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April 3, 2018

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Walmart Foundation Invests Nearly \$250K in Cities United Roadmap to Safe, Healthy & Hopeful Communities Academy

2018 Diversity and Inclusion Competitive Grant Will Accelerate Creation of City-Level Comprehensive Public Safety Plans, Aimed to Keep Young Black Men and Boys Safe, Healthy and Hopeful

Louisville, KY—Today, Walmart Foundation announced a nearly \$250,000 investment in Cities United’s Roadmap to Safe, Healthy & Hopeful Communities Academy Planning Labs. Cities United joins 11 other finalists who are all implementing solutions to the nation’s most pressing challenges and exploring innovative approaches to reach diverse communities who persistently lack equal access to opportunity.

The Walmart Foundation is committed to helping advance solutions to bridge divides and build more inclusive, empathetic communities where all people have equal access to the tools and opportunities they need to reach their full potential, said Julie Gehrki, vice president of the Walmart Foundation. “By supporting organizations working to build trust and foster cross-sector partnerships including Cities United we’re helping to build capacity for organizations and practitioners working on the front lines to help strengthen communities.”

Cities United was selected from over 150 applicants that applied through an open RFP issued by the Walmart Foundation as part of their larger commitment to building more inclusive and vibrant communities.

The Walmart Foundation announced its grants in conjunction with the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Walmart and Sam’s Club are lead sponsors of the MLK50 Symposium being held at the National Civil Rights Museum, April 2-4, in Memphis, TN.

Cities United supports a growing, national network of 122+ mayors committed to working with their communities to create solutions to cut the homicide rate of young Black men and boys in half by the year 2025. Cities United’s Roadmap Academy partners with mayors and city leaders from across the country to accelerate their comprehensive public safety plans that will establish safer, healthier and more hopeful cities for everyone. The mayors involved in Cities United bring together all corners of the community—city agencies, businesses, faith leaders, public safety officials, community members

and young people most impacted by violence—to implement a comprehensive strategy to countering violence.

“For our cities to prosper, we must improve life outcomes and expand opportunities for all our young people and residents,” said Mayor Madeline Rogero of Knoxville, TN. “This includes creating opportunities and establishing safe neighborhoods for our young Black boys and men who currently face greater barriers to surviving and thriving. Cities United’s Roadmap Academy comes at the right time, allowing Knoxville to deepen our efforts to establish lasting public safety by equipping us with invaluable tools and resources to develop and carry out our plan.”

The Roadmap Academy is a year-long engagement with invited mayors, their teams and community partners designed to provide the coaching and capacity building needed to lay the groundwork and launch a comprehensive public safety plan in each city. The Academy provides hands-on opportunities to share promising practices, exchange data and case studies and implement a plan to reduce violence and improve life outcomes for young African American men and boys.

“We need a new blueprint for 21st century public safety that lights a path to real hope and opportunity for all young people,” said Anthony Smith, Executive Director of Cities United. “We’re honored to be a 2018 Walmart Foundation Diversity and Inclusion Competitive Grant recipient. The funds will allow us to expand our Roadmap Academy to provide a practical forum for mayors and city leaders to accelerate the creation of city-level comprehensive public safety plans that will tackle all the interlocking factors that allow shootings and homicides to persist in our communities.”

Mayors and city leaders are uniquely positioned to develop and lead comprehensive approaches to addressing violence that are grounded in social justice, equity, youth voice, collaboration and innovation – while also investing resources into quality education, building an inclusive economy and engaging youth and families as part of the solution.

Nine cities participated in the Roadmap Academy Planning Labs in the first quarter of 2018, including Brooklyn Park, MN; Buffalo, NY; Gary, IN; Hampton, VA; Houston, TX; Knoxville, TN; Newport News, VA; Pittsburgh, PA; and West Palm Beach, FL. Up to 40 cities total will participate through the end of the year.

ABOUT CITIES UNITED: Cities United was launched in 2011 by former Philadelphia Mayor, Michael A. Nutter, and Casey Family Programs President and CEO, Dr. William C. Bell, who partnered with New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Campaign for Black Male Achievement CEO, Shawn Dove, and the National League of Cities to forge a national network of communities focused on eliminating violence in American cities related to young African American men and boys. Today, this movement has grown to 122 mayors (and counting) committed to working with community leaders, families,

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Cities United is a project of Tides Center

youth, philanthropic organizations and other stakeholders to cut the homicide rate of our young Black men and boys in half by the year 2025. These mayors are focused on restoring hope to their communities and building pathways to justice, employment, education and increased opportunities for residents. For more information: www.citiesunited.org. Twitter: @CitiesUnited.

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