I. Purpose of Project

Research has shown that Nashville currently lacks housing affordable for low-income families. When a large portion of our workforce and populations with special needs are spending too much on housing they are unable to afford basic necessities, such as health insurance, food, school supplies, and transportation. Moreover, lack of affordable housing forces some into substandard housing conditions or homelessness that can result in illnesses, public health issues, education inequities, and an overall increase in crime rates. While such a housing shortage exists, all Nashvillians are affected. The inadequate provision of affordable low-income housing ends up costing the city and state more money in the provision of social services. Providing affordable and low-income housing promotes the well being of all Nashvillians by decreasing homelessness, promoting public health, and improving neighborhood stability and vitality. Establishing a housing trust fund in Nashville would provide a dedicated source of funding from state or local governments that would be used for affordable housing initiatives such as development, construction, rehabilitation, or preservation.

Last year’s Cal Turner fellows researched the feasibility of creating a housing trust fund in Nashville by examining already established funds in cities similar to Nashville (most notably in Charlotte and in Indianapolis). This cohort was able to identify potential sources of funding for the city to construct such an initiative and recommended steps that need to be taken in order to establish a Nashville Housing Trust Fund. These steps include building a support coalition and creating a common vision among leaders. This year’s Cal Turner cohort plans to adopt these recommendations and establish an action plan that incorporates these steps. By meeting with prominent leaders in the Nashville community including Reverend Bill Barnes, whose initial proposal will serve as our policy framework, as well as Mike Hodge, the program manager of the Neighborhoods Resource Center, and Loretta Owens, the Executive Director of The Housing Trust Fund, our group will build a political and a financial strategy to get the Nashville City Council and Mayor’s Office on board with developing a housing trust fund for Nashville. We plan to identify groups within the community who can help us advocate for our cause and debunk the myths surrounding housing trust funds. In addition, we will further examine the financial issues surrounding the issue and discern a list of best practices to help policymakers realize the need and urgency of a housing trust fund. Furthermore, our group plans to support the 2010 Cal Turner group in publicizing the Hyatt Fund event to increase awareness on the issue. Our ultimate goal is for our policy proposal to be submitted to city leaders. We hope to bring more awareness and support for our overall vision that a housing trust fund is both an effective and efficient solution to improving many of the city’s problems in areas of healthcare, education, crime, and economic development.
II. Key Research Questions

Previous work focused on investigating the role and feasibility of public housing trust funds (HTF) in similarly situated cities (Charlotte and Indianapolis), as well as building relationships with key allies in Nashville for future work towards realizing the goal of affordable housing for all Nashvillians. The 2011-2012 Cal Turner Program Housing Trust Fund team has been given the task of strategically communicating the needs and benefits of a public housing trust fund in the form of a proposal to the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. Before a proposal is formalized, a number of questions must be addressed in order to effectively communicate why a public housing trust fund is right for Nashville. The results will be quantified and summarized into a short executive summary to be presented to community leaders.

The following represent a number of critical tasks followed by key research questions associated with each.

**Quantifying the Costs and Benefits of a Public Housing Trust Fund**

Arguments for and against housing trust funds are often accompanied by qualitative about crime, property values, education, and health care. These benefits must be quantified economically and politically so that stakeholders can make informed decisions.

What are the capital and recurring costs associated with a public HTF?

What is a feasible project size and scope for a public HTF?

Who benefits economically from a public HTF? Who is hurt?

What is the optimal funding strategy?

How will those economically responsible for funding a public HTF benefit?

Where can we find numbers to support or refute claims regarding crime, education, health care, and public expenditures related to HTFs?

How could a housing trust fund be utilized to provide assistance for purchases and rentals of existing housing? How does this change costs and benefits?

**Benchmarking**

Housing trust funds, both public and private, exist across the United States. Some have succeeded, and some have failed. Opponents of a housing trust fund are likely to focus on failures, so it is important to understand what strategies have been successful and which have not.

What has defined success/failure of housing programs in other cities (i.e. economic, political, etc.)?
What funding strategies have been successful? Which have failed?

How has funding (successfully and unsuccessfully) been maintained long term?

What has been the political reception of public HTFs in other cities?

**Identifying Key Players in the Community**

Strong supporters, opponents, and those with no particular rooting interest exist in both formal and informal roles within the community. In fact, a private housing trust fund, The Housing Fund, already exists in Nashville.

Who are the power players for housing issues in the community and on the Metro Council?

Who are public HTF supporters within the community and on the Metro Council?

What niche does the existing housing fund fill? Why is a public HTF necessary? How could a private and public HTF work together without “competing” for resources?

**III. Key Resources**

- Lindsey Krinks, *Contributor* staff member and former CTP Fellow
  - Knows the political climate in Nashville, especially city council members’ attitudes regarding homelessness and legislation
  - Has several contacts versed in making affordable housing accessible and approaching and presenting to government leaders, such as Mike Hodge and Stewart Clifton
- Other former CTP Fellows (Katie Knies & Geradine Young)
- *The Politics of Creating a Housing Trust Fund: Political Players* Contact Sheet
- Urban Institute’s Justice Policy Center study on HOPE VI
- 2010 Census Results
- Nashville mayor’s Strategic Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness (2005)
- Barnes Fund for Affordable Housing Proposal (2007)
- Indianapolis and Charlotte data from previous year’s CTP Fellows
- Prominent advocates and non-profit lobbyists in Nashville community
- Rusty Lawrence (Urban Housing Solutions), Mike Hodge & Loretta Owens
- Mr. Cal Turner

**IV. Action Plan**

**Immediately:**

1. Meet with Mike Hodge and Rusty Lawrence to seek their expertise on Nashville Housing and proper political groups that we need to target. More Specifically:
- Advice about funding sources and quantity of money to be allocated
- Get an idea about Loretta Owens and the private Nashville HTF

2. Speak with Loretta Owens about Private Housing Trust Fund in Nashville to determine scope and role of the private trust fund already in Nashville

3. Update data on existing 1997 Bill Barnes Proposal, including data on 2010 census.

4. Work with Claire Smrekar in applying research on neighborhoods into Barnes Proposal. Include information on Health, Public Safety, Education, and Economic Development. Learn how to include verbiage about new model of low-income housing, not “projects” type housing.

5. Contact Mayor’s Poverty Initiative and seek recommendations about a Nashville Housing Trust Fund.

**Later this Fall:**

1. Determine best sources of funding for the NHT.

2. Phone call to Mary Brooks (expert on HTFs) about best practices across the board. Also seek information about Louisville contacts.

3. Possible trip to Louisville, KY for lessons learned from a failed trust fund.

4. Examine Charlotte and Indianapolis breakdown of how HTF funds were dispersed and used.

5. Meet with Mayor’s economic developer.

**Winter:**

1. Contact Stuart Clifton to meet about lobbying in the city council and strategy for government intervention.

2. Hyatt Lecture: Create energy and enthusiasm before council members meet.


**Spring:**

2. Discuss proposal with appropriate city council and community members.

V. Meetings: Every other Friday, 2:30 PM at Peabody College, Wyatt Building.

VI. Proposed Budget Estimate

$ 600.00 Printing and binding costs (Hyatt materials & political packets)
$ 300.00 Gas for transport around Nashville
$ 500.00 Snacks/meals for meetings with advisors and VIPs (not for fellows-only meetings)
$ 500.00 Marketing and Advertising

$ 2,000.00