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**REVERSING AMERICA'S POVERTY EPIDEMIC: NEW BOOK URGES ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH TO  
BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

San Francisco – On the heels of data from the Census Bureau showing that the nation is stuck at record high poverty levels, a new book by leading experts in community and economic development, academia, government policy, health and philanthropy offers entrepreneurial solutions to a national epidemic that now affects one in six Americans. *Investing in What Works for America's Communities*, published today by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) and available at [www.whatworksforamerica.org](http://www.whatworksforamerica.org), features dozens of innovative ideas that can improve economic prosperity, from new policies, to technology, to integrated community efforts.

Poverty has spread throughout cities to suburbs and rural communities that once had thriving farms and manufacturing businesses, and is being transferred from one generation to another. When where you live can predict how long and how well you live – regardless of how hard you work to get ahead – new approaches must focus on strategies that have proven to build healthier communities—those that connect housing with education, health care, and jobs, the authors say.

“We realize there is no ‘silver bullet’ solution to poverty. Our hope is that the ideas in this book will spur new ways of thinking and collaboration that will empower everyday people and lift up their neighborhoods,” said David Erickson, director of the Center for Community Development Investments at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. “Just as the nature of poverty has changed, those of us working to address poverty need to continue evolve to help transform both people’s lives and the places where they live.”

In *Investing in What Works for America's Communities*, key leaders from a broad range of sectors (a full author list is included below) provide specific suggestions for building communities that are healthy places to live, learn, work, and play—places that put families on more solid economic footing. This will require moving out of traditional policy silos and approaching problems in a more holistic manner. Partners must agree not only to work together but to invest together by using money from a mix of funding streams and to increase impact.

“Poverty affects us all, regardless of where we live – it’s not just a housing problem or an education problem or an employment problem. It’s all of the above and more,” said Nancy O. Andrews, president and CEO of LIIF, a nonprofit community development financial institution based in San Francisco. “And we need to take steps now to address this crisis especially for our children. We know that the obstacles children encounter early in life can create a negative chain of events that is often passed down to new generations. We can’t afford to waste these lives if we are to have a strong economy that lifts everyone up for the future,” she added.

“We need effective interventions that will drive financial inclusion and economic opportunity in our most impoverished neighborhoods,” said Pam Flaherty, president and CEO of the Citi Foundation, which provided support to LIIF for the project. “The contributing authors of *Investing in What Works for America’s Communities* have identified both innovative and common sense ways to make sure every investment in reversing poverty counts.”

*Investing in What Works for America’s Communities* is organized into three broad sections:

- The first section traces the history of community development alongside the evolution of American poverty, highlighting initiatives like the Harlem Children’s Zone, Living Cities’ Integration Initiative, Purpose Built Communities, and other exemplary community-building efforts.
- Section II features voices and opinions from leaders in policy, universities, think tanks, and some of the nation’s leading experts from housing, health, philanthropy, and other fields that are working to reduce poverty and address race, equity, transit-oriented development, and financial services for lower-income people.
- Section III maps out a plan for moving ahead, informed by several insights, of which the most profound may be that “community development is about the entire life of the community.” This means recognizing the complex, far-reaching and constantly changing dynamics of poverty, as well as the need to connect struggling neighborhoods with the broader economy in order to breathe new life into them. A successful 21<sup>st</sup> century model for community development will be driven by data; accountable, with incentives built in to achieve desired outcomes; comprehensive and collaborative; flexible; and strategic in its deployment of capital to achieve scale.

For more information about the book and its authors or to request a hard copy, visit [www.whatworksforamerica.org](http://www.whatworksforamerica.org).

#### **Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco**

The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, with branch offices in Los Angeles, Seattle, Salt Lake City, and Portland, and a cash processing office in Phoenix, provides wholesale banking services to financial institutions throughout the nine western states. As the nation’s central bank, the Federal Reserve System formulates monetary policy, serves as a bank regulator, administers certain consumer protection laws, and is fiscal agent for the U.S. government. Follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/sffedreserve](https://twitter.com/sffedreserve).

#### **Low Income Investment Fund**

The Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) invests capital to support healthy families and communities. Since 1984, LIIF has served one million people by investing \$1 billion. Over its history, LIIF has provided financing and technical assistance to create and preserve affordable housing, child care centers, schools, transit-oriented developments and healthy food retail in distressed neighborhoods nationwide. LIIF’s work has generated \$20 billion in family income and societal benefits. LIIF has offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City and Washington, D.C. For more information about LIIF, visit [www.liifund.org](http://www.liifund.org).

## FULL LIST OF AUTHORS AND AFFILIATIONS

**Foreword by** Elizabeth A. Duke, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System

**Community Development: Past and Present**

Alexander von Hoffman, Harvard University  
Alan Berube, Brookings Institution  
Eric Belsky, Harvard University  
Jennifer Fauth, City of New York

**Open Forum: Voices and Opinions from Leaders in Policy, the Field, and Academia**

Shaun Donovan, U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development  
Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education  
Kathleen Sebelius, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services  
Angela Glover Blackwell, PolicyLink  
Angela Blanchard, Neighborhood Centers, Inc.  
Antony Bugg-Levine, Nonprofit Finance Fund  
Cynthia M. Duncan, AGree  
Shirley Franklin, Purpose Built Communities  
David Edwards, IBM Corporation  
Paul Grogan, The Boston Foundation  
Ben Hecht, Living Cities  
Ted Howard, Democracy Collaborative  
Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Clara Miller, F. B. Heron Foundation  
Sister Lillian Murphy, Mercy Housing  
Janet Falk, Mercy Housing  
Mark A. Pinsky, Opportunity Finance Network  
John Robert Smith, Reconnecting America

Allison Brooks, Reconnecting America  
Jennifer Tescher, Center for Financial Services Innovation  
Nancy E. Adler, University of California, San Francisco  
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Mark Calabria, Cato Institute  
Peter Edelman, Georgetown University Law Center  
Ingrid Gould Ellen, New York University  
Gabriella Conti, University of Chicago  
James J. Heckman, University of Chicago  
James M. Radner, University of Toronto  
Jack P. Shonkoff, Harvard University

**Mapping the Future: Synthesizing Themes and Ideas for Next Steps**

Ellen Seidman, Visiting Scholar at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco  
David Erickson, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco  
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