The George Washington University  
Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration  
PPPA 6062.10  
Community Development Policy  
Fall 2020 Syllabus  
As of August 2, 2020

Time: 6:10 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Mondays  
Location: Online only via videoconference – see instructions below on accessing video class sessions on Zoom.

Professor: Joseph Firschein  
joseph.a.firschein@frb.gov  
703-731-5992 (cell)  
202-775-5531 (work)  
Office hours by appointment

Course Description:  
This course examines the policy and practice of community development, including how private sector developers and lenders work with nonprofits, foundations, and the public sector to promote sustainable affordable housing, economic development, and other community-based projects that meet both financial as well as social impact criteria. The course explores a range of community and economic development programs and policy issues, including those related to financing affordable housing, community facilities, and small businesses. The course also addresses emerging trends that are likely to affect community development policymakers and practitioners in the future, including transit-oriented development, comprehensive community initiatives, and new ways of raising capital for community development projects.

Although the course includes a discussion of public policy analysis and underwriting techniques used by public and private sector community development practitioners, no previous community development finance or public policy experience is required.

Course Prerequisites: None

Required Texts:


2) Harvard Business Publishing Coursepack. The coursepack includes the cases listed below:

The coursepack is available from the following Harvard Business Publishing link. The link requires students to register with a username and password (if you don’t have a username, you can create one on the site the first time you register):
https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/736674

For other required readings available for free via the web, see details below under each class. Note that in addition to the required class readings, in some cases there are a number of “additional optional readings.” These readings are for students seeking additional information on a particular topic.

Student Learning Outcomes:
As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Identify and understand the public policy issues associated with the key federal, state, and local government community and economic development programs, including grant and loan programs, tax credit programs, and regulations;
2. Understand the role that banks and other regulated financial institutions play in community development, explore their incentives, and analyze current policy issues associated with the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA);
3. Describe and analyze the role that Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) play in community development, explain how CDFIs partner with traditional financial institutions, and identify current public policy issues associated with CDFIs and the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s CDFI Fund;
4. Understand the implications of the large volume of foreclosed and/or vacant properties for policymakers and practitioners and current policy issues associated with foreclosed and vacant properties;
5. Understand the role that the housing Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs) – Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac – currently play in community development and the implications of alternative policies on the future of the GSE; and
6. Understand and analyze strategies employed by high performing public and private sector community development organizations and describe some of the new approaches being pursued by these organizations.

Class Requirements and Grading:
Students are expected to complete the following requirements:
1. **Class Participation (15%)**: Regular course attendance is required. The class participation grade will be based on students’ informed participation in the class discussions of the assigned required readings and cases. In class, students may be called on to answer questions or summarize assigned articles and cases. In addition, there may be periodic unscheduled in-class writing assignments on the required readings and these assignments will be considered part of the participation grade. Note: students will not be expected to read the “additional optional readings” listed on the syllabus. As noted above, those optional readings are for students seeking more information on a particular topic.

2. **Community Development Policy Memo (30%)**: Students will write an individual analysis of a community development policy topic. Detailed instructions for the policy memo will be posted on Blackboard.

3. **Midterm Exam (30%)**: The exam will focus on items specifically discussed in class and in the assigned readings for the class sessions prior to the exam date. Detailed information on the exam format will be provided prior to the exam.

4. **Final Group Presentation (25%)**: Students will divide into small groups and collaborate on a PowerPoint presentation analyzing a completed community development project. Detailed instructions for the Final Group Presentation will be posted on Blackboard. Final Group Presentation teams must submit their proposed presentation topic (project name, project type, date of completion, and location) in advance. The presentations will take place in class.

**Use of Zoom for Accessing Class Sessions:**
We will use the same Zoom link each week to access the class sessions. Students will be expected to be on each of the Zoom videoconference sessions in video mode (not just calling in) unless there is prior approval from the professor. To access the Zoom videoconference, use this link. Accessing the Zoom video should not require a meeting ID but, if needed, the Meeting ID is: 919 5830 9661. If you are having technical difficulty accessing the video using the web link or you are not able to access the internet, you should dial in using one of the following local phone numbers (you may be asked for the above-referenced meeting ID):

- +1 213 338 8477 US (Los Angeles)
- +1 267 831 0333 US (Philadelphia)
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 470 381 2552 US (Atlanta)
- +1 646 518 9805 US (New York)
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

See this link for a list of international call-in numbers.

**Background on Instructor:**
Joseph Firschein is Deputy Associate Director and Community Affairs Officer at the Federal Reserve Board’s Division of Consumer and Community Affairs. He leads the Board’s Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) team that is responsible for developing and implementing CRA regulations to support bank lending, investment, and services in low- and moderate-income communities. He also oversees the Board’s community development team that works with a range of stakeholders to promote the economic mobility of low-income and underserved individuals and communities.

Prior to joining the Federal Reserve Board, Joseph served as a Director in Fannie Mae’s Housing and Community Development Division where he managed the business segment responsible for financing community development financial institutions and led the company’s efforts to sell foreclosed single family homes to public entities and nonprofits. Prior to joining Fannie Mae, Joseph managed lending to community development financial institutions at the U.S. Treasury Department Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund and served as lead community development analyst at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Housing Branch. Joseph has served as a board member of several local nonprofit community development and policy organizations and is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and George Washington University, where he teaches courses on community development finance and policy. Joseph has an MBA in Finance from the University of Maryland, Robert H. Smith School of Business; a Master of Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley, Goldman School of Public Policy; and a B.A. in Psychology from Stanford University.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>No class due to Labor Day</td>
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relations? What role does the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) play in CD and what are some of the key CRA policy issues?


*Additional Optional Readings:*


| Sept. 21 | Community Development Lending – Part 2: What is the role of CDFIs in CD finance efforts? What are the key challenges facing CDFIs and what are some of the important public policy issues facing the CDPI |
2) “Breaking Down Barriers, Rebuilding Walls: The Role of Community Development..."
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td><strong>No class due to Yom Kippur</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td><strong>Class 4</strong></td>
<td>1) Schwartz, A. Housing Policy in the United States (course text), pp. 163-198 (&quot;Public Housing&quot;).</td>
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|         | Public Housing, Privately Owned Rental Housing Built With Federal Subsidy and Vouchers: To what extent is public housing developed and financed in conjunction with private developers and specifically what is the role of the HOPE VI program in developing mixed-income housing? What are the other key federal programs that subsidize privately owned rental housing? How are housing vouchers used to support privately owned rental housing? What are the key policy issues and potential reforms associated with these programs? | 2) Schwartz, A. Housing Policy in the United States (course text), pp. 203-223 ("Privately Owned Rental Housing Built With Federal Subsidy" and pp. 227-261 ("Vouchers").  
Additional Optional Readings:  
Oct. 12
Class 5

**The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program:** What are the key policy and management issues raised by the LIHTC Program? Who are the key participants in this program?

1) Schwartz, A. Housing Policy in the United States (course text), pp. 135-159 (“The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit”).

2) “Low Income Housing Tax Credit Overview.” Novogradac and Co. April 1, 2010.


**Additional Optional Readings:**


**Instructions and team assignments will be discussed for Final Group Presentations (instructions will also be posted on Blackboard)**

Oct. 19
Class 6

**State and Local Housing Programs and the Nonprofit Sector:** What are the key state and local housing programs, including block grants, tax-exempt bond financing, housing trust

1) Schwartz, A. Housing Policy in the United States (course text), pp. 265-301 (“State and Local Housing Policy and the Nonprofit Sector”).

Oct. 26
Class 7

Public Sector Economic and Commercial Development Programs: What is the role of public sector programs like Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program in supporting local economic and commercial development? What is the role of early learning in local economic development?


2) “Investing in Early Learning as Economic Development at the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank.” Harvard Business Publishing Coursepack. To purchase, use link under “required texts” section of syllabus.


Additional Optional Readings:


Additional Optional Readings:


2) “We Own This.” Documentary on TOPA. Latino Economic Development Corporation. April 25, 2011.


| Nov. 2 Class 8 | Community Development and Housing Finance: What are the key features of the present housing finance system, including institutions such as the Federal Home Loan Bank system, the Federal Housing Administration, and the Government Sponsored Enterprises? How do these institutions interact with private real estate developers and lenders working in the CD field? What are the implication of housing finance reform on the CD activities of private sector developers and lenders? |

| | Community Development and Housing Finance: What are the key features of the present housing finance system, including institutions such as the Federal Home Loan Bank system, the Federal Housing Administration, and the Government Sponsored Enterprises? How do these institutions interact with private real estate developers and lenders working in the CD field? What are the implication of housing finance reform on the CD activities of private sector developers and lenders? |


| 1) Schwartz, A. Housing Policy in the United States (course text), pp. 69-112 (“Housing Finance”). |


**Additional Optional Readings:**


Nov. 9  
Class 9

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<tr>
<th>Community Development Programs Involving Small Business Credit: What are the key challenges associated with small business credit access? How is the small business credit landscape changing? What is the role that CDFIs and other mission-focused small business lenders are undertaking to adapt to those changes?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2) Northrup et. al. “CDFIs and Online Business Lending: A Review of Recent Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities.” Carsey School of Public Policy. November 2016.</td>
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<td>4) “Micro-lender Kiva Zip off To as Fast Start in Milwaukee.” February 2015</td>
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**Additional Optional Readings:**

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Class 10</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
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| Nov. 23| Class 11| Implications of Foreclosure and Vacant Properties for Community Development: What policy efforts have been undertaken to mitigate foreclosure and what has been the success of these programs? What are the key public sector and bank programs that are designed to incentivize reinvestment in areas affected by foreclosure and how are these programs working? | 1) Raskin, S. “Legal Opportunities and Challenges in Crafting a Foreclosure Response.” Speech at the Maryland State Bar Association, Columbia, Maryland. October 4, 2011.  
**Additional Optional Readings:**  
1) “Why is Ed DeMarco Blocking a Win-Win Housing Program?” August 1, 2012. |
and new ways of raising capital?


Additional Optional Readings:


8) Stid, D. “Pay for Success is not a Panacea.” SF Fed. Community Development Investment Review.
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<th>Topic</th>
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**Additional Optional Readings:**


University Policies:

University Policy on Religious Holidays
1. Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.
2. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
3. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

Support for Students Outside the Classroom
1. Disability Support Services (DSS): Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/

2. Mental Health Services 202-994-5300: The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. counselingcenter.gwu.edu

Academic Integrity Code
Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see: studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity

Out of Class Learning
Average minimum amount of independent, out-of-class, learning expected per week: In a 15 week semester, including exam week, students are expected to spend a minimum of 100 minutes of out-of-class work for every 50 minutes of direct instruction, for a minimum total of 2.5 hours a week.