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**City of Duluth - Communications Office**

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**SUBJECT: Duluth Selected for NLC Cities of Opportunity Cohort to Address Health of People and Thriving Communities**

**BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer**

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**Duluth Selected for NLC Cities of Opportunity Cohort  
to Address Health of People and Thriving Communities**

As part of a national effort to develop multisector, holistic, sustainable and equitable policy solutions that improve the health and wellbeing of city residents, the City of Duluth has been selected as one of six cities to join the new cohort of the National League of Cities' (NLC) Cities of Opportunity initiative. This will build on the [experiences of the pilot cohort](#) to advance cross-cutting and collaborative approaches to three critical challenges: economic opportunity, healthy and affordable housing, and city planning and design.

"We are honored to have been selected by the National League of Cities to participate in this cohort," said Mayor Emily Larson. "Our efforts around expanding our local economy, improving access to jobs for women and people of color and backing up our commitment to affordable housing with tangible resources are being noticed, and more importantly, they are working. We can't wait to share these stories with other communities, and we are eager to learn from them to bring back new, creative ideas to Duluth."

In cities across America, the life expectancies of people who live a few miles apart, and sometimes even blocks apart, can vary by as much as five, 10 or even 20 years. Multiple factors influence how long we live and how well we live. Economic, environmental and social conditions – education, employment, family and social supports, housing and transit – all play a role in shaping health outcomes in our communities. City leaders are well positioned to improve these local conditions, advancing cross-cutting approaches that address underlying factors that affect their residents' health and their cities' wellbeing.

Cities of Opportunity: Healthy People, Thriving Communities, is designed to harness the power of city leadership to address factors that affect how long we live and how well we live. With the generous support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the NLC Institute for Youth, Education, and Families will support city leaders to develop and implement robust, integrated action plans with comprehensive strategies that improve health outcomes for their residents.

The technical assistance cohort cities vary in population sizes and types, and span the geographic regions of the country. All have made inroads or are well positioned to take a holistic approach to multiple factors that affect health. They are passionate about advancing equity and opportunity in their communities and want to engage more deeply with community residents. All see this as a defining time to work in a more integrated way to share and learn with other cities.

The six cities will focus on three major factors that affect health, identified through key informant interviews with a diverse group of mayors, councilmembers and other city leaders:

- Economic Opportunity – the capacity to work and support a family, plan for the future and improve one's standard of living;
- Housing – an affordable, safe and healthy place to call home, with access to jobs, schools and community resources; and
- City Planning & Design – land use and transportation decisions that enable residents to be connected to the people, places, resources and services they need.

The goal is to help local leaders build cities where all residents can reach their full potential and live productive, fulfilling and healthy lives in thriving communities – ultimately ensuring Cities of Opportunity for all residents.

In addition to **Duluth**, five other cities making up the NLC Cities of Opportunity pilot cohort include **Dubuque, Iowa; Evanston, Illinois; Las Vegas, Nevada; Napa, California; and South Fulton, Georgia.**

To learn more about the results of the Cities of Opportunity pilot cohort, please download the [Cities of Opportunity: Health People, Thriving Communities - Highlights and Summary from 12-City Pilot](#) report.

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*The National League of Cities is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans. The Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, a special entity within the National League of Cities, helps municipal leaders take action on behalf of the children, youth, and families in their communities.*