

Talking Points: President Obama's Promise Zones Initiative
Thursday, January 9, 2014

- For decades before the economic crisis, local communities were transformed as jobs were sent overseas and middle class Americans worked harder and harder but found it more difficult to get ahead.
- Announced in last year's State of the Union Address, part of the President's plan to create a better bargain for the middle class partners businesses with hard-hit local communities to put people back to work and increase opportunity by creating "Promise Zones".
- Today, President Obama will take the next step in those efforts by officially naming the first five "Promise Zones" at an event at the White House. The first five Zones, located in San Antonio, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Southeastern Kentucky, and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, have each put forward a plan on how they will partner with local business and community leaders to make investments that reward hard work and expand opportunity. Representatives and community members from each of these five zones will join the President at the event.
- Each Zone identifies clear goals to revitalize their communities with a focus on creating jobs, increasing economic activity, improving access to education opportunities and quality, affordable housing, and reducing violent crime.
- And each of these designees knows and has demonstrated that it takes a collaborative effort – between private business and federal, state, tribal and local officials; faith-based and non-profit organizations; children and parents – to ensure that hard work leads to a decent living for every American, in every community. For more information on each of these five Zones and their plans, click [HERE](#).
- Investing in and rebuilding hard-hit communities are important parts of the President's plan to restore the basic bargain at the heart of the American story – that every child should have a fair chance at success. And that, no matter who you are or where you're from, if you're willing to work hard and play by the rules, you should be able to find a good job, feel secure in your community, and support a family.

THE PROMISE ZONES INITIATIVE

The five Promise Zones announced today are part of the 20 that will be announced over the next three years. These unique partnerships support local goals and strategies with:

- **Accountability for Clear Goals:** Each Promise Zone has identified clear outcomes they will pursue to revitalize their community, with a focus on creating jobs, increasing economic activity, improving educational opportunities, increasing access to quality, affordable housing and reducing violent crime. All Promise Zones will continuously track those outcomes, and have committed to sharing data across their community partners (private-sector, non-profits, federal, state, and local agencies, etc.) so that each partner can work towards improvement and accountability. The Administration will work with the Promise Zones and third party experts to track progress and evaluate results.

- **Intensive Federal Partnership:** Modeled after the Administration’s successful [Strong Cities Strong Communities](#) and [Strike Force for Rural Growth and Opportunity](#) initiatives, which have created unique partnerships between local stakeholders and the federal government, these first five Promise Zones will benefit from intensive federal support at the local level to help them implement their economic and community development goals.
- **Help Accessing Resources:** Where necessary to achieve their goals, Promise Zones will get priority and be able to access federal investments that further the goals of job creation, additional private investment, increased economic activity, improved educational opportunity, and reduction in violent crime.
- **National Service:** Each Promise Zone will be provided five full-time AmeriCorps VISTA members to support their strategic plan. These VISTAs will recruit and manage volunteers, and strengthen the capacity of Promise Zones to expand economic opportunity.
- **Investing in What Works:** In order to be designated as a Promise Zone, these five communities have already demonstrated that they are pursuing strategies that have data proving their effectiveness. This same data will also help direct future federal investments to these Zones.
- **Cutting Taxes for Businesses:** Finally, President Obama has proposed, and called on Congress to act, to cut taxes on hiring and investment in areas designated as Promise Zones – based upon the proven model of Empowerment Zones tax credits – to attract businesses and create jobs.

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