

## 2016 AGENCY AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WINNERS

### ADMINISTRATIVE INNOVATION

#### **Self Service Interactive Receptionist (SSIR)**

On any given day, there are over 250 clients visiting the Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles' Administrative Office. Consequently, this high volume of foot traffic and outdated check-in process results in long lines and frustration for visitors.

As a solution, the agency implemented the Self Service Interactive Receptionist, known as SSIR, an iPad application that allows clients to manually check-in to a virtual lobby reception environment using one of the three stations in the lobby. This system not only automated and streamlined lobby operations, but improved the way business is conducted for clients and staff.

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#### **Electronic Point-in-Time Homeless Count/Survey**

Every other year, hundreds of communities across the nation must perform a Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of the homeless. Many communities have moved to more in-depth survey models that gather not only names and basic demographic information, but also detailed health and behavioral information. As the lead agency since 2011 in overseeing the PIT Count in the community, the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara began utilizing a cross platform electronic survey (instead of paper) that volunteers could easily operate on their phones or tablets and transmit to their database, creating improved efficiency and efficacy in their efforts to house the homeless.

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#### **Mobile Digital Vans for Public Housing**

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is the largest public housing authority in North America, serving a population of low and moderate income families. Many residents are unable to afford a computer and internet technology. To bridge the "digital gap," NYCHA set up

two Mobile Computer Vans equipped with eight laptops, a printer/scanner, wireless internet and an instructor, visiting 18 developments biweekly. Each van is staffed with an instructor to assist residents in applying for a job, paying rent, communicating with family, or for many, learning how to use a computer and software for the first time.

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### **Informal Hearings Process Enhancements**

The Memphis Housing Authority (MHA) recognized that when a Housing Choice Voucher-assisted household violates program obligations, potential competing interests of the PHA and family are implicated. When a termination results, however, regulations require an informal hearing for participants to appeal in a way that assures due process and a fair opportunity to challenge. With these considerations in mind, the University of Memphis School of Law and the Memphis Housing Authority embarked on a partnership aimed at enhancing MHA's informal hearing process, providing impartial hearings for participants, and providing experiential learning opportunities for law students.

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## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

### **Housing First - San Diego**

The San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) announced Housing First – San Diego, SDHC's three-year Homelessness Action Plan, on November 12, 2014. First-year achievements included:

1. Invested \$8.2 million toward the development of 121 affordable housing units with supportive services for homeless San Diegans.
2. Awarded 180 federal housing vouchers to assist homeless or formerly homeless San Diegans.
3. Kicked off the rehabilitation of Hotel Churchill to provide studios for homeless Veterans, youth, and additional adults.
4. Purchased a 120-unit senior apartment complex, setting aside 20 percent – 24 units – for homeless seniors.
5. Dedicated 25 SDHC-owned apartments for homeless San Diegans.

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### **MetroTowns @ Parkside**

A unique partnership, MetroTowns @ Parkside, is a 125 unit mixed-income development in Washington, DC. The project was the vision of renowned sports owner and philanthropist Abe Pollin. In 2002, Pollin approached Mayor Anthony Williams and the District of Columbia Housing Authority to develop an affordable community for teachers, fireman, policeman, and other local public service employees. The development honors the memory of his two children who he tragically lost. The project achieved 1-for-1 replacement of public housing at the former site and created affordable homeownership opportunities for a total of 125 families.

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### **Recruitment of Landlords to House Homeless Vets**

In July of 2014 Allegheny County Chief Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto accepted President Obama's challenge to end veteran homelessness by December 31, 2015. On August 8, 2014 a Housing Boot Camp formed with an array of agencies from across the area, which included the Allegheny County Housing Authority. After exceeding the goal of housing 135 homeless veterans in 100 days, it became evident landlord recruitment would be necessary in order to achieve their final goal. They designed simple and patriotic signage to be installed on Allegheny County Port Authority Buses, in bus shelters throughout the City of Pittsburgh, and in windows of businesses who were willing to help in order to recruit landlords.

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### **2880 South County Trail**

East Greenwich, RI, a small, affluent suburban town, is faced with the challenge of meeting a state mandate that 10% of its total housing units be affordable at 80% of area median income. Prior to this initiative, more than 20 years had passed since the construction of any new affordable rental housing for families. The housing authority acted as developer, acquiring land and financing to bring 10 new townhouse style homes online in the spring of 2015.

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## COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

### **Bridge to Housing - Innovative Housing First Model**

Partners in Bridge to Housing (B2H), created a time and population limited pilot project designed to test the efficacy of a Housing First model within the context of large scale, long-term homeless encampments. This program moved sixty-five individuals from The River into interim housing, 82% graduated Housing Bootcamp with 49 of the 53 graduates receiving a housing choice voucher. 72% obtained permanent housing using their voucher, and one year later, 84% of these households are still permanently housed through the Housing Voucher program.

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### **Veteran's Drop-In Center**

The Rockford Veteran's Drop-In Center, which provides supportive services for veterans, was housed in another agency's building with restrictive hours and space. They decided they needed to expand their hours, services, and building space. The Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA) received a donation of a large, foreclosed and distressed home from the National Community Stabilization Trust as part of WCHA's neighborhood recovery program. WCHA partnered with the Rockford Home Depot Store, which arranged for volunteers and a grant to rehab the home, and then donated it to the Veteran's Center.

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**Westland, Jefferson Barns Community Vitality Center**

The Jefferson Barns Community Vitality Center (JBCVC) is a key component in the City's efforts to revitalize the Norwayne historic district. Built during WWII, Norwayne is Westland's most economically-challenged neighborhood. Approximately 5.5% of the City's population lives in Norwayne, 85% of students qualify for free lunches, and 12% of the Westland Police Department's calls are dispatched to Norwayne. Mayor Wild designated the Norwayne revitalization as a priority. The City used local and federal NSP, CDBG and HOME funds for renovation, demolition, green space, roads, sidewalks, infrastructure, and park improvements. The JBCVC is the largest investment in Norwayne.

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**Prospect Village Initiative**

The City of Omaha Planning Department partnered with twenty-five organizations to create and implement a holistic neighborhood revitalization model. The initiative was launched in Prospect Village, a distressed, racially mixed neighborhood in north Omaha. As a result of the broad spectrum of community partners, residents' needs were met through new housing construction, existing housing rehabilitation, healthy home and energy efficiency upgrades, establishment of community gardens, cultural fairs, neighborhood art projects, financial management training, parenting classes, gang prevention initiatives, and the formation of a viable neighborhood association. The collaboration is now replicating the model in a distressed neighborhood in south Omaha.

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## PROJECT DESIGN

### **Redtail Ponds**

Redtail Ponds, located in South Fort Collins, is the first Permanent Supportive Housing development in the community. Serving homeless individuals with a disability, veterans, and low-income occupants, the new construction development is the realization of the Fort Collins Housing Authority's goal to build a well-designed, high performance residence for the community's most vulnerable populations that is energy efficient, beautiful, and sustainable. The goal of this design was to provide a bright, welcoming place that helps foster a sense of community.

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### **Crump Village Education and Resource Center**

The Burlington Housing Authority, in partnership with the City of Burlington and Elon University, recently completed the Crump Village Resource Center. The 8,900 SF new construction project serves as home to after-school, summer camp, and training programs in Burlington, NC. The innovative and sustainable design engages the occupants by offering a welcoming and safe learning environment for both children and adults. The facility boasts large flexible spaces, hosting community workshops and educational programs for residents. Automated building systems, natural lighting and views to the exterior from all occupied spaces have proven to enhance building performance and occupant productivity.

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## RESIDENT AND CLIENT SERVICES

### **Those People**

The initiative of “Those People” was created not specifically for housing residents, but rather it empowers all individuals who desire to overcome life’s hardships, and it provides a platform to share their stories to help break negative stereotypes surrounding impoverished families. It is when a personal story is shared that another person reading it has the possibility to relate and connect with that person and to be empowered to succeed and obtain self-sufficiency knowing that someone else has made it out of the shared hardship. An address should never determine someone’s success. People are people.

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### **Full Circle Wrenching Crew**

The Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority’s (LDCHA) Full Circle Wrenching Crew is an innovative approach to bicycle accessibility, safety, and maintenance. Through a public-private partnership with Lawrence Unchained Bicycle Coop and other volunteers, low income youth earn bicycles by completing safety and basic maintenance courses. Bicycle Rodeos are hosted by the LDCHA where youth become Wrenches (Bicycle Mechanics). The Wrenching Crew also teaches valuable interpersonal skills. As they perform routine maintenance, Wrenches teach peers how to perform repairs thus gaining valuable leadership skills. Agency staff and tenants have noted an increase in ridership for fun and as a means of transportation.

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### **Reading is My Superpower!**

In the summer of 2015, the Greensboro Housing Authority (GHA) did more than feed the body of those attending the Summer Lunch Program in their communities. Thanks to 27 heroes, the “Reading is My Superpower!” program nourished young minds as well. These heroes, all GHA staff members, volunteered their Reading Superpower and a portion of their lunch hour to visit and read to children receiving lunch in their communities. “Reading is My Superpower!”

combines existing resources to offer this low-cost literacy program for youth and challenged GHA to do more to place books in the hands of youth living in their communities.

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### **Wangari Maathai Tree Project**

In 1964, the Housing Authority of the City of Erie's (HACE) former Executive Director, John Horan, graduated from Mount St. Scholastic College in Atchison, KS. Included in that class, was 2004 Nobel Peace Winner Wangari Maathai from Kenya, founder of the Greenbelt Movement responsible for creating 6,000 tree nurseries, which resulted in the planting of 6,000,000 trees. This inspired Mr. Horan to work with residents, community groups, and volunteers from within the HACE family to plant 1,000 trees setting up nurseries in eight HACE communities. Once the trees reach maturity, they will be planted throughout HACE communities providing beauty for years to come!

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### **Job Training and Section 3 Program**

Providing low-income residents the opportunity for employment in multi-million dollar redevelopment efforts can be challenging to any housing authority. By developing an aggressive outreach program with the general contractor and the for-profit developers, the Allegheny County Housing Authority helped employ 36 Section 3 residents during the 17 million dollar revitalization. Using creative marketing strategies and community outreach, this successful program has led to 16 permanent jobs for the Section 3 residents.

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**PRHA STEM Week**

The Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing Authority (PRHA) in partnership with Make A Difference 2020, implemented STEM Week, a Spring Break Camp, held April 6-10, 2015. The camp was attended by 36 youth, 5-14 years of age, who participated in fun, hands on, interactive activities and field trips to a local zoo and museums. The youth visited Nauticus Maritime Museum, The Virginia Zoo, The Children's Museum of Virginia, The Chrysler Museum of Art, and ended the week with a presentation from Mad Science, a local group that transforms laboratory science into fun, interactive learning experiences.

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