



## THE STATE OF NATIONAL URBAN POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES

Name of national urban policy	No national urban policy, but cross-agency and cross-sector federal initiatives and locally-driven efforts, including <i>Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2)</i> , <i>Partnership for Sustainable Communities</i> , <i>Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative</i> and other place-based efforts
Date of national urban policy	2009
Explicit or partial	Not applicable
Legal status (e.g. act of the legislature, executive order, administrative guidance, etc.)	Not applicable
Previous/secondary policies	Executive Order 13602 establishing a White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities, 2012; Executive Order 13503 establishing the White House Office of Urban Affairs, 2009
Stage of development	Not applicable
How developed (e.g. through a participatory/stakeholder process, or act of parliament, etc.)	Legislative enactment with stakeholder engagement and locally-driven implementation
Implementing body	The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) manages federal programmes for housing and urban development.
Government system	Federal
Type of national urban agency	Not applicable
Implementation mechanism (e.g. committee, involvement of multiple agencies, national-local co-ordination)	Involvement of multiple agencies, national-local co-ordination

### Current national urban policy

The US Federal Government has instigated a variety of initiatives related to urban development and housing. The current Administration has outlined its role in urban policy as leading, empowering, and maximising the power of metropolitan areas. Initiatives strive to build integration, flexibility and accountability into municipal programmes and strategies. A selection of those initiatives is:

- *Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Initiative*, established in 2012 to strengthen the capacity of distressed cities to achieve economic development goals. SC2 and its partners are working together to co-ordinate federal programmes and investments to catalyse economic growth in distressed areas and create stronger co-operation between community organisations, local leadership, and the federal government. SC2 currently is working in over 20 communities and regions across the United States.
- *Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC)* works to co-ordinate federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to make neighbourhoods more prosperous, allow people to live closer to jobs, save

households time and money, and reduce pollution. The partnership agencies, the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), incorporate six principles of livability into federal funding programmes, policies, and future legislative proposals: i) provide more transportation choices; ii) promote equitable, affordable housing; iii) enhance economic competitiveness; iv) support existing communities; v) co-ordinate and leverage federal policies and investment; and vi) value communities and neighbourhoods.

- *Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative* was established in 2007 as a framework to help local communities enforce the Administration's place-based strategy to revitalise neighbourhoods with concentrated poverty into areas of opportunity. The Initiative is a cross-department, interagency partnership between the White House, the HUD, DOE, the Department of Justice (DOJ), Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Treasury. The agencies collaborations have focused on four existing programmes (*Choice Neighborhoods*, *Promise Zones*, *Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation*, and *Community Health Center*). Best practices are shared through the *White House Neighborhood Revitalization Report* (US White House, n.d.b).
- *Choice Neighborhoods program* supports locally driven strategies to address struggling neighbourhoods with distressed public or HUD-assisted housing through a comprehensive approach to neighbourhood transformation. The programme is designed to catalyse critical improvements in neighbourhood assets, including vacant property, housing, services and schools. *Choice Neighborhoods* was a continuation of the work from *HOPE VI Program*, which was developed to address severely distressed public housing by making physical improvements. It expands on *HOPE VI* by increasing its focus on the neighbourhood and including private developments in their reconstruction plan.
- *Promise Zones* are a mechanism to designate high-poverty urban, rural and tribal communities that will receive private and public funds to create jobs, leverage investments, increase economic activities, expand educational opportunities, and reduce violent crime rates. For the communities selected, the federal government will partner to help the *Promise Zones* access resources and expertise. In 2015, 12 agencies are providing preferential access in 37 programmes (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d.b).

## Previous national urban policy and developments

The White House Office of Urban Affairs was established in 2009, via Executive Order 13503, to consult widely with state and metropolitan stakeholders on federal policy, and the office is woven within the work of the White House Domestic Policy Council. However, little information is available on the outcome of this effort (Dodson et al., 2015; US White House, n.d.b) as it co-ordinates across all agencies and the White House. Previous urban policies in other administrations have been less holistic, with movements towards tax relief to ensure economic development but with little social investment. Predominantly, the focus has been on housing affordability.

## Bibliography

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