

Selection Committee
2011

Anthony Berkley
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Kimberlee Cornett
The Kresge Foundation

Frank DeGiovanni
Ford Foundation

Lautaro Diaz
National Council of La Raza

Martin Eakes
Self-Help

Lesley Eckstein
Wells Fargo

Gregory Fairchild
University of Virginia

Sister Corinne Florek, OP
Mercy Partnership Fund

Jackie Khor
College Access Foundation of California

Mike Loftin
Homewise, Inc.

Trinita Logue
IFF

Michael Lohmeier
General Board of Pension & Health Benefits
of The United Methodist Church

Clara Miller
F.B. Heron Foundation

Marc Morial
National Urban League

Sharon Oster
Yale University

Mark Pinsky
Opportunity Finance Network

Michael Rizer
Wells Fargo Corporation
Co-Chair, Selection Committee

Debra Schwartz
MacArthur Foundation
Co-Chair, Selection Committee

Julia Stasch
MacArthur Foundation

Eileen Stenerson
Wells Fargo

Megan Teare
Wells Fargo Community Lending
& Investment

Christa Velasquez
The Hauser Center for Nonprofit
Organizations at Harvard University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**\$8.25 MILLION AWARDED TO TWO INNOVATIVE CDFIs
TO INVIGORATE LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES**

*Maine-Based Coastal Enterprises, Inc. and Pennsylvania-Based The Progress Fund
Receive Coveted Wachovia Wells Fargo NEXT Awards to Support Community Businesses*

Philadelphia, October 25, 2011— The country's largest and most coveted awards program for community development financial institutions (CDFIs) announced today that it will award \$8.25 million to two top-performing CDFIs: **Coastal Enterprises, Inc.** in Wiscasset, ME; and **The Progress Fund** in Greensburg, PA. The two CDFIs will use the **Wachovia Wells Fargo NEXT Awards for Opportunity Finance** to bolster local economies and stimulate and retain job growth in disadvantaged communities.

The **NEXT Awards** recognize pioneering work by CDFIs, which are market-based, private sector financial intermediaries that provide financing to low-income, low-wealth, and other disadvantaged communities. The Awardees will be recognized at a celebration on November 15 at Opportunity Finance Network's (OFN's) 27th Annual Conference in Minneapolis, MN.

How will the recipients use the awards?

Coastal Enterprises Inc., located in Wiscasset, Maine, will use its \$5.5 million **NEXT Award** to expand its national Working Partner Initiative (WPI), a collaborative program to partner with CDFIs and other community-based organizations to finance innovative projects in rural regions throughout the U.S. This program is unique because CEI uses fees generated by New Markets Tax Credits to fund these projects, and encourages other investor partners to do the same. Additionally, CEI requires every project it funds to adhere to a Community Benefits Agreement, which outlines expectations regarding the creation and retention of jobs, as well as the use of local labor, materials, and products.

With its **NEXT Award**, CEI hopes to bring its expertise to other areas by developing three to five WPI projects that will catalyze jobs, housing, and opportunity in rural America.

CEI is a private, nonprofit CDFI that provides financing and support for job-creating small businesses, natural resources industries, community facilities, and affordable housing.



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The Progress Fund in Greensburg, PA will use its \$2.75 million **NEXT Award** to expand its Trail Town Program[®] and to support replication of this strategy elsewhere. This innovative, regional partnership supports small businesses involved in outdoor recreation and tourism along The Great Allegheny Passage, a popular 141-mile biking and hiking trail that runs from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD.

Since 2007, The Progress Fund's Trail Town Program[®] has benefited eight rural communities in Pennsylvania and western Maryland. The 61 new trail-related businesses that opened thanks to The Progress Fund have created 83 new jobs. In addition, 12 businesses were able to expand operations because of the program.

The Progress Fund finances economic development by lending needed capital and by providing technical assistance to underserved entrepreneurs in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and western Maryland. Its goal is to build wealth and create living wage jobs in northern Appalachia.

The Wachovia Wells Fargo NEXT Awards for Opportunity Finance is operated by and funded through OFN by The Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The awards recognize excellence among financial institutions that responsibly serve low-income and low-wealth people and communities, and were established to spotlight how CDFIs increasingly benefit the nation's economy.

"By supporting the NEXT Awards, we are providing financing that might otherwise be unavailable to help CDFIs, such as CEI and The Progress Fund, do what they do best—help low-income communities," said Lesley Eckstein, executive vice president and group head, Community Lending and Investment, Wells Fargo.

A distinguished national selection committee chose the two recipients from a highly competitive field of top-level CDFIs located across the country. The award amounts are based on each organization's asset size—\$5.5 million for CDFIs with assets over \$50 million and \$2.75 million for those with assets in the \$10 million-\$50 million range.

"Since the **NEXT Awards** began five years ago, we have had the privilege of helping high-performing CDFIs expand their impact and deliver critical financial resources to underserved communities," said Debra Schwartz, Director of Program-Related Investments at the MacArthur Foundation. "As in years past, this year's winners are delivering game-changing capital to transform low-wealth markets across the country."

"I commend Coastal Enterprises, Inc. and The Progress Fund on their NEXT financing strategies," said Mark Pinsky, President and CEO of Opportunity Finance Network, "By sharing their visions for the future of the opportunity finance industry they inspire their peers to develop their own NEXT-level projects. They are also advancing the industry by serving the needs of more low-income, low-wealth, and disadvantaged people and communities in

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The Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation

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innovative ways.”

ABOUT THE AWARDS

In 2007, the Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation made a \$16.75 million grant and the MacArthur Foundation made a \$25 million low-cost, long-term loan to Opportunity Finance Network to fund the **Wachovia Wells Fargo NEXT Awards for Opportunity Finance**, inaugurated in 2007. Each year from 2007 through 2011, the **Wachovia Wells Fargo NEXT Awards for Opportunity Finance** has included:

- A \$5.5 million program-related investment (low-cost loan) and unrestricted grant award to an outstanding, high-potential CDFI with more than \$50 million in assets dedicated to lending or investing;
- A \$2.75 million program-related investment and unrestricted grant award to an outstanding, high-potential CDFI with \$10-\$50 million in assets dedicated to lending or investing, and
- Four \$25,000 unrestricted grant awards to CDFIs of any size that have demonstrated excellence in Innovation, Advocacy, Financing, and Community Impact.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

The Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation is a private foundation that provides grants to eligible 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations to support the following focus areas: Education, Community Development, Health/Human Services, Arts/Culture, Civic and Environment. The mission of the Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation is to build strong and vibrant communities, improve the quality of life, and make a positive difference.

The MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society. MacArthur has been a leading supporter of the Opportunity Finance field since the early 1980s, investing nearly \$250 million in approximately 100 groups nationwide. More information is available at: www.macfound.org.

Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), the leading network of private financial institutions, creates growth that is good for communities, investors, individuals, and the economy. Members of OFN are community development financial institutions (CDFIs) that deliver responsible lending to help low-wealth and low-income communities join the economic mainstream. Opportunity Finance Network originated more than \$23.2 billion in financing in non-conforming urban, rural, and Native communities through 2009, which

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generated or maintained 298,511 jobs; 60,261 businesses and microenterprises; 635,528 housing units; and 6,465 community facility projects. More information is available at: www.opportunityfinance.net.

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