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### **NEW GRANT HELPS NONPROFITS PROTECT VACANT PROPERTIES**

DETROIT- Feb. 13, 2009- Community Legal Resources will award mini-grants to nine Detroit community-based organizations. The grants will help residents maintain and protect vacant property in their neighborhoods. The grants will be awarded through the Community and Property Preservation (CAPP) program, which is funded by The Kresge Foundation.

The nine organizations approved for CAPP grants are Detroit Catholic Pastoral Alliance, Focus: Hope, Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation, MorningSide, Oakman Boulevard Community Association Housing Corporation, Pilgrim Village Association, The Villages CDC, University District Radio Patrol, and U-SNAP-BAC Housing Corporation.

A pilot project, the CAPP program provides supplemental financial assistance to community-based organizations that are incurring costs due to do-it-yourself vacant property maintenance and security initiatives. The CAPP program will help stabilize Detroit neighborhoods suffering from increasing numbers of vacant properties and declining vacant property conditions.

Community Legal Resources received 49 grant applications in total. The applicant pool was very diverse, representing different income levels, organization types, and geographic areas of the city.

In general, organizations applied for funding for security and maintenance activities, such as 1) mowing lawns, 2) boarding up properties, and 3) cleaning trash from vacant properties.

Steve Wasko, former president of the Historic Indian Village Association and first president of the Villages CDC, said the grant will help them achieve their goal of “...keeping all properties viable, maintaining home values, and making vacant property crime something...too risky to undertake.”

In addition to ongoing vacant property security and maintenance activities, the grants will also fund many innovative activities including: installing exterior solar-powered motion detector lights, putting up exterior indicators so police and security forces can easily identify vacant properties, providing gas gift cards for residents that mow the lawns of vacant properties, starting a “Clean Corps” comprised of neighborhood youth that will improve and document vacant properties, and painting murals on boarded properties.

The CAPP program is funded by the Kresge Foundation and administered by Community Legal Resources (CLR). CLR is a nonprofit legal services provider and the lead organization on a collaborative project called the Detroit Vacant Property Campaign (DVPC). The DVPC is an initiative of Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation and involves community groups, city residents, faith-based organizations, Community Development Advocates of Detroit, the University Of Michigan Taubman College Of Architecture and Urban Planning, and the City of Detroit. The purpose of the campaign is to empower Detroit residents to reduce the negative effects of vacant properties and turn vacant properties into neighborhood assets. For more information, please see [www.detroitvacantproperty.org](http://www.detroitvacantproperty.org).