



2020 Award of Excellence Winners

Nominated from among the Awards of Merit winners each year, the Awards of Excellence are chosen by national juries and represent the very best work being done by housing and community development agencies nationwide. This year we presented 21 award winning entries in the following categories, Administrative Innovation, Affordable Housing, Community revitalization, Project Design and Resident and Client Services.

[View the 2020 Awards of Excellence Presentation](#)

For more detailed information, please see the listings below.

Congratulations to all our 2020 Awards of Excellence winners!

Administrative Innovation

Housing Santa Barbara Day

The Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara (HACSB) developed and facilitated Housing Santa Barbara Day (HSBD), a day created to provide access to affordable housing resources and encourage residents to advocate for expanded affordable housing opportunities for all in the community. Continually increasing costs and limited availability make finding affordable housing challenging. HACSB collaborated with over 30 community partners, housing providers, and other agencies to provide approximately 3,000 residents with information and access to six elected officials to organize community-wide advocacy to create significant comprehensive solutions. This collaboration helped decrease barriers to accessing information and housing.

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Funding Scholarships Using PILOT Contributions

The Housing Authority of the City of Pharr (HACP) needed to raise money to offer and fund scholarships to graduating seniors that receive housing assistance through the public housing and housing choice voucher programs. HACP staff and tenants conducted bake/plate sales throughout the year to fund the scholarships. This required a lot of work for a small return. HACP was awarding a little over \$7,000 in scholarships annually. HACP approached the school district and city leaders and by building strong relationships, convinced both entities to donate the payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) HACP paid to a nonprofit for scholarships.

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Digital Initiative

To increase the ease and efficiency of engaging with the agency and help close the digital divide for its low-income tenants, the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) launched a comprehensive Digital Initiative to take better advantage of technology for communicating and conducting business. A new digital newsletter allows for interactivity not possible in print, such as direct links to a host of resources, instant language translation, and enlarged text reading. Recognizing that not all tenants have the skills, devices and service they need to improve their lives through access to the internet, SHA included a significant digital equity component.

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Affordable Housing

Renaissance at Parc Grove

Renaissance at Parc Grove is a new construction affordable housing community that serves veterans, including many who are experiencing homelessness. The project is the first of its kind in the Central Valley and was one of the first construction projects to use Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention program funds. The site offers free services, health and wellness programming, and on-site case management. The site is directly across the street from the only veterans hospital in the Central Valley, which covers Bakersfield to Sacramento. The residents can conveniently access much-needed health services. Forty veterans now have much needed affordable housing.

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Encanto Village

Encanto Village represents the future of communities, addressing challenges of crime and poverty in distressed urban settings. This transit-oriented, high-density, mixed-use affordable housing community provides 65 beautiful apartment homes for individuals and families with incomes between 30 and 60 percent of the area median income, with eight units set aside for homeless veterans. Retail on the first level offers additional opportunities to bring investment and resources to the community. Its urban design and bright colors are breath-taking as the new vibrant development stands in stark contrast to the old and abandoned buildings that line the streets of Imperial Avenue.

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New Path Community Housing Partnership

New Path Community Housing is an ambitious development made possible through a collaboration between Idaho Housing and Finance Association and Boise City/Ada County Housing Authorities, the city and county, businesses, nonprofits, and healthcare providers. This 40 unit project provides housing and services to people experiencing chronic homelessness in the City of Boise. New Path, a permanent supportive housing project, operates using Housing First practices to stimulate positive, permanent outcomes for its tenants. Spurred by a growing "tent city" in Boise, partners contributed nearly \$7 million in development capital and over \$750,000 annually for rental assistance and services. Boise State University performs ongoing project evaluations.

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Posterity Scholar House

The Fort Wayne Housing Authority (FWHA) is always looking at innovative ways to bring affordable housing and self-sufficiency services to the residents in their community. So when FWHA was approached to partner with a developer on a new, four-phase housing project, Posterity Heights, FWHA jumped at the chance. This energy efficient and technologically innovative development would serve a

variety of demographics, including low-income, single-parent students. FWHA would provide Project Based Vouchers. HOFW Property Management, a subsidiary of Housing Opportunities of Fort Wayne (FWHA's non-profit arm), would provide the on-site property management and maintenance services.

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Community Revitalization

Health & Wellness Programs

The Nampa Housing Authority (NHA) was awarded a grant from St. Luke's Hospital. St. Luke's Community Health Improvement Fund (CHIF) supports community health improvement activities. The fund was established to provide financial or in-kind support to nonprofit organizations that are also working to improve the health of people in the community. Priority is given to nonprofit organizations that support St. Luke's Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) significant health needs. NHA will use the grant money to create and/or continue programs to improve the prevention, detection and management of mental illness and reduce suicide, as well as to improve the overall physical health of their residents.

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Cornerstone Village - Phase II

Cornerstone Village Phase II is a mixed-income housing development and critical phase of the Larimer Redevelopment that has occurred under a FY2013 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant. The process has been underway for more than a decade and was launched after the City of Pittsburgh, Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP), Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), private property owners, neighborhood residents, and community stakeholders came together to develop the Larimer Vision to Action Plan. HACP and its partners delivered the successful replacement of mixed-income housing through creative financial transaction, participatory site acquisition, inclusive relocation process, and community capacity building.

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Garcia Street Urban Farm

The San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) received the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant in 2014. The grant included six Critical Community Initiatives (CCI) to help revitalize the neighborhood. One of the accepted CCI projects was an urban farm. With community input and partnerships, Garcia Street Urban Farm was born and built. The neighborhood is a known USDA food desert, and the farm was one way to reduce food disparity in the Choice Neighborhood footprint.

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Project Design

New Palace Hotel Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation of New Palace Hotel by the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) created essential, additional permanent supportive housing for seniors who experienced homelessness or were at risk of homelessness. Previously a Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) residential building, New Palace Hotel was transformed into 79 affordable studio apartments by SDHC in partnership with its nonprofit affiliate, Housing Development Partners (HDP). This was the first major renovation of New Palace in approximately 25 years and included energy-efficiency upgrades. Residents of the renovated New Palace receive federal rental assistance from SDHC and have access to a variety of supportive services.

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Rancho Verde

Rancho Verde is a new construction 24 unit LEED Platinum multi-family development for farmworker households earning between 30-50% AMI in Ventura, California. The Housing Authority City of San Buenaventura developed this as a response to the drastic shortage of safe and affordable housing for farmworkers—a job sector that is vital to the City's economic development. A mix of 1 to 4 bedroom units are spread across 11 residential buildings organized around landscaped common area courtyards and a stand-alone community building. 80% of Rancho Verde's energy use is offset by on-site solar and a Greywater system conserves water usage.

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Sharswood Tower / Modernization / Rehab

The Philadelphia Housing Authority's Sharswood Tower, a mid-century low-income senior apartment high-rise, was seriously dilapidated, inefficiently laid out, and did not meet current requirements for energy efficiency, life safety, and accessibility. Through careful selective demolition and insertion of all new electrical, mechanical and sprinkler systems, insulation, and windows, the building now complies with current life safety and energy codes and meets EGC criteria. The units were reorganized with new kitchens and bathrooms to meet accessibility codes and provide a fresh, modern look. The community room was expanded, leasing and tenant offices, and common laundries were modernized, the outdoor patio was upgraded, and a walking park was added.

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Sandstone Quarry - Phase I

Sandusky Court (now renamed Sandstone Quarry Apartments) formed the lowest tier of Allegheny Dwellings public housing community in the Fineview neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The site had significant topographical challenges with steep rock formation and slopes. The redevelopment successfully achieved the goal of reintegrating the previously isolated and stigmatized project with the greater neighborhood. A master planning process with extensive public outreach ensued. Designed judiciously, the project optimizes on-site strengths in embracing and enhancing local context. Sandstone Quarry Apartments is now a transformed catalytic development and an impetus for other development in the area.

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Phillis Wheatley Park

As part of the Wheatley Courts revitalization into East Meadows, the San Antonio Housing Authority's "SAHA" vision included the construction of a new public park. Situated next to the new 215 unit multi-

family development and the 80 unit Wheatley Park Senior Living complex, Phillis Wheatley Park is named after a nationally renowned poet. Sitting on approximately 3/4 acre of linear tract land, it is bounded by four streets, which provides easy access. The park is very welcoming to all residents of this new and amazing redeveloped neighborhood.

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Resident and Client Services

Public Housing Youth Taking Flight in Aviation

The Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) was pleased to introduce 100 low-income, public housing youth to the aviation industry through hands-on education and career exploration experiences. During the summer months of 2018 and 2019, The Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP) facilitated fast-paced programs, packed with participant-driven activities that turned dreams into viable careers and ignited a whole new world of visibility to occupations in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for youth. This program addressed the need to continue learning in the summer months and successfully engaged youth in the process.

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Annual Backpack Giveaway

The Annual Backpack Giveaway was created to address the problem of school supply affordability for low-income families. Boise City/Ada County Housing Authorities partnered with the Southminster Presbyterian Church to provide backpacks and basic school supplies for children of low-income families. All school supplies are donated brand new through a network of local businesses. School supplies are given based on each grade level. Children in grades kindergarten through the 6th grade are eligible for these backpacks. This solution allows families to use their limited resources on other things, such as clothing and any fees for school registration.

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HYPE/TWTW Youth Employment Programs

In 2019, the City of Wichita's Housing Authority (WHA) collaborated with their summer youth employment program, The Way to Work (TWTW) to establish the Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE) program. Their goal was to assist teens and young adults prepare for employment. HYPE is a collaboration of four community partners in Wichita, Kansas, each working together to leverage services to ensure the success of youth participants. During the summer of 2019, HYPE served 3,252 area youth with 1,210 finding employment with over 200 employers. Total wages earned by HYPE participants was \$1,403,600.

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Donovan Manor Health & Wellness Partnership

Newport Housing Authority partnered with a newly created 501c(3) organization of residents, the Hi-Lo Neighborhood Association, to enhance the lives of residents through multiple efforts. Working together, they applied for grant money that would create a health and wellness space for seniors. The project was started and finished within six months, resulting in a space that residents can use to improve their physical and mental health. They also formed a relationship with a local university to foster interactions between elderly residents and young college students. The result is better mental and physical health for residents and high quality service opportunities.

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The Olori Academy

Youth programming in Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing Authority (PRHA) communities revealed that PRHA youth's awareness and understanding of the world was limited to their immediate community and city. To expand their world, The Olori Academy was created. The Olori (Leadership) Academy was founded to ensure PRHA youth were equipped with tools to become emerging community leaders. During the Spring of 2019, elementary-aged youth that reside in PRHA communities were provided the opportunity to learn about youth from different countries around the world. This program exposed the youth to the similarities and differences between youth from different cultures.

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Supported Employment Program

The Supported Employment (SE) program embodies the Yakima Housing Authority's commitment to providing opportunities for the families they serve. SE aligns local resources to provide individualized, person-centered support to clients. SE provides purpose and structure for individuals experiencing behavioral health challenges. With the right supports, individuals can reach stability in their health, housing, and employment. SE is using a new funding stream that helps maintain financial sustainability for the program and agency. Integration of SE into the PHA's daily operations has enhanced relationships with their residents and has been a perfect complement to the Family Self-Sufficiency program.

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