

2023 Award of Excellence Winners Announced at 2024 Washington Conference

Nominated from among the Awards of Merit winners each year, the Awards of Excellence, selected by national juries, represent the best work of housing and community development agencies nationwide. This year, we will present the 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! For more information about these winners, check out the Award of Merit Catalog online.

Affordable Housing

Ch'bala Corners, Cook Inlet Housing Authority

Cook Inlet Housing Authority's Ch'bala Corners is a multi-generational development located in mid-town Anchorage. This is the first of a planned two-phase buildout of the site, comprised of three buildings offering a mix of senior housing and family housing and brings 48 new, affordable rental apartments to the community. Ch'bala is the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina word for spruce tree. Spruce trees were a valuable resource for the Dena'ina, providing food, fuel, building materials for shelter and supporting the animals of the region.

Carol Gore
President/CEO
Cook Inlet Housing Authority
3510 Spenard Rd., Ste 201
Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: 907-793-3007
Email: cgore@cookinlethousing.org

Buena Esperanza - Permanent Supportive Housing, City of Anaheim Housing Authority

A prototype for California's \$2.75 billion Homekey program, the City of Anaheim Housing Authority's Buena Esperanza in Anaheim, CA is one of the State's first motel conversion projects, and a pioneer effectively housing people experiencing homelessness. Buena Esperanza is an adaptive reuse of a blighted, two-story former Econo Lodge Motel and Anaheim's first motel conversion under the City's new streamlined entitlement process adopted as a city-wide ordinance. It provides Permanent Supportive Housing for 69 at-risk or formerly homeless residents and dedicated to serving individuals with mental health conditions and Veterans.

Grace Stepter
Director - Housing and Community Development
City of Anaheim Housing Authority
201 S. Anaheim Blvd., Suite 1003
Anaheim, CA 92805
Phone: 714-765-4315
Email: gstepter@anaheim.net

Sacramento Homekey Program, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency

In order to reduce COVID-19 exposure risk for 5,500 people living on the streets of Sacramento, CA, the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency partnered with an affordable housing developer to acquire and convert Woodsprings Suites, a local hotel, into La Mancha permanent supportive housing for 100 formerly homeless individuals. The \$25 million project utilized a \$14.5 million award from the California Homekey Program.

LaShelle Dozier
Executive Director
Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency
801 12th St.
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-440-1319
Email: ldozier@shra.org

Access and Opportunity for Senior Housing, Housing Authority of East Baton Rouge Parish

The Housing Authority of East Baton Rouge Parish's (EBRPHA) Cypress Pinchback is a 99-unit affordable housing development on the banks of Bayou Fountain in Baton Rouge and fills a gap for quality, affordable housing for seniors 62 years or older. Amenities include a fitness center, meeting room, computer center, garden, trail, educational activities. In case of a hurricane or outage, the local energy company has also committed to providing the entire building with emergency power. A signature property for EBRPHA, Cypress Pinchback cost \$25M in HUD funds, grants, commercial loans, and tax credits.

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

Administrative Innovation

Common Ground Café, Clarksville Neighborhood and Community Services

The Common Ground Café serves as a teaching program for individuals with intellectual disabilities seeking employment opportunities. The impacts of the pandemic heavily affected these individuals whose health concerns were at a greater risk, further limiting opportunities. Since the grand opening of the Common Ground Café on June 6th, 2022, three interns have graduated from the program and currently one intern is working in the café with others expected to join soon.

Michelle Austin
Director
Clarksville Neighborhood and Community Services
1 Public Square
Clarksville, TN 37040
Phone: 931-648-6133
Email: michelle.austin@cityofclarksville.com

HACLA Law Clerk Academy, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) established a formal law clerk program in its Legal Department to identify, train, and produce the next generation of legal leaders in the affordable housing industry. Participating law clerks received mentors and were able to see firsthand the important services HACLA provides the community. Upon completion of the program, the participating clerks became “HACLA alumni,” and received information about permanent job opportunities at HACLA. These law clerks will be ambassadors for HACLA for years to come.

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

Orchard Arms Solar Project, Los Angeles County Development Authority

The Orchard Arms Solar Project highlights the Los Angeles County Development Authority’s (LACDA) efforts to operate its public housing sites in an environmentally friendly manner. The project involved the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) energy systems at its public housing sites, providing not only clean and renewable energy but also lowering resident electricity costs by 30-40%. Additionally, instead of a typical roof installation, LACDA constructed steel carports to support the solar panels removing barriers to routine maintenance.

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

CodeRED Tenant Alert System, Seattle Housing Authority

The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) launched CodeRED, a new Tenant Alert System that enables SHA to rapidly text, email and call select groups or all residents and voucher participants with urgent and emergency information. Alerts could range from notifying residents of a specific SHA building about an elevator outage, to messages alerting entire communities about a life-threatening situation. The program is for urgent and emergency communications only, not for routine or general business communications from SHA. CodeRED has quickly become a vital communications tool for those hopefully rare times when SHA needs to reach tenants quickly about disruptions, or worse a serious safety or life-threatening incident.

Rod Brandon
Executive Director
Seattle Housing Authority
190 Queen Anne Ave N.
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: 206-615-3510
Email: rod.brandon@seattlehousing.org

Community Revitalization

The Nave, Cook Inlet Housing Authority

Cook Inlet Housing Authority's The Nave sits on the traditional and current homelands of the Dena'ina Athabascans, who have been the caretakers of the land, water, plants, and animals of the area for thousands of years. The Nave is open to all and offers the community a place to recognize, honor and promote Alaska Native culture and values. The project was an evolution of a building and the role of community, culture and art in building strong connections, neighborhoods and communities.

Carol Gore
President/CEO
Cook Inlet Housing Authority
3510 Spenard Rd., Ste 201
Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: 907-793-3007
Email: cgore@cookinlethousing.org

Sharswood Grocery Outlet: Forgotten No More, Philadelphia Housing Authority

The Philadelphia Housing Authority and its partners fulfilled a promise to Sharswood, a long-forgotten neighborhood, to establish a retail anchor: Sharswood Ridge. This mixed-use development included affordable housing apartments and retail space to include the Sharswood Grocery Outlet, Santander Bank and Everest Urgent Care Center. The grocery not only provided jobs for nearby PHA residents but also brought fresh fruits and veggies, discounted foods and household supplies during a period of rapidly rising inflation. Residents can now walk to the store or take the bus, which stops in front of the complex.

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

Legacy at Alazán, Opportunity Home of San Antonio

Opportunity Home of San Antonio's Legacy at Alazán is a modern affordable housing development that replaces distressed public housing units with higher quality units, at the same or increased density. This 88-unit development offers 40 public housing units, 40 affordable housing units, and eight market-rate units aimed at residents earning at or below 60% of AMI. The development includes a 4-story elevator building, and two 2-story walk up properties and offers a community and fitness center, activity and community room with a kitchen, a business center and a leasing office.

Ed Hinojosa
President and CEO
Opportunity Home of San Antonio
818 S. Flores Street
San Antonio, TX 78204
Phone: 210-477-6064
Email: Ed_Hinojosa@homesa.org

Hybla Valley Community Center, Fairfax County Department of Housing/Community Development

The Fairfax County Department of Housing/Community Development's award-winning Hybla Valley Community Center (HVCC), which opened in April 2022, is a dynamic hub of activity with programs, services, and opportunities available to a historically underserved community. Evolving from a private, membership-only tennis club, HVCC represents Fairfax County's revitalization efforts along the Route 1 Corridor of Fairfax County.

Thomas E. Fleetwood

Director

Fairfax County Department of Housing/Community Development

3700 Pender Drive, Suite 300

Fairfax, VA 22030

Phone: 703-246-5105

Email: Thomas.Fleetwood@fairfaxcounty.gov

Project Design

Rosefield Village, Housing Authority of the City of Alameda

In 2022, the Housing Authority of the City of Alameda (AHA) completed the new construction and lease up of the Rosefield Village community, now providing 92 affordable homes for mixed income family households, ranging from 20-80% Area Median Income range. Rosefield Village, once the site of 46 fifties-era modular townhomes, is an intergenerational community with a preference for households that live or work in Alameda. Onsite services provided by AHA's partner, LifeSTEPS including case management counseling and wellness activities.

Vanessa Cooper

Executive Director

Housing Authority of the City of Alameda

701 Atlantic Ave.

Alameda, CA 94501

Phone: 510-747-4320

Email: vcooper@alamedahsg.org

Earvin "Magic" Johnson Park Phase 1A, Los Angeles County Development Authority

At 120-acres, the Los Angeles County Development Authority's Earvin "Magic" Johnson Park (the Park), is the largest open space in the unincorporated community of Willowbrook located in South Los Angeles, and an integral recreational and community asset. Once the site of an oil storage facility, the Park, and its new event center, have sustainably transformed the urban landscape for this under-served community. For example: The innovative stormwater treatment system allows for water runoff recycling, providing the Park with a sustainable water source.

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

Altgeld Family Resource Center, Chicago Housing Authority

While still a part of Chicago, Chicago Housing Authority's 190-acre Altgeld Gardens-Murray Homes is a fairly isolated and self-contained development located as far south as one can go in the city. To revitalize the heart of this community, CHA developed an architectural jewel, the Altgeld Family Resource Center, which serves as a daycare facility and public library.

Tracey Scott
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Housing Authority
60 E Van Buren St., Ste 12
Chicago, IL 60605
Phone: 312-913-7040
Email: tscott@thecha.org

Lemington Senior Housing, Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh

The former Lemington Home for the Aged was a vacant 35-year-old, four-story, 109-bed nursing home that had been unoccupied since 2005. The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) created a mixed-use development, including 54 units of senior housing fully funded by project-based vouchers (PBV) and a community healthcare space. Through substantive rehab, the Lemington Senior Housing project serves a much-needed affordable senior housing facility, one that functions as a catalyst in revitalizing the neighborhood, generates employment as well as provides healthcare and support services to existing and adjacent communities.

Caster Binion
Executive Director
412 Boulevard of the Allies, 7th Floor.
Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 412-456-5012
Email: caster.binion@hacp.org

The Manton Pathway, Housing Authority of the City of Providence

Manton Heights Pathway is a collaboration among (PHA), Rhode Island Housing, and the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council. The team transformed an overgrown, unsafe parcel of land into a safe, functional connection for residents of Manton Heights public housing development and other residents of Providence's Olneyville to the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Bike Path for travel, exercise, and recreation. This project was an outcome of the Build Olneyville Plan, resulting from a 2009 Choice Neighborhood Initiative Award, which highlighted the need for infrastructure and housing investments throughout the neighborhood.

Melissa Sanzaro
Executive Director
Housing Authority of the City of Providence
100 Broad St.
Providence, RI 02903
Phone: 401-709-1134
Email: msanzaro@provhousing.org

Legacy at Alazán, Opportunity Home of San Antonio

Legacy at Alazán is a modern affordable housing development that replaces distressed public housing units with higher quality units, at the same or increased density. This 88-multifamily development offers 40 public housing units, 40 affordable housing units, and eight market-rate units aimed at residents earning at or below 60% of area median income. This development's 4-story elevator and two 2-story walk up offers amenities to include a community center, fitness center, activity room, community room with a kitchen, business center and leasing office.

Ed Hinojosa
President and CEO
Opportunity Home of San Antonio
818 S. Flores Street
San Antonio, TX 78204
Phone: 210-477-6064
Email: Ed_Hinojosa@homesa.org

Resident and Client Services

Strategies to Improved Landlord Satisfaction and Retention, Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino

In 2020, the Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino formed a Landlord Outreach Committee. The committee identified, recommended, and implemented strategies to increase landlord participation and overall satisfaction with our rental assistance programs. A Landlord Satisfaction Survey identified motivations, service needs, and note improvements. Based on the survey results, HACSB revised its leasing processes, increased outreach and education, and developed a Moving to Work landlord incentive activity to provide signing bonuses and damage mitigation. These changes have improved landlord participation in our rental assistance programs.

Maria Razo
Executive Director
Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino
715 E Brier Dr.
San Bernardino, CA 92408
Phone: 909-890-0644
Email: mgrazo@hacsb.com

Food Distribution and Nutrition Education for Youth and Families (HFDK), Denver Housing Authority

The Denver Housing Authority (DHA), in partnership with our non-profit arm Youth Employment Academy (YEA), addressed food insecurity in Southwest Denver through education, food distribution, and youth leadership in horticulture. YEA provided healthy cooking and nutrition classes for families, distributed healthy snacks to youth, and created an "Edible Artscapes" Project in one of DHA's public housing neighborhoods. By strengthening families' capacity to identify, eat, and cook health meals with fresh ingredients and make empowered healthy decisions about their diets/eating habits at particularly with young children, the program aids in promoting a healthy lifestyle for low-income youth and their families.

David Nisivoccia
Executive Director
Denver Housing Authority
1035 Osage St.
Denver, CO 80204
Phone: 720-932-3106
Email: dnisivoccia@denverhousing.org

Opening New Doors, Randolph County Housing Authority

Working in partnership with ComWell, a Community Wellness Agency, the Randolph County Housing Authority developed an innovative program designed to improve housing access and outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) within its service area. The Opening New Doors Program resulted in expanded housing opportunities and supportive services for individuals with IDD, while also allowing them to make informed decisions about where and with whom they choose to live.

Christopher Blechle
Executive Director
Randolph County Housing Authority
916 George St.
Chester, IL 62233
Phone: 618-826-4314
Email: cblechle@rchail.org

Advancing Community Employment Program, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority

The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority's (CMHA) Advancing Community Employment (ACE) program fosters local economic development, promotes workforce development and ensures compliance with HUD Section 3 policy. The ACE program replaces the Lower Income Project Area Resident Participation program, designed to connect residents with employment opportunities as the agency repaired properties and provides a readily accessible approach to comply with HUD's 2020 changes to Section 3. It goes beyond the basic requirements of Section 3 by providing contractors and resident workers with direct access to staff who are knowledgeable about Section 3 and who facilitate opportunities to connect contractors with eligible workers.

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

Neighborhood Early Learning Connectors, King County Housing Authority

Partnering in program design with public housing residents, the King County Housing Authority (KCHA) developed the Neighborhood Early Learning Connectors (NELC) Program to increase kindergarten readiness of KCHA's youngest residents. The NELC staff delivering services to eligible families are public housing residents employed by KCHA to conduct outreach and engage with families. The program's goals are to give families the information and resources they need to raise small children, to provide opportunities for children and families to participate in high-quality programs and services, and to strengthen relationships among neighbors.

Robin Walls
Executive Director/CEO
King County Housing Authority
600 Andover Park W.
Tukwila, WA 98188
Phone: 206-574-1100
Email: Robinw@kcha.org