



2021
Agency
Awards
of Merit



**National Association of Housing
& Redevelopment Officials**

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The **NAHRO Agency Awards Program** was created to give national recognition to the achievement and innovation of NAHRO agency/organizational members throughout the country; to provide additional opportunities to inform the public of the best in housing and community development; and to create a resource bank of information on significant, innovative activities performed by housing and redevelopment agencies and community development departments. Since 1989, NAHRO has honored more than 6,000 programs.

The Agency Awards Program is a two-tiered program consisting of the Awards of Merit and the Awards of Excellence. The first tier of the program, the Awards of Merit, are submitted to National NAHRO and sent to Regional Juries for review. The second tier of the program, the Awards of Excellence, are selected from the Award of Merit winners nominated for an Award of Excellence by the Regional Juries. They are sent to National Juries who may select up to 24 Awards of Excellence winners in a given year.

Eligibility Requirements

The awards honor new programs. All entries must comply with the following standards:

- The program must have been put into operation/construction after January 1, 2017, and have produced demonstrable results by October 31, 2020. Entries in Project Design categories must be occupied. If the program was in existence before 2017 only major changes are eligible and should be clearly indicated in the application.
- The nominated program, either in whole or in substantial part, may not have received a previous NAHRO Award of Merit.
- A program may be entered in more than one category, but a separate application reflective of how it meets the intent of each category must be included as well as a separate application fee.
- NAHRO agency/organizational members must have played a significant role in developing, implementing, or financing the program. The agency/organization must remain a member to receive the award.
- All steps in the application process must be completed and the application fee must be paid.
- Only agency/organizational members of National NAHRO may apply for an Award of Merit.

Selection Criteria

All entries must comply with the following criteria:

- The program must have produced tangible results, i.e. cost savings, enhanced productivity, improved client services, better coordination of services with others; creative financing.
- The program must have an innovative approach, creating and using techniques and procedures that represent new and creative practices in implementing programs and resolving problems among agencies of similar size. Successful programs typically accomplish one of the following:
 - Offer a new or expanded service, fill gaps in existing services, or tap new revenue sources.
 - Improve the administration or enhance the cost efficiency of an existing program.
 - Upgrade the working conditions of employees.
 - Provide information on agency/organization programs to the community to enhance their support.
 - Promote intergovernmental cooperation and coordination of services.
 - Promote public/private partnerships to provide new or improved services or programs.
 - Deal with community planning and redevelopment in a holistic manner considering use of land, transportation, housing, employment, community resources, etc.
- If the program is developed in response to a government regulation, law, or funding, the program must go beyond mere compliance and must display an innovative approach to meeting those requirements.



Courtesy of Housing Authority of the City of Aurora



Courtesy of Denver Housing Authority

Award Categories

Program Innovation: Resident and Client Services

Includes programs that enhance the lives of residents and clients:

Self-Sufficiency Programs—Including employment, job readiness, homeownership counseling, etc.

Youth Programs—Including education, summer programs, recreation, etc.

Elderly or Special Needs Housing—Social Services Programs—Including health, social programs, security issues, etc. for the elderly, homeless, mentally or physically disabled, etc.

Other—Those programs that cross categories above or are general services in support of all residents/clients.

Program Innovation: Community Revitalization

Includes programs that have a positive economic impact on a neighborhood or city, i.e. balanced growth, economic development, job creation, creative financing, public/private partnerships, mixed-use developments, and/or neighborhood preservation.

Administrative Innovation

Includes programs that improve the efficiency or effectiveness of administrative operations or the general functioning of the agency/organization, i.e. management systems, maintenance, community relations, inter-agency cooperation, computer use, professional development, public relations.

Program Innovation: Affordable Housing

Includes programs that produce affordable housing in an innovative manner, i.e. creative financing, public/private partnerships, mixed income developments, adaptive reuse, special needs housing.

Project Design

Focuses primarily on the physical or landscape design of a building or project. (If what is most innovative is the program or financing rather than the design, the program should be entered in an Innovation Category.) Types of design include:

Project Design: New Project—For new buildings or developments.

Project Design: Modernization/Rehabilitation Project—For the modernization, rehabilitation, preservation, or alternative use of existing buildings, developments, or areas, regardless of their original architectural intent.

Project Design: Enduring Design—Recognizes those projects which were completed before December 31, 2010, that show continued excellence in design and original program and in the creative aspects of its statement by today's standards.

Landscape Design—Recognizes the use of landscape design to enhance the sense of community, increase security, provide recreational areas, advance environmental efficiency, or to augment natural landscapes.

Application, Deadlines, Fees

Online Application: www.nahro.org/agency-awards

Complete the online application process following the word count guidelines and limits. You may want to print a copy of the completed application for your files. Applications must be submitted electronically by the dates listed below.

Early Bird Deadline: November 20, 2020 (\$50 application fee)

Regular Deadline: December 18, 2020 (\$75 application fee)

Late Deadline: January 22, 2021 (\$150 application fee)

Credit Card: You may charge the application fee to VISA, MasterCard, or American Express by calling 202-580-7206 or through our secure fax at 202-289-8181.

Check: To pay by check, print the application confirmation email and send it with your payment to NAHRO Agency Awards, 630 Eye Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001. Please make check payable to NAHRO. You may combine payments for more than one entry in the check, but be sure to enclose a separate cover sheet for each entry.

Check payments are due three weeks after submitting the entry in order to qualify.

More Information: Call toll free (877) 866-2476 or send email to meritawards@nahro.org.

Judging

All entries are judged on their own merit (not in competition with each other). Entries need to score an average of 30 points from the Jury Members to receive an Award of Merit and an average of 40 points to be nominated for an Award of Excellence. The scoring criteria is on the next page.



Courtesy of Housing Authority of the City of Aurora



Courtesy of Sarasota Housing Authority

2021 Awards Application Process

STEP 1: Summarize the Program

In 700 characters or less, briefly describe the program including the problem, innovative solution, and results. The application only accepts 700 characters for the summary (every word, number, or abbreviation used as a word is counted). The summary will be used to describe the program in the NAHRO Awards Catalog and in the "Awards Database" on the NAHRO website.

STEP 2: Provide a Program Narrative

In 15,000 characters or less, create an overview of the program addressing the following topics. Each topic lists questions to help you formulate your response. Each topic will be judged based on the points indicated. The overview should read as a narrative and each topic should flow easily into the next. Award entries in each category must address all of the topics below and failure to do so renders the entry incomplete.

Innovation Categories [48 points plus 2 additional points = 50]

Description and Background of the Program: Discuss the problem/need that prompted the development of the program. Provide a description of the program including its objectives, the time frame for development/implementation, and the clientele being served.

Role of the Agency/Organization (Value 5 Points): What was the specific role of the agency/organization in development, financing, administration of the program? What was the specific contribution, if any, of other partners?

The Results/Success of the Program (Value 15 Points): How did the program meet its objectives? Be specific about what was accomplished, quantifying as much as possible. What obstacles were overcome? Provide specific examples and measurements of the success, i.e. How many persons were served (percentage of resident population); Did it save money; or How did it improve delivery or services?

The Total Cost/Financing of the Program (Value 7 Points): What were the operating and capital costs incurred in developing and implementing the program? What was the value received for the funds expended? Include a list of all the funding sources and the amounts. How were these funds leveraged? Are there any additional expenses that would be necessary to replicate the program?

Innovation (Value 7 Points): What is new about this program? How is this program innovative for an agency/organization of your size? If other agencies have similar programs, what is your unique solution?

Ongoing Activities (Value 4 Points): What plans does the agency/organization have to continue this program? If it uses primarily federal funds, what might be done if the funding is reduced? How easily could this project be replicated by another agency/organization in a different locale?

Replicability (Value 4 Points): How easily could this project be replicated by another agency/organization in a different locale?

Creatively Addressing a Challenge (Value 6 Points): What challenge(s) did your agency face that prompted them to create this program? What was the unique solution your agency developed to face this challenge? What were the steps involved?

Project Design Category [50 points total]

Description of the Design (Value 18 Points): Provide a description of the design. What were the design goals of the project and how did it meet the goals? What was the time frame for development and was it met? What specific obstacles, if any, were encountered, and how were they handled? How did the project enhance a sense of community, create a quality environment for residents, increase security, provide recreation, advance environmental efficiency, increase water conservation, or augment natural resources?

Role of the Agency/Organization (Value 5 Points): What was the specific role of the agency/organization in development, financing, administration of the program? What was the specific contribution, if any, of other partners?

Design and Relationship to Surroundings (Value 7 Points): How does the design relate to its surroundings? How does it fit into its environment? How does it enhance its surroundings? What impact did it have on the surrounding community? How were the prospective residents considered in the design?

Sustainability/use of Materials (Value 11 Points): How is the project sited from a sustainability perspective? (Access to public transportation, shopping, community facilities, etc.) What features were included to increase the project's manageability or livability? What sustainable building products were used? What is the life cycle costing? How is the project designed for ease of management; long-term maintenance? What storm water management features were incorporated into the design? How does the use of energy efficient materials, appliances and systems, including HVAC and plumbing compare to the local code requirements?

Total Cost/Financing of the Project (Value 5 Points): What were the total development costs and per unit costs? How do these costs compare to similar projects in your area? Include information on type of materials used and any special energy or cost-saving measures which may account for significant price differentials from local standards. Give a list of all funding sources.

Innovation (Value 4 Points): What is innovative about the design? How does the design support the planned functions of the building?

Enduring Design Category: Describe any changes to the original structure of design and its use. (Only complete if applying in Enduring Design Category.) Include photos of the original and current building. Make sure these photos are labeled and dated.

STEP 3: Provide Images

All attachments must not exceed a total of 5 MB without being zipped. If your attachments exceed the limit, they will not be accepted. PDF is the preferred format for all attachments.

The **INNOVATION CATEGORIES**—entries may submit up to five (5) photos if they help explain the program.

The **PROJECT DESIGN CATEGORY**—entries must submit up to 15 color photos that show the various aspects of the finished project including its exterior, interior, standard unit, etc. The photos should show its placement in the community and the surrounding community. If it is in modernization/rehabilitation, you must include before and after photos. Required drawings include: vicinity plan/context plan; site plan; floor plan of main floor of building; floor plans of typical units; landscape plan.