



# PRESS RELEASE

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## ***Mayor Rawlings-Blake Celebrates Two Years of Removing Blight from Baltimore's Neighborhoods***

*Mayor announces plan to join the Clinton Global Initiative by eliminating 3,000 vacant properties.*

*Mayor's Vacants to Value initiative strengthens Baltimore by removing blighted properties and encouraging investment in communities.*

**(BALTIMORE, MD. (November 27, 2012)** – Today, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake was joined by Baltimore Housing Commissioner Paul Graziano, residents, and community partners to celebrate the two-year anniversary of the Vacants to Value initiative and to announce Baltimore's participation in the Clinton Global Initiative by committing to eliminate 3,000 vacant properties over three years.

Launched in November 2010, Vacants to Value is a market-based approach to encouraging reinvestment in neighborhoods impacted by blighted properties by strengthening code enforcement, promoting rehabilitation, streamlining the sale of vacant City-owned property, and by providing new, targeted incentives for homebuyers and developers who invest in vacant properties.

"To get Baltimore growing again, we needed to develop a strategy to strengthen our communities by the reducing bureaucracy that discouraged investment while at the same time creating incentives to increase investment in our neighborhoods," said Mayor Rawlings-Blake. "The partners standing with us today have stepped up to join our effort to eliminate blight and create new opportunities for families who want to live and work in Baltimore."

Since launching in November 2010, Vacants to Value has produced impressive results. Thanks to Vacants to Value:

- Property sales have increased fivefold, from 100 in fiscal year 2010 to 524 in fiscal year 2012.
- The City has issued more than 700 citations, at a cost of \$900, to vacant building owners who have failed to maintain their properties, spurring more than \$23 million in private investment.
- More than 450 vacant properties have been rehabbed or are undergoing rehab.
- The City has sold 90% of City-owned properties in community development clusters.
- 117 \$10,000 Homeownership Booster Program incentives have been provided; 25% of these homeowners are new to the city.

Baltimore Housing • office 410-396-4215 • fax 410-361-9681 • [www.baltimorehousing.org](http://www.baltimorehousing.org)  
Baltimore Housing reflects the combined efforts of the Housing Authority of Baltimore City  
and the Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development.



- City wide, 245 vacant and blighted properties have been demolished, and the Power In Dirt initiative handed over more than 700 vacant lots (over 31 acres of land) to non-profits and residents.

“Baltimore Housing has worked hard to be innovative and create a plan that will help us effect real change in Baltimore,” said Baltimore Housing Commissioner Paul T. Graziano. “We’re not done, and we have a lot of work to do, but we are committed to making our communities stronger.”

For more information about Vacants to Value, visit [www.baltimorehousing.org](http://www.baltimorehousing.org).

At this morning’s announcement, Mayor Rawlings-Blake also announced Baltimore’s participation in the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Commitment to Action by committing to eliminate 3,000 vacant residential buildings in the city over three years. Starting in January 2013, 1,500 properties will be demolished, and an additional 1,500 properties will be rehabilitated using the tools and strategies of the Vacants to Value program. This commitment marks a significant expansion of the program, including new, ambitious rehabilitation and demolition goals and the addition of new strategic partners to support the City in meeting these goals.

“President Clinton established the Clinton Global Initiative America (CGI America) to address economic recovery in the United States,” said Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. “Vacants to Value is now two years old, and we have the momentum to meet this ambitious goal, which will positively affect nearly 18,000 people.”

CGI America brings together leaders in business, government, and civil society to generate and implement commitments to create jobs, stimulate economic growth, foster innovation, and support workforce development in the United States. Since its first meeting in June 2011, CGI America participants have made more than 170 commitments, valued at \$13.4 billion when fully funded and implemented. To learn more, visit [www.cgiamerica.org](http://www.cgiamerica.org)

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