

COMMUNITY INNOVATION AWARDS 2026 AWARDS OF MERIT





Shaping Stronger Communities

Affordable & Mixed-Income Housing

Housing Authority Partnerships

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Welcome to the 2026 Community Innovation Awards!



Sean Gilbert
NAHRO President



Mark Thiele
NAHRO CEO

In 1989, NAHRO created the Awards of Merit Program both to celebrate the successes of member agencies, and to share these innovations and best practices with others. Now, 37 years and more than 7,000 awards later, we are proud to present this year's winners. Hailing from all across our nation, 29 housing agencies earned 193 Awards of Merit, and 17 of those awardees went on to achieve Awards of Excellence. Together, these awards form the Community Innovation Program, a recognition that reflects how collective vision and local action can deliver national impact.

Behind each of these awards is a story of perception, creativity and determination. Housers nationwide identified specific local challenges or opportunities, brainstormed solutions, then gathered the partners and resources they needed to implement them. This catalog is a compendium of these success stories, and a celebration of the hardworking housers who created them.

This awards catalog represents agencies of every size and location in every state and territory. Their projects are varied and suited to their communities' needs. They use technology to improve communication and service deliveries; create initiatives to increase educational and work opportunities; strengthen relationships with local landlords, police and other community partners; build, maintain, and renovate vital affordable housing, and so much more. And we are honored to share these successes with you.

Congratulations to all our winners! Your thoughtfulness, hard work and dedication inspire us all.

Mark Thiele
NAHRO CEO

Sean Gilbert
NAHRO President



ADMINISTRATIVE INNOVATION

All photos are courtesy of the agencies.

1 FORT PAYNE CONNECT

The Fort Payne Housing Authority (FPHA) became the first housing authority in Alabama to launch a fully integrated resident mobile app. Rooted in servant leadership, this innovation modernizes communication, increases operational efficiency, and strengthens resident engagement. In partnership with Brooks Jeffrey Marketing, the platform centralizes announcements, payments, applications, maintenance requests, and real-time updates. This scalable model positions FPHA as a statewide leader in administrative innovation and resident-focused service delivery.

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Small Agency



2 BEYOND THE DESK

As the Cook County Inlet Housing Authority expanded across a wider geographic area, fostering a genuine connection among employees became increasingly challenging. Beyond the Desk was created to meet that challenge through storytelling. The initiative encourages staff to see each other as individuals rather than job titles through personal profiles that highlight their backgrounds, passions, and experiences. By amplifying authentic voices from across the organization—particularly non-

management staff—Beyond the Desk strengthens internal relationships, reinforces a shared sense of purpose, and builds community culture that supports both employees and residents we serve.

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3 QENEK & KQAT

Qenek is the Dena'ina Athabascan word for news or information, and K'qat means food. At Cook Inlet Housing Authority, Qenek & K'qat is a recurring, employee town hall designed to strengthen communication, transparency, and organizational cohesion. The event, which reflects Alaska Native cultural traditions where communal gatherings are often followed by food, combines a structured business update (Qenek) with a shared meal (K'qat). Qenek & K'qat creates space for senior leadership to share timely operational updates while also providing employees with meaningful opportunities to engage directly through an open and inclusive Q&A session.

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4 INAUGURAL LANDLORD APPRECIATION EVENT

The City of Glendale's Community Services Department and the Glendale Housing Authority (GHA) hosted their inaugural Landlord Appreciation Event. The event brought together more than 70 attendees, including 38 participating landlords, City staff, and Mayor Jerry P. Weiers. During the event, attendees visited booths, met their community services representatives, mingled with Glendale Mayor Weiers, and played games.

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5 MULTI-AGENCY PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINED VETERANS HOUSING

To better support veterans, the City of Phoenix Housing Department and the US Department for Veterans Affairs (VA) strengthened processes through targeted, innovative partnerships. Traditional steps were not enough, so intentional enhancements were introduced to boost leasing success and stability. The impact was substantial: turnover dropped more than 60% (27 to 10 per month) and utilization rose from 81% to 92%, demonstrating improved housing stability for veterans.

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6 TREAT AND READ HCV AND LIBRARY EVENT

HCV families often rely on libraries, but many face barriers such as misconceptions about needing a permanent address, fees, or not knowing library locations and services. To expand access, the City of Phoenix Housing Department (COPHD) partnered with the Phoenix Public Library to host the Treat and Read HCV Library Event. The library provided staff, resources, and digital cards, while COPHD contributed costumed staff, treats, and event support. This effort reflects our commitment to empowering HCV families with knowledge, access, and opportunity.



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7 EXPANDING EQUITABLE ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING ACCESS TO THE CARMELITOS PUBLIC HOUSING COMMUNITY

Access to Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations just became easier for residents at the Carmelitos public housing community in North Long Beach, CA. Through an innovative partnership between the Los Angeles County Development Authority, the Los Angeles County Internal Services Department, Southern California Edison, and PowerFlex, 20 Level 2 charging stations are available for residents and onsite staff. This initiative brings modern EV charging infrastructure to a low-income community, built decades before electric mobility infrastructure was envisioned. The

modernizations ensure public housing residents can participate in California's transition to clean transportation.

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8 AZURE APARTMENTS – PROJECT LEASE-UP HOUSING MATCH (PLUHM): A REAL-TIME HOUSING PLACEMENT SYSTEM

Azure Apartments, a permanent supportive housing initiative, demonstrates a coordinated system-level approach to addressing homelessness. The project paired a locally designed placement process that effectively identifies and prioritizes individuals and connects them with vacant units. By aligning development, interim operations, and lease-up within a single framework, the City of Anaheim and its partners maintain continuity for residents, reduce inefficiencies in placement, and ensure housing resources focus on those with the greatest need.

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9 DATA AND INNOVATION INITIATIVE

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz uses Microsoft Power BI dashboards to transform data into clear, real-time insight. Interactive dashboards track voucher success rates and transaction quality in the Family Self-Sufficiency program. Staff and leadership can instantly see performance, identify training needs, and detect disparities in program access. Instead of routine reports, the Agency now operates with living data that updates daily. The result is faster decision-making, stronger accountability, and a clearer path toward equitable program outcomes.

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10 DAVIS-BACON AND RELATED ACTS LABOR COMPLIANCE PROGRAM AND RESOURCES

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA) while supporting small and disadvantaged contractors. DBRA requires payment of federal prevailing wages but compliance, especially apprentice wage calculations, is complex and often leads to errors and underpayments. To address this, HACLA's Labor Compliance Program provides training, guidance, and tools, including forms and videos developed at no cost using existing software. These efforts have reduced apprentice underpayments by over 75%, lowered administrative burdens, and improved compliance across HACLA-funded projects.



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11 HACLA HOUSE OUR VETS CAMPAIGN

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) launched the House Our Vets (HOV) campaign in January 2025 to accelerate housing placements for veterans experiencing homelessness. In partnership with the Mayor of Los Angeles, the Department of Veterans Affairs – Greater Los Angeles (VA-GLA), and other veteran agency partners, HACLA restructured the HUD-VASH program processes as a rapid-response system. HACLA streamlined application and leasing steps, increased landlord participation, and improved veterans' access to permanent housing.



Award of
Excellence
Nominee

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12 NEXT UP LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) launched a targeted Next Up Leadership initiative to strengthen staff capacity, build a bench of prepared leaders, and improve service delivery for low-income residents. In partnership with Coro California, OHA implemented a customized, eight-session training series focused on strategic thinking, communication, and collaboration. Emerging leaders and new-to-management participants gained practical tools to lead effectively, navigate complex challenges, and align their work with agency priorities. The cohort graduated with increased confidence, improved decision-making

and preparedness to step into leadership roles as organizational needs arise.



Award of
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**Oakland Housing
Authority**

13 STATE OF VENTURA HOUSING BREAKFAST

Ventura Housing (formerly the Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura) launched its inaugural State of Ventura Housing Breakfast as a flagship public engagement and fundraising event to elevate housing issues, strengthen partnerships, and reintroduce the agency's new brand identity to the community. The sold-out event convened 182 civic leaders, policymakers, funders, nonprofits, developers, residents, and media, raising \$45,975 to support resident services. By combining data, resident storytelling, and policy dialogue, the event positioned Ventura Housing as a trusted convener for advancing collaboration, awareness, and solutions for housing affordability.

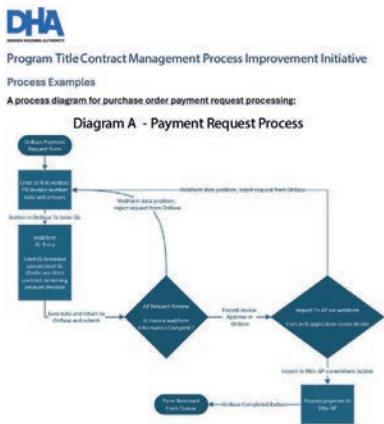
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14 CONTRACT MANAGEMENT PROCESS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

Denver Housing Authority implemented an integrated system between OnBase and Elite to streamline vendor payments and contract management. The solution automates invoice processing, enforces general ledger and funding checks, and uses workflow routing to prevent lost or duplicate requests. Contract and purchase order balances update in real time as transactions occur, and enhanced reporting provides clear visibility into vendor activity, payments, purchase order usage, and overall contract obligations.

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15 REDUCED WORK SCHEDULE – 100-90-100 PILOT AT HOUSING CATALYST

Housing Catalyst ran an 18-month pilot using a 100-90-100 model: 100 percent pay for 90 percent hours in exchange for 100 percent productivity. From September 2023 to February 2025, 74 staff participated. Outcomes included a 33 percent drop in leave, a 10.3 percent decrease in turnover, and a net benefit of \$240,329. An independent Colorado State University study found 74% of participants felt they had enough time to fulfill their duties. This performance-driven approach led to a permanent rollout that

boosts well-being and efficiency without sacrificing service quality.



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16 SAFETY AND SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS

Foothills Regional Housing spent the last two and a half years significantly investing in improved safety and security measures across its portfolio. The multi-faceted approach included upgrading security cameras, contracting with a security provider, hiring a Director of Safety and Security, and improving internal systems such as incident reporting. The efforts paid off both financially and in the quality of life for residents and employees. The improvements resulted in increased lease renewals and referrals, reduced staff turnover, and reduced incidents and police calls.



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17 DELAWARE STATEWIDE ELECTRONIC REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL (RFTA) INITIATIVE

The Delaware State Housing Authority modernized voucher leasing by replacing fragmented, paper-based processes with a single, standardized electronic portal for all five public housing authorities in the state. Delaware State Housing Authority, Dover Housing Authority, Newark Housing Authority, New Castle Housing Authority, and Wilmington Housing Authority collaborated with AffordableHousing.com to streamline landlord submissions, enable real-time status tracking, and accelerate inspections to 7-10 days. By aligning administrative reform with Delaware's source of income protections, the program reduces barriers for landlords, improves staff efficiency, & expands housing access for voucher holders.

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18 FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS: PCHA ASSISTANT PROPERTY ORIENTATION

Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA) developed a compliance-integrated onboarding manual for entry-level Assistant Property Managers at Landings at Cross Bayou, a 184-unit community layering Low Income Housing Tax Credit, HOME Investment Partnerships, Project-Based Vouchers, Rental Assistance Demonstration and LINK programs. Previously, no structured training framework existed for new employees at this high-complexity site. The manual delivers a 30-day, eight-phase training program addressing program hierarchy, income certification, recertification deadlines, audit preparation, and daily operational standard, preparing entry-level staff to

protect federal tax credits and comply with all five regulatory programs from their very first day.

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19 FROM WAITLISTS TO ENGAGEMENT: PCHA'S QR CODE INTEREST SHEET INNOVATION

Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA) redefined how public housing agencies engage prospective residents through the implementation of its Interest Sheet QR Code Program. The program is an innovative, scalable, and resident-centered solution designed to address one of the most persistent challenges in affordable housing: maintaining meaningful engagement during waitlist closure.

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20 PCHA CONNECT: A RESIDENT-CENTERED WEBSITE & HOUSING NAVIGATION PLATFORM

PCHA Connect is a fully redesigned, resident-centered website and housing navigation platform that improves how applicants, residents, landlords, vendors, and the public access information and services. Built to remove barriers, the ADA-friendly, mobile-friendly site offers clearer guidance, stronger transparency, expanded community resource connections, and a structure that is easier to manage internally. In its first 90 days, the site reached approximately 40,000 users and generated 390,000 interactions, showing strong engagement and immediate value to community and agency operations.



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21 PCHA – LIVING OUR VALUES: EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION CELEBRATION

“Living Our Values” is a monthly employee recognition program reinforcing four core values—accountability, innovation, education, and integrity—aligned with the agency’s mission to provide quality affordable housing and improve residents’ lives. Non-supervisory employees nominated by peers, supervisors, or leadership are celebrated at All-Staff meetings with a certificate, ribbon, and photo with the Executive Director. Employees recognized in all four value categories receive special distinction. With over 200 awards presented, this low-cost program drives mission-centered culture agency-wide.

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22 OFF-HOURS SERVICE CALLS MANAGED BY AI

The Tampa Housing Authority’s Facilities & Maintenance Department has converted weekend and night service calls from a manual answering service to an AI assistant solution. The digital assistant responds to resident calls, routes them to the appropriate maintenance technician, and adds text messaging with a summary of the call data. Calls repeat and escalate until the text message is acknowledged. Each call is categorized by subject, and all data is organized in a property-specific database that offers clear, actionable insights, and caller histories. Reporting and accountability is significantly improved through organized access to voice recordings and call transcripts.

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23 FOUNDATIONS OF LIFE COACHING SUMMIT FOR HOUSING RESIDENT SERVICE COORDINATORS

The Summit is a specialized professional development initiative created to address gaps in traditional, compliance-focused coordination. The program equips housing professionals with trauma-informed, strength-based coaching tools that deepen resident engagement while reducing staff burnout. Through interactive, in-person training, participants learn to shift from directive case management to partnership-driven conversations that honor resident autonomy, build trust, and support long-term self-sufficiency outcomes. The program strengthens workforce capacity while improving the quality and sustainability of resident services.

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24 INDIANA FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY (FSS) COALITION

Founded in 2025, the Indiana Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Coalition is a statewide coalition of FSS Coordinators who convene quarterly to share resources, training opportunities, best practices, and peer support. Created to address the absence of a statewide forum for FSS professionals, the Coalition strengthens local programs through shared learning, coordinated problem-solving, and collective advocacy. By connecting coordinators across diverse regions, the Coalition enhances program consistency,

builds capacity, and improves service delivery for FSS participants throughout Indiana.

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25 BRAND STYLE GUIDE

The Housing Authority of South Bend (HASB) began a rebranding initiative in 2025. To ensure the new branding was implemented effectively across internal and external applications, a Brand Style Guide was developed. Prior to development of the brand style guide, HASB's logo was used inconsistently, diluting the effectiveness of the agency's messaging. The comprehensive brand style guide clearly defines usage standards for HASB's brand including font, color, and logo/graphic elements, as well as internal and external communications. HASB's brand style guide reinforces the importance of consistent logo usage to build brand awareness and create an effective identity for the agency.

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26 COMMUNITY BASED EXECUTIVE ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Lansing Housing Commission restructured executive staff meetings into a community-based engagement model by hosting sessions at partner organizations serving shared populations. Through on-site meetings, facility tours, and service presentations, leadership gains first-hand knowledge of community resources, eligibility requirements, and referral pathways. This approach strengthens inter-agency relationships, improves service coordination, and enhances the agency's ability to connect residents with critical support such as food access, literacy services, housing counseling, education programs, and medical transportation.

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27 SOCIAL IMPACT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Missoula Housing Authority's (MHA) social media program brings innovation to public service by blending transparency, staff participation, and engaging content. The team highlights real people behind the work, shares timely updates, and uses current trends to make essential information accessible. By mixing creativity with clear communication, MHA builds trust, strengthens community connection, and ensures residents and perspective residents receive the information they need in a format they enjoy.



Award of
Excellence
Nominee

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Missoula
Housing
AUTHORITY

28 RESIDENCE AT SOUTH COLLEGE DRIVE

This 24-unit, one-bedroom, mid-rise apartment building in Deptford Township, New Jersey was designed for individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities who are capable of independent living with appropriate support. Inter-agency cooperation with community partners improves the efficiency of operations by seamlessly bringing supportive services to underserved population in Gloucester County. By integrating inter-agency services, RSCD can remove traditional access barriers and seamlessly deliver critical services to our residents.

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29 HOMELESSNESS ECONOMIC RISK FRAMEWORK (HERF)

Launched by the NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in 2025, HERF is a data-driven administrative innovation that transforms how agencies anticipate, plan for, and prevent homelessness. By integrating ZIP-level analytics, predictive modeling, and equity-focused metrics, HERF enables DCA to forecast rising housing instability, assess systemic risk and align homelessness prevention resources. HERF allows

DCA to quickly and comprehensively model potential funding threats and economic crises for stakeholders, including elected officials, housing advocates, corporate and philanthropic partners, and NJ residents, to foster support for solutions.



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Losing \$440M in Rent Stabilization Will Cost NJ \$1.76-\$2.2 Billion in Downstream Crisis Response

How a \$440M Cut Cascades into \$2B in Systemic Cost

Impact Category	Key Driver	Cost Range
Emergency Services	Emergency shelter & rapid rehousing for 10,000+ renters	\$10M - \$17M
Health & Behavioral Health Systems	ED visits, psychiatric care, crisis stabilization	\$14M - \$15M
Legal & Judicial System	Eviction-related court cases, public defender caseload	\$10M - \$14M
Child Welfare & Education Expenses	Foster placements, school mobility impacts	\$8M - \$12M
Emergency Response & Policing	911 calls, emergency response, public perception	\$5M - \$8M
Lost Rent & Market Distortion	\$440M lost rent - \$200M associated lost economic revenue	Not fully recoverable

Statewide Economic Impacts

- GDP Drag**
 - With ~\$1.2B diverted to emergency management and revenue losses, NJ could see a 0.3-0.5% reduction in GDP growth, particularly in sectors tied to real estate, construction, and consumer spending.
- Housing Market Contraction**
 - Loss of 50,000+ subsidized households destabilizes the low-income rental market.
 - Landlord disengagement from federal/state programs accelerates vacancy mismatch and rent hikes.
 - Increased turnover leads to reduced reinvestment in aging rental stock.
- Labor Force Disruption**
 - Homelessness and instability lead to lost productivity, especially among low-wage essential workers.
 - Estimated 25,000-30,000 dislocated workers impacted by housing loss may generate \$500M+ in lost wages.
- Multplier Effects**
 - Emergency shelter costs and crisis services have low economic multipliers (low wage, temporary jobs).
 - Preventive subsidy spending has high multipliers: every \$1 in HCV spending generates ~\$1.12 in local economic activity.



30 NEW JERSEY HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUNICIPAL EQUITY AND SUCCESS (NJHOMES)

Created by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in April 2025, New Jersey Housing Opportunities for Municipal Equity and Success (NJHOMES) support municipalities with training, technical assistance, and predevelopment funding to strengthen affordable housing planning, design, and implementation. The program promotes high-impact, low-density housing, especially in suburban and rural areas. Selected towns gain cohort learning, mentoring, access to senior State staff, tailored training, and NJHOMES Choice, an interactive dashboard to plan, track progress, and explore projects and funding.



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NJHOMES

31 UNM WORK-STUDY PARTNERSHIP

The AHA-UNM partnership is a cost-free workforce model where UNM covers 100% of student wages. Students serve as Service Coordinator Assistants at RAD properties, providing senior tech support, resident workshops, and K-12 tutoring. The partnership bridges the “staffing-service gap” without impacting AHA’s budget. Plans include expanding student roles into finance, housing vouchers, and public outreach to enhance agency-wide innovation.



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ALBUQUERQUE HOUSING AUTHORITY

32 CYBER AWARE, CYBER SECURE

In 2025, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority IT Department launched a modernized cybersecurity program using the Usecure platform to reduce exposure to email-based threats. By implementing automated phishing simulations and personalized micro learning, the agency transformed digital behavior into a shared responsibility. This initiative serves 100% of the staff, protecting sensitive resident data and ensuring economic stability. The program has achieved quantifiable success through increased threat reporting and lower simulation failure rates. This scalable, innovative model provides a high value defense strategy that is easily replicable by other public agencies.

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CMHA
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1933
CUYAHOGA METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY

33 SCAN FOR SAFETY

The Scan for Safety Program modernizes emergency response by replacing outdated paper documentation with digital QR codes at critical access points.

These codes, placed in Knox Boxes and fire alarm panels, provide first responders with instant access to essential building data like valve locations and stairwell layouts. This initiative improves coordination and minimizes costly delays during emergencies.

Led by the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority Risk Management Department, the program is cost effective, environmentally sustainable, and highly replicable. By streamlining data updates and strengthening partnerships with first responders, the project ensures a safer and more resilient community.

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34 STRENGTHENING SURVIVOR PROTECTIONS

To address the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) compliance challenge, our agency innovated by centralizing procedures through a Section 504 VAWA Specialist and a Domestic Violence Liaison. We replaced a fragmented system with a secure “one-stop-shop” utilizing a dedicated email, tracking system, and digital kiosks to ensure resident privacy. This trauma-informed model, launched in September 2025, processed 127 requests by February 2026, with 37% of clients receiving wraparound services. Remarkably, this was achieved at no cost by repurposing existing staff and technology. This replicable approach improves efficiency, reduces staff confusion, and reinforces our commitment to resident safety and equity.



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35 SELF-SERVICE RESIDENT KIOSKS: STREAMLINING ACCESS, PAYMENTS, AND COMMUNICATION

The Tennessee Valley Housing Services implemented self-service kiosks at its main office and community resource center to streamline rent payments, document submission, and resident interactions. Residents can make payments, scan and submit documents directly to staff, complete forms, and receive instant receipts without waiting in line. This reduces paper use, eliminates copying needs, and improves efficiency for both staff and residents. The scalable, user-friendly system enhances access, convenience, and overall service delivery.

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36 PARTNER POWER SUMMIT

The Partner Power Summit is a collaborative initiative, led by the Abilene Housing Authority, that brings together HA's, nonprofits, government agencies, and community partners from across Texas to strengthen coordination around housing and resident services. Recognizing that housing stability requires cross-sector collaboration, the summit breaks down silos between housing providers and service organizations. Through training sessions, cross-sector panels, and strategic networking, participants gain practical tools and partnerships that improve housing outcomes. The summit demonstrates how housing authorities can serve as conveners to impact beyond traditional program delivery.



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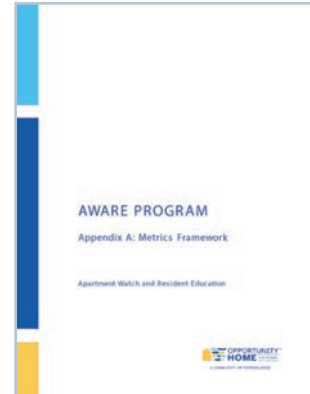


37 AWARE-DICE: APARTMENT WATCH AND RESIDENT EDUCATION & DATA-INTEGRATED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AWARE transforms traditional resident engagement into a engagement program that integrates crime analytics, resident reporting, and enforcement. The program empowers residents to participate in safety initiatives by providing structured pathways to escalate information, ensuring their concerns are documented and acted upon. By aligning social cohesion with insight-informed strategies and lease enforcement, AWARE converts community input into measurable action. The result is increased reporting, faster intervention, and sustained reductions in crime

and disorder. AWARE enhances trust and situational awareness while delivering scalable, evidence-based safety outcomes.

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38 HOUSING POWER HOUR PLUS 2025 SERIES

Housing Power Hour Plus is an educational series created by Opportunity Home San Antonio to increase awareness of affordable housing programs among policy advisors, community leaders, partner organizations, and other stakeholders. Through monthly sessions led by staff experts, participants gain practical insight into housing programs, development partnerships, and resident services. Since launching in March 2025, the series engaged more than 200 participants and strengthened cross-sector relationships while improving understanding of the systems that support housing stability and opportunity.



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39 OPPORTUNITY HOME SAN ANTONIO EMPLOYEE RETREAT

Opportunity Home extended the conference experience to all employees through a full-day retreat. The retreat provided exposure to the latest information and updates, while employee connections led to collaboration and innovation. In this environment, employees engaged in discussions reflecting on the organization's past and present, gaining knowledge about our history and strategic plans guiding the future. Participants chose from numerous sessions and visited a resource fair. The retreat addressed compassion fatigue, acknowledging the nature of their work and the support required to maintain the high standards of excellent service, care, and compassion delivered to our residents.

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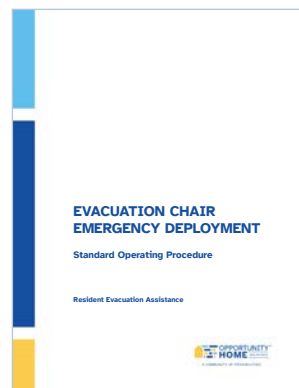
40 SAFE HOUSING INITIATIVE FOR EMERGENCY LIFE-SAFETY DEPLOYMENT (SHIELD): SAFE EGRESS FOR ALL

Elevator outages in high-rise public housing can leave elderly and mobility-impaired residents unable to safely exit their homes or attend critical medical appointments. Opportunity Home San Antonio addressed this life-safety gap through the Safe Housing Initiative for Emergency Life-Safety Deployment (SHIELD) initiative: Safe Egress for All, a powered evacuation program that deploys EVAC+Chair Power 900 units. The program enables

safe stair evacuation, preserves resident dignity, and maintains continuity of care. It eliminates costly hotel relocations during outages (\$50,000 per week), strengthening life-safety, operational resilience, and responsible stewardship of public resources.



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41 WINTER WONDERLAND

Opportunity Home San Antonio's 2025 Winter Wonderland celebrated global December traditions like Bodhi Day, Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. Held in the office's adjacent park, the event featured educational presentations, competitive tournaments, and cultural craft stations. The staff enjoyed bingo, a snowball-throwing contest, an ugly sweater competition, a Riverwalk tour, and line dancing. The event reflected gratitude for the work and dedication to residents and community services that the employees complete throughout the year. The feedback suggested logistical improvements for future events and praised the community spirit and engagement.



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42 EMERGENCY FLIP CHART INITIATIVE

In 2025, the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) implemented a new emergency flip chart, a digital and printed quick reference safety guide created collaboratively by SHA’s Emergency Management and Communications teams. Designed for rapid navigation, the chart consolidates all emergency response procedures into a single, highly visible, easy to use format designed to support employees at any time. Posted across offices, property management offices, and maintenance sites since mid-2025, it provides immediate emergency response guidance while raising awareness of local threats and hazards. In a 2026 survey, 95% of staff demonstrated high confidence in emergency response.

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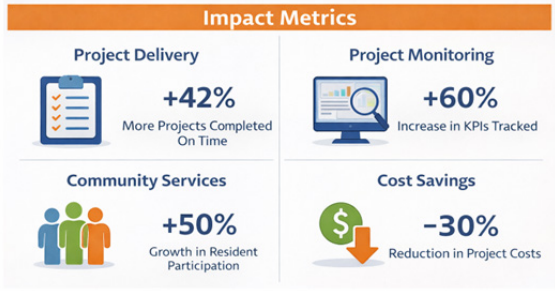
43 FROM SILOS TO SYSTEMS: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PROJECT MANAGERS TO ACCELERATE SERVICE DELIVERY

The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) established the Community of Project Managers (CoPM) to streamline project delivery and embed a consistent project

management framework across operational divisions. CoPM equips staff with standardized tools, templates, governance practices, and one-on-one project support. More than 50 staff now participate in this knowledge-sharing community, resulting in reduced planning cycle time, fewer cross-team conflicts, and improved execution of operational initiatives. CoPM has improved operational efficiency, strengthened collaboration, and accelerated service delivery within Housing Operations.



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AFFORDABLE HOUSING

44 HERITAGE TO HORIZON: THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTHTOWN COURT TO EDGEHILL AT SOUTHTOWN

Southtown Court was a 500-unit public housing development constructed by the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District (HABD) in the 1940s. As the community far exceeded its useful life, HABD began planning the redevelopment of the property in 2016. In conjunction with the selected master developer, HABD created a master plan that would transform the community from an area of persistent poverty to a mixed use, mixed income community with workforce development and resident services intentionally executed for the benefit of residents. To mark the transformation of the community and respect its

heritage, the community has been rebranded “Edgehill at Southtown.”



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Nominee

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45 AZURE APARTMENTS

Azure Apartments is an 87-unit permanent supportive housing development in Anaheim, California, created through the adaptive reuse of a formerly blighted motel. It represents the City’s latest effort to transform underutilized properties into stable housing for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and those most at risk of housing instability. While motel conversions are becoming more common across California, Azure Apartments represents the evolution of that model.

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46 ACCELERATED PATHWAYS TO HOUSING: THE CENTRAL METRO PLACE SENIOR PBV INITIATIVE

The Housing Authority of the City of Baldwin Park (HACBP) launched the Accelerated Pathways to Housing initiative to expand senior housing and speed lease-up at Central Metro Place, a 55-unit development by Retirement Housing Foundation (RHF), including 37 Project-Based Voucher units. HACBP partnered with RHF to streamline referrals, improve communication, and expedite approvals. Shared tracking, proactive case management, and regular coordination reduce time from unit readiness to occupancy. This collaborative approach provides an effective model for accelerating PBV lease-up in senior housing.

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Small Agency



47 OAK VIEW RANCH

Oak View Ranch Family Apartments, developed by National Community Renaissance, transformed a constrained historic infill site in downtown Murrieta into a 119-home affordable housing community secured for 65 years. Leveraging Low Income Housing Tax Credit financing, \$6 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding, \$6.14 million in local investment and a \$3.325 million municipal ground lease, the project expands housing opportunities, integrates a 2,040-square-foot Boys & Girls Club and delivers LEED Gold-certified sustainability.



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48 HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNADINO'S ACQUISITION OF ECHO APARTMENTS

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino (HACSB) is addressing the shortage of funding for affordable housing development by using a new type of creative financing. HACSB acquired a 38-unit property with a minimal amount of upfront capital through an innovative partnership with the Aspen Group. HACSB retains full operational control of the property and gains increasing ownership over time. The result is a scalable acquisition model and a replicable pathway to expand workforce housing.

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49 PACIFIC VILLAGE

Pacific Village, the result of a collaboration among the federal, state, county, and city governments, San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC), and supportive services providers, offer a life-changing opportunity for a new home for unhoused San Diegans. SDHC oversaw the conversion of a former motel, owns and manages the property, and administers federal rental assistance for Veterans, transition-age youth, and San Diegans who lived in their cars, in shelters or on the streets.



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50 PRESIDIO PALMS

Presidio Palms, a powerful example of rapid collaborative housing innovation, turned a vacant extended-stay hotel into more than 160 furnished homes with supportive services for San Diegans experiencing homelessness in seven months. The San Diego Housing Commission led rehabilitation of the property and demonstrated how extensive teamwork at the federal, state, county, and city level can come together to create life-changing housing opportunities through permanent housing and supportive services. SDHC committed 161 Project-Based Housing Vouchers to Presidio Palms, ensuring deeply affordable housing that will remain restricted for a minimum affordability period of 55 years.



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51 VALENTINE ROAD APARTMENTS

Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura converted a former La Quinta Inn into 134 units of permanent supportive housing—the largest such development in Ventura County— through adaptive reuse, a record \$32 million Homekey grant, and a 13-source, \$76.8 million capital stack that includes innovative Restore Rebuild vouchers converting unused public housing authority into permanent affordability. The development has achieved GreenPoint Rated Platinum certification, California's highest green building standard, with full decarbonization including a state-of-the-art tankless heat pump water heater and solar PV modeled to meet 100% of estimated annual energy needs. As of February 2026, 112 of 134 units are leased, including 26 households placed directly from encampments.



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52 SUN VALLEY BLOCK 3: JOLI APARTMENTS, FLO SENIOR APARTMENTS, AND THE SUN VALLEY FOOD INCUBATOR

Sun Valley Block 3 is the first completed phase of the Denver Housing Authority's transformative Sun Valley redevelopment, delivering 358 mixed-income homes for families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. Designed by OZ Architecture, the project replaces obsolete public housing with sustainable, inclusive residences supported by HUD Choice Neighborhoods funding and Low Income Housing Tax Credit equity. Anchored by the Sun Valley Food Hub and connected to riverfront open space, Block 3 establishes a replicable model for equitable, community-centered urban redevelopment.



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53 VILLAGE ON IMPALA

Village on Impala is a \$44.8 million redevelopment that transformed three separate, aging properties into one cohesive, 86-unit affordable community. Housing Catalyst innovatively merged 11 units of obsolete public housing with 12 existing duplexes to create a modern, high-density campus. By utilizing HUD Section 18 disposition proceeds and 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits, the project netted 49 new affordable homes while ensuring long term financial sustainability. The all-electric site serves residents at 30% to 70% area median income, offering a 40% reduction in water use and solar energy to offset tenant costs. It sets a replicable standard for repositioning public housing assets.



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54 HERITAGE OAKS: A DREAM THAT COMES TO FRUITION

Heritage Oaks is a \$31 million, 80-unit affordable senior housing development in Largo, Florida. It is Phase 1 of Pinellas County Housing Authority's (PCHA's) four-phase Rainbow Village Redevelopment. After nearly two decades of planning and multiple failed Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) cycles, PCHA and NewStar Development assembled a seven-source capital stack—LIHTC equity, HOME, SHIP, CDBG, Raymond James financing, PCHA funds, and HUD Project-Based Vouchers—to replace 48 obsolete public housing units with 80 modern apartments for seniors 62+ earning ≤60% area median income. Completed 60 days ahead of schedule and fully occupied within 60 days of opening, Heritage Oaks is a proven, replicable model for persistent and creative affordable senior housing production.



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55 PLUS: A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN A FAITH-BASED WORLD

Palm Lake Urban Sanctuary (PLUS) is an 86-unit affordable housing development located on church-owned land in St. Petersburg's Disston Heights neighborhood. Led by the Pinellas County Housing Authority in partnership with Palm Lake Christian Church, PLUS represents a historic convergence of faith-based community stewardship, public housing innovation, and private-sector financing. It is the first affordable housing development in St. Petersburg and among the first in Florida approved under a city ordinance adopted in response to Florida House

Bill 1339, which allows affordable housing to be built on any parcel zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial use.



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56 VALOR PRESERVE: A LESSON IN PARTNERSHIPS, COURAGE, AND FORTITUDE

Valor Preserve at Lake Seminole is a Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA) 64-unit permanent supportive housing community in Seminole, FL, for veterans, persons with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness. Built on land PCHA held since 2013, the project survived a 5-2 city council rejection driven by NIMBY opposition, the passing of founding champion Executive Director Debra Johnson, and a complete redesign before prevailing. Half of units serve disabled residents; 15% target 33% AMI. Full occupancy at opening; 500 waitlist applications in 10 days. Valor is a lesson in fortitude.



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57 WEST RIVER AFFORDABILITY

The Tampa Housing Authority (THA) led the West River Redevelopment as a 17-phase, mixed-income transformation that more than triples housing from 820 to nearly 3,300 units, with 70% affordable. Through innovative public-private partnerships and financing—including land as equity—THA leveraged over \$650 million while maintaining long-term ownership. The project successfully relocated 670 households without displacement, guaranteeing return rights and providing full case management. West River delivers housing, jobs, retail, and community services, creating a scalable national model for equitable, financially sustainable redevelopment.



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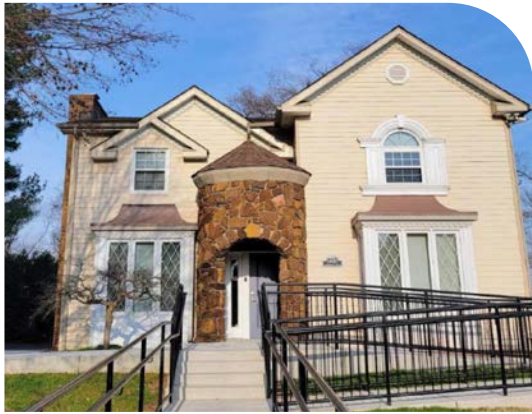
58 HERITAGE AT MADISON PARK: WHAT'S OLD, IS NEWLY REPURPOSED

Heritage at Madison Park in Glen Burnie, Maryland, redeveloped the 1960s Doll Furnished Apartments into a 16-unit affordable housing community for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Acquired in 2022 for \$3.19 million with HUD HOME-ARP funds, total development exceeded \$5.4 million with support from Arundel Community Development Services (ACDS) and the Housing Commission of Anne Arundel County (HCAAC). Renovations (May 2024–July

2025) modernized units, preserved the residential character, and added an on-site case management center. Operated by HCAAC, these are subsidized units through project-based vouchers and reserved for households earning $\leq 30\%$ area median income, referred via the County's Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance (VI-SPDAT) system.



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59 NET ZERO ENERGY DISTRICT: REPLICABLE MODEL FOR HIGH- PERFORMANCE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County conceived and implemented the Fairmount Heights Net Zero Energy District, delivering six Net Zero, all-electric affordable homes and a community pocket park in partnership with the Town of Fairmount Heights and Housing Initiative Partnership, Inc. (HIP). Verified in December 2025 and celebrated on February 27, 2026, each home achieved a HERS score of -2. The project combines affordability tools, strong buyer demand, and a scalable district model targeting 30+ homes, reducing long-term energy costs, and advancing equitable community revitalization.



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Small Agency



60 WASHINGTON COUNTY (MN) EMERGENCY HOUSING SERVICES BUILDING

The Washington County Emergency Housing Services Building (EHSB) is an innovative multifamily housing development that provides safe, dignified shelter for adults experiencing homelessness. Developed by the Washington County Community Development Agency in partnership with Washington County, Minnesota, the two-story facility includes 30 private, furnished rooms which prioritize privacy and dignity. The EHSB is located on the Washington County Government Center Campus, which removes barriers to accessing necessary resources to support transition to permanent housing.



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61 JOHN MCGRAW & SILVER SAGE COURTS REPOSITIONING

The Housing Authority of the City of Reno (RHA) is proud to have recently completed the substantial rehabilitation of two adjacent properties originally constructed in 1995. By undertaking these twin projects, RHA ensured the properties will continue to provide safe, high-quality, public and affordable housing for low-income residents of Washoe County. The properties consist of John McGraw Court, 34 units of public housing, and Silver Sage Court, an adjacent affordable housing property containing 16 units. RHA led all aspects of the project including assembling the financing, construction, and relocation teams and providing project management throughout the year-long renovations.

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62 RESIDENCE AT SOUTH COLLEGE DRIVE

Residence at South College Drive (RSCD) is a 24-unit, one-bedroom mid-rise apartment building in Deptford Township, New Jersey. This project was designed for individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities who are capable of independent living with appropriate support. RSCD addresses the affordable housing needs of our community by creating an innovative approach to inclusive housing. All 24 units are supported by Project-Based Housing Choice Vouchers (PBV) administered by the Housing Authority of Gloucester County. The project demonstrates a creative financing model by utilizing national,

state and local funds, as well as services that foster independence, dignity, and equal opportunity for all Gloucester County residents.

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63 NEW MAINTENANCE STANDARD

The New Maintenance Standard transformed maintenance operations at the Sanford Housing Authority (SHA) by replacing reactive practices with a standardized, accountability-driven framework. The initiative clarified response times, work order protocols, quality assurance, and supervisory oversight across all developments. Following implementation, SHA achieved significant improvements in NSPIRE inspection scores, including transitions from failing and troubled designations to high-performer status. The initiative enhanced resident safety, preserved assets, and restored HUD confidence through sustainable, replicable maintenance reform.

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64 FROM EYESORE TO EYE CANDY – PARK APARTMENTS DEVELOPMENT

In 2025, Lucas Metropolitan Housing and Toledo community leaders proudly proclaimed, “mission accomplished,” with the grand opening of the new, first-of-its-kind-in-Northwest Ohio Park Apartments. This \$15 million, 45-unit affordable housing apartment building represents a historic investment toward ending the homelessness crisis among people with disabilities and young adults between 18–24 years old who are aging out of the foster care system or at risk of homelessness, which affects approximately 4,000 youths in Northwest Ohio.



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65 36N – TRANSFORMATION IS HERE

Pre-development of the 36N community made one thing clear— there was no existing multifamily housing market in North Tulsa to draw comps from. After decades of disinvestment, North Tulsa became a desert in every sense, with lack of access to housing, food, and more. Phoenix @ 36N, Phase I of the development, brings 100 mixed-income housing units to a historic area of the city. With most units subsidized or workforce housing, residents have access to market rate quality and amenities, including an on-site grocery store, the Grocery Box. Phoenix @ 36N remains fully leased with a significant waitlist, revealing

demand for affordable housing and sparking promise for future phases.



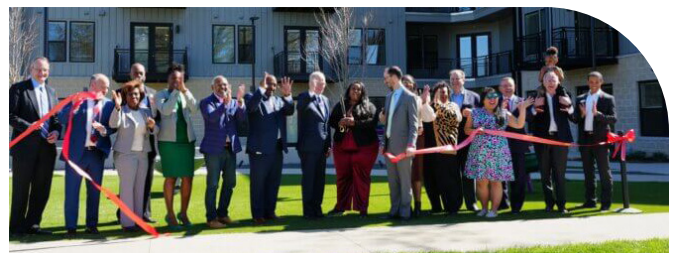
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66 CAYCE TRANSFORMATION

The Cayce Transformation is a comprehensive, resident-driven redevelopment of the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency’s largest public housing community into a vibrant mixed-income, mixed-use neighborhood. Spanning 63 acres, the plan replaces aging units one-for-one while adding affordable workforce and market-rate housing. Through phased development, residents remain connected to their community with a guaranteed right of return. The initiative integrates housing with health services, education, workforce development, and access to fresh food, while leveraging innovative public-private financing and Section 3 opportunities to drive economic mobility and long-term neighborhood revitalization.

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67 FAIR RIDGE SHELTER

In only eight months, the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) acquired and operationalized the “Fair Ridge Shelter,” an 80-bed facility for families experiencing homelessness. Seeking innovative solutions to provide more shelter space, in the fall of 2024 the FCRHA purchased a hotel and converted it into an operational shelter by April 2025. This facility was made possible through the commitment of many partners, including Fairfax County agencies, community non-profits, Fairfax County Police Department, Fairfax County Continuum of Care board, and elected officials. The outcome resulted in enhanced capacity to provide services and emergency housing in the community.

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68 SAWARA APARTMENTS

Funded in part with a HUD Choice Neighborhood Initiative grant and in cooperation with the City of Seattle, Seattle Housing Authority’s Sawara Apartments opened recently in the greater Yesler Terrace Redevelopment. This 100% affordable housing building is a seven-story mid-rise that provides 114 homes in a range of sizes from 1-4 bedrooms with a total square footage of 141,450 sf. An underground parking garage provides 47 parking spaces to support the large families living in the building. Amenities include a

protected courtyard, a community room, and a study hall.



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Nominee

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69 EDISON-EASTLAKE: A BLUEPRINT FOR RESILIENT NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFORMATION

Through a \$42.5 million Choice Neighborhoods grant, the City of Phoenix Housing Department is transforming Arizona’s largest public-housing concentration into a mixed-income, resilient community. Supported by over \$300 million in leveraged investment, and guided by the One Vision Plan, the effort delivers over 1,000 new rental and homeownership units, expanded parks, adaptive reuse spaces for health, technology, and entrepreneurship, and digital access initiatives, strengthening climate resilience, health equity, and long-term economic opportunity in the Edison-Eastlake neighborhood.

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COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

70 RESIDENT STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The City of Phoenix Housing Department uses storytelling as an innovative engagement and leadership strategy that elevates resident voices, preserves neighborhood history, and informs revitalization. In partnership with Phoenix Revitalization Corporation and South Mountain Community College, residents joined workshops to share lived experiences and community identity. Storytelling strengthened confidence, deepened connections, guided planning, and influenced redevelopment, including naming the Girasol apartments.



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71 HERITAGE ESTATES — SINGLE-FAMILY HOMEOWNERSHIP SUBDIVISION

Heritage Estates is a 33-home single-family subdivision in Southwest Fresno (93706), a historically disadvantaged community, delivering affordable homeownership through innovative public-private partnerships. The project layered \$6 million+ in public funding, donated land, and phased construction financing to serve households from 50–80% area median income. Buyers accessed up to \$295K in down payment assistance, with some entering

homeownership with \$100K mortgages. All homes are solar, all-electric, and built to market-rate quality. The model integrates community-based counseling and is highly replicable for equitable neighborhood revitalization.

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72 RAMONA GARDENS GREEN CONNECTIONS PROJECT

Ramona Gardens has over 1,700 low-income residents surrounded by freeways, a rail yard, and warehouses which generate high levels of pollutants. The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and North East Trees partnered to transform Henry Alvarez Park, a two-acre, underused park, into an urban green space through the Ramona Gardens Green Connections Project. It connected walking paths to a playground, basketball court and the surrounding neighborhood while improving air and water quality, creating a better habitat for wildlife through planting of native trees and drought tolerant plants, and installing rain gardens, bioswales, and a decomposed granite walking path, and access ramp.



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73 BOOKS ON WHEELS: THE MOBILE LIBRARY AT CAMBRIDGE PARK

Cambridge Park expanded literacy and educational enrichment opportunities for resident children through a collaborative partnership with the Bristol Public Library's Mobile Library program. During summer months, the mobile library visits Cambridge Park weekly, parking outside the community room during the Summer Meals lunch distribution from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM. By coordinating the visit with a well-attended community program, children and families can easily access books and educational activities in a convenient and welcoming setting.

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74 NO CHILD HUNGRY: A COMMUNITY SUMMER MEALS PROGRAM

The Bristol Housing Authority, in partnership with the Bristol Board of Education, implemented a Summer Meals Partnership Program to address food insecurity among school-aged children during the summer months. This initiative ensures that children who rely on school-provided meals during the academic year continue to have access to nutritious food when school is not in session. The program operates

annually from June through August, beginning Monday following the close of the school year and concluding on Friday prior to the start of the new school year.

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75 HERITAGE OAKS: COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS & FUNDING

Heritage Oaks is a \$31 million, 80-unit affordable senior housing development in Largo, Florida, and Phase 1 of PCHA's four-phase Rainbow Village Redevelopment. After nearly two decades of planning and multiple failed Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) cycles, PCHA and NewStar Development assembled a seven-source capital stack consisting of LIHTC equity, HOME Investment Partnerships, SHIP, Community Development Block Grant, Raymond James financing, PCHA funds, and HUD Project-Based Vouchers to replace 48 obsolete public housing units with 80 modern apartments for seniors 62+ earning ≤60% AMI. Heritage Oaks is a proven, replicable public-private partnerships model for persistent and creative affordable senior housing production.



Award of
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Nominee

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76 PLUS: A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN A FAITH-BASED WORLD

Palm Lake Urban Sanctuary (PLUS) is an 86-unit affordable housing development located on church-owned land in St. Petersburg's Disston Heights neighborhood. Led by the Pinellas County Housing Authority in partnership with Palm Lake Christian Church, PLUS represents a historic convergence of faith-based community stewardship, public housing innovation, and private-sector financing. It is the first affordable housing development in St. Petersburg and among the first in Florida to be approved under a city ordinance adopted in response to Florida House Bill 1339, which allows affordable housing to be built on any parcel zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial use.



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77 EMERGENCY HOUSING SUPPORTIVE SERVICES INITIATIVE

The Housing Authority of Champaign County's (HACC) HCV wait list has been closed since 2024. HACC recognized the growing lack of supportive services available in Champaign County alongside their own

limitations as a housing authority. HACC's goal was to develop an activity that addressed this need in a manner compliant with Moving to Work (MTW) guidelines while also responding to the increasing number of individuals and families facing housing instability or homelessness. By leveraging their MTW flexibilities, HACC implemented the Emergency Housing Supportive Services activity, a \$1.5 million funding opportunity made available to local organizations to provide direct supportive services to the Champaign County community.



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78 CYPRESS AT ARDENDALE - PHASE I

Cypress at Ardendale is a key component of the HUD Choice Neighborhoods initiative in Baton Rouge. Led by the East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority and its development arm Partners Southeast, Phase I delivers 170 mixed-income homes through a \$69 million public and private investment. As part of the broader Baton Rouge Choice effort, the development contributes to the transformation of a historically disinvested area by delivering walkable streets, connected housing, access to education, and workforce opportunities. The multi-building community supports a coordinated approach to long-term neighborhood growth.



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79 LEGACY CENTRAL: FROM VACANT LANDMARK TO VIBRANT COMMUNITY ASSET

Legacy Central transformed a vacant former school site in downtown Shakopee, Minnesota into a vibrant mixed-use community asset. The Scott County Community Development Agency led redevelopment of the blighted property into 60-unit affordable senior apartments for households age 55+ at or below 80% area median income and a new 21,000-square-foot public service headquarters. Located near county non-profit services, the project expands housing choice, increases tax base, activates downtown, and improves access to housing and community development services. Legacy Central reached 90% occupancy shortly after opening in 2025.



Award of
Excellence
Winner

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80 HAB COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT (ORGANIZATION HABCRO)

Strong communities start with homes that let families put down real roots. HABCRO was created to help Montana communities open the door to attainable homeownership. Rooted in House Bill 819 and the Montana Community Reinvestment Plan, we work to build the homes Montana needs next—homes families can afford, homes that support the local workforce, and homes that help our close-knit towns stay strong for generations. Our mission is to strengthen Montana communities by building attainable homes and reducing the financial barriers that keep working families from homeownership. Families pay \$0 down payment! HABCRO creates the mortgage product and builds the quality homes.



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81 RESIDENCE AT SOUTH COLLEGE DRIVE

Residence at South College Drive (RSCD) is a 24-unit, one-bedroom mid-rise apartment building in Deptford Township, New Jersey. This project was designed for individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities who are capable of independent living with appropriate support. RSCD has contributed to Gloucester County's Community Revitalization as it demonstrates creative financing between agencies and strong public/private partnerships within the community necessary to provide RSCD residents access to a comprehensive system of supportive

services that address the full spectrum of needs associated with independent adult living.

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82 EXPANDING HOUSING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH PBVS

The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) expanded its portfolio through partnerships to provide high-quality rental assistance across Cuyahoga County. By layering diverse funding like LIHTC and HOME funds, CMHA achieved nearly 100% occupancy across sites serving seniors, youth exiting homelessness, and families in recovery. Programs like The Lotus and Henrietta Homes promote equity and homeownership, while Garrett Square supports aging in place. With 40-year HAP commitments and bi-weekly oversight, these replicable models address systemic disparities and environmental sustainability through innovative, service-rich housing.

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83 FROM EYESORE TO EYE CANDY – PARK APARTMENTS DEVELOPMENT

In 2025, Lucas Metropolitan Housing and Toledo community leaders proudly proclaimed, “mission accomplished,” with the grand opening of the new, first-of-its-kind-in-Northwest Ohio Park Apartments—a \$15 million, 45-unit affordable housing apartment building that represents a historic investment toward ending the homelessness crisis among people with disabilities and young adults between 18-24 years old who are aging out of the foster care system or at risk of homelessness, which affects approximately 4,000 youths in Northwest Ohio.



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84 36N – TRANSFORMATION IS HERE

Phoenix @ 36N is aptly named. The first multi-family housing in North Tulsa, Phase I of 36N demonstrates what’s possible when a community demands more for itself, after decades of disinvestment that yielded a 10+ year life expectancy gap between residents of North and South Tulsa. Since receiving a \$50 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grant in 2023, Housing Authority of the City of Tulsa activated a community-led planning process. Phoenix @ 36N boasts 100 mixed-income housing units and an over 3,000 square foot Grocery Box, the area’s first grocery store. City-supported 36N infrastructure has contributed to the

development of 74 single-family homes adjacent to the property.



Award of
Excellence
Nominee

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85 SECOND AVENUE REBUILD

After a 2020 bombing in downtown Nashville damaged more than 60 historic buildings, the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) led the revitalization of the city's iconic Second Avenue on behalf of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. Through stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships, the project—known as the Second Avenue Rebuild—envisioned the corridor in new ways that captured the attention of locals and tourists. In December 2025, the area fully reopened, restoring economic activity and transforming a site of tragedy into a vibrant destination will have a long-lasting impact.

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86 ST. PAUL'S TRANSFORMATION – KINDRED COMMUNITY (NORFOLK VIRGINIA)

The City of Norfolk and the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority are transforming the former Tidewater Gardens public housing community into Kindred. The mixed-income, coastal resilient community is built on a simple but powerful idea: Revitalization succeeds when it restores people, home and place together.



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PROJECT DESIGN



87 ESCALANTE MEADOWS COMMUNITY CENTER: ADVANCING ACCESS, EDUCATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY IN GUADALUPE

Escalante Meadows in Guadalupe is a thoughtfully designed community project that provides vital support and resources for residents and the broader community. With its new two-story Community Building, the project offers early childhood education, wellness programs, adult education, and essential services such as transportation and sustainable

infrastructure. Financed through various grants and tax credits, the center promotes housing stability, economic mobility, and community cohesion, all while prioritizing environmental sustainability and accessibility for low-income families.



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88 CENTURY GATEWAY PARK, JORDAN DOWNS REDEVELOPMENT

Century Gateway Park is a 0.62-acre public park at Jordan Downs in Watts, Los Angeles. Developed by The Michaels Organization on behalf of Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles. With \$2.7 million in stacked public funding (TCC, Clean California, U.S. Forest Service, CPF Barragan), the park delivers drought-tolerant native landscaping, 35 new trees, permeable surfaces, meandering pathways, interpretive sustainability kiosks, Big Belly smart trash receptacles, and passive recreation areas. Shaped by multi-year resident-led engagement, it forms the green gateway to a revitalized community alongside the 2025 NAHRO Award of Merit-winning Freedom Tree Park.



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Winner

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89 PEARL PARK, JORDAN DOWNS REDEVELOPMENT

Pearl Park is a 0.5-acre public green space constructed alongside the Cypress View affordable housing development at Jordan Downs in Watts, Los Angeles. Developed by BRIDGE Housing on behalf of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) with \$2.3 million in Caltrans Clean California Round 1 funding, the park features water features, a children's play area, shade structures, open lawn, game tables, picnic tables, and Big Belly smart trash receptacles—all shaped by multi-year resident engagement. Pearl Park opened January 2026, advancing HACLA's commitment to deliver nine acres of new green space as part of the \$1B Jordan Downs redevelopment.



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90 STAY COOL IN THE SUMMER – HEAT MITIGATION HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

This comprehensive heat mitigation program sought to reduce indoor temperatures and energy burdens through thoughtful, energy-efficient retrofits, making the public housing units safer during summer months. Beginning in 2023, the program includes installing air conditioners in every residential unit and cool roofs on every building at the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles' public housing sites. The design solution incorporates actionable tasks, such as installing new vinyl windows and through-the-window air

conditioner units in the living room and ceiling fans in the bedrooms and retrofitting existing roofs with new silicone coated roofing systems.



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Before & After Pictures of a 5-Bedroom Unit with Living Rooms & Dining & Kitchen – 1st Floor



91 THE ENDURING DESIGN OF HACSB'S VISTA DEL SOL AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMUNITY

Vista del Sol is a 71-unit mixed-income senior housing community developed by the Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino (HACSB) in a Redlands, California redevelopment area. In partnership with Housing Partners I, Inc., HACSB overcame complex funding and logistical challenges to deliver the project in 2010. Ongoing improvements, including recent landscape improvements, continue to elevate quality of life for residents. Vista del Sol demonstrates lasting excellence in design, purpose, and creativity for more than a decade.

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92 BELMAR GROVES REHABILITATION

In 2025, Metro West Housing Solutions (MWHS) redeveloped Belmar Groves, a 118-unit affordable housing community in Lakewood, Colorado. Located near the Belmar Shopping District, the project modernized interiors and exteriors, upgraded building systems, and added community amenities including a fitness center, computer lab, and outdoor gathering spaces. Energy-efficient materials, improved HVAC systems, and sustainable landscaping enhance long-term livability and reduce costs. The redevelopment prioritized resident stability through phased construction and resulted in a more connected and durable community.



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93 THE DELAWARE STATEWIDE ELECTRONIC REQUEST FOR TENANCY APPROVAL (RFTA) INITIATIVE

This Initiative modernized voucher leasing by replacing paper-based processes with a single, standardized electronic portal for all five PHAs in the state. Delaware State Housing Authority, Dover Housing Authority, Newark Housing Authority, New Castle Housing Authority & Wilmington Housing Authority collaborated with AffordableHousing.com to streamline landlord submissions, enable real-time status tracking, and

accelerate inspections to 7-10 days. By aligning administrative reform with Delaware's source of income protections, the program reduces barriers for landlords, improves efficiency for staff, and expands housing access for voucher holders statewide.

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94 DELMAR PLACE

Delmar Place is a 32-unit affordable senior housing development created by the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority (LDCHA) to address the shortage of housing for low-income seniors in Douglas County, Kansas. Built adjacent to the Clinton Place community, the project expands an established senior housing campus with shared amenities, transportation, and supportive partnerships. Through an innovative financing strategy combining American Rescue Plan Act funds, City of Lawrence Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and Moving to Work reserves, LDCHA developed the \$4.7 million project debt-free, ensuring permanent affordability while expanding housing opportunities for older adults.



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95 CYPRESS AT ARDENDALE - PHASE I

Cypress at Ardendale is a 170 unit mixed-income community designed as a walkable neighborhood within Baton Rouge's Ardendale redevelopment district. The multi-building layout uses connected streets, green space, and cypress-lined streets to create a cohesive residential setting. A mix of townhomes and walk-up apartments, including ADA-accessible units, is configured to define streets and support everyday movement. The architecture draws from Louisiana character through covered entries and varied materials, creating a community that feels grounded in its surroundings and built for how people live day to day.



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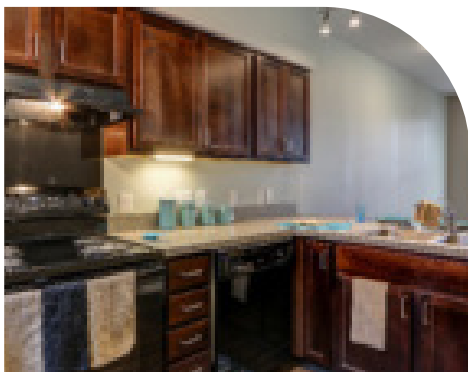


96 COLLINGWOOD GREEN COMMUNITY | TOLEDO, OH

The project design for Toledo's Collingwood Green affordable apartments community, constructed by Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH), is an undeniably enduring architectural legacy. The design of the opening-in-2026 Collingwood Phase 5 replicates in almost every detail the design of the buildings LMH created during the 2010s. Collingwood Green proves that true classic design does not go out of style, as it is defined by timeless principles, quality materials, and functionality rather than passing trends.



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97 BEDFORD DWELLINGS PHASE I: THE REED – HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH

Bedford Dwellings Phase I: The Reed is the first phase of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh's Choice Neighborhoods redevelopment of the 84-year-old Bedford Dwellings public housing community. Led by HACP and co-developer TREK Development Group, The Reed transformed a notable Hill District neighborhood site into 123 mixed-income homes financed with 9% and 4% Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). Comprised of family and senior housing apartment buildings, and townhomes, The Reed follows a "build first, move once" strategy to minimize resident disruption while advancing a broader plan to replace

411 existing units and deliver more than 853 new homes in the Hill District.



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98 OAKLAND PRIDE – THE MOSAIC (THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH)

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) launched its Project Based Voucher (PBV) & Gap Financing Program in 2015 to diversify the City of Pittsburgh's affordable housing portfolio. This program, made possible by HUD's Moving to Work (MTW) funds along with HACP-administered Section 8 PBVs, allows MTW agencies like HACP to invest & participate in producing quality affordable housing in the Pittsburgh's real estate market. The program provides an opportunity for developers looking to invest in affordable housing to apply for a "last resort" gap financing loan and PBV subsidy and include them in their capital stack for a more robust proforma. The PBV and Gap Financing Program is a 2019 NAHRO award recipient.

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99 CAMPBELL ESTATES

Campbell Estates is located on the former Gibson Terrace site in the City of Connellsville, Pennsylvania. The prior development, constructed in 1943, consisted of 142 row-style apartments on just 8.7 acres. After a full demolition of all existing buildings, roads, and utilities, the Fayette County Housing Authority focused its vision on a total redesign of the development to better improve the operational functionality as well as the experience of those who live there. Financed in part with LIHTC equity, construction on Phase I was completed in December 2025.



Award of
Excellence
Nominee

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100 VICTORIA PLAZA RETROFIT: A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE AND SAFE AFFORDABLE HOUSING- MODERNIZATION/REHABILITATION

The agency skillfully integrated multiple critical improvements into a single, coordinated construction effort. By strategically timing these upgrades with a required roof replacement, Opportunity Home San Antonio maximized efficiency, minimized disruption for residents, and delivered substantial long-term benefits in operations, safety, and sustainability. This comprehensive approach culminated in the project achieving Build San Antonio Green (BSAG) Energy Retrofit – Level 3 Certification.



Award of
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RESIDENT AND CLIENT SERVICES

101 EDISON-EASTLAKE COMMUNITY PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVE

The City of Phoenix Housing Department's Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation initiative in the Edison-Eastlake Community uses a resident-led, prevention-focused approach to reduce crime and strengthen trust during a period of major neighborhood transformation. Through a coordinated system of strategies, including community watch, youth development programs, quarterly meetings, front porch briefings, and consistent engagement, the initiative fosters transparent communication, shared accountability, and stronger relationships among residents, police, and city partners. These strategies demonstrate improved engagement and provide a replicable, community-driven public safety model.



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102 MARYVALE PARKWAY TERRACE RESIDENT RELOCATION

The Maryvale Parkway Terrace Resident Relocation project successfully relocated senior and disabled residents during major rehabilitation. The City of Phoenix Property Management Division coordinated

and secured accessible temporary housing within residents' communities, ensuring residents remained near their medical providers and reliable transportation. Through personalized relocation services and bilingual support, the program minimized disruption and eliminated financial burdens for residents. Regular property meetings and open communication kept everyone informed throughout their transition.

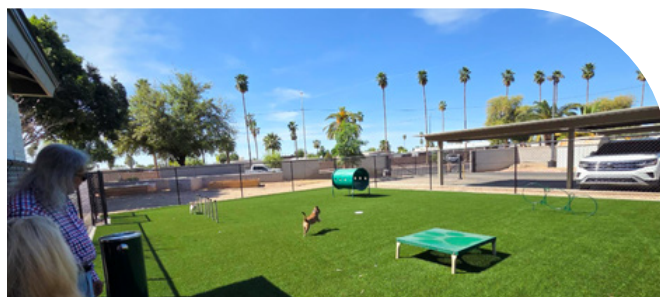
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103 MARYVALE PARKWAY TERRACE SENIOR COMMUNITY DOG PARK

The Maryvale Parkway Terrace Dog Park provides a safe, accessible space for senior and disabled residents without vehicles to exercise their pets close to home. With durable, heat-mitigating synthetic turf, shade, seating, a water station, and agility features, the park supports resident well-being, reduces mobility barriers, and offers a comfortable outdoor area tailored for Arizona's desert climate.

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104 MULTI-AGENCY PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINED VETERANS HOUSING

To better support Veterans, the City of Phoenix Housing Department and the VA strengthened processes through targeted, innovative partnerships. Traditional steps were not enough, so intentional enhancements were introduced to boost leasing success and stability. The impact was substantial: turnover dropped more than 60% (27 to 10 per month) and utilization rose from 81% to 92%, demonstrating improved housing stability for Veterans.



Award of Excellence Nominee

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105 TREAT AND READ HCV AND LIBRARY EVENT

While Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) families often rely on libraries, many face barriers such as misconceptions about needing a permanent address, fees, or not knowing library locations and services. To expand access, the City of Phoenix Housing Department (COPHD) partnered with Phoenix Public Library to host the Treat and Read HCV Library Event in October 2025. The library provided staff, resources, and digital cards, while COPHD contributed costumed staff, treats, and event support. This effort reflects our commitment to empowering HCV families with knowledge, access, and opportunity.

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106 UMOM'S NEW DAY CENTERS FAMILY EMERGENCY SHELTER NON-CONGREGATE EXPANSION PROJECT

United Methodist Outreach Ministries (UMOM) partnered with the City of Phoenix Housing Department to expand its Family Emergency Shelter by converting an on-campus building into 20 non-congregate units, including Americans with Disabilities Act accessible and sensory-friendly options. UMOM led the redesign and remodeling, while the City of Phoenix provided HOME-ARP funding for the project. The project was completed under budget eight months early, allowing UMOM to serve those in need sooner: increasing safety, privacy, and service engagement. UMOM now serves roughly 880 additional families each year, strengthening stability, dignity, and long-term housing outcomes.



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107 NORTH HOUSING:
THE ESTUARY (I) & LINNET CORNER

In Alameda, Ca, the North Housing Phase A projects, The Estuary (I) & Linnet Corner, focus on supportive housing encompassing 109 apartment homes, onsite property management, and resident services hub. The Estuary (I) is the City's first new construction with a 100% permanent supportive housing) community for previously homeless people featuring 45 units: 20 one-bedroom apartments, 24 studio apartments, and a two-bedroom manager unit. Linnet Corner houses seniors, ages 62+, featuring 64 units: 40 studios, 23 one-bedroom, and a two-bedroom manager unit. 16 of the 64 units at Linnet Corner are reserved for US military veterans who are seniors, previously homeless, and disabled.



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108 EXPANDING EQUITABLE ELECTRIC
VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING ACCESS TO
THE CARMELITOS PUBLIC HOUSING
COMMUNITY

Access to (EV) charging stations just became easier for residents at the Carmelitos public housing community in North Long Beach, CA. Through an innovative partnership between the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA), the Los Angeles County Internal Services Department (ISD), Southern California Edison (SCE), and PowerFlex, the installation of 20 Level 2 charging stations are available for residents and onsite staff. This

initiative brings modern EV charging infrastructure to a low-income community, built decades before electric mobility infrastructure was envisioned. The modernizations ensure public housing residents can participate in California's transition to clean transportation.

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109 ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE
IS A NECESSITY FOR ALL

Escalante Meadows features a dedicated Early Childhood Development Center designed to provide affordable, high-quality childcare for families in the City of Guadalupe and surrounding areas. The center, funded by the California Department of Social Services, prioritizes low- and middle-income families and offers subsidized care, meals, and age-appropriate programs in four classrooms. Operated by Early Development Services, it emphasizes security, compliance, and accessibility, supporting residents and the broader community while gradually increasing enrollment as awareness grows.



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110 ESCALANTE MEADOWS – PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE SERVICES TO ON-SITE RESIDENTS AND THE OUTER COMMUNITY

Escalante Meadows in Guadalupe, CA, serves as a vital community hub, prioritizing support for residents and farm workers by offering accessible services and programs. The facility hosts a variety of nonprofit partners, health providers, and agencies, including the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara’s (HASBARCO’s) Resident and Supportive Services team, United Way, and Family Services Agency, all working together to reduce barriers to healthcare, education, and food access. Through collaborative partnerships, onsite case management, and the Wellness Center, Escalante Meadows brings much-needed resources directly to the community, ensuring both general and intensive support for residents.

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111 HARRY’S HOUSE FRIENDSGIVING: BUILDING COMMUNITY AND BELONGING

In 2025, Harry’s House hosted a Friendsgiving event for residents and their neighbors at Golden Inn and Village Senior. The event was planned as a resident-centered, community-building initiative designed to strengthen relationships among residents, staff, and community partners. Staff collaborated with local partners and volunteers to ensure the event was welcoming, accessible, and reflective of residents’ needs and cultural traditions. The event exemplified Harry’s House’s commitment to fostering a supportive, inclusive environment beyond the provision of housing alone.

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112 BEAM (BOOKS, EDUCATION, ACCESS, MOTIVATION) PROGRAM

The Department of Education reports that more than 61% of low-income families lack age-appropriate books at home, and many children have limited access to libraries. To address this gap, the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) established free libraries at its

affordable housing developments, allowing residents to select and keep books donated by community-based organizations and OHA staff. These libraries, stocked partially through an employee-led book drive, collected over 500 books in the past year. In addition to expanding access to reading materials for resident families, the initiative strengthened staff engagement and reinforced OHA’s mission of serving the community.



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113 NOURISH (NUTRITION OPPORTUNITY FOR UNITY, RESOURCES, INTERACTION & SENIOR HEALTH) PROGRAM

The Oakland Housing Authority Nutrition Opportunity for Unity, Resources, Interaction & Senior Health (NOURISH) program improves senior health and connection by providing dietitian-prepared, low-sodium meals in a communal setting. It addresses food insecurity, chronic disease, and isolation among low-income older adults. By combining nutritious meals with social engagement, NOURISH helps senior residents manage health conditions, reduce loneliness, and build supportive relationships—promoting dignity, wellness, and the ability to age safely and independently in place.



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114 OHA-BTSBA YOUTH WRESTLING PROGRAM

Recognizing that socioeconomic barriers often limit youth in low-income housing from participating in organized sports, the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) partnered with Beat the Streets Bay Area (BTSBA) to create an onsite OHA-BTSBA Youth Wrestling Program, expanding access and opportunity. Through free, high-quality onsite wrestling classes, the program removes cost, transportation, and availability obstacles while providing structured physical activity, mentorship, and teamwork. By leveraging existing community spaces and resources, OHA and BTSBA helped to advance equity in youth development, health, and well-being without requiring additional staffing or significant new funding.



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115 IMPROVING ACCESS TO SUPPORTIVE SERVICES THROUGH HACSB'S PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITE US

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino (HACSB) addresses barriers to self-sufficiency by expanding access to critical supportive services for both program participants and wait-listed families. Partnering with Unite Us, a technology company that builds coordinated care networks, HACSB implemented a closed-loop referral platform and launched a self-referral tool, enabling broader, more equitable access to services. This partnership significantly extends our reach and improves connections to food, housing, employment, and utility assistance to all families in San Bernardino County.



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116 ROADMAP TO HOMEOWNERSHIP: HACSB'S PARTNERSHIP WITH NHSIE

Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino (HACSB) and Neighborhood Housing Services of the Inland Empire (NHSIE) address barriers preventing low-income families from achieving homeownership by offering the Roadmap to Homeownership. This innovative program combines workshops, one-on-one counseling, and personalized action plans to build financial literacy, improve credit, and support savings. Since 2025, over 75 families completed counseling and 14 purchased homes, demonstrating measurable progress toward long-term economic stability and increased access to homeownership.



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117 WORKING WITH WAITLISTED PROGRAM

The San Diego Housing Commission's Working with Waitlisted Program provided services to help households on the waitlist for federal rental assistance overcome barriers to leasing housing, such as low credit and limited savings. Funded by a \$90,000 grant from Kaiser Permanente San Diego Community Health, the program provided participants free one-on-one financial coaching, employment counseling, income supports, and access to credit-building tools. A total of 102 households enrolled. By the program's end, all enrolled households met with a financial counselor, 75 improved their credit score, and 13 established a credit score for the first time.



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118 FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER (FRC)
ON-THE-GO!

The Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara launched the Family Resource Center On-the-Go Program in 2025 to expand outreach and deliver services directly to residents. Designed as a mobile initiative, the program brings resources and support to family housing developments, offering immediate assistance with public benefit applications and energy assistance programs. By hosting sessions in the evenings, the program improves accessibility for working families and reduces common barriers.



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119 MOBILE PET WELLNESS CLINIC

Ventura Housing’s Mobile Pet Wellness Clinic, launched in 2025 in partnership with the Humane Society of Ventura County, brings essential veterinary care directly to residents through a fully equipped clinic on wheels. Enabled by local animal welfare grant funding, the program delivers on-site pet wellness services across Ventura Housing communities, including Valentine Road: a permanent supportive housing site for formerly homeless individuals. By providing accessible veterinary care where residents live, the initiative strengthens housing stability and wellbeing, recognizing the vital role pets and service animals play in residents’ lives.



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120 SENIOR RESOURCE FAIR & ART SHOW

Ventura Housing hosted its first Senior Resource Fair & Art Show on November 25, 2025, at The Palms, home to 75 low-income senior and disabled residents. Inspired by residents’ desire to showcase artwork created through ongoing arts activities and free weekly classes with Vita Art Center, the event featured a community-sponsored BBQ lunch and brought together a dozen senior serving agencies. The fair connected residents to vital resources, celebrated their creativity, and strengthened community bonds.



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121 THE ROAD HOME CAMPAIGN

The Road Home Campaign, created by Ventura Housing and its affiliate nonprofit ATLAS–Ventura Housing, supports formerly homeless residents moving into Valentine Road—Ventura Housing’s 134-unit permanent supportive housing community redeveloped through California’s Homekey program. Many residents arrive with almost nothing —lacking even the most basic household items needed to begin again. This community-driven campaign provides essential furnishings and supplies that ease the financial strain of starting over, restore dignity, and help residents build a stable foundation for long term well-being.



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122 OPENING DOORS: DENVER HOUSING AUTHORITY’S HOUSING NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

As the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) continues to expand its housing profile and diversify the types of affordable and market rate housing offered, it saw an unmet need for assistance navigating the housing application and lease-up processes. Funded through LIPH and HCV operating budgets and overseen by the resident services department, DHA launched two new Housing Navigator positions in 2024. This team helps people apply for affordable housing, receive housing faster, maintain their housing stability, and reduce vacancy rates.



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123 COMMUNITY E-BIKE PROGRAM

The Community E-Bike Program established a collection of zero-cost electric bicycles reserved for community members with on-site charging. Launched through a partnership between Metro West Housing Solutions, Regional Air Quality Control, and Boomerang Fleets at Metro’s Lamar Station Crossing community, the program reflects the community’s commitment to transit-oriented living.. By bringing this initiative to life, we have created a reliable and sustainable way for residents to connect with essential needs and daily destinations.



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124 BOOKS ON WHEELS: THE MOBILE LIBRARY AT CAMBRIDGE PARK

Cambridge Park expanded literacy and educational enrichment opportunities for resident children through a collaborative partnership with the Bristol Public Library’s Mobile Library program. During summer months, the mobile library visits Cambridge Park weekly, parking outside the community room during the Summer Meals lunch distribution from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM. By coordinating the visit with an already well-attended community program, children and families can easily access books and educational activities in a convenient and welcoming setting.

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126 RENT REPORTING PILOT

The Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) launched an innovative Rent Reporting Pilot Program that transforms rent payments into a tool for financial empowerment. In partnership with NeighborGood Partners and Self Financial, the program provided 225 low- and middle-income renters with 12 months of free rent and utility reporting and access to financial coaching. More than half of the participants improved their credit scores—with gains exceeding 50 points on average—and 14% moved from subprime to prime. By turning a routine expense into a credit-building asset, DSHA is expanding access to housing, financing, and economic opportunity.



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125 NO CHILD HUNGRY: A COMMUNITY SUMMER MEALS PROGRAM

The Bristol Housing Authority, in partnership with the Bristol Board of Education, implemented a Summer Meals Partnership Program to address food insecurity among school-aged children during the summer months. This initiative ensures that children who rely on school-provided meals during the academic year continue to have access to nutritious food when school is not in session. The program operates annually from June through August, beginning Monday following the close of the school year and concluding on Friday prior to the start of the new school year.



127 BOOKS AND BITES STOP

We have got the weekend reads and fan-favorite snacks covered. Every Friday after school, Books and Bites sets up a grab-and-go station where youth stop by to pick books and snacks. Created to support children in building strong reading skills by providing access to engaging books and encouraging consistent reading habits, the program makes literacy fun and accessible. Through reading logs, incentives, and family participation, Books and Bites builds accountability and creates a positive, supportive environment where young readers grow and develop a lifelong love of reading.

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128 BRIGHT MINDS TECH CLUB

Bright Minds Tech Club is a monthly hands-on STEM experience where curiosity meets creativity and careers come to life. Serving 18–30 youth per session, this high-impact program is partnered with National Society of Black Engineers and Florida Atlantic University. The club engages children in building, exploring, and innovating through real-world technology activities and is open to all youth; no experience required, and 100% of materials provided. Every child can discover their potential and grow their confidence in STEM.

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129 VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Our licensed, on-site pre-kindergarten program delivers free, high-quality early learning to four-year-olds in public housing. The program has provided over 1,000 instructional hours since its inception. Designated Excellent by the Florida Department of Education and earning a 6.03 CLASS score—top 10% statewide—the program goes beyond standards with swim lessons, school tours, and milestone celebrations, preparing children for kindergarten success.



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130 HERITAGE OAKS CONTINUUM OF CARE: HEART SAFE HOUSING INITIATIVE

The Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA) is redefining resident services through its Heart Safe Housing Initiative, a partnership-driven model that delivers a continuum of care to senior residents. Developed by PCHA’s Program Department, this initiative established a strategic partnership with the American Heart Association to bring life-saving resources, education, and prevention services directly into senior housing communities. Heritage Oaks, home to 95 senior residents, installed Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) on all three floors to ensure immediate access during cardiac emergencies when seconds can mean the difference between life and death.

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131 PINELLAS COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY & HEAD START: 60 YEAR PARTNERSHIP – PROMISES DELIVERED

Since 1966, Pinellas County Housing Authority and Head Start have sustained the longest-running early childhood education partnerships in public housing and the county. Having served over 4,000 children, Head Start is located within Rainbow Village. The program operates five classrooms and serves 69 toddlers and pre-kindergarteners from both Rainbow and surrounding Ridgecrest, a low-income community. At full enrollment, the program delivers comprehensive early education, health screenings, nutrition, and family support services. This partnership

provided and helped shape the lives of generations of children and families.

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132 GAMERS CLUB

Tampa Housing Authority, in partnership with University of South Florida (USF) , created the Gamers Club in a unique commitment to honor students lived experiences. Armed with a modest set of Oculus virtual reality headsets, the Program merges youth culture, emerging technology, and educational innovation. The club offers students a space to explore storytelling design, and problem solving through the lens of game creation and AI tools.

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133 GTE FINANCIAL: 15 YEARS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY SUPPORT FOR FSS FAMILIES

For the past 15 years, GTE Financial Credit Union has partnered with the Tampa Housing Authority’s Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program to provide quality financial literacy education to participating families.

Through ongoing workshops and individualized guidance, GTE Financial delivers essential training in financial wellness, budgeting, banking, credit readiness, and car buying. This long-standing partnership has strengthened the financial capability of hundreds of FSS participants and continues to play a key role in supporting long-term economic stability.

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134 IT'S A SMALL WORLD MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Tampa Housing Authority (THA) 62+ senior apartment complex, JL Young Gardens, began participating in the It's a Small World monthly multicultural lunch. Each month, between 35-53 residents and staff participate and discuss diverse cultures, cuisines, and stories. With over 25 editions, each month spotlighted countries across five continents and included guest speakers, resident-led programming, and conversation about the country. This program was created to strengthen social connection among residents, celebrate cultural diversity, and increase resident participation to reduce the risk of social isolation.

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135 SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

62+ seniors living at JL Young Gardens began participating with the Americorp Senior Volunteer program through Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services (Gulf Coast JFCS). JL Young volunteer residents have been able to choose to help their community as Buddy Companion Support, Food Service Support, Community Beautification and Activity Support. The volunteers have facilitated numerous classes including arts & crafts, painting, crotchet, and Spanish language. Our volunteers participated in making paintings with inspirational words towards the hurricane victims in Jamaica with Our Hope for Jamaica project.

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136 MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS INITIATIVE

With March recognized as National Mental Health Awareness Month, Housing Authority of Champaign County (HACC) felt it was essential to increase mental health awareness and reduce stigma. Through the efforts of dedicated staff and partnerships with neighboring organizations, HACC organized several meaningful events aimed at advancing Mental Health Awareness for our clients and the broader community.



Award of
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137 THE HOUSING AND BEYOND CATALOG OF SERVICES

Utilizing internal resources, The Housing Authority of Champaign County’s (HACC) communications team designed and published a detailed and informative catalog of their Moving to Work (MTW) programs. HACC created the catalog to build consistent marketing of MTW activities and programs, as it was found that many clients only learn of these programs during their HCV briefing. Due to the publication of the Housing and Beyond catalog, HACC saw an increased interest from their Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) clients, which brought the utilization of the programs to their full capacity and potential.



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138 “OUR HOUSE” PODCAST

The Chicago Housing Authority’s (CHA) “Our House” podcast is a resident-focused venture highlighting the topics, stories, and resources that matter to residents and stakeholders. We interview a wide range of individuals associated with CHA and housing across all levels.

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139 HOME PROGRAM

The HOME Program is a Chicago-based voucher-to-homeownership pathway that transitions low-income households from rental assistance to asset ownership within the City of Chicago. Through the integration of the Choose to Own initiative and the Down Payment Assistance program, the agency has significantly expanded access to homeownership for income-qualified families. Since 2021, 438 Chicago families have achieved homeownership. In 2025 alone, 169 families purchased homes—the highest annual production in program history.

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140 PEACEPLAYERS CHICAGO

Since summer of 2024, the Chicago Housing Authority has partnered with PeacePlayers Chicago and Intentional Sports to provide male-identifying youth between ages 13-15 with a paid summer program that combines leadership development, career readiness, and peace-building through basketball.

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141 EMPOWER FORWARD

The Kankakee County Housing Authority implemented the Empower Forward Program to combat the “cliff effect,” where increased wages cause rent hikes that trap low-income families in poverty. The program offers one-on-one coaching and deposits the difference in rent increases into a tax-free escrow account, enabling participants to build substantial savings. This approach helps residents build assets for goals like homeownership, with recent workshops focusing on credit-building for mortgage qualification.



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142 ROCK RIVER VALLEY PANTRY WEEKLY GROCERIES

Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA) partnered with Rock River Valley Pantry to help residents retain access to essential food when SNAP benefits were reduced or discontinued. The Pantry provides direct grocery support to households experiencing food insecurity, helping families stabilize during periods of financial strain. This allows WCHA to respond quickly to urgent resident needs, reduce the risk of hunger, and ensure that vulnerable households

—particularly those affected by changing SNAP work requirements —have reliable access to nutritious food.



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143 WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

The Work Experience program provides short-term, paid internship opportunities for residents to build meaningful work experience and strengthen their long-term employment prospects. Participants are placed with local employers in structured, supportive roles that allow them to explore career interests, develop professional skills, and gain firsthand experience in real workplace settings. Throughout the internship, residents receive guidance and coaching to help them build confidence, establish positive work habits, and prepare for future employment or training pathways.

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144 HOME FOOD PROGRAM

In 2025, families in Howard County faced a sudden increase in food insecurity when Indiana declined participation in the federal SUN Bucks Program. Many households later experienced disruptions in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Kokomo Housing Authority partnered with the Howard County Health Department and local organizations to launch the Howard County Summer Lunch Program and the Howard County Feeding Program. These initiatives provided 6,000+ meals to 3,000+ people while creating a collaborative response to food insecurity. These programs have been joined to create what is known as the HoME Food Program – Howard County Meal Equivalency Food Program.



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145 IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH AND SERVICES REFERRALS THROUGH A COMMUNITY CARE CLOSET

The Housing Authority of the City of Richmond’s Community Care Closet is an on-site, no-cost, distribution and resource referral center providing basic needs supplies and direct connections to supportive services for majority elderly/disabled residents with limited transportation. The Closet is supplied entirely by donated goods and partner support. Since its installation in spring 2025, the Closet has served 66% of building residents and strengthened

engagement, offering a scalable, replicable model to provide free hygiene items, clothing, and household supplies while connecting residents to services like healthcare, financial coaching, and the FSS program.



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146 PROVIDING LIFESAVING MATERIALS AND TRAINING THROUGH A FREE, ON-SITE OVERDOSE RESPONSE STATION

The Housing Authority of the City of Richmond, IN (HACR) installed a publicly accessible NaloxBox at its Merle Henderson Apartments in 2025, providing free naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and xylazine test strips. The HACR also provided free overdose response training to residents and staff. Partnering with a nonprofit supplier of the anti-overdose materials, the program operates at no cost to the agency and expands access to lifesaving tools outside medical settings. The NaloxBox has distributed over 170 doses of intranasal naloxone and hundreds of test strips. Overdose incidents decreased from three prior to installation to one after, indicating improved community safety.



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City of Wichita’s Housing and Community Services Department (HCSD). The purpose of the initiative was to investigate the connectivity between homelessness and criminality by implementing efforts to decrease the occurrence of violent crime within its Target Area (Downtown) by decreasing homelessness.

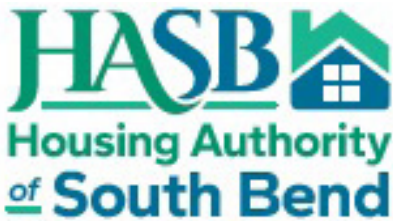
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147 HELPING HANDS AT HOME

The Housing Authority of South Bend’s Resident Services Department implemented a Helping Hands at Home Model to proactively identify and support residents at risk of housing instability. Using inspection data, pest control reports, and staff referrals as early-warning triggers, Resident Services engages residents through education, material support, and coordinated referrals before issues escalate to lease violations or displacement. This resident-centered, preventative approach improves unit conditions, preserves housing, strengthens trust, and stabilizes households while leveraging existing staff and community partnerships for long-term impact and replicability.



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148 PROJECT HOPE

Project HOPE is a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary Byrne Criminal Justice Initiative grant initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Justice awarded to the



149 SPRING INTO MOTHERHOOD: COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER AND MATERNAL WELLNESS INITIATIVE

Spring Into Motherhood: Community Baby Shower and Maternal Wellness Initiative is a resident-focused event, created from the partnership between the Alexandria Housing Authority and Humana to support expecting mothers and families living in public housing. Through partnerships with healthcare providers and community organizations, the event provides maternal health screenings, car seat safety checks, educational resources, and essential baby supplies. By bringing healthcare services and family support directly into housing communities, the program helps reduce barriers to care and promotes healthy outcomes for mothers and babies.



Award of
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Nominee

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150 TOGETHER TUESDAY

Together Tuesday is the Alexandria Housing Authority (AHA)'s weekly Facebook Live where we connect with residents and the community in a fun and engaging way! Hosted by our Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator and Resident Assistance Coordinator, we go live every Tuesday to share updates, spotlight community partners, give property tours, introduce our amazing staff, and highlight resources and programs. It is all about keeping our residents informed, involved, and connected to everything happening at the Alexandria Housing Authority! Our community can see firsthand how AHA is working every day to support and empower the families we serve.

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151 HEALTH & HOUSING: BRINGING CARE HOME

The Health & Housing Initiative: Bringing Care Home connects families to healthcare, nutrition, and wellness services directly within their communities. Through year-round partnerships and an annual health fair, the program removes barriers such as transportation and cost to expand access to preventive care. In partnership with the LSU AgCenter, residents receive firsthand nutrition education and access to healthy food. The initiative has reached hundreds of families and led to life-changing outcomes, including early disease detection.



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152 THE HERITAGE AT SEVERN DANCING DIAMONDS

The Dancing Diamonds of Heritage at Severn is a resident-driven youth development initiative designed to provide accessible, structured extracurricular opportunities for school-aged children living in affordable housing communities. The dance team provides an accessible, on-site activity that promotes teamwork, skill development, discipline, and positive peer engagement. It offers dancers a safe, structured outlet during out-of-school hours while building confidence, social skills, and a sense of belonging. Community volunteers are paid a stipend for participating in mentoring and supporting the dancers.



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153 RESIDENT RENT REPORTING FOR CREDIT BUILDING PROGRAM

The Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) partnered with Project GREEN (Grassroots Economic Empowerment Network) a nonprofit organization, to make the credit reporting software Piñata accessible to the families served. The Piñata app helps renters establish, build or repair credit scores by reporting monthly on-time rent payments to the major credit bureaus. The goal is to financially empower residents by helping them build the credit that's essential for approval and favorable terms for loans, leases and credit cards.

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154 LANSING HOUSING COMMISSION AND BOYS & GIRLS CLUB COMMUNITY-BASED YOUTH ENRICHMENT INITIATIVE

The Initiative delivers structured, high-quality youth programming directly within an affordable housing community. Serving over 100 youth annually, the program provides academic support, leadership development, and recreational activities in a safe, accessible environment. By removing transportation

and cost barriers, the initiative increases participation, strengthens school engagement, and supports family stability while creating a replicable, place-based service model.



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155 PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Established in 2023, the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority's (MPHA) Pathways to Success program uses an innovative, holistic partnership to help residents achieve long-term financial stability. The partnership connects MPHA families with Twin Cities RISE to deliver career readiness training; PRG, Inc. to provide specialized financial coaching and credit remediation services; and Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity to connect families with homeownership education, financial coaching, and variety of homebuying tools to make homeownership a reality. In 2025, MPHA celebrated the first family to successfully achieve homeownership through the partnership.



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156 RESIDENT MINI GRANTS

The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority , along the City of Minneapolis Health Department through the Highrise Health Alliance, developed a mini grant program supporting resident ideated and led events and initiatives. The mini-grant program sought to strengthen connections among residents, improving mental health and quality of life. Examples of successful projects and events funded by the mini grants include weekly community meals, monthly movie nights, bingo nights, garden clubs, and one-time gatherings. All told, the mini grant program supported more than 25 community building events in 2025.



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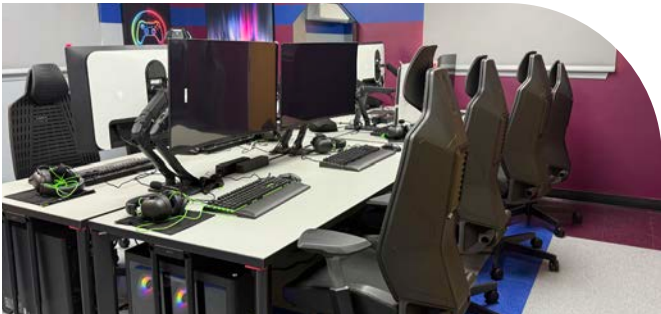


157 YHC YOUTH TECH CENTER

The Ypsilanti Housing Commission (YHC) created the YHC Tech Center to close the technology access gap for residents in low-income communities, particularly youth who often lack access to hands-on STEM learning. Funded through a \$200,000 State of Michigan grant, YHC transformed underused space into an immersive center for classes and instructional series in coding, robotics, animation, and video game development. Shaped by resident input and designed to serve the broader YHC community, the center creates a safe, engaging space where youth can build skills, explore future pathways, and connect with learning in new ways.



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158 PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE: FYI EXPANSION INITIATIVE

The Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program provides stable housing for youth aging out of foster care who face significant barriers to housing stability. Missoula Housing Authority expanded FYI vouchers and redesigned program implementation to ensure successful utilization and long-term outcomes. The program pairs rental assistance with coordinated support, landlord engagement, and connections to services such as Family Self Sufficiency. By addressing common challenges including lack of rental history, limited income, and reduced case management, FYI creates a stable foundation that supports education, employment, health, and successful transitions to independence.



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159 VETERAN PATHWAYS TO SELF SUFFICIENCY

Missoula Housing Authority's (MHA) Family Self-Sufficiency team expanded its veteran focused efforts in 2024 by strengthening partnerships that support housing stability, economic mobility, and community connection. These efforts led to three key initiatives: Heroes at Home, the Veteran-Made Art Show, and the Roads Less Traveled storytelling partnership. MHA's focus on leadership roles, volunteer experience, storytelling, and creative work provides non-traditional but meaningful pathways toward self sufficiency, identity rebuilding, and long term stability for Veterans.



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160 RESIDENCE AT SOUTH COLLEGE DRIVE

Residence at South College Drive (RSCD) is a 24-unit, one-bedroom mid-rise apartment building in Deptford, New Jersey, designed for individuals with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities who are capable of independent living with appropriate support. Through partnerships with Gloucester County's agencies, the Academy of Neurodiversity, the Adult Center for Transition, the Special Olympics NJ, and RSCD's strategic location on the Rowan College at South Jersey Gloucester Campus, RSCD residents are surrounded by supportive agencies and social programs providing access to education and

workforce training, financial literacy, health services, legal advocacy, transportation, and recreation.

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161 NEW JERSEY EVICTION GUIDE

Launched by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in July 2025, the New Jersey Eviction Guide (<https://evictionguide.dca.nj.gov/en>) is the State's only centralized, tenant-focused tool explaining the full eviction process and linking users to immediate help. Through simple, plain-language questions, tenants can understand their rights, navigate each stage, and find support. Developed in-house by DCA's Data Center and Office of Eviction Prevention, the guide helps tenants manage complete processes, stabilize housing, and prevent displacement and homelessness.

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162 EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAM

The Albuquerque Housing Authority's (AHA) Emergency Food program is a frontline initiative designed to tackle food insecurity within its residential communities. Orchestrated by the Service Coordination team, the program relies on a grant from Albuquerque Community Foundation that allows Service Coordination staff to procure non-perishable food items to store and put together food boxes for families in need. It's more than just a pantry; it's a vital safety net integrated into AHA's broader mission to foster resident stability and wellness throughout Albuquerque.



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163 PORTAL ACCESS CLASSES

Albuquerque Housing Authority's (AHA) Portal Access Classes bridge the digital divide for residents and applicants with limited tech experience. Launched in Summer 2025, the program serves hundreds of people through monthly sessions for 15-20 attendees. Costs are minimized by using repurposed staff computers, AHA's central office conference space, and a partnership with UNM-AHA work-study program students for instruction. This innovation ensures equitable access as society and housing services transition to online-only platforms.



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164 HARVEST HOUSING AUTHORITY REVITALIZATION THROUGH VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT & STUDENT TEAMS

On Earth Day 2025, Greensboro Housing Authority (GHA) and North Carolina A&T State University Greek Council volunteers cleared debris, planted trees and flowers, and hosted a Resource Fair on education, employment, and economic stability at GHA's Hickory Trails neighborhood. The HARVEST. Initiative enhances the local environment while fostering resident engagement, youth mentorship, and college partnerships. This initiative engaged families and children while giving college students hands-on service experience. Over 250 students, GHA team members, and residents contributed more than 400 hours to make lasting improvements to their shared environment.



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165 HEALTH WITHIN REACH:
VIRTUAL PRIMARY CARE CENTER

In Greensboro’s Census Tract 114, residents face a 10–15 year life expectancy gap compared to the rest of the city. To help close this gap, Greensboro Housing Authority (GHA) in partnership with Cone Health, launched an on-site Virtual Primary Care office at its Hampton Homes community. This dedicated space transforms a “health desert” into a hub primary care for Hampton Homes residents and the local community, building on GHA’s long-standing commitment to community health. The program offers a scalable model designed to improve long-term health outcomes at Hampton Homes and provides a blueprint for expansion into other underserved areas.



Award of Excellence Nominee

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166 EXPANDING ACCESS THROUGH LIVE
DIGITAL LEARNING

To address barriers like complex passwords and staff-heavy monitoring, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) launched the Family Self-Sufficiency Livestream in 2025. By using free streaming software and YouTube, CMHA provides a seamless “one-click” resource for job training and financial literacy at zero cost to the agency. This innovative shift removes technical hurdles, increases average attendance from 35 to over 65, and connects 550+ residents to vital services. This model is fully replicable for other agencies; using only free tools, it automates post-production and ensures instant accessibility. CMHA remains committed to this ongoing initiative, which

promotes equity by simplifying the path to economic stability.



Award of Excellence Nominee

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167 YOUTH PROGRAMS: ‘CRADLE TO
CAREER’

In June 2024, Lucas Metropolitan Housing (LMH) joined with core community partners to announce Toledo’s selection to participate in Harvard University’s nationally recognized “Cradle-to-Career” initiative. Toledo and LMH are one of only ten new communities in the U.S. that were invited by Harvard to join the 2024-25 program. Cradle to Career is a major push to support the education and development of children and youth in Central Toledo’s Junction neighborhood. The initiative succeeds in improving childhood literacy, academic performance, and student attendance.



Award of Excellence Nominee

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168 RESIDENT SERVICES PROGRAM

The Clarion County Housing and Redevelopment Authority Resident Services Program supports more than 800 households across nine rural counties by promoting housing stability and preventing eviction. Developed in response to the post-COVID environment and the conclusion of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, the initiative addresses increased tenancy challenges that emerged as temporary support ended. During the two-year duration of the program, it has assisted 278 residents and prevented 167 evictions through housekeeping support, budgeting guidance, transportation assistance, SOAR disability advocacy, and strong community engagement.



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169 CHERYL GAINEY WELLNESS CENTER – THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh and its nonprofit affiliate, Clean Slate E3, opened the Cheryl Gainey Wellness Center at Allegheny Dwellings in June 2025, in partnership with community wellness organization Long-Term Fitness. Named for the late Allegheny Dwellings Tenant Council president, the wellness center promotes physical and mental wellness, causes that Ms. Gainey staunchly supported. Long-Term Fitness provides a welcoming space where residents & their families can connect, share experiences, and build supportive relationships at the wellness center. Through group exercise programs, residents come together to

pursue shared goals, foster teamwork to reduce isolation, and improve emotional well-being.

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170 NO QUICHE, NO POLICE!

The Jamestown Housing Authority’s Coffee and Conversation is a monthly program at Jamestown Housing Authority and Pemberton Place that brings residents, staff, and the Jamestown Police Department together to build trust and improve communication. Supported by a Legislative Grant from Rhode Island State Senator Dawn Euer, the initiative operates at low cost with high impact. Unnecessary police calls decreased from 144 in 2021 to as low as 31 in 2024, demonstrating improved service use and reduced strain on resources. The program fosters inclusion, strengthens community relationships, and is sustainable and replicable.



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Small Agency



171 TRICK OR TREAT ON
PEMBERTON AVENUE

The Jamestown Housing Authority (JHA) created Trick or Treat on Pemberton Avenue at JHA and Pemberton Place to reduce isolation and promote inclusion among senior and disabled residents. Staff and partners ensure all residents can participate by providing decorations and treats. Children from the Jamestown Early Learning Center attend, joined by the Jamestown Police Department and Jamestown Fire Department. The event drives strong participation, strengthens community ties, and concludes with a staff-hosted brunch. Low-cost and growing annually; the event is a replicable model for engagement.



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172 RESIDENT SAFETY & EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS SERIES

The Lincoln Housing Authority implemented a Resident Safety & Emergency Preparedness Series. This initiative demonstrates a proactive, collaborative approach to resident well-being by enabling public housing residents with essential knowledge, skills, and resources to respond effectively during emergencies and medical crises.

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173 FSS HOMEOWNERSHIP RESOURCE FAIR

Spartanburg Housing Resident Services Department's Family Self-Sufficiency Program created a one-stop Homeownership Resource Fair that brought lenders, realtors, credit counselors, employers, and education partners into an accessible community setting. This low-cost, highly replicable event promotes self-sufficiency and empowers families by connecting aspiring homeowners with tools, guidance, and partners who support their path toward purchasing stable, sustainable housing.

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174 A PLACE TO DREAM: A COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP FOR BETTER SLEEP AND
BRIGHTER FUTURES

Tennessee Valley Housing Services (TVHS) launched a partnership in December 2025 with Sleep in Heavenly Peace to provide handmade beds, mattresses, and bedding to community children who previously slept on floors or shared overcrowded spaces. More than furniture, this initiative restores dignity, improves health and school readiness, and strengthens family stability. By mobilizing staff, volunteers, and community partners, TVHS created a sustainable, replicable model that ensures children have a safe, comfortable

place to sleep and dream of their future. This initiative promotes youth stability and success, reduces financial and emotional strain on families, and fosters dignity in the household.

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175 HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS: DELIVERING DIGNITY THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Tennessee Valley Housing Services partnered with The Avenue Dream Center to deliver Thanksgiving meals directly to more than 300 public housing and Housing Choice Voucher households across four counties. Staff coordinated logistics, organized distribution, and personally delivered meals door-to-door, eliminating transportation barriers and ensuring equitable access. This collaborative, resident-centered initiative strengthened community partnerships, improved food access, and deepened relationships through direct, meaningful engagement.

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176 PREPARED TO SUCCEED: BACK TO SCHOOL, BACKED BY COMMUNITY

Tennessee Valley Housing Services hosted a back-to-school bash that ensured children began the academic year prepared and confident. Over 125 children received backpacks filled with school supplies donated by the community and partnerships with First Baptist Church Morristown and the Morristown Fire Department. This collaborative initiative reduced financial stress, promoted academic readiness, and strengthened community connections in support of youth success.

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177 TVHS SUCCESS ACADEMY: A DIGITAL LEARNING PLATFORM FOR RESIDENT STABILITY AND SUCCESS

Tennessee Valley Housing Services launched TVHS Success Academy, a digital learning platform designed to improve resident outcomes through targeted education. Using AI-generated video content, residents access courses on housekeeping, fire safety, financial responsibility, complete quizzes, and earn certificates tracked by staff. The program addresses recurring lease violations proactively, reduces preventable issues, and strengthens resident engagement. This scalable, cost-effective solution empowers residents with practical skills while supporting long-term housing stability and compliance.

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178 LYDIA SOCIETY

For several years, the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) has helped young women shine. The program, known as the LYDIA Society, is a coming-o-age organization designed to engage teenage girls living in MDHA properties and provide education about topics such as writing, technology, and health. The participants take part in an eight-week summer program that includes specialized workshops led by Meharry Medical College Master of Public Health program. Once the program is completed, the LYDIA Society participants are recognized at the annual ball, where a Miss LYDIA Society is named and crowned.

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179 ABILENE HOUSING AUTHORITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Each year, Abilene Housing Authority (AHA) seeks new ways to increase the value of the service provided to Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing participants. In 2025, AHA created the Abilene Housing Authority Scholarship Program. Part of AHA’s mission statement states it will “...enhance self-sufficiency and promote community quality of life and economic viability.” The Scholarship Program recognizes that in a changing world, preparing families with the tools to be successful is imperative. Through this program, AHA will award four (4) \$2,000 scholarships each year to two high school seniors, one FSS participant, and one ROSS participant.



Award of
Excellence
Nominee

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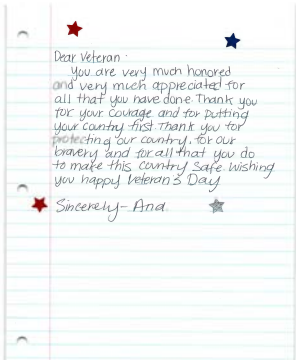


180 THE FAMILY LEARNING CENTERS LETTERS TO VETERANS

The Harlingen Housing Authority and the Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District implemented The Family Learning Centers Letters to Veterans to motivate students to enjoy their freedom made possible by military members. This program fosters a deeper sense of civic duty, empathy, and appreciation for others’ needs. It also allows them to practice essential literacy skills like handwriting, letter structure, and expressing thoughtful, meaningful messages; a valuable skill needed even in a digital age. The letters offer psychological comfort and a sense of recognition, which can be incredibly meaningful for veterans and their families.



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181 THE LE MOYNE GARDENS BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB BUTTERFLY GARDEN

The Harlingen Housing Authority (HHA), in partnership with the Family Living Center and the Boys and Girls Club of Harlingen, recognized the need to support children in maintaining healthy lifestyles and connection with peers. The HHA installed the Butterfly Garden as stress relief and a living educational science lab. It inspires environmental stewardship and encourages pollination. HHA envisioned a practical way for children to stay active while enjoying the benefits of fresh air and nature’s beauty. This encourages opportunities to build relationships and create a sense of community.



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182 FOOD AND FINANCE WORKSHOP

In response to federal funding shifts that threatened residents’ food security, Opportunity Home San Antonio launched the “Food and Finance Workshop” to help families during economic transitions. This program bridged the gap between immediate crisis intervention and long-term financial resilience by pairing essential resources with economic education. Through a hybrid model of virtual and in-person sessions, staff collaborated with community partners to provide coaching on credit repair, savings strategies, homeownership pathways, and equipping residents with the financial tools to break the cycle of poverty.



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183 HOLISTIC EDUCATION FAIR

Opportunity Home San Antonio residents face economic barriers and limited awareness of educational training. To address this, staff from two self-sufficiency programs co-facilitated an on-site Education Fair, connecting residents from Villa Veramendi and surrounding properties to career and academic pathways. By integrating basic needs support—including food and clothing distributions—with access to eight educational partners, the program addresses immediate hardships while promoting long-term self-sufficiency. This holistic model empowers residents to pursue stable, higher-paying careers through direct educational engagement.



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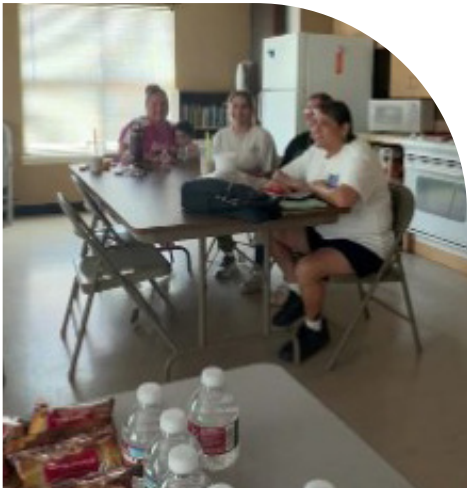


184 MISSION OF MOTHERHOOD (M.O.M.)

The Mission of Motherhood (M.O.M.) addresses intimate partner violence and maternal health disparities in San Antonio’s East Side through a community partnership led by Family Self-Sufficiency and Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency staff. By transforming community rooms into trauma-informed hubs, M.O.M. provides resources, peer-led support, and guest speakers for residents at Highview and Springview Apartments. The mom-led coalition creates community leaders among mothers, fostering healing and stability for families facing housing insecurity. The program proves that resident-led initiatives are key to sustainable health and community well-being.



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185 SITE BASED HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR

Opportunity home San Antonio’s Health and Wellness fair model—a comprehensive healthcare ecosystem brought directly to residents’ doorsteps—was established to address challenges in accessing healthcare faced by residents. By hosting on-site events featuring a collaborative network of partners providing services in healthcare, nutrition, mental health, and immunizations, the program eliminates barriers that prevent residents from seeking help. This initiative empowers residents through direct, face-to-face connections with community partners, fostering improved health literacy, greater engagement in preventive care, and long-term wellness outcomes within the public housing community.



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186 CREDIT COUNSELING WORKSHOP “CREDIT 101”

On Saturday, July 12, 2025, the Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo’s Family Self-Sufficiency Program partnered with Affordable Homes of South Texas to host a Financial Literacy Workshop, Credit 101. The workshop expanded access to financial education and equipped participants with tools to support economic self-sufficiency. Through this community partnership, participants received practical guidance

on credit, debt management, and long-term financial planning, helping them build confidence and take meaningful steps toward financial stability and future homeownership.



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187 GROWING HEALTHY TOGETHER: A SUMMER NUTRITION PROGRAM AT AVANTI EAST

In summer 2025, Avanti East partnered with Texas A&M AgriLife to host an eight-week Summer Nutrition Program for resident families. Weekly sessions taught parents about food safety, nutrition, and healthy ingredients while children participated in live cooking activities. Families worked together to prepare meals, helping kids build confidence and interest in healthy eating. The program created a fun environment where parents and children could learn and bond together. Ten participants completed all eight sessions and graduated, receiving tools like recipe books and cooking supplies to continue practicing healthy habits at home.



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188 INTRODUCTION TO BANKING: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE FOR TEENS

On Saturday, October 4, 2025, the Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo's Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) partnered with Texas National Bank to host a Financial Literacy Workshop for Teens. This financial literacy program prepares teens with foundational knowledge of credit, promote financial decision-making, and sustain financial practices. The program provides comprehensive instruction on credit fundamentals, tools for establishing credit, effective debt management strategies, and responsible credit utilization to support long-term economic independence.



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189 NATIONAL NIGHT OUT RESOURCE FAIR "HALLOWEEN EDITION"

On October 24, 2025, the Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo hosted its Annual National Night Out. This year's event embraced a Halloween theme, creating a fun and engaging atmosphere for residents and families. National Night Out is a community-building event designed to strengthen relationships between residents and community organizations while promoting safety awareness and neighborhood unity. Through family-friendly activities, community engagement, and informational outreach, the event provided residents with an opportunity to connect with community partners, access valuable resources, and celebrate together in a safe and welcoming environment.



Award of
Excellence
Nominee

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190 ROADMAP TO SUCCESS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

On January 1, 2026, the Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo’s Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) launched the Roadmap to Success Incentives Program. This program, created to promote growth, motivates and rewards current FSS participants working toward their individualized goals. Participants are encouraged to make measurable progress in areas such as employment, education, financial literacy, and overall economic stability. The program recognizes milestones and achievements throughout a participant’s journey, reinforcing positive progress and empowering families to remain focused on long-term self-sufficiency and independence.

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191 STRONGER TOGETHER: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AT 501 JASMINE VILLAS

On October 15, 2025, 501 Jasmine Villas hosted National Night Out to unite residents with local law enforcement, emergency services, and community organizations. Over 140 residents attended the event, featuring interactive booths focused on education, healthcare, and safety. Attendees enjoyed a K-9 demonstration and received resources from South Texas College, Nuestra Clínica del Valle, and McAllen ISD. The event strengthened connections among community members, provided valuable information, fostered a sense of belonging, and demonstrated the power of unity to support families.



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192 THRIVING TOGETHER: A COMMUNITY WELLNESS SERIES FOR SENIORS AT LA STELLA

Beginning May 16, 2024, La Stella Apartments hosted a senior wellness series in partnership with Molina Healthcare. The program included gentle fitness sessions, health education, and creative activities like dancing, arts and crafts, and painting to help residents stay active and socially connected. Seniors encouraged one another while learning exercises they could continue at home. Molina Healthcare also installed a blood pressure monitoring station, giving residents easier access to track their health. The program brought joy, connection, and wellness to

the community and was highlighted on local news, making residents proud to see their community recognized.



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193 CLUTTER SUPPORT TEAM

The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA)’s Community Services Division and Health & Housing Program leads the Clutter Support Team (CST). SHA integrates housing operations with resident services to address complex tenancy risks that cannot be solved through property management alone. CST bridges property management and supportive services, ensuring lease compliance is managed effectively and equitably. Since June 2024, SHA emphasized program development and staff capacity-building in this new program. This included defining program scope, establishing intervention standards, and communicating program capabilities across the agency.

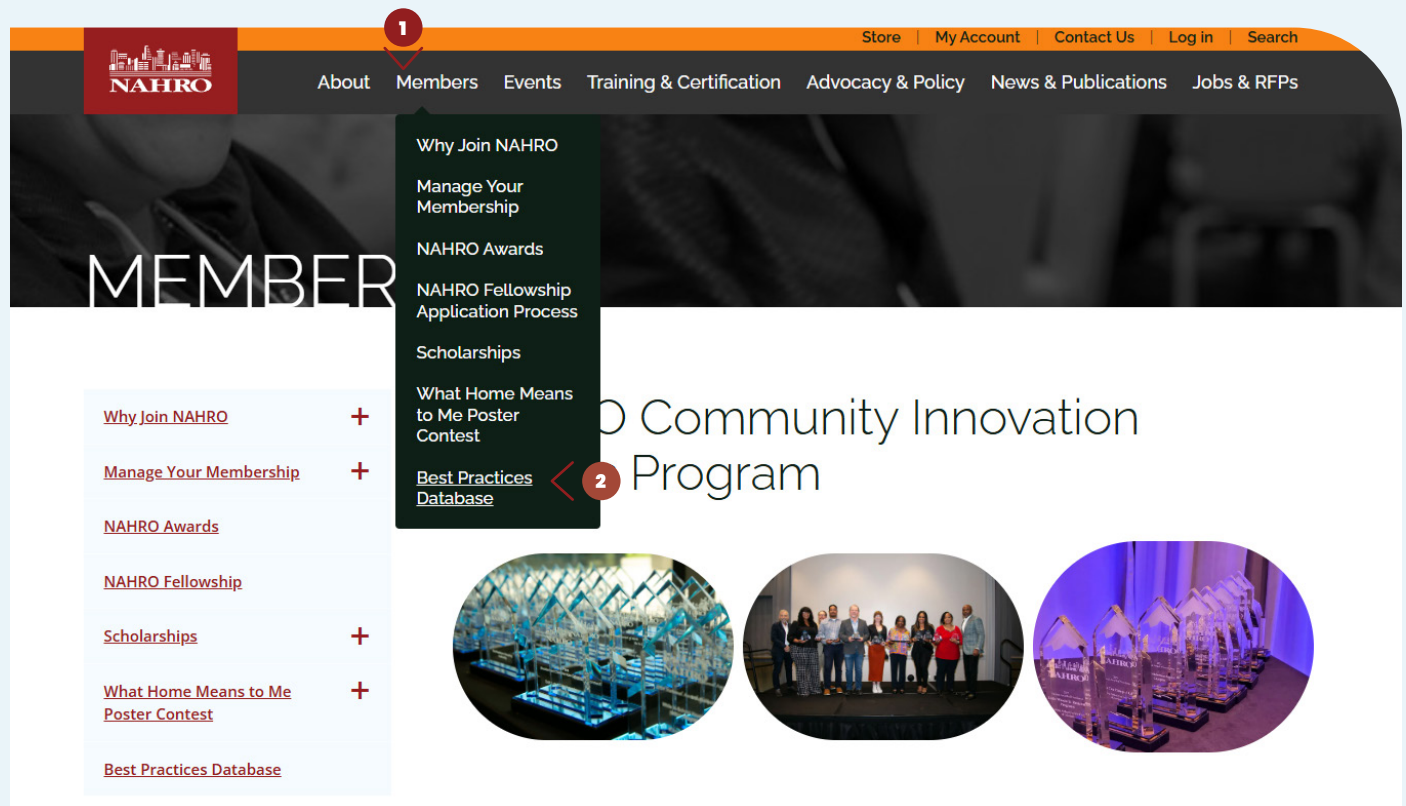


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NAHRO's Best Practices Database

Did you know that NAHRO members have free access to thousands of award-winning affordable housing and community development innovations through the NAHRO Best Practices Database?



1

It's easy to use! Just log into your NAHRO account, click on the **Members** tab

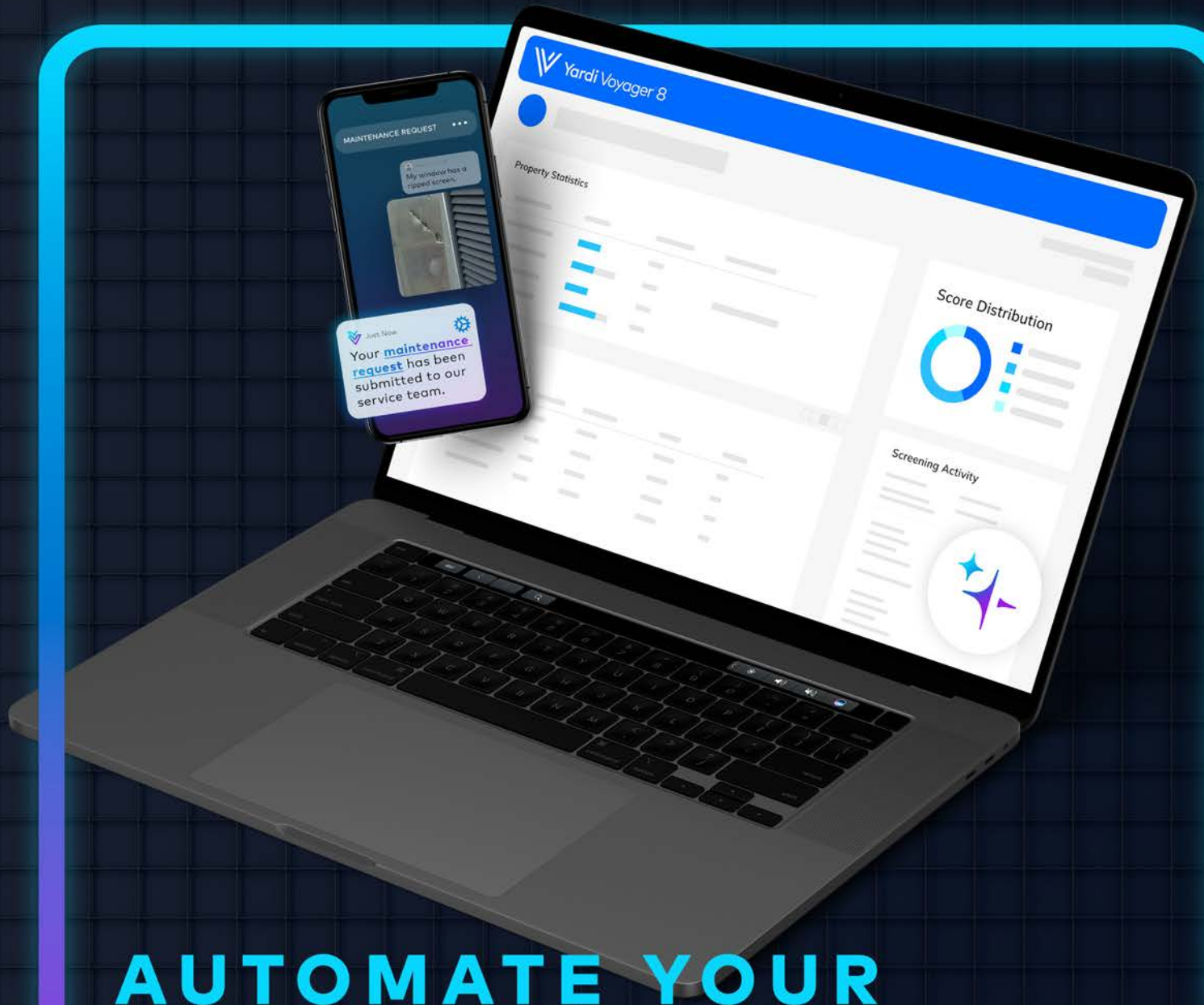
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Then click on the **Best Practices Database** tab. You can browse by year, award title, city/state and more.

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About NAHRO

NAHRO, which was established in 1933, is a membership organization of more than 26,000 housing and community development providers and professionals throughout the United States. NAHRO members create and manage affordable housing for low- and middle-income families, and support vibrant communities that enhance the quality of life for all. NAHRO members administer more than 3 million homes for more than 8 million people.

Vision Statement

Thriving communities with affordable homes for all.

Mission Statement

To advance the creation of strong, sustainable and affordable communities through advocacy, professional development, and empowerment of our diverse members.



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