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NEWS RELEASE

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Project Parachute Program Receives \$7.2 Million in New Grants from the Diane and Dorothy Brooks Foundation, Ford Foundation, The JPB Foundation, M&T Bank, Robin Hood, Trinity Church Wall Street, Wells Fargo, and the William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation to Help New York City Tenants Stay in their Homes

Launched as a public-private partnership, Project Parachute seeks to provide rental assistance, eviction prevention, and financial services during COVID-19 and beyond

New grants will significantly expand Project Parachute's funding in the near term

NEW YORK, NY - (November 12, 2020) – [Enterprise Community Partners](#) (Enterprise), [the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City](#), [the Real Estate Board of New York](#) (REBNY), [the New York State Association for Affordable Housing](#) (NYSFAFH), and seven community-based partners today announced 8 major new grants from the Diane and Dorothy Brooks Foundation, [Ford Foundation](#), [The JPB Foundation](#), [M&T Bank](#), [Robin Hood](#), [Trinity Church Wall Street](#), [Wells Fargo](#), and [the William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation](#) totaling \$7.2 million in additional funding in support of [Project Parachute](#). Project Parachute is a coalition of property owners, nonprofits, and city agencies committed to helping vulnerable and underserved New York residents stay in their homes as the COVID-19 crisis continues, through its program FASTEN (Funds and Services for Tenants Experiencing Need), which offers eviction prevention services and financial resources, including rent relief. Project Parachute has so far raised a total of \$11.6 million, with these new grants and its initial seed funding of \$4.5 million from property owners

combined. The grants will help Enterprise reach its goal of raising \$15 million to support at least 3,000 people with rental assistance and other resources during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

“We are excited to have Robin Hood, Ford Foundation, the Diane and Dorothy Brooks Foundation, The JPB Foundation, the William J. and Dorothy K. O’Neill Foundation, Trinity Church Wall Street, Wells Fargo, and M&T Bank as partners in this critical endeavor,” **said Judi Kende, vice president and New York market leader for Enterprise Community Partners.** “Now more than ever, we must work to ensure that the most vulnerable New Yorkers do not slip through the safety net, and meaningful support from these organizations will help us carry out this mission through the Project Parachute program.”

"Far too many families are struggling to make ends meet as we deal with the long-term economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. The City's partnership with Enterprise and the philanthropic sector will help the most vulnerable New Yorkers stay in their homes, regardless of immigration status," **said Vicki Been, New York City Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development.** "On behalf of the de Blasio administration, I want to thank the Diane and Dorothy Brooks Foundation, Ford Foundation, The JPB Foundation, M&T Bank, Robin Hood, Trinity Church Wall Street, Wells Fargo, the William J. and Dorothy K. O’Neill Foundation, and the many others who are stepping up to keep New Yorkers stably housed at this critical hour."

“The ongoing impact of the pandemic and its economic fallout have made even clearer that home is a basic need that everyone -- regardless of race, income level, or immigration status – deserves,” **said Maria Torres-Springer, Vice President of US Programs, Ford Foundation.** “The Ford Foundation commends all of the partners involved in Project Parachute for launching this important initiative, providing critical relief for families and exemplifying the type of cross-sector, collaborative effort that will ensure our city not only recovers but does so equitably.”

Project Parachute takes a holistic approach to addressing the needs of tenants now by deploying philanthropic funds to expand the capacity of community-based service providers to administer eviction prevention services. FASTEN is providing clients with rental arrears assistance and will provide landlord mediation and legal assistance where needed to help them remain housed in the immediate crisis; helping them stabilize more holistically with resources like food relief, affordable health services and utility arrears assistance; and helping them sustain stable housing through access to financial counseling, job search assistance, and other service referrals.

While New York State and federal moratoriums have temporarily halted evictions nationwide through January 1, 2021, these are stopgap measures. Comprehensive support and additional resources are needed to prevent evictions, not merely delay them, to help housing-unstable populations remain in their homes for the long term, and to support property owners, especially smaller landlords at financial risk after so many months of reduced rental income. Project Parachute also seeks specifically to reach those not eligible for other forms of state and federal public assistance, including undocumented workers and those in nonstandard employment. While Project Parachute fills an important gap in needed resources, the collaborative partners recognize that this is the first step in addressing the need and will continue to raise and advocate for more resources from both the public and private sectors to provide long-term solutions and stable housing for all New Yorkers.

Project Parachute was launched in August as a collaborative approach by Enterprise, REBNY, NYSFAFH, the City of New York, and seven community-based partners - BronxWorks, CAMBA, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens, Catholic Charities Community Services, HELP USA, RiseBoro Community

Partnership (RiseBoro), and Services for the UnderServed (S:US) - to support tenants at risk of eviction, to ensure building operations are maintained, and to preserve ownership of buildings by smaller landlords.

Impacted tenants can access Project Parachute assistance through the seven community-based partners, who are also New York City's [Homebase](#) providers. Homebase is a City-funded homelessness prevention program based on a network with 26 providers across the five boroughs of New York City. The Homebase program is overseen by the NYC Human Resources Administration.

The initiative was seeded by REBNY and NYSAFAH, with over \$4.5 million in philanthropic support from more than 50 property owners committed to helping vulnerable tenants stay in their homes during the pandemic and in its aftermath. Property owner-members of the program have also agreed to proactively communicate with and connect tenants to these services and work with tenants on an individual basis to establish payment plans and waive fees to ensure housing stability.

Through philanthropic funding, Project Parachute increases the capacity of Homebase provider partners and enables them to reach those not eligible for other forms of state and federal public assistance, including undocumented workers and those in nonstandard employment, as identified by the Homebase providers. The funds are administered entirely autonomously by nonprofit partners and are blind to in which buildings the tenants live.

About 85% of Project Parachute participants to date are undocumented immigrants, signaling the unique needs this population faces to help keep their homes and safeguard public health. FASTEN is currently scaling up outreach and referral partnerships to reach more New Yorkers in need of assistance, including through collaboration with the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs and its community-based partner organizations to develop referrals to the program among the thousands of people who have reached out to them seeking Covid-19 relief support.

Since the program launched, FASTEN has provided undocumented immigrants and families stricken with joblessness, health crises, and rental arrears with crucial rental assistance, food cards, MetroCards, and access to financial workshops and affordable health services. Clients include previously employed workers from the restaurant and house cleaning industries who are now without work. Homebase providers have facilitated tenant support and look forward to working with other prospective enrollees.

"M&T Bank is honored to be part of this esteemed group working collaboratively to solve our cities' great challenges," said Matt Petrula, Group Vice President, Commercial Real Estate at M&T Bank.

"With New York City witnessing the highest rates of unemployment since the Great Depression, millions of New Yorkers will be left with rent arrears or even eviction notices that may drive families into homelessness. Forcing people out of their homes will only perpetuate the vicious cycle of generational and predictable poverty," said Wes Moore, Chief Executive Officer of Robin Hood. "We are proud to partner with Project Parachute to keep New Yorkers sustainably housed, but we know that philanthropy alone cannot meet the tremendous need. As we drive for a more equitable New York, New York State must follow the lead of California, Illinois, Texas and Florida to enact legislation that will allow New Yorkers to access rental and other emergency assistance, regardless of their immigration status."

"Many New Yorkers were struggling to keep a roof over their heads before this pandemic. Now, amid rising unemployment, a lot of our neighbors have gone months unable to pay rent. For undocumented

immigrants, this is especially concerning as they have limited access to public assistance benefits and eviction prevention programs,” **said the Rev. Phillip A. Jackson, Priest-in-charge and Vicar of Trinity Church Wall Street.** “Project Parachute’s commitment to helping these individuals is one of many reasons Trinity is proud to be a partner.”

“Having a safe, healthy and affordable place to call home is essential to help lay the foundation for wellness, dignity and economic opportunity,” **said Eileen Fitzgerald, head of housing affordability philanthropy with the Wells Fargo Foundation.** “Wells Fargo is committed to the importance of home for everyone in our nation. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, as far too many New Yorkers are facing housing instability, we are proud to support Project Parachute as we continue to address the housing affordability crisis together.”

"A home is so much more than a roof over your head--it's a source of comfort, a safe convening place for family, and a place where roots are planted and nurtured," **said Toya Williford, Executive Director of the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.** "Project Parachute ensures that our most vulnerable community members can remain in their homes and rebuild from the impacts of COVID-19. We are proud to collaborate with Enterprise to activate the power of partnership to support New Yorkers in the ways they need it most."

"With so many New Yorkers struggling to make ends meet during the pandemic, the City responded with supports for the largest household expenses, including access to free food and healthcare. Together with Enterprise Community Partners we extend this support to rental assistance, ensuring that more New Yorkers are able to stay in their homes and communities," **said Peter Hatch, COVID-19 Public-Private Partnership Czar.** "I want to thank the many philanthropic partners who have generously contributed to this effort."

“Families and neighborhoods hit hard by the pandemic are depending on public and private leaders joining forces to show real support in this time of crisis,” **said HPD Commissioner Louise Carroll.** “We couldn’t be more excited that the Diane and Dorothy Brooks Foundation, Ford Foundation, The JPB Foundation, M&T Bank, Robin Hood, Trinity Church Wall Street, the Wells Fargo Foundation, and the William J. and Dorothy K. O’Neill Foundation are supporting this incredible effort to raise millions for the households struggling to stay on their feet. New York’s public, nonprofit and philanthropic communities can help drive a fair and equitable recovery if we continue working together.”

“The deep and disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on immigrant communities, including undocumented families, can be felt across our country. Immigrant workers are among those serving on the frontlines of this crisis and those most vulnerable to housing instability, and yet their families continue to be overlooked in federal stimulus relief,” **said Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs.** “Through this partnership and our network of community-based organizations, immigrant New Yorkers most in need will receive these critical services. We thank the Project Parachute partners for putting principle into practice and supporting our City’s work to connect New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, to the support they need and deserve.”

“As New York City continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are committed to doing everything in our power to help New Yorkers avoid evictions and secure their homes,” **said Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks.** “Project Parachute is an innovative public-private partnership that serves our most vulnerable neighbors, ensuring that New Yorkers in need are able to stabilize their housing situations during these unprecedented times. On behalf of DSS-HRA-DHS, I thank

all of our partners for participating in this important initiative, and for their steadfast support of our ongoing efforts to rebuild a stronger and more equitable New York City.”

“Safe affordable housing and security at home is vital to the economic recovery the state desperately needs, and Project Parachute will provide just that by offering much-needed rental assistance and eviction prevention for vulnerable New Yorkers,” **said Jolie Milstein, CEO and President of the New York State Association for Affordable Housing (NYSFAH)**. “New York tenants are still recovering from the pandemic, and grants from the Ford Foundation, JPB Foundation, Robin Hood, Wells Fargo, and other stakeholders will help advance this pivotal effort in keeping New Yorkers in their homes.”

“Many thanks to the Ford Foundation, Robin Hood, the Diane and Dorothy Brooks Foundation, The JPB Foundation, M&T Bank, Trinity Church Wall Street, Wells Fargo, and the William J. and Dorothy K. O’Neill Foundation for supporting Project Parachute. Addressing our City’s housing problems remains a top priority and providing needed resources and concrete solutions to keep the most vulnerable New Yorkers safe in their homes is one approach,” **said James Whelan, president of the Real Estate Board of New York**. “It requires collective efforts, like Project Parachute, where owners, foundations, nonprofits and government band together to work with and assist tenants, advocate for federal dollars and raise funds to meet the deep rental assistance needs of our fellow New Yorkers during this crisis.”

“The COVID-19 Pandemic continues to impact our most vulnerable Bronx neighbors and gravely hinder their ability to provide the most basic needs for themselves and their families. BronxWorks is committed to providing necessary support and especially keep our community members stably housed. Project Parachute is a vital program that addresses a major effect of the economic crisis and ensures that our collective work to break the cycle of poverty continues. We are proud to be a part of this coalition,” **states Eileen Torres, Executive Director, BronxWorks**.

“CAMBA is very proud to partner with Enterprise, the NYC Human Resources Administration and Robin Hood to provide crucial resources through the FASTEN effort to our fellow New Yorkers who have had to make the difficult choice between feeding their families or paying their rent,” **said Joanne M. Oplustil, President & CEO of CAMBA, Inc. and CAMBA Housing Ventures**. “CAMBA, through its Homebase program, is able to assist many individuals and families who would not be seeking services before the pandemic, and who are otherwise not eligible for regular government assistance.”

“Helping families find relief from hunger and homelessness is at the very core of our mission,” **said Msgr. Alfred LoPinto, President and CEO of Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens**. “The COVID-19 crisis has accelerated this need in ways we have never seen before. We are grateful to the additional resources for rent assistance from Project Parachute and look forward to working together to advocate for more funding and legislation to help keep the hundreds and thousands of families in their home.”

“Catholic Charities Community Services is proud to be one of the agencies receiving FASTEN (Project Parachute) funds to assist needy New Yorkers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic,” **said Antonio Garcia, Department Director, Preserving Housing, at Catholic Charities Community Services**. “We are welcoming referrals from social and immigration services providers so that we may help preserve the housing of all affected tenants. Tenants in need of assistance should call our Helpline at 1-888-744-7900.”

“HELP USA has always believed that all people, regardless of immigration status, deserve the dignity of safe housing. That’s why we are excited to bring a proven homeless prevention model to families who

are currently ineligible for city-funded services,” said **Marisol Toledo-Liz, Executive Director of FASTEN at HELP USA**. “FASTEN will allow us to expand our program to meet the dire needs of undocumented families in jeopardy of becoming homeless during this time of crisis.”

“RiseBoro Community Partnership has already witnessed how Project Parachute is changing lives,” said **Scott Short, CEO**. “Undocumented workers are part of the essential fabric of this great city. Without Project Parachute, many of them would now be homeless. The generosity and compassion of those supporting, funding, and working for Project Parachute makes me proud to be a New Yorker and hopeful for an inclusive recovery.”

“Thousands of New Yorkers are facing immense financial uncertainty and housing instability due to COVID-19. Project Parachute bolsters S:US’ ability to prevent evictions for underserved families in NYC and to address the fallout from the ongoing public health crisis. This new partnership also offers hope and opportunity for hundreds of New Yorkers who have never before been able to access services to resolve their housing crisis,” said **Donna Colonna, CEO of Services for the UnderServed (S:US)**.

"For New York families, averting eviction in a pandemic can be a matter of life and death. There are already over 43,000 people living in family shelters in New York City, including close to 25,000 children and teens. Nearly 95% of these families are Black and Latinx," said **Raysa Rodriguez on behalf of the Family Homelessness Coalition**. "Now, as a result of the pandemic, roughly one in every three households with children were unable to pay last month's rent and even more have no confidence in their ability to pay rent next month. As the eviction ban looms, thousands more vulnerable women and children are at risk of experiencing the life-altering trauma of homelessness. This new infusion of funds for Project Parachute will go a long way to help keep New Yorkers in their homes as the future COVID-19 and our economic recovery remain uncertain. But the fight to end family homelessness in New York City is far from over. We stand by ready to work alongside our partners to leverage what is learned through Project Parachute to ensure that public dollars at the federal, state, local level are invested in the prevention supports, rent subsidies and rapid rehousing options families need in the months and years to come."

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About Project Parachute

Project Parachute is a coalition of New York City property owners who have pledged to help the most vulnerable renters remain in their homes during and in the aftermath of the Coronavirus crisis and provide a vehicle for the real estate industry to contribute toward the economic viability of the city and its residents. Participating property owners are philanthropically supporting Enterprise Community Partners and nonprofit Homebase providers who work with tenant counseling services and provide rent payment support through the program FASTEN (Funds and Services for Tenants Experiencing Need). More information can be found at www.projectparachute.nyc.

About Enterprise Community Partners

Enterprise works with partners nationwide to build opportunity. We bring together the nationwide know-how, partners, policy leadership and investments to multiply the impact of local affordable housing development. Over more than 35 years, Enterprise has created nearly 585,000 homes, invested \$43.6 billion and touched millions of lives. Join us at www.EnterpriseCommunity.org.

About Ford Foundation

The Ford Foundation is an independent, nonprofit grant-making organization. For more than 80 years it has worked with courageous people on the frontlines of social change worldwide, guided by its mission to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement. With headquarters in New York, the foundation has offices in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

About Robin Hood:

Founded in 1988, Robin Hood finds, fuels, and creates the most impactful and scalable solutions lifting families out of poverty in New York City, with models that can work across the country. This year, Robin Hood will invest nearly \$200 million to provide COVID relief, legal services, housing, meals, workforce development training, education programs, and more to families in poverty in New York City. Robin Hood tracks every program with rigorous metrics, and since Robin Hood's Board of Directors covers all overhead, 100 percent of every donation goes directly to the poverty fight. Learn more at robinhood.org.

About Trinity Church Wall Street

Now in its fourth century, Trinity Church Wall Street is a growing and inclusive Episcopal parish of more than 1,200 members that seeks to serve and heal the world by building neighborhoods that live Gospel truths, generations of faithful leaders, and sustainable communities. The parish is guided by its core values: faith, integrity, inclusiveness, compassion, social justice, and stewardship. Members come from the five boroughs of New York City and surrounding areas to form a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse congregation. More than 20 worship services are offered every week at its historic sanctuaries, Trinity Church and St. Paul's Chapel, the cornerstones of the parish's community life, worship, and mission, and online at trinitywallstreet.org. The parish welcomes approximately 2 million visitors per year.

About Wells Fargo

Wells Fargo & Company is a community-based financial services company. Founded in 1852 and headquartered in San Francisco, Wells Fargo provides banking, investment and mortgage products and services, as well as consumer and commercial finance, through 7,200 locations, more than 13,000 ATMs, the internet (wellsfargo.com) and mobile banking. Wells Fargo serves one in three households in the United States. Wells Fargo & Company was ranked No. 30 on Fortune's 2020 rankings of America's largest corporations. News, insights and perspectives from Wells Fargo are also available at [Wells Fargo Stories](#).

About the William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation

The William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation is a private family foundation that exists to engage all generations of O'Neill family members through philanthropy. The Foundation is committed strengthening families and improving communities in which O'Neill family members live and are engaged in the work of the Foundation.

About The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City

The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, chaired by First Lady Chirlane McCray, is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization committed to promoting partnerships between the City and the private sector in support of high-impact public programs. The Mayor's Fund is focused on serving as a vehicle for the generous business and philanthropic communities to contribute to City programs and enhance the lives of New Yorkers in areas ranging from mental health, to youth workforce development, to immigration and citizenship. To learn more about the Mayor's Fund, visit nyc.gov/fund.

About the New York State Association for Affordable Housing

The New York State Association for Affordable Housing (NYSFAFH) formed in 1998 is a trade association for private sector organizations throughout New York State that are involved in affordable housing. NYSFAFH's goals are to increase housing programs and subsidies, to be a voice for professionals in the field, and to inform members of new opportunities and developments. Currently they have over 300 members, including developers, general contractors, attorneys, architects, lenders, equity investors, and other housing professionals.

About The Real Estate Board of New York

The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) is the City's leading real estate trade association. Founded in 1896, REBNY represents commercial, residential, and institutional property owners, builders, managers, investors, brokers, and salespeople; banks, financial service companies, utilities, attorneys, architects, and contractors; corporations, co-partnerships, and individuals professionally interested in New York City real estate. REBNY conducts research on various civic matters including tax policy, city planning and zoning, rental conditions, land use policy, building codes, and other city, state, and federal legislation. REBNY regularly publishes market data, policy reports, and broker surveys. In addition, REBNY provides for its members: informational, technical, and technological resources; networking and charitable service opportunities; qualifying and continuing education courses; professional education programs, seminars, and designations; career-changing awards; legal advice; and a wide range of additional member benefits. For more information, please visit www.REBNY.com.