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City group gets grant to study, combat crime

By Ron Davis

An neighborhood revitalization group active in Govans and Patterson Park today will receive the first of ten \$50,000 grants aimed at reducing street violence and crime.

The group is Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc., a nonprofit partnership of community residents, business leaders and city and state officials concerned with increasing home ownership and housing rehabilitation.

About \$20,000 of the grant will come from the Eisenhower Foundation in Washington, headed by former Johns Hopkins University President Milton S. Eisenhower.

An additional \$30,000 will be provided by the Goldseker Foundation of Baltimore, which awards grants to groups working to improve housing, health and human services, education and community affairs in Baltimore neighborhoods.

The total award is part of a two-year, national anti-crime program that also involves Northwestern University.

In addition to the cash grant, the Eisenhower Foundation, a private continuation of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, also plans to provide the Baltimore group with more than \$50,000 in backup help.

Dr. Eisenhower, chairman of the foundation bearing his name and former head of the presidential commission, is scheduled to present the grant

to the group at an 11 a.m. news conference.

Ten such grants are to be awarded nationally to aid people in developing "self-help" anti-crime programs in their neighborhoods, said Lynn A. Curtis, the Eisenhower Foundation's president.

The foundation has arranged for Northwestern researchers to poll residents and business owners about their perceptions of crime and how to stop it. The researchers also will record rates of specific crimes.

A coordinator will use the survey results and work with residents to develop a specially tailored anti-crime program.

Organizations receiving the awards can use the money as they see fit. For instance, it might be spent on citizen patrols and escort services, block watches, youth employment programs, self-defense classes or rape crisis programs, foundation officials say.

After two years, Northwestern researchers will conduct another survey. If it shows a drop in the area's crime rate, the Eisenhower Foundation will consider paying for programs in other Baltimore neighborhoods, Mr. Curtis said.

He noted that a Baltimore organization was chosen as the first award recipient because of Dr. Eisenhower's ties to the city as former Hopkins President.

The Bronx, Brooklyn, Cleveland, Newark, Philadelphia and Washington

will get other grants. Groups in five other cities still are being considered for the last three grants, Mr. Curtis said.

He added that all of the grants include matching money from local foundations or corporations.

Mr. Curtis said the goal of the program is to use crime prevention to encourage economic development, housing rehabilitation and youth employment. He noted that such development often cannot occur because residents and businessmen fear crime.

"We want to help communities protect their past investments and encourage new ones," Mr. Curtis said. "The idea is to help residents gain more control in their neighborhoods. The commission stressed community involvement and wanted to select organizations doing housing rehabilitation and economic development.

"We were looking for groups with a good track record that will sustain the program after the private funds are gone because we plan to teach these groups to be self-sustaining."

Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc., has helped more than 600 families become first-time homeowners, rehabilitating more than 200 vacant properties in the process, said Dale McArdle, the organization's director in Patterson Park. The group was one of several in Baltimore to apply for grants in an open competition last year, Mr. McArdle said.

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