duluth City Council in November for final acceptance.

Backed by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the *Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund* is a \$2 million fund. Nearly \$1 million is being granted through this initial round, with an additional \$1 million available for deployment in 2013. Grantee cities were selected based on the quality of their initiatives, potential for impact, and implementation plans, among other criteria.

About Cities of Service

American cities face serious challenges and many mayors want to take advantage of every resource available to them – including the time and energy of public-spirited residents – to address those challenges. But in cities across America today, citizen service is often an underutilized or inefficiently utilized strategy by municipal governments. Founded in September 2009, Cities of Service supports mayors to leverage citizen service strategies, addressing local needs and making government more effective.

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