

# PartnersUpdate

January/February 2018

**Articles**

[Opportunity Zone Program](#)

[Labor Market Issues](#)

[Webinar on the Digital Divide](#)

**Departments**

[Staff](#)

[Subscribe Online](#)



[Investments in Low-Income Communities](#)

02/14/2018 -

The recent tax bill created a new incentive for investing in distressed communities. Learn about the Opportunity Zone Program in this article.



[Webinar to Address Labor Market Issues](#)

01/31/2018 -

The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City is cohosting a three-part webinar series on strategies to promote and improve quality jobs for lower-wage workers. Learn more about this multi-institutional partnership in this article.



[Webinar Will Explore the Digital Divide](#)

01/05/2018 -

Join experts from the Federal Reserve and BBVA Compass as they discuss broadband access under the Community Reinvestment Act. Register for the session in this piece.



## Partners Update

January/February 2018

### Articles

[Opportunity Zone Program](#)

[Labor Market Issues](#)

[Webinar on the Digital Divide](#)

### Departments

[Staff](#)

[Subscribe Online](#)

## Investments in Low-Income Communities

The tax bill that passed in December created a new tax incentive for investment in distressed communities. The Opportunity Zone Program is designed to attract private capital to distressed communities by granting favorable capital gains treatment to investors in exchange for patient investment (of seven to 10 years) into "opportunity funds." Opportunity funds, as defined in the tax law, will invest in projects or businesses that are located in low-income census tracts that have been designated "opportunity zones."

Governors in every state and U.S. territory have until March 21 to select and nominate up to 25 percent of their existing low-income census tracts to be designated opportunity zones. The secretary of the U.S. Treasury will grant the designations. Governors may request one 30-day extension to the March 21 deadline (the extension deadline is also March 21). States that do not nominate tracts as opportunity zones by the statutory deadlines will not receive any designations.

Low-income census tracts are the same as those that qualify for the federal New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program—tracts with an individual poverty rate of at least 20 percent and median family income up to 80 percent of the area median. Up to 5 percent of nominated tracts do not have to meet this definition, but must be contiguous with low-income census tracts. The designation does not guarantee investment, but it makes projects within the boundaries of the opportunity zone eligible for investment by privately raised and managed opportunity funds.

Only 25 percent of a state's low-income census tracts will be designated opportunity zones. This new tax incentive begs the attention of those who seek to bring private capital to community revitalization efforts. For those interested in learning more about the designation process and mechanics of the program, here are further resources:

- [CDFI Fund at U.S. Treasury](#) is the official source of program information and gives details on the procedure for nominating tracts
- [Economic Innovation Group \(EIG\)](#) provides background and history of the Opportunity Zone Program
- [Enterprise Community Partners](#) has a mapping tool for determining eligible tracts
- [Novogradac & Company](#) provides resources and details
- [Missouri](#) shows an example of a state request for proposal process for nominating tracts.

*By Will Lambe, CED senior adviser; contact him with questions about the program*





January/February 2018

## Articles

[Opportunity Zone Program](#)

[Labor Market Issues](#)

[Webinar on the Digital Divide](#)

## Departments

[Staff](#)

[Subscribe Online](#)

## Webinar Will Explore the Digital Divide

Join experts from the Federal Reserve and BBVA Compass as they discuss broadband access under the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). Under the CRA, infrastructure investment includes facilitating the construction, expansion, improvement, maintenance, or operation of essential infrastructure or facilities for health services, education, public safety, public services, industrial parks, or affordable housing. Broadband is included as a form of infrastructure investment—an essential community service.

This Connecting Communities webinar will highlight possible opportunities for financial institutions to receive CRA consideration and take advantage of new opportunities to help close the digital divide across communities and improve economic stability.

Speakers include:

- *Jordana Barton*, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas
- *Jeanne Milliken Bonds*, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond
- *Chelsea Cruz*, Federal Reserve Bank of New York
- *Yolanda Davila*, BBVA Compass
- *Adrian Franco*, Federal Reserve Bank of New York

[Register](#) for the January 11 session, which takes place at 3:00 p.m. ET. Participation is free, but preregistration is required.

The Connecting Communities® webinar series is a Federal Reserve System initiative intended to provide a national audience with timely information on emerging and important community and economic development topics. All past sessions are in the Connecting Communities archive. For more information about this series, please email [communities@stls.frb.org](mailto:communities@stls.frb.org).





January/February 2018

**Articles**

[Opportunity Zone Program](#)

[Labor Market Issues](#)

[Webinar on the Digital Divide](#)

**Departments**

[Staff](#)

[Subscribe Online](#)

**Webinar to Address Labor Market Issues**

In today's labor market, companies across the country are adopting new business practices to create good jobs to attract, retain, and grow their talent. To examine these issues, the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City is cohosting a three-part webinar series on strategies to promote and improve quality jobs for lower-wage workers. The series is a partnership with the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, the Aspen Institute, and the Good Companies, Good Jobs Initiative at the Sloan School of Management in connection with the Federal Reserve System's initiative Investing in America's Workforce.

The first webinar in the series will explore how the changing labor market is affecting two manufacturing companies and the strategies they use to design higher-quality jobs, improve working conditions, and strengthen operations. Panelists will also discuss the role of technology in enhancing job quality and expanding employment. The webinar will conclude by offering a menu of practices and programs used by employers across industry sectors proven to increase their competitive advantage and help them to become an employer of choice. Fred Dedrick of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions will moderate the session.

Panelists include:

- *Kathy Jewett*, XLT Inc.
- *Mike Madina*, Optimax Systems Inc.

[Register](#) for the February 22 session, which takes place at 3:00 p.m. ET. And mark your calendar for upcoming webinars in this series: [Engaging Workers in Creating Good Jobs](#) on March 22 and [In Search of the Employment "High Road": A Research Perspective on Developing Good Jobs](#) on April 26. Participation in this series is free, but registration is required for each webinar.

**More about the Investing in America's Workforce initiative**

Investing in America's Workforce is a Federal Reserve System initiative to reimagine and reframe workforce development efforts to improve outcomes for workers, more competitive businesses and greater regional economic growth. [Learn](#) more about the initiative, [explore](#) additional resources, and join the conversation at #InvestInWork.



PUBLICATIONS



January/February 2018

**Articles**

[Opportunity Zone Program](#)

[Labor Market Issues](#)

[Webinar on the Digital Divide](#)

**Departments**

[Staff](#)

[Subscribe Online](#)

**Staff**

Mary Hirt  
Jennifer Staley  
Jeanne Zimmermann

**Policies:**

The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta or the Federal Reserve System. Printing or abstracting material from this Web publication is permitted if *Partners Update* is credited and a copy of the publication containing reprinted material is provided to the Community and Economic Development group, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, 1000 Peachtree Street, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30309-4470.