

# Award of Excellence Winners Announced 2023

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 present 20 award winning entries in the following categories: Administrative Innovation, Affordable Housing, Community Revitalization, Project Design, and Resident and Client Services.

Congratulations to all our winners!

## Administrative Innovation

### **HACLA University**

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) in-house legal department designed and implemented a training program for its use, called "HACLA University." This program uses HACLA staff to create and present the trainings, thus providing professional development for both presenters and attendees. This approach conserves scarce public resources, as no additional funds or outside resources are used. Furthermore, this approach highlights the tremendous expertise within the Housing Authority, by giving staff a forum at which to demonstrate their expertise and share their knowledge with their colleagues.

Doug Guthrie  
President and CEO  
Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles  
2600 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90057  
Phone: 213-252-1810  
Email: [douglas.guthrie@hacla.org](mailto:douglas.guthrie@hacla.org)

### **PPE Distribution Project**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Oakland Housing Authority's (OHA) Family and Community Partnerships Dept (FCP) developed a program to distribute personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to residents. This project played a vital role in keeping residents healthy and safe during the pandemic by providing supplies that were virtually impossible to obtain and cost prohibitive. Staff hosted giveaways at OHA's two largest public housing sites, and coordinated delivery to residents in 240 scattered sites, as well as for residents with disabilities. The project enabled staff to do wellness checks, share vital COVID-19 information and community resources, in addition to supporting residents with other services.

Patricia Wells  
Executive Director  
Oakland Housing Authority  
1619 Harrison Street  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Phone: 510-874-1517  
Email: [pwells@oakha.org](mailto:pwells@oakha.org)

### **Self Service Kiosks**

The year 2020 brought about many challenges to provide optimal services to the customers that the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) serves. In addition, CMHA continuously looks for innovative ways to help improve efficiencies for our customers as they navigate the affordable housing process. In efforts to address both, CMHA implemented the use of six self-service kiosks in the lobby of our main campus. The kiosks provide a convenient and streamlined experience for our customers all while allowing for the practice of social distancing. Customers are able to use the kiosks to submit documents, apply to waiting lists, complete online applications for housing as well as annual re-certifications and access personalized portals.

Jeffery K. Patterson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority  
8120 Kinsman Road  
Cleveland, OH 44104  
Phone: 216-271-2072  
Email: [jpatt@cmha.net](mailto:jpatt@cmha.net)

### **Affordable Housing**

#### **Vista Verde**

Vista Verde is one of the first all-electric, zero net energy communities in the Inland Empire, designed and constructed using cost-efficient technologies and innovative approaches to create a community that is environmentally conscious and reduces its carbon footprint. At Vista Verde, National Community Renaissance begins to build out the dream envisioned by the City of Ontario and its residents to revitalize their downtown neighborhood into a bike and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood that encourages healthier lifestyles and reduces pollution. Vista Verde provides 101 high-quality apartment homes and a beautiful, healthy community for the working families of Ontario.

Steve PonTell  
CEO/President  
National Community Renaissance  
9421 Haven Ave Ste 100  
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730  
Phone: 909-204-3434  
Email: [spontell@nationalcore.org](mailto:spontell@nationalcore.org)

#### **San Diego Housing Commission Accessory Dwelling Unit Development Pilot Program**

To help homeowners in the City of San Diego (City) understand the process of constructing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) completed the ADU Development Pilot Program. SDHC, working with its nonprofit affiliate, built five ADUs in the available yard space of five single-family homes SDHC owns and rents as affordable housing in the City of San Diego, creating five new affordable rental housing units. SDHC also detailed key takeaways and lessons learned from the process of constructing these five ADUs in a comprehensive report to provide important information to help San Diego homeowners interested in building ADUs on their properties.

Jeff Davis  
Interim President and CEO  
San Diego Housing Commission  
1122 Broadway, Suite 300  
San Diego, CA 92101  
Phone: 619-578-7477  
Email: [jeffd@sdhc.org](mailto:jeffd@sdhc.org)

### **The Commons on MLK**

The Commons on MLK is Lane County's first permanent supportive housing community that utilizes the Housing First model to house chronically homeless individuals who are the most frequent users of emergency services. A 2019 analysis of federal data found that Eugene, Oregon leads the nation in the number of people experiencing homelessness per capita, ahead of both Los Angeles and New York City. In collaboration with several community partners that include Lane County and four of the biggest healthcare providers in the area, Homes for Good was able to create a 51-unit development dedicated to housing the most vulnerable members of the community.

Jacob Fox  
Executive Director  
Homes for Good  
100 W 13th Avenue  
Eugene, OR 97401  
Phone: 541-682-2535  
Email: [jfox@homesforgood.org](mailto:jfox@homesforgood.org)

### **Adaptive Reuse Creates Neighborhood Revitalization Serving Homeless Veterans**

The Housing Authority of the City of Yakima (YHA) discovered the high homeless veteran population in early 2016 and wanted to be a part of the solution. To do so, YHA hired Beacon Development Group and architects Barry Hoyne and SMR Architects to help bring housing for veterans to fruition. As work began YHA found that not only was housing limited but services were hard to access due to the rural nature of Yakima. The team sought out a space that could solve both issues. The disposition of the former Marine Army Base provided that opportunity. The development, along a newly formed transit line, allows five service providers to work collaboratively with clients alongside the 41 new homes for our veteran population.

Lewel Krueger  
Executive Director  
Housing Authority of the City of Yakima  
810 N 6th Avenue  
Yakima, WA 98902  
Phone: 509-453-3106  
Email: [lowel.krueger@yakimahousing.org](mailto:lowel.krueger@yakimahousing.org)

## **Community Revitalization**

### **Small Business Emergency Relief Program**

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Los Angeles County's small business community immediately faced severe, negative impacts. Recognizing businesses' need for working capital to continue operations, the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) pivoted from its traditional approaches to economic development by quickly deploying staff to create a program to assist small businesses. By establishing a number of different funding sources to target various subgroups within the Los Angeles County's small business sector, the LACDA's Small Business Emergency Relief Program succeeded in providing \$102,061,270 in grants and loans to 6,320 businesses.

Emilio Salas  
Executive Director  
Los Angeles County Development Authority  
3815 700 West Main Street  
Alhambra, CA 91801  
Phone: 626-586-1505  
Email: [emilio.salas@lacda.org](mailto:emilio.salas@lacda.org)

### **Harmony Garden Estates, LP**

Wrought with community safety issues surrounding common woes of area decline due to structure age and influx of crime, the Alexandria Housing Authority partnered with Knight Development, formerly BGC Advantage, to aid in a comprehensive transformation that involved renovation, community outreach, law enforcement intervention, and the residents' commitment to change. The conversion of Harmony Garden Estates from public housing to an affordable housing community proved to be more than a physical rehabilitation; it was a community and resident mindset shift to renewed hope and pride.

Stephan Fontenot  
Executive Director  
Alexandria Housing Authority  
2558 Loblolly Lane  
Alexandria, LA 71303  
Phone: 318-442-8843, ext. 223  
Email: [s.fontenot@alexhousing.org](mailto:s.fontenot@alexhousing.org)

### **Garcia Street Urban Farm Stand**

Food Security at the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) became a priority after COVID-19 showed us how food insecure our residents are. Prior to COVID, the sustainability staff secured a grant to build an urban farm. The farm, located in a USDA known food desert, was installed to increase health and nutrition in the Eastside of San Antonio. Over the past year, the farm began to host an Urban Farm Stand on Wednesday nights. The stand has been a huge success with the San Antonio community as more residents at SAHA began to frequent the stand over the year. SAHA has been able to partner with other organizations for various events, such as with Metro Health for free COVID-19 vaccines.

Ed Hinojosa  
President and CEO  
San Antonio Housing Authority  
818 S. Flores Street  
San Antonio, TX 78204  
Phone: 210-477-6064  
Email: [Ed\\_Hinojosa@homesa.org](mailto:Ed_Hinojosa@homesa.org)

### **Majestic Ranch Apartments- Community Revitalization**

San Antonio, as a whole, faces the effects of historic socioeconomic segregation, and a looming housing shortfall. Majestic Ranch is a 288-unit multi-family development specifically targeting working families and was built with appropriate design considerations and amenities. It consists of one, two, and three-bedroom mix of units. This community is designed as walkable, sustainable, and inter-generational with improved connections to the surrounding neighborhood. A collaborative process with residents, community leaders, City Partners, the San Antonio Housing Authority and other stakeholders was key to developing a plan to provide a higher quality of life and long-term sustainability.

Ed Hinojosa  
President and CEO  
San Antonio Housing Authority  
818 S. Flores Street  
San Antonio, TX 78204  
Phone: 210-477-6064  
Email: [Ed\\_Hinojosa@homesa.org](mailto:Ed_Hinojosa@homesa.org)

## Project Design

### **Cottages at Green's Lake**

The Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority used creative design and financing to meet the local need for supportive housing for behavioral health patients at a new property, The Cottages at Green's Lake. In partnership with local healthcare providers, the Cottages is part of the new Behavioral Health Campus in Lawrence, Kansas. This campus includes a crisis recovery center, transitional group housing, and the 10 units at The Cottages as permanent supportive housing. The Cottages units are innovative in their design due to the incorporation of built in conveniences for behavioral health patients and the long term efficiency of the units via investment in solar panels.

Shannon Oury  
Executive Director  
Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority  
1600 Haskell Ave.  
Lawrence, KS 66044  
Phone: 785-830-2250  
Email: [soury@ldcha.org](mailto:soury@ldcha.org)

### **Majestic Ranch Apartments- New Project Design**

After many efforts over the years to develop a 14-acre tract of land whose one major obstacle to development was the Zarzamora Creek that runs north and south and divides the land into two sections, the San Antonio Housing Authority and HomeSpring Realty Partners partnered with the City of San Antonio and the community to develop the land into an affordable multi-family development that has revitalized the neighborhood. What emerged from that design and development process was the addition of the Majestic Ranch Apartments, a 288-unit, multi-family apartment development reinforcing the community's core character and enhancing the functionality of the surrounding neighborhood.

Ed Hinojosa  
President and CEO  
San Antonio Housing Authority  
818 S. Flores Street  
San Antonio, TX 78204  
Phone: 210-477-6064  
Email: [Ed\\_Hinojosa@homesa.org](mailto:Ed_Hinojosa@homesa.org)

### **North Central Five: Inclusive Living Brings New Life to North Philadelphia**

North Central Five is a mixed-income community in North Philadelphia that offers 133 units of housing on a full-block site. The \$51.6 million, 152,000 GSF property includes three buildings; a multifamily building with 117 units around a lushly landscaped courtyard, and two townhome buildings with 16 units that have large-three bedroom units with private outdoor space. All residents have access to a fitness room, community room with kitchenette, computer room and library, an outdoor courtyard and community gardens, as well as an on-site management staff, package lockers, and bike storage. It was developed as part of a larger \$30 million Choice Neighborhood Grant.

Kelvin A. Jeremiah  
President & CEO  
Philadelphia Housing Authority  
2013 Ridge Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19121  
Phone: 215-684-4174  
Email: [kelvin.jeremiah@pha.phila.gov](mailto:kelvin.jeremiah@pha.phila.gov)

## Resident and Client Services

### CCP/PHA Shared Housing Program

The Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) and the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) collaborated on an innovative partnership that transformed six scattered sites units into dorm-like apartments for CCP students. The Shared Partnership offers a vital new service by providing housing specially designed around the unique and urgent needs of community college students. The program provides tenants with wraparound services from both CCP, which offers academic services, and from PHA, which offers life skills and budgeting classes. Students eligible for the housing must qualify for Pell grants and be taking at least six college credits. Students will pay rent based on 30 percent of their incomes.

Kelvin A. Jeremiah  
President & CEO  
Philadelphia Housing Authority  
2013 Ridge Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19121  
Phone: 215-684-4174  
Email: [kelvin.jeremiah@pha.phila.gov](mailto:kelvin.jeremiah@pha.phila.gov)

### Emergency Housing Program

In an effort to create solutions to combat the issue of homelessness in Boyle County, the Emergency Housing Program (EHP) was established in December 2020. With no other homeless shelter or resources for homelessness in the immediate area, the program was designed to assist those experiencing homelessness by providing hotel vouchers, transitional living options, and access to supportive services designed to assist with permanent housing solutions. As a result of this program, 95 total individuals, including children, were served through the use of emergency hotel vouchers and 15 individuals utilized the transitional living and case management services at the conclusion of December 2021.

Tim Kitts  
Executive Director  
Housing Authority of Danville  
1014 Rosemont Avenue  
Danville, KY 40422  
Phone: 859-236-6116  
Email: [hadanvl@bellsouth.net](mailto:hadanvl@bellsouth.net)

### Local University (UNE) Support of Resident Wellness

The Housing Authority of the City of Westbrook (WH) partnered with the University of New England (UNE) in late 2020 to offer a Wellness Center on our Larrabee Campus. WH provided UNE with an office and function spaces to provide service-oriented activities for our 650 low income residents. Our kick off was slightly delayed for the academic year 2020-21 due to COVID-19. During the 2021-22 academic year, the initiative was able to provide pro bono oral health preventative care, digital denture services, nutrition education, social work and pharmacy consultation. Other planned activities include adding physician assistants, nursing, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, all provided at no cost to our residents.

Chris LaRoche  
Executive Director  
Housing Authority of the City of Westbrook  
30 Liza Harmon Drive  
Westbrook, ME 04092  
Phone: 207-854-6805  
Email: [claroche@westbrookhousing.org](mailto:claroche@westbrookhousing.org)

### **Opportunity Fund for College Students**

The Housing Authority of Champaign County's (HACC) Opportunity Fund provides up to \$500 of assistance for each student per semester for members of HACC-assisted households enrolled in local public community colleges. Primary uses of funding include public and private transportation, assistance with childcare costs, and laptops.

Richard Monocchio  
Executive Director  
Housing Authority of Cook County  
175 W. Jackson Blvd., #350  
Chicago, IL 60604  
Phone: 312-542-4851  
Email: [rmonocchio@thehacc.org](mailto:rmonocchio@thehacc.org)

### **Seniors Connect Art Kit Program**

To stay connected with seniors during the pandemic, the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) created the Seniors Connect-Art Kit Program, providing each participant with an art kit with items focused on art projects, events or holidays. The monthly kits were delivered to the seniors for them to work on from the safety of their homes, in lieu of the ordinary on-site senior programming. Each senior received a monthly Senior Connect Newsletter and had access to the Senior Connect virtual platform to showcase their artwork and stay connected. The OHA team used this to share health information and supportive resources, creating invaluable wellness checks for our seniors throughout the pandemic.

Patricia Wells  
Executive Director  
Oakland Housing Authority  
1619 Harrison Street  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Phone: 510-874-1517  
Email: [pwells@oakha.org](mailto:pwells@oakha.org)

### **Tech Tools for Children in Housing Communities**

Access to education is a key mission directive of the East Baton Rouge Housing Authority (EBRPHA). In 2020, COVID 19 forced school-aged children into virtual learning. EBRPHA devised a comprehensive action plan. Door-to-door assessments of internet and tech tools in each of the housing communities revealed a critical lack of internet infrastructure for 680 children who had no computers or little or no internet connections. With commitment, resolute intention, and a cooperative partner, EBRPHA and the East Baton Rouge School System created "Tech Ready" for distribution of Chromebooks, "Hot Spots", computer accessory essentials and eventually free wi-fi to 680 children.

J. Wesley Daniels, Jr.  
Executive Director  
East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority  
4731 North Boulevard  
Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
Phone: 225-923-8150  
Email: [jdaniels@ebrpha.org](mailto:jdaniels@ebrpha.org)