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## Cleveland Churches to Build 100 Affordable Homes

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CLEVELAND, Ohio In a city where housing insecurity continues to impact many families, a new effort is aiming to turn vacant land owned by churches into real solutions. At least 100 new affordable homes could be built across Cuyahoga County under a new initiative by Enterprise Community Partners, a national nonprofit currently implementing its Faith-Based Development Initiative in the region.

The organization is calling on at least 20 churches and places of worship across the region to participate in a unique opportunity, transforming underused or empty land into affordable

housing and community-focused spaces. The goal is to not only create much-needed housing but also help churches serve their neighborhoods in a deeper, lasting way.

“This can be a revenue stream for the church as well as an opportunity for the house of worship to serve their community in a new way,” said Ayonna Blue Donald, Ohio market leader for Enterprise Community Partners.

The effort is part of Enterprise’s national Faith-Based Development Initiative, which trains churches in the basics of real estate development. From August through December 2025, selected congregations will participate in a training program designed to equip them with the tools and knowledge to pursue real estate projects focused on affordable housing and community development. Once they complete the program, they’ll be eligible to apply for up to \$75,000 in pre-development grant funding.

The potential projects would focus on areas with strong community needs, including Cleveland neighborhoods like Glenville, Union-Miles, and Hough, along with nearby suburbs such as East Cleveland and Maple Heights. The type of development will depend on the space available and the vision of each participating church.

“There are approximately 20,000 city-owned parcels in Cleveland that could potentially be made available at low cost to nearby houses of worship for affordable housing development,” Blue Donald added, noting that city-owned land could also be part of plans.

This effort has received key support from KeyBank and its KeyBank Foundation, which contributed \$350,000 in funding. The grant is part of a broader \$3 million investment aimed at supporting faith-based and community-centered development efforts.

The partnership between churches and development experts offers a new way to meet housing needs while respecting the values and missions of local faith communities. By taking part, churches have a chance to build more than just homes; they can help shape a more stable and inclusive future for the neighborhoods they’ve long served.

Churches interested in joining the program can register through Enterprise’s website. The deadline to apply is July 18.

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