



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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ENTERPRISE LAUNCHES AFFORDABLE HOUSING DESIGN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE TO BRING DESIGN EXCELLENCE TO LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE
Community Development and Architecture Leaders will Convene to Share Best Practices and Solve Real-World Community Design Challenges

(Minneapolis, December 10, 2009) – Leading an effort to bring the benefits of design excellence to low-income communities nationwide, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. (Enterprise) today announced the launch of the Affordable Housing Design Leadership Institute. The Institute, made possible by support from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the McKnight Foundation and Kendeda Fund, will provide a structured forum for architecture and community development leaders from across the country to share best practices and solve real design challenges they currently face.

“There is a critical need for increased collaboration between architects and community development practitioners. Design excellence incorporating sustainable building principles and participatory planning with the community not only improves the lives and health of residents, but is critical to the long-term financial viability of affordable housing,” said Katie Swenson, senior director of the Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellowship and Institute moderator. Like the Enterprise Rose Fellowship, the Institute will seek to unite a community-based approach to development with best practices in design. Swenson continued, “By bringing architects and community developers together, the Institute will raise frontline design and development leaders’ capacity to tackle affordable housing’s most pressing challenges.”

The two-and-a-half-day Institute will take place at the University of Minnesota’s Minneapolis campus in July 2010 where a design resource team of eight leading architects will work with nonprofit housing developers to address design challenges of affordable housing that is still in the planning phase. Design resource team members scheduled to participate include Lawrence Scarpa of Pugh + Scarpa Architects. The company just received the 2010 American Institute of Architects (AIA) Architecture Firm Award, the highest honor the AIA bestows upon an architecture firm. The resource design team will also include two Fellows of the AIA, one of the highest honors the AIA gives to an individual.

Nominations for nonprofit affordable housing developers to attend the Institute will be by invitation only. An Institute selection committee will choose the eight participants from across the country based on the organizations’ volume of affordable housing production and its commitment to excellence in community design, sustainability and resident engagement. At least two of the eight community developers selected to participate will be from the Minneapolis-area.

As part of the program, the Institute will engage local residents, housing developers, community leaders and members of tenant organizations in a public discussion of local community design and development issues. This local community engagement is central to the approach Enterprise takes to affordable housing and community development, stemming from the belief that to build a community one must be part of the community and engage all local stakeholders in the planning of any future development. The program will conclude with a summary of the lessons learned on major themes that arose during the Institute, and selected proceedings from the Affordable Housing Design Leadership Institute will be published on sponsor websites.

“The Affordable Housing Design Leadership Institute will bring national best practices in community design to the Twin Cities, allowing us to highlight our region’s contributions to the field as we learn from renowned design and community development leaders nationwide,” said Eric Muschler, region and communities program officer, the McKnight Foundation. “The Institute will engage our local community in dialogue about critical neighborhood issues and regional challenges, while offering design solutions for our region and for neighborhoods across the country.”

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Enterprise is a leading provider of the development capital and expertise it takes to create decent, affordable homes and rebuild communities. For more than 25 years, Enterprise has introduced neighborhood solutions through public-private partnerships with financial institutions, governments, community organizations and others that share our vision. Enterprise has raised and invested more than \$10 billion in equity, grants and loans to help build or preserve more than a quarter million affordable rental and for-sale homes to create vital communities. Enterprise is currently investing in communities at a rate of \$1 billion a year. Visit www.enterprisecommunity.org and www.enterprisecommunity.com to learn more about Enterprise's efforts to build communities and opportunity.